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The Jewess in English literature: A mediating presence

Witkin, Mildred Starr, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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THE JEWESS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: A MEDIATING PRESENCE

by

Mildred Starr Witkin

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
English in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

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Abstract

THE JEWESS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: A MEDIATING PRESENCE

by

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The history of the Jewess in English literature starts with the Old Testament, a repository of models for the English Jewess. Available there is a panorama of archetypal Hebrew women, all beautiful, who portray a range of traits; they are noble, courageous, vulnerable, manipulative, erotic, and dangerous. Their outstanding and most significant quality for the Jewesses who follow them, however, is their sexuality, designed as intrinsic to their identity. The English Jewess of the medieval world is associated with an odious religion tainted with deicide, with ritual murder, and with an evil father who encourages her destruction as a devoted martyr. In the new awareness of the human-centered world of the English Renaissance, the Jewess emerges as both a biblical and secular character reflecting Renaissance themes; the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists, Marlowe and Shakespeare, use the Jewess to advance themes that project the conflict between old and new ideas. Whether she is victim, as Marlowe draws her, or rebel, according to Shakespeare, the Jewess is

featured as the object of religious conversion, an essential element of her portrait. The Jewess of modern times, located in the English novel, reflects social, political, economic, and cultural change in England's history and literary fashions. Incorporating new historical influences, the portrayals of Jewesses in the English novel continue to evoke elements of older traditions as revealed in plot, character, and theme. From Tobias Smollett to James Joyce, the characters of Jewesses provide a literary tradition that is frequently self-conscious, notably when novelists compare their Jewesses to earlier portraits. Foremost, the tradition of the Jewess is evident in the repeated motif of the rich Jew's beautiful daughter which supplies the most pervasive elements for the Jewess's portrait and the most basic condition for her as a mediating presence between Jew and Christian. Selected as the link to Christian piety, the Jewess becomes the agent of redemption for Christian writers. Even in the portraits drawn by Anglo-Jewish novelists, the Jewess perpetuates her role as redeemer, but as one who seeks to reclaim Jewish identity.

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THE JEWESS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE:
A MEDIATING PRESENCE

Introduction

When Walter Scott declares, "The Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate," he connotes a beautiful, young defenseless woman in imminent danger, and the reader surmises the nature of her peril even before the Templar advances. Rebecca's vulnerable position in the historical romance of 1819 affirms the circumstances of the typical Jewess of English literature. Although based on a living Jewess, Rebecca Graetz, the most famous Jewess of English literature, Rebecca of Ivanhoe, follows in the steps of Jewesses who preceded her and affects the line of Jewesses who followed her.

The history of the Jewess in English literature starts with the Old Testament, a repository of models for the English Jewess. Available there is a panorama of archetypical Hebrew women, all beautiful, who portray a range of traits; they are noble, courageous, vulnerable, manipulative, erotic, and dangerous. Their outstanding and most significant quality for the Jewesses who follow them, however, is their sexuality, designed as intrinsic to their identity. The English Jewess of the medieval world is associated with an odious religion tainted with deicide, with ritual murder, and with an evil father who encourages her destruction as a devoted martyr. In the new aware-

ness of the human centered world of the English Renaissance, the Jewess emerges as both a biblical and secular character reflecting Renaissance themes; the greatest of the Elizabethan dramatists, Marlowe and Shakespeare, use the Jewess to advance themes that project the conflict between old and new ideas. Whether she is victim, as Marlowe draws her, or rebel, according to Shakespeare, the Jewess is featured as the object of religious conversion, an essential element of her portrait. The Jewess of modern times, as located in the English novel, reveals components that reflect social, political, economic, and cultural change in England's history and literary fashions. Although they incorporate new historical influences, the portrayals of Jewesses in the English novel continue to evoke elements of older traditions as revealed in plot, character and theme. From Tobias Smollett to James Joyce, the characters of Jewesses provide a compendium of a literary tradition that is frequently self-conscious, for example, when George Eliot alludes to Rebecca of Ivanhoe in her description of Mirah in Daniel Deronda, when Amy Levy in her Reuben Sachs refers to both Scott's Rebecca and to Eliot's Jews of Daniel Deronda, and when numerous writers color their portraits of Jewesses with comparisons to their biblical prototypes. But most of all, the tradition of the Jewess is evident in the repeated motif of the rich Jew's beautiful daughter which supplies the most pervasive elements for the Jewess's

portrait and the most basic condition for her as a mediating presence between Jew and Christian.

Outside of the Old Testament, at every stage in the development of her figure, the English Jewess is used to explore the nature of the relationship between Christian and Jew, a relationship that focuses on opposing ideologies.¹ Influenced by those factors that cause historical change, the tradition that opposes Jew to Christian stems from the dialectical notion of Judaism as the ancient religion upon which Christianity is founded and which must be reintegrated into the Christian fold. Originating in the writing of Paul, the aim of this tradition is expressed by Harold Fisch who uses this idea to explain the creation of the Jew in literature as devil or saint or both simultaneously:

The Jew would survive to testify to the ultimate triumph of the divine plan of salvation, this plan being to Paul synonymous with the messiahship of Jesus. This dialectical attitude to the Jew explains the special status he "enjoyed" -- if that is the right term -- in the Middle Ages. He had to be kept outside the pale of society: but he had to be preserved. Hence the legally sanctioned Jewry or Jews' Street, and later, the Ghetto; hence the special laws governing the existence and conduct of the Jewish community; hence the effort of the Papacy to protect the Jew from the mob and from the worst forms of calumny. The Jews were a deicide nation but they were also a nation which is redeemed, and on whose redemption the fate of mankind hangs. From this state of mind arises the two-fold image of the Jew in the Christian literature of the Middle Ages and beyond.²

Selected as the link to Christian piety or as the weak link in her attachment to Judaism, the Jewess becomes the agent of redemption for Christian writers. The most common feature of the Jewess's role mediating between Jew and Christian depicts her as the rich Jew's beautiful daughter who must face the decision to convert. Indeed, she is often shown as redeeming herself, accepting conversion, thus fulfilling the Pauline creed. The questions of the Jewess's conversion and marriage to a Christian are major themes in works in which the Jewess appears. Conversion threads through the medieval Noah play, the Elizabethan The Jew of Malta, The Merchant of Venice, and the English novels of local color, historical romance, and realism. Even in the portraits drawn by Anglo-Jewish writers, the Jewess perpetuates her role as redeemer, but one who seeks to reclaim Jewish identity.

Placing the Jewess as a mediating presence between two worlds, where she considers conversion or reclaims her Jewish identity, adds to the tension, struggle, and vulnerability of her character. Furthermore, the demands made on her character in this struggle test her piety and filial devotion. In addition, this crucible of loyalty to the ambivalent forces in the Christian mind, the Jewess's religion, invites consideration of the Jewess as an acceptable object to be violated. Her sexuality also is ever available to encourage this violation, too.

Thus, as mediator between Jew and Christian, the Jewess is placed in an intensely precarious position requiring resources of character if she is not to succumb to the treacherous world around her. Indeed, the Jewess does risk death and even achieves martyrdom in important interpretations of her portrait.

The recurring image of the Jewess as a mediating presence elevates her portrait to archetype. As mediator between "Jew" and "Christian," the Jewess projects an archetype of a woman of her own religion that might well apply to secular woman as well. Indeed, in the twentieth century, represented by James Joyce's Molly Bloom, the Jewess evolves, as archetype, into an earth goddess with connections to elemental feminine powers. Joyce's primordial secular Jewess is the ultimate redeemer, as she is portrayed with all the attributes necessary for her to execute psychic transformation.

Like the Jew, the Jewess in English literature is a type who demands attention in an assortment of roles that delineate her as a literary creation with a history and a lineage. Since James Joyce's Leopold Bloom, the Jew has entered contemporary literature identified with Everyman. The Jew's alienation, wandering, and pariah status manifest a psychological state of universal application. Does the archetype of the Jewess do for the modern world what the Jew has done? Does the

Jewess express a feminine condition of universal significance? In its examination of the history of the Jewess in English literature, this book attempts to answer these questions.

FOOTNOTES

¹The opposition of ideas represented by "Jew" and "Christian" is obvious in Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice where Jessica, the rich Jew's beautiful daughter, asserts her allegiance to "giving" Christian values. See chapter 3. Another clear example of the use of this opposition to present a dichotomy for another age is Matthew Arnold's "Hellenism and Hebraism."

²Harold Fisch, The Dual Image: the Figure of the Jew in England and America (New York: Ktav, 1971), pp. 14-15.

CHAPTER 1

THE HEBREW WOMAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

THE USES OF SEXUALITY

"Such a peculiar lineage, to be a Jewish woman -- some humorless prophets, others wily murderers, most invisible to God, unwanted by God, subjected to men, and yet sometimes strong like weeds and mongrel pups, surviving everything, like a clever bacillus that alters itself slightly to defeat man's chemical brews. I am a woman anyhow whose history is long if not happy, and who therefore can expect a future."

Anne Roiphe, Long Division.

"He [Richard Burton] would stride into rehearsals, sweep me off my feet, swing me in the air, and call me his 'beautiful Hebrew princess.' I was ecstatic, though trying to hide my infatuation."

Susan Strasberg, Bittersweet.

"Imagine him in bed with a woman. (Cody snorted.) He pictured the woman as dark and Biblical, because of her name: Ruth. Shadowed eyes and creamy skin. Torrents of loose black hair. ... No doubt her eyes were plum shaped, slightly tilted. No doubt her hands were heavily ringed, with long, oval fingernails painted scarlet."

Anne Tyler, Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant.

"By this time, I knew that she was my grandmother, that she was Jewish.... She had been a beautiful woman, 'the most beautiful woman in Seattle,' my friends' mothers used to tell me.... [She had] a biblical Jewish face that might have belonged to the young Rachel when Jacob first saw her.... The young woman in the photograph looks as though she could be easily hurt."

Mary McCarthy, Memories of a Catholic Girlhood.

"Anne Frank is a Jewish saint."

Philip Roth in a
New York Times Book Review interview.

"Michal, my bride, was not just the daughter of a king but a bona-fide Jewish American Princess! I had married a JAP! I am the first in the Old Testament to be stuck with one."

Joseph Heller, God Knows.

The portraits of the Hebrew women in the Bible are of crucial importance to English literature, representing archetypes of such majestic familiarity that they remain in our unconscious -- whether we be reader or writer, Jew or Christian. These forceful portraits are the subject of this initial chapter, part of a larger study illuminating the treatment of the Jewess in English literature. My main thesis is that certain Old Testament women are prototypes of the Jewess as portrayed in English literature. That is, the overriding element found in the literary portrait of the Jewess¹ in English literature is the synthesis of specific features of selected Old Testament women. A correlary of this main thesis is that portraits of the Jewess have influenced the depiction of women known for their Christian virtues. As a literary figure, the English Jewess emerges from Old Testament women and affects portraits of women of universal, even secular, significance.

The abiding principles of the Jewess in English literature are concerned primarily with her nobility and sexuality. Of the two qualities sexuality is by far the more prominent, basic feature. The Old Testament attributes sexuality to the Hebrew woman frequently, openly, and with urgency. Linked to the portrait of the Hebrew woman are themes that shed light on her sexuality. They are the grace of fertility and the punishment of barrenness, the influence of women over men and the dominance of men over women, rivalry with other women, love as a controlling factor in women's lives, and, above all, women's vulnerability and seductiveness, this last of both the pleasurable as well as the dangerous kind. These themes also attach themselves to portraits of the Jewess who inherits the archetypical pattern of the Hebrew woman, her literary ancestor. As the heiresses of Hebrew women, the Jewesses mentioned in the quotations that preface this chapter, all from recent American sources, echo and affirm the biblical tradition.

These characteristic principles of the Jewess in English literature also apply to certain portraits of women who are not Jewesses. Old Testament women are responsible for influencing the creation of secular women as well as those whose Christian piety is emphasized. A significant example of the Bible's direct influence on the portrayal of the Jewess in English literature and, at the same time, its widening influence on the creation of a character of

universal application is the case of Susanna and the Elders.² Taught according to the laws of Moses, Susanna is the beautiful, virtuous, faithful Hebrew woman whose accusers are guilty of the lust with which they charge her. This quality, the ability to arouse sexually, is a fundamental feature of the portrait of the Jewess in English literature. A version of the Susanna narrative, with the source evident in the title, may be found in Thomas Garter's play, Virtuous and Godly Susanna (1578). A similar story and theme may be found also, however, in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (1603-4) with Susanna transformed into the upright and Christian Isabella. The Bible here has been used as a source for an archetype of maligned womanly virtue and religious faith, but the religion has been changed. This is one case among many whereby the Hebrew woman influences the creation of a feminine character of universal application: the fascinating, pious, yet vulnerably seductive woman. Moreover, as will be shown below, certain Old Testament women are described by Christian writers and commentators as early versions of Christian martyrs with their sexuality used as a feature of their saintly portrait. This consideration is one explanation for the special treatment given to the Jewess in English literature as compared to that of the Jew. The use of the Jewess in English literature as a victim-martyr provides an additional reason for the need of a study confined exclusively to the Jewess,

a study that elucidates, primarily, Christian attitudes towards the Jewess.

Why do we start with the Bible? The Bible, the drama, the ballad, and the novel are the four main repositories in English literature of the Jewess as a literary type. In all four strands, although she is frequently associated with the Jew, the Jewess is identified with her faith in ways that distinguish and separate her from the opprobrious Jew, as the Jew is so often depicted in English literature. The portraits of the Jewess in English literature represent a singular literary tradition with the Bible as the primary source.

Before the Reformation, one of the ways the Bible served English literature was as a source of lore exemplified notably in the traditions of the folk ballad and miracle plays which drew on characters and scenes from the Bible and blended them with folk elements. After the Reformation, when the Bible became accessible to the literate public, it became for three centuries the most read book in the English language. The popular dissemination of the English Bible, especially the King James Version completed in 1611, made it the most basic book in the education of English speaking Protestants, and thus one of the most recurring influences produced thereafter. The Bible as a source of religion, literature, and lore is the core of a tradition that presents to us the portraits of

Hebrew women we find so memorable.

The archetypes of Hebrew women in the Old Testament are created within repeated patterns of expected conduct and theme. What are the motifs of the Hebrew woman in the Old Testament? Told in a patriarchal family setting, the basic narratives of the Old Testament show the Hebrew woman most prominently as a wife and mother who joins with her husband to fulfill the destiny of their people as promised in the Covenant. Frequently, she is the one who reminds her partner of his moral duty, and sometimes she even risks her own life, thus revealing her nobility in her willingness to sacrifice herself. In the few cases when the Hebrew woman stands alone, like Deborah, Huldah, and Judith, her goal remains steadfast and her faith unswerving. She is God's, if not her husband's or her father's obedient servant. At the same time, however, the Hebrew woman, more often than not, is presented as the embodiment of beauty and eroticism, conveying two qualities that assure her supreme sexual status: her vulnerability and her power to arouse sexual appetite. This erotic combination is prominently displayed in the portraits of Jewesses in English literature. The preceding citation of Susanna and the Elders is just one of many examples of the Jewess as an erotic and vulnerable creature.

The erotic treatment of the Jewess brings up certain questions that are beyond the scope of this study. First, closely related to the question of the assignment of

eroticism is the subject of sexual projection. Secondly, the matter of female eroticism brings with it, too, the question of misogynism. Thirdly, since the subject under study is a Jew, the question of anti-Semitism is directly related and pertinent. In the first case, of sexual projection, I am not prepared to undertake a psychological analysis. In the second and third cases, I argue that although the basis for erotic portraits in English literature are found in the Old Testament, these biblical portraits are prototypes for later literary depictions to which were added anti-Semitic and misogynist traditions. But the exegesis of these traditions or an analysis of the inherent syncretism in the portrait of the Hebrew woman is not the focus of this study. It is impossible to embark on a study of the Jewess oblivious to the role of hatred against a religion and against a sex. However, while this examination will refer to anti-Semitic or misogynist elements, it will not trace the development of anti-Semitism or misogynism per se in portraits of the Hebrew woman or the Jewess.⁴ In this chapter, I will examine how the Old Testament presents the salient features of significant Hebrew women within their family roles as mother, wife, and daughter. On the whole, while nobility is a quality frequently attributed to the Old Testament woman, her sexuality is a more prominent and recurring feature of her portrait. Sexuality for the Hebrew woman is that quality which establishes

her existence and assures her identity.

"Give me children, or I shall die!"

These are the words of Rachel who, miserable in her barrenness begs her husband to impregnate her. One of the four matriachs of the Israelites, Rachel is linked to the other three in their purpose and function as mothers of nations -- women whose fertility and existence is dedicated to the creation and survival of the legitimate heirs of the line of Abraham and Sarah, chosen by Yahweh. To the matriarchs, barrenness is personal and national death, a sign of punishment by God. Motherhood, in fact, is so crucial to the destiny of the Israelites that even Deborah, the Joan of Arc of her people, is called in the victorious Ode of Deborah "a mother in Israel." The influence of mothers on the condition of the nation is further affirmed in Kings and Chronicles where a catalogue of the names of queen mothers is presented and accompanied by an evaluation of each son's reign. Sometimes, too, the word mother is used metaphorically to represent a nation or a large city with the populace likened to her children. (Isa. 50:1, Jer. 50:12, Hos. 4:5, II Sam. 20:19). Such references tend to emphasize the connection between motherhood and civil community. But, above all, motherhood in the Old Testament asserts the one certain means by which a woman achieves status and identity.

"No higher status could be given anyone than was given the mother in ancient Israel," says John H. Otwell who also concedes that the pre-eminent office of priest was held exclusively by men. Hebrew women "are never described as having served as priests." According to Otwell, "Motherhood ... was not only a biological and sociological function. It was a sacred act of great magnitude which only the woman could perform."⁵ Actually, the Hebrew woman is the medium through whom God acts. Although Hebrew women may take steps to assure their fertility, mortal control of fertility is limited. The final agent of conception or barrenness is divine. But in spite of this ultimate sacred nature of fertility, the Hebrew woman is portrayed as an involved and even competitive participant in the effort to fulfill her people's destiny by bearing children, especially sons.

Beginning with the narrative of Sarah and Abraham, the Old Testament presents specific conventions that elucidate female sexuality in the portraits of Hebrew women who are mothers. These conventions or motifs focus on the urgency of motherhood, barrenness, rivalry between women, control of birthright, and beauty and seductiveness. Although the narratives of the matriarchs contain all these motifs, they do not make use of these conventions equally. In any given narrative, some motifs are more embellished than others. For instance, Rachel's story elaborates

more profusely the rivalry between women than Rebekah's story which describes the most elaborate tale of a mother's attempt to control her son's destiny through birthright.

First and foremost, the Hebrew woman exists as wife and mother. The urgency of her role as mother leads to the introduction of the other motifs mentioned. For instance, the primary role of the Hebrew woman as mother is emphasized with the introduction of the theme of barrenness, repeated in the portraits of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel. Although a long period of barrenness is a conventional device used preceding the announcement of the birth of a significant son or culture hero, its purpose in the Old Testament also serves to diminish or make helpless the wife who would be mother. Indeed, barren Sarah's motherhood is miraculous, the first miraculous birth recorded in the Bible. The reaction of the aging Sarah, who is "out of my time," to the news of God's promise of a son for her and Abraham is laughter -- laughter that she denies "for she was afraid." Rachel, too, learns the only remedy for her barrenness is faith in God. In answer to Rachel's plea for children after years of jealously witnessing the births of four of Jacob's children with her sister Leah, Jacob angrily says, "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" (Gen. 30:2). Rachel's lesson in piety is learned only after the birth of all of Leah's children. Then, when Rachel's Joseph is

born, Rachel says, "God has taken away my reproach." (Gen. 30:23) Motherhood, while it offers the Hebrew woman her status and identity, is presented as a humbling experience in which God's divine favor is revealed.

To the matriarchs, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah, their fertility is of such importance that a rivalry between women in the household surfaces. The pattern for this rivalry is first presented between Sarah and Hagar in the Sarah-Abraham narrative when Sarah gives her maid Hagar to Abraham: "Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee go unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai." (Gen. 16:2)

Although according to custom, the child of such a union as Sarah proposes would be regarded as Sarah's own child, Sarah finds the gloating impudence of Hagar, made pregnant by Abraham, too much to bear. Reminded by Abraham that she may reprimand her servant, Sarah starts in motion another motif: the effective means whereby the wise or cunning wife-mother controls the destiny of her children -- with God's approval. Sarah's reprimand causes Hagar to flee to the wilderness. Hagar returns, only to be sent away years later, this time with her son Ishmael because as Sarah, now the mother of young Isaac, urges Abraham: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son,

even with Isaac." (Gen. 21:10)

Abraham does as his wife asks. Her plea coincides with God's plans, for God says to Abraham, "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken to her voice; for Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Gen. 21:12) Significantly, the narrator withholds God's statement until after Sarah shows her strength in resisting the threat to her son's birthright. By so doing, the narrator leaves the impression that Sarah, like Rebekah after her, controls the destiny of her people when actually both women had been privileged with the foreknowledge of the destiny of their children. Indeed, Sarah is portrayed as a mother who is protective of her son, a quality that is transformed by Rebekah into shrewd cunning when she successfully tricks her husband Isaac into ordaining his successor, the mother-favored Jacob, instead of Esau who had been favored by his father. These Old Testament matriarchs are made to appear more eager than their husbands to involve themselves in the destiny of their sons. Yet the motifs reveal them as strong women who are made weak by their powerlessness to control their own fertility, a condition which determines their identity and existence.

The matriarch who undertakes the most desperate action to remedy her barren condition is Rachel. She is also the first woman in the Bible to die in childbirth. Not only

is Rachel in Genesis involved in the most detailed and complex rivalry between herself and Leah, she is also referred to significantly in Jeremiah (31:15) and in the New Testament where she is presented as the ancient mother who weeps "for the children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (Matthew 2:18)

As it unfolds in Genesis, the rivalry of Rachel and Leah may be interpreted as a literary device to call attention to the significant births of the twelve tribes. But the intense contest of Rachel and Leah reveal the personal strategies of two women who desire sons: Leah, in order to acquire her husband's love, and Rachel, in order to acquire status. Rachel and Leah's contest of wombs is an important part of the view of female sexuality in the Old Testament for it asserts God's power over fertility, if not over love.

Presented within a family and cultural context, the rivalry of Rachel and Leah stems from the custom of marrying off the elder before the younger daughter. In spite of the agreement made between Jacob and Laban for the hand of the younger daughter, Rachel, the elder daughter, Leah, is married to Jacob. As Jacob had deceived his father, Jacob is now deceived by Rachel's father.

God's selection of the fertile elect is evident in Leah's serial births and the naming of her sons. Giving her status by carrying on the line, Leah's sons are the means for her to win her husband's affection. Rachel,

when she is finally united with Jacob, remains barren. She already has her husband's love, but has not won God's approval. For that she undergoes a test, the contest with Leah for sons:

And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.

And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord that heard that I was hated he hath therefore given me this son also; and she called his name Simeon.

And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.

And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

(Gen. 29:31-35)

Rachel reacts enviously to these births. She pleads with her husband to "give me children." Jacob's answer is a pointed reminder of God's role. As the sisters' husband, Jacob disassociates himself from their battle for fertility. At this turn in the narrative the rivalry between Rachel and Leah is intensified when Rachel marshalls her maid to substitute for her, whereupon Leah uses her maid for the same purpose; two sons are born from each maid's union with Jacob. Rachel's position in the contest seems hopeless.

The rivalry over fertility and love is further evident in the next stage of Leah and Rachel's competition. This time they fight over the mandrakes that Reuben, Leah's

first born, has found. Rachel and Leah strike an agreement. For the mandrakes, to which fertility is attributed, Rachel allows Leah to spend a night with Jacob who is told by Leah, "Surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes." More sons are born to Leah in her union with Jacob until, after her sixth son, Zebulun, her male line ceases and the one daughter born to the matriarchs is brought forth. Dinah's birth seems to trigger Rachel's fertility:

...and she called his name Zebulun.
 And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.
 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.
 And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:
 And she called his name Joseph; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son.

(Gen. 30:20-24)

The contest between Leah and Rachel is completed with the birth of Joseph and the announcement of the son to be born later, Rachel's Benjamin.

This last born son, the son who causes Rachel's death, is for Rachel not only the means she achieves her identity, but also the son over whose destiny she attempts to exert control, an effort which is superseded by her husband. As a rule, the mother in the Old Testament names her child, thus suggesting the mother's power and even right to place a personal sign on her child. In Rachel's case, as she is dying in childbirth, she cries, "Call his name Ben-omi," meaning "son of sorrow." Jacob, however, overrules her and calls the boy Benjamin, meaning "son of happiness."

Nevertheless, Jacob's wresting from Rachel her power to name further invests Rachel with his love, as the changed name indicates.

In spite of the assurance of Jacob's love, Rachel had yearned for sons. Both Jacob's love for Rachel and Leah's desire to win Jacob's love are clearly placed in the context of bearing sons. Children, especially sons, are shown as a means to cement the relationship between husband and wife. This effort at solidifying the marriage relationship serves, of course, a divine purpose: Rachel's Benjamin completes the number of Jacob's twelve sons who become the twelve tribes of Israel.

If Rachel is the most desperate example of the barren woman, the most submissive example is Hannah, identified as the mother of Samuel, the earliest of the great prophets after Moses and the last of the Judges. Although Hannah is not one of the Old Testament matriarchs, her portrait serves as a gloss on them. Like Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, Hannah endures years awaiting conception. Like Sarah and Rachel, Hannah witnesses the birth of children whom her husband, Elkanah, conceives with another woman. Hannah's rivalry with this other woman, Penninah, parallels the rivalry between Sarah and Hagar and between Rachael and Leah. Like Leah, Penninah is the less favored wife whose jealousy of the favored one is revealed when she, like Hagar, slights Hannah because, "The Lord had shut up her womb." (I Sam.

1:16) To remedy her woeful condition, Hannah seeks prayer, but even the religious ceremony reminds her of her barren status. Although Elkanah, a priest, favors her, in his sacrifices in the tabernacle, he gives Hannah the portion that is smaller than Penninah's because Hannah has had no children.

Hannah's yearly trips with her family to Shiloh where she prays for a child becomes a hardship for her. Finally, like Rachel, she confronts her husband -- but unlike Rachel, she does so passively; she weeps and refuses to eat. Elkanah's response to Hannah differs from Jacob's. He asks, "Why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am I not better to thee than ten sons?" (I Sam. 1:8)

Elkanah's questions, because they so boldly omit the divine reference that Jacob had made under similar circumstances, emphasize by contrast Hannah's deeply religious answer to him in her petition to God for a child:

O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

(I Sam. 1:11)

Hannah's petition affirms her humility and submission in its repetition of "handmaid" and in its avowal to return her man child to God as a Nazarite. The reference to "handmaid" also alludes to the maid who had mothered four of the

twelve tribes of Israel, Rachel's maid Bilham, natural mother of Dan and Haphtali; Leah's maid Zilpah, natural mother of Asher and Gad; and their forerunner, Sarah's maid Hagar, natural mother of Ishmael. The status of the handmaid is raised by the honor of bearing a son of Yahweh's people, as the other handmaids had done.

Hannah fulfills her promise for the gift of life by giving up the child whom she names Samuel, meaning "asked of the Lord." (I Sam. 1:20) But, above all, she expresses as a mother her faith in God when she leaves Samuel in the tabernacle with the priest, Eli. In this Song of Triumph (I Sam. 2:2-10), considered the prototype of Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), Hannah fervently affirms God's power to uplift the downtridden. Barrenness becomes one of the many arduous conditions that faith in God overcomes.

The connections in Hannah's story with features in the Old Testament narratives of the matriarchs reveal specific patterns that focus on motherhood. Completing the themes of the urgency of motherhood and the rivalry between women is the theme of birthright, presented with the coat of blue fabric that Hannah sews for her son each year to be worn by Samuel under his priest's vest. This coat may be viewed as linked with the coat of Rachel's Joseph. In its use of motifs related to motherhood, the story of Hannah elucidates the portraits of the Old Testament matriarchs, and, at the same time, Hannah's portrait looks ahead to the

Virgin Mary. As Edith Deen points out, "Hannah, like Mary, gave her child to God, and after she did, slipped into the background and became immortal through her son."⁶ The ease with which certain Old Testament Hebrew women fulfill the role of Christian martyr shed light on the portraits of the Jewess found in English literature.

The foregoing exploration of the conventions associated with motherhood in selected Old Testament Hebrew women elucidates certain qualities of the Jewess developed later in English literature. The conventions of the urgency of motherhood, barrenness, rivalry between women, control of birthright, and beauty and seductiveness function to promote the Jewess's essential nobility. This nobility, however, is tinged with her vulnerability -- a feature of her beauty and desire for fertility. The variety of ways the Hebrew woman responds to the conditions of motherhood within the conventions explored above provides the basis for the vivid portraits of Old Testament mothers that remain in our memory.

Before we move on to study the uses of sexuality in daughters and wives of the Old Testament, it is critical to consider how Old Testament Hebrew mothers have been used by Christian sources. Such a consideration validates the conventions that promote the Hebrew mother's nobility. Furthermore, Christian commentators have used the Old Testament Hebrew mother to promote Christian

virtues, providing the basis for those portraits of the Jewess as a figure of noble self-sacrifice. Hannah, who is said to foreshadow Mary, mother of Jesus, is one of several Old Testament women connected to the New Testament by Christian commentators. The linking of the Old and New Testaments by means of typological analysis is one way of examining the Bible in order to verify the principle, "In the Old Testament the New Testament is concealed; in the New Testament the Old Testament is revealed."⁷ When this approach is used to study Old Testament Hebrew women, however, the type selected invariably reveals a noble capacity for suffering while demonstrating Madonna-like devotions of piety and sacrifice.

Rachel, as noted on page 20, is mentioned in the New Testament when Christ is born. Here Rachel is depicted as the ancient mother "weeping for her children" when Herod, angered by the mockery of the wise men, "slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." (Mat. 2:16) This same portrait of Rachel as suffering mother is projected in English medieval drama where Rachel's lament is called Ordo Rachelis. Indeed, Rachel's portrait becomes tinged with Christian martyrdom when in the words of a church hymn she is described:

Sad-eyed Rachel, do not weep,
 Your children die as martyrs go;
 They are the first-born of the seed
 Which from your blood began to grow;
 In spite of tyranny's dread days
 They bloom in glory to God's praise.⁸

Rachel is a supreme example of the Hebrew mother who personifies the spiritual power that transforms, saves, and protects.⁹ Rachel's transforming power affects her husband and elevates him, too. She is the beloved wife of Jacob whose dying words include a pointed reference to her:

And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

(Gen. 48:7)

Jacob's love for Rachel reflects and improves his own nature, according to Samuel Taylor Coleridge who says, "No man could be a bad man who loved as he loved Rachel." Thus, behind the portrait of the "suffering mother" is Rachel as the beloved wife whose sexuality and fertility are tested and function as the source of her anguish and ultimate achievement. Thus, too, Rachel becomes a martyred saintly force who transforms and saves.

Christianity's use of the suffering Hebrew mother is dramatically represented in the case of Rizpah, concubine of Saul. Along with Rachel and Hannah, Rizpah displays the pre-Christian mother's sacrifice and love. Rizpah's nobility and motherly sacrifice are evident in her watch

over the dead bodies of her two sons and Saul's five grandsons, keeping wild beasts and birds of prey from them. Her grisly vigil touches David, Saul's successor, who finally allows the bodies to be buried in the family grave.

Others have been touched by the biblical description of Rizpah. According to Herbert Lockyer, "Different writers have drawn attention to the similarities between Rizpah as she stood by those seven trees on the hillside, and Mary who stood by the tree upon which her son was hanged."¹⁰ Furthermore, Rizpah's vigil as a display of motherly devotion protecting and defending the dead was depicted by the nineteenth-century English painter Joseph Turner and was the basis for Alfred Tennyson's poem, "Rizpah." Tennyson's "Rizpah" is a monologue of a mother whose son has been hanged for mail robbery. Tennyson has his Rizpah visit the gallows to collect her son's bones so that they may be buried in consecrated ground. The English poet lifts Rizpah from her biblical setting and places her in his own time where she echoes her prototype as a lone protector of the dead. Here, too, Tennyson's use of character and convention verifies that Rizpah is one of many Old Testament women who provide the basis for literary portraits of Christian as well as Jewish women. This is to say that the Old Testament supplies archetypes of universal features used in English literature. How-

ever, the portraits of Hebrew women in the Old Testament provide two elements that steadfastly adhere to the portrait of the Jewess in English literature. They are the Jewesses's eroticism and her association with a man.

If sexuality for the Old Testament mother is associated with her fertility, which God controls, sexuality for⁶ the wife and daughter is manifested in tangible beauty and seductiveness over which a man exerts control. Invariably, an important component of the eroticism of the Hebrew woman as wife and daughter is her submission or conversion to a masculine authority.¹¹ Moreover, submission by the Hebrew wife or daughter often places her in a position whereby she exhibits characteristics of nobility and martyrdom that reflect on the masculine authority over her. This position is best examined when authority is passed from father to husband in the classic motif of the suitor displacing the father.

In the passage from daughter to wife, from the authority of the father to that of the suitor-husband, two essential motifs are revealed: 1. the use of beauty for self-interest -- for entrapment or safety; and 2. the re-alignment of the daughter's allegiance to another masculine authority -- effecting her submission or rebellion.

The narrative of Rachel as she moves from Laban's daughter to Jacob's wife provides the thematic conditions

for these two motifs. For one, Rachel's beauty and desirability¹² are exploited by her father so that Laban may continue to benefit from Jacob's labor:

And Jacob served seven years for Rachel;
and they seemed unto him but a few days,
for the love he had to her.

(Gen. 29:20)

But at the end of seven years, Laban tricks Jacob into marrying the older, less beautiful, "tender-eyed" Leah. Jacob accepts Laban's beguilement and continues his labors when once again Rachel is promised and finally is given to him:

And he went in also unto Rachel, and he
loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served
with him yet seven other years.

(Gen. 29:30)

The reward of the beautiful Rachel more than compensates for the trickery of her father. In fact, the father's duplicity motivated by "Laban's greediness and his lust for gold"¹³ is a challenge to the suitor. Jacob patiently endures Laban's entrapment and works to win his prize.

The second motif, the re-alignment of masculine authority, is evident when Jacob prepares to leave with his wives after enriching Laban with fourteen years of service. Jacob says to Laban:

For it was little which thou hadst before
I came, and it is now increased unto a multi-
tude; and the Lord hath blessed thee since my
coming: and now when shall I provide for mine
own house also?

(Gen. 30:30)

Jacob wrests his "house" from Laban by tricking him and he is aided by Laban's daughters, especially Rachel. In episodes that are heavily colored with deceit and vengeance, Jacob answers Laban's duplicity with his own. During the six additional years Jacob works for his father-in-law, he breeds strong, speckled cattle for himself and feeble cattle for Laban, thus building his own easily identified wealth. Justification for the parting from Laban, however, is offered by both daughters, Rachel and Leah, who cite to Jacob their father's informal act of disinheritance as the best reason for quitting their father's house:

And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion of inheritance for us in our father's house?

Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.

For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God that said unto thee, do.

(Gen. 31:14-16)

But the final act that demonstrates her break with her father's house is Rachel's when she steals her father's household idols and then lies about possessing them.

And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's.

(Gen. 31:19)

Subject to varying interpretations, Rachel's theft of her father's household idols and her subsequent lying about possessing them reiterate the deceit that is woven

through this part of the Rachel-Jacob narrative. Rachel's bold lie to her father, however, may be seen as an act of audacious rebellion; she cuts herself off from her father's authority and, at the same time, shows her disdain for him by robbing Laban of the means of his authority, the household idols. Young Rachel's act is echoed in the behavior of those Jewesses in English literature who disown their father, invariably depicted as one whose "lust for gold" leads to the loss of his greatest treasure -- his daughter. Shylock's daughter is representative of such a Jewess. The Jewess' conversion is the final episode of such rebellion and may be seen as a retributive act aimed at the Jew.

In the Old Testament Rachel covers her lie to her father by using her physical condition as a woman -- her menstruation.

Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

(Gen. 31: 34-35)

The instrument of Rachel's deceit is her "unclean" condition as a woman, a state that precludes a search for the idols where they may be found. Real or feigned, Rachel's menstruation, is used to break the daughter's tie with her father. This essential element of her sexuality

also establishes her new association with her husband, and shows that Rachel, using her sexuality, is capable of rebelliousness and deceit in the name of a just cause.

The devotion and self-sacrifice of the Hebrew daughter, a pervasive and enduring theme in the treatment of the Jewess in English literature, is represented in the Old Testament by Jephthah's daughter whose identity is encased in the name by which she is known. Her destiny is similar to Agamemnon's Iphigenia, thus demonstrating another recurring theme found in the portrait of the Jewess -- the glorification of her victimization.

Jephthah's daughter is slain as a result of her father's vow to sacrifice to God whatever came out of his house to meet him on his victorious return from battle with the Ammonites. His daughter is the one Jephthah sees upon his return, and Jephthah insists he must carry out his oath, but not without paternal anguish, for she was his only child:

And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou are one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.

Judges 11:35

His daughter's answer frees Jephthah of his obligation to God. She willingly accepts her own death in order to fulfill her father's vow. Significantly, however, she asks for a delay of two months during which, as she says,

"I may go up and down upon the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows." (37) Jephthah allows her the time:

...and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel

That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

(Judges 11:38-40)

Thus Jephthah's daughter, never fulfilling her expected role as wife and mother because she is obedient to her father, accepts her death. But linked to her noble self-sacrifice is her virginity, an important element of her martyrdom.

After she passes from daughter to wife, the Hebrew wife is frequently the subject of a narrative that enlists her nobility to correct a wrong or save someone while using her sexual attractions. In the narratives of Sarai-Sarah and Rebekah, they, as wives, are called on to use deceit and seductiveness in order to save their husbands. The episodes are noticeably similar, encouraging the reader to accept them as narratives of rhetorical repetition and emphasis, revealing thematic developments or literary conventions.

Twice in the narrative of Sarai-Sarah and Abraham and once again in the narrative of Rebekah and

Isaac, the wives are called on temporarily to give up their role as wife and act instead as sister in order to spare their husbands' lives when they find themselves in alien and perilous lands. The change in relationship, from wife to sister, is required because in each case the husband fears that his wife's beauty puts him in great danger with an enemy. As sister, she will protect his life even though she herself is taken captive by the leader of the enemy. As Abram explains to the young Sarai when they are about to enter Egypt because a famine in their own land will not sustain them:

And it came to pass, that, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

(Gen. 12: 11-13)

Similarly, in the case of Rebekah and Isaac, when a famine also threatens their existence, at God's injunction Isaac remains in Gerar where he, like Abraham, feigns his wife as sister:

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

(Gen. 26: 7)

Rebekah benevolently complies. In stories that echo one another, the young Sarai, the more mature Sarah, and, later, Rebekah protect their husbands by giving up their role as wife; on their part, Abraham and Isaac, by abandoning their role as husband, relinquish their protection over their wives, leaving the beautiful women available to the whims of their captors. The beauty of the wives is used as a snare, but it is also a boon, as the narration reveals. Although the wives' beauty helps to keep their husbands alive, it also places the wives in mortal danger. In all three episodes the wives spend time in the enemy camp where they are in peril as unprotected alien women. The narrator treats these three episodes as revealing God's special protection over the matriarchs and patriarchs. But the narrative would also show God's favor if Abraham and Isaac had faced the danger openly with their wives. Lacking, however, from such an alternate narrative turn is the suspense of the capture and the titillation of the imminent violation of the beautiful wife. The wives are spared violation by the omnipotence of God who stays the hand of the lascivious captors. Nevertheless, the wives are conveyed as seductive creatures whose beauty is dangerous, useful and always vulnerable.

Although they are part of a deception, Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel use their sexuality or are used be-

cause of their sexuality for a just cause. They fall in-
to the "virtuous woman" tradition as expressed in Proverbs
31:10-31:

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is
far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in
her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days
of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly
with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth
her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth
meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the
fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheth
her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her
candle goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands
hold the distaff.

She stretched out her hand to the poor; yea, she
reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household:
for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her cloth-
ing is silk and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth
among the elders of the land.

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and
delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

Strength and honour are her clothing; and
she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in
her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her house-
hold, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou
excellest them all.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but
a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be
praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let
her own works praise her in the gates.

Through their efforts and schemes such Old Testament wives and widows as Abigail, Esther, and Ruth assert the righteousness of their position when their menfolk have been negligent or unjust. As each plays a variation on the theme of the "woman of valor," each also elucidates the literary convention of the Jewess in English literature.

Abigail is the example of the "woman of good understanding and of beautiful countenance" who intercedes for her husband. Abigail saves her "churlish and evil" husband, Nabal, after he refuses to give David the provisions due to the leader and his men. Understanding the danger of such a refusal, Abigail supervises the preparation of the quantity of food necessary for David's men and delivers it to David herself without her husband knowing. Furthermore, upon presenting the provisions to David, she not only declares her husband's folly, but also advises David of his coming greatness and the needlessness of vengeance against her husband.

And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

(I Samuel 25: 30-31)

Abigail's mission is so successful that when Nabal dies, soon after learning of his wife's petition, David asks Abigail in marriage. Abigail thus saves Nabal from David and David from himself. Her goodness, her ability to ameliorate, her appeal to noble action, and her stance as prophet provide a cluster of conventions for the Jewess in English literature.

The supreme example of the beauty of the Jewess is, of course, Esther who, like Abigail, also intercedes for another's benefit -- for her cousin, Mordecai and, most of all, for her people. A secret Jewess who marries royally outside her religion, Esther represents the compliant, astute beauty who uses her charms and guile to save her people from the evil Haman, the king's minister. Esther's amiability contrasts with the disobedience of her predecessor, Vashti, who had been deposed as queen because she had refused to dance before some visitors as her husband, King Ahasureus, had commanded. However, Esther's tie to her royal husband is not as binding as her loyalty to her cousin Mordecai, who acts as father to her, for Esther is an orphan. Esther's allegiance is first and foremost to her people whose extermination is planned by Haman. She secretly plans with Mordecai, a known Jew, a scheme to depose Haman. At the end of this narrative, Esther saves her people by petitioning the king and revealing her true identity as Jewess. So smitten is

Ahaseurus with Esther that he grants her request and even substitutes Mordecai for Haman as court adviser.

Both the narrative and the character of Esther reveal a unity in the theme of displacement. Esther is the Jewess who ultimately is responsible for displacing evil with good. Vashti, Esther's rebellious predecessor, is replaced by Esther because of her beauty and surface compliance; the evil intolerance of Haman is replaced by the patient righteousness of Mordecai. But the major motif surrounds the character of Esther, herself, the beauty who secretly schemes behind the scenes until her objective is gained. She, like Abigail, tells the king what he should do, achieving her virtuous goal because of her winning, deferential ways and the magnitude of her beauty -- two elements that exist to sway men.

Besides Esther, the only other book in the Old Testament that bears the name of a woman is Ruth, the Moabitess, also known as a "stranger." In spite of Ruth's status as alien in the beginning of this narrative, by the end (Ruth 4: 11-12), she is associated with the Hebrew matriarchs Rachel and Leah and is elevated as the ancestor of David. Ruth, therefore, is an example of the convert Jewess who, through her obedience and dedication to her mother-in-law, follows the traditions of her adopted people and is rewarded for doing so.

The story of Ruth is the one narrative in the bible

that explores a mother-daughter relationship. But this relationship is set into the larger theme of redemption from a man. Much has been written about Ruth's fidelity to Naomi, apparent in the following moving passage:

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee,
or to return from following after thee; for
whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou
lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my
people, and thy God my God

Where thou diest, will I die, and where I be
buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also,
if ought but death part thee and me.

(Ruth: I: 16-17)

Joined to Ruth's loyalty to her mother-in-law, however, is Ruth's desire to find favor, "find grace," in the eyes of a man, her wealthy kinsman, Boaz, by gleaning the ears of corn in his fields. Such favor is given the poor young widow. Ruth is presented as a woman in the fields who is noticed by Boaz, identified, and rewarded by him. Once Ruth's steadfastness to Naomi is recompensed by Boaz with extra measures of gleanings, Naomi suggests the means by which Ruth may win Boaz herself.

In a delicately worded, restrained, yet seductive passage, Naomi guides Ruth to follow Boaz to the threshing floor at night after washing, anointing, and dressing herself. There Ruth does as Naomi instructs:

And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou
shall mark the place where he shall lie, and thou
shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee
down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt to.

(Ruth 3: 4)

Fortunately, Boaz accepts Ruth's advance with tender regard for this "virtuous woman." He promises "to do the part of a kinsman" providing the one who is next of kin to Ruth relinquishes his turn. This is accomplished; Ruth's loyalty and virtue are rewarded by her marriage to Boaz followed by, of course, the birth of a son, Obed, grandfather of David. Fittingly, Ruth's son is described by the narrator as Naomi's reward too. The women of Bethlehem tell Naomi:

And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

(Ruth 4: 15)

Abigail, Esther, and Ruth are all good women marked by a deferential manner; their major action is the petitioning of a man vital to their survival. The manner of their request functions as a catalyst to the chivalry of their men. They ask a boon no gallant man can refuse, especially when the request is high-minded or founded on a principle of justice. This portrait of the Jewess as the noble petitioner of a man essential to her survival is another of the significant ways she is drawn in English literature.

Whereas the Old Testament women analyzed in this study are depicted as noble or virtuous beauties whose seductiveness is used for a good cause, nowhere else in

the Old Testament is there the intensity of eroticism that may be found in the Shulamite maiden of the Song of Solomon, a woman whose cause is physical pleasure itself. In a narrative that strongly implies a wooing or seduction, the Shulamite maiden is sketched as the epitome of sensual attraction and fidelity to her pledged lover. Although some scholars interpret the Song of Solomon as an allegorical representation of the love of God and Israel, it is clear that the allusions are to physical love. As such, the Shulamite maiden seems to have experienced and enjoyed sensual delights. Her frequent refrain is:

His left hand is under my head, and his
right hand doth embrace me.

I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till
he please.

(Song of Solomon 2: 6-7)

The charms of the beloved are described with a passionate lyricism and sensuous freedom of expression that helped to link the Jewess with her erotic origins and established a source of language used for erotic description in general. The following is a representative passage:

How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O
prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs
are like jewels, the work of the hands of a
cunning workman.

Thy navel is like a round goblet, which
wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like a
heap of wheat set about with lilies.

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.

How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;

And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

(Song of Solomon 7: 1-9)

The description of the beloved in the Song of Solomon is a synthesis of feminine beauty designed to arouse sexual desire; it is a treasure of lyrical, erotic images associated with the Jewess as she is frequently described in English literature. The references to the beloved in the Song of Solomon that may be found in the description of the Jewess in English literature are to a woman of dark complexion with a long, white neck. Her hair is purple-dark and wavey, and her eyes are dove-like. Her teeth are white and even, her lips scarlet, her speech "comely." She has rosy temples and a curvacious, erect figure. As part of her apparel, she wears jewels, tinkling gold chains, and a veil. She is perfumed with the aroma of spices, fruit, and flowers. One of many such

women is Walter Scott's Jewess, Rebecca.

In considering the beloved of the Song of Solomon, the question raised is not only the one of the Shulamite maiden's sensuality unaccompanied by a noble cause. A pertinent consideration is the use of the same enticements for sexual enjoyment in both good and bad women. Outside of the Song of Solomon, in Proverbs, for instance, such charms as the beloved displays are condemned as snares. Such an apparent contradiction is overcome in English literature, however, since the Jewess's sensuality is assumed from her association with such Old Testament women as are examined above. Her eroticism and her helplessness are attached to her portraits and make her the vulnerable target she frequently is in English literature.

How shall we consider the Jewess who is not vulnerable, is not reticent, does not act as suppliant, does take aggressive action, and yet is associated with a man whom she betters? She is to be feared as a femme fatale. Represented by Jael and Judith, both of whom commit a deed condemned as treacherous by Christian commentators, these Old Testament women are considered dangerous assassins who trick the men they entertain in their tents only to slay them. Actually Jael and Judith's deeds are as patriotic as Esther's. Discretion, however, characterizes Esther's actions in having others carry out

the destruction of the enemy of her people. Jael, in fact, is singled out in the Old Testament narrative for praise because of her patriotic assassination of Sisera, a foe of Israel: "Blessed above all women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent." (Judges 5: 25) While the biblical text allows for praise of Jael's murder of an enemy of Israel, Christian commentators are unwilling to accept Jael's deed as anything more than treachery. This Christian interpretation applies to the Jewess in English literature; it stamps as femme fatale the Jewess who is not helpless, who acts aggressively even to the point of actually murdering a man in the name of a noble cause. The motif of the Jewess as femme fatale has a place in the history of English literature and is evident as recently as in the writing of James Joyce to be discussed in the final chapter of this study.

In English literature, the Jewess usually combines both the erotic and the noble. She reveals both sinful and virtuous qualities. Her sensual physical qualities are frequently accompanied by noble traits, but she is required also to disclose a vulnerability as a condition of her predicament or beauty. These motifs may be found, as shown above, in the Old Testament where the Hebrew woman, whether she be wife, mother, or daughter, is presented as a suppliant or one who is used for her erotic charms.

FOOTNOTES

¹The distinction between the Hebrew woman and the Jewess originates in history, but extends to semantics. While both women are connected with the Bible, the Hebrew woman is genealogically linked with the tribes of Israel and the Jewess with her post-exile people. The term Jewess also embodies a perjorative meaning associated with and yet distinguished from the term Jew. Jew, according to the OED, expresses, especially in its early use, an opprobrious sense. Jewess, however, connotes another meaning, one that is best expressed in Walter Scott's Ivanhoe: "The Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate."

²Not found in the Hebrew Bible, the story of Susanna and the Elders is part of the Protestant Apocrypha, in the Book of Daniel.

³Evidence of the influence of biblical lore may be found in medieval miracle or mystery plays which dramatized selected events from the Bible. It is within this tradition, for instance, that Noah's wife is presented as a nagging shrew and Rachel is shown as representative of the grieving mothers of Israel, singing her lament in an episode known as Ordo Rachelis.

⁴The following sources contain useful background information. Francis Lee Tuley in The Crooked Rib (New York, 1970) considers the misogyny of St. Jerome, the translator of the Latin vulgate Bible (400 A.D.). A study that reveals the intensity of misogyny in ancient Hebraic society from the second century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., a condition that influenced the subsequent history of Judaism is Leonard Swidler's Women in Judaism: The Status of Women in Formative Judaism: Myth, History and Struggle (New York, 1980) offers some valuable insights. Robert Alter's The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York, 1981) is a brilliant model of literary analysis.

⁵John H. Otwell, And Sarah Laughed: The Status of Woman in the Old Testament (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 66, 174.

⁶Edith Deen, All of the Women of the Bible (New York, 1955), p. 92.

FOOTNOTES continued

⁷Northrop Frye, The Great Code: The Bible and Literature (New York, 1982), p. 79.

⁸Quoted in Herbert Lockyer, The Women of the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1967), p. 130.

⁹In his analysis of the ascending variety of the feminine, Erich Neumann observes; "At this highest level [Spiritual Transformation: Sophia], the Feminine more and more loses her original archetypal character as goddess and seems to become concept and allegory. Sophia, like Philosophia and in the Jewish sphere Torah, 'the law,' and Hokhma, 'wisdom' (a central symbol of the cabala), tends in this direction; while in the Shekinah, the glory of God in exile, and its personification, Rachel weeping for her children, the personal character is still preserved, or else reasserts itself." The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype. Trans. Ralph Manheim. Bollingen Series XLVII (Princeton, New Jersey, 1970), p. 330.

¹⁰Lockyer, p. 144.

¹¹A notable exception to this pattern is the story of Ruth and Naomi, the one biblical narrative that evokes a mother-daughter relationship. But even in this narrative a masculine authority is sought and won over by Ruth, with Naomi's help, in order to reaffirm the family lineage.

¹²Like Rebecca's, Rachel's beauty is conveyed at her first appearance at a well, a scene that establishes the setting, occasion, and effect of her beauty. See Genesis 29: 10.

¹³Jehiel Isaiah Trunk, "Jacob and Esau," in Voices from the Yiddish, ed. Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg (New York, 1975), p. 145.

CHAPTER 2

THE ENGLISH JEWESS EMERGES IN THE DRAMA AND BALLAD
OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

"Everywhere in Europe the Middle Ages constituted a long Jewish martyrdom."

Arnold Rogow, The Jew
in a Gentile World.

"[The Crusades initiated] an era of martyrdom for the Jewish people which is without precedent in history."

Cecil Roth, History of the Jews.

As the Jewess develops into an independent type in English literature, evolving from biblical origins, she is portrayed as a Hebrew character embellished with English folk and Christian elements. She is first depicted this way in the English mystery plays and ballads of the Middle Ages. The folk and Christian elements of these early forms adhere to her literary portrait as a Hebrew woman and become part of the conventional motif of the Jewess, thus establishing a persistent literary tradition. First and foremost, and the main subject of this chapter, the literary portrait of the medieval Jewess stands on its own, exhibiting eroticism, piety, nobility, spiritedness and bloodthirstiness, qualities that are compatible with both medieval Christianity and folklore. In addition, the tradition of the Jewess sheds light on the parallel

English literary tradition of the Jew. Moreover, although the Jewess becomes an independent figure that influences the creation in literature of women who are not Jewesses, she is affected by the tradition of the Jew that circulated in medieval England, and she is used to advance that convention. Thus, to understand the nature and function of the portrait of the English Jewess, it is instructive, first, to consider the attitude towards the Jew in England during the Middle Ages, second, to compare this attitude with the one towards the Jewess, and, third, to verify this comparison by examining in detail the portraits of medieval Jewesses as they appear in English drama and ballads of the period.

The Jewess's portraits in both drama and ballad are prompted by the same impetus that created her medieval counterpart, the Jew. "Religion, economics, and a sense of strangeness" are behind the odious impression of the Jew in England, according to Modder¹. However, the institution most responsible for creating this impression is the Christian Church. The view held by the medieval English Church of the Jew as heretic and Christ-killer resulted in the dissemination of Christian slanders. Reinforced by the notions of folk-lore², the Jew was known as well-poisoner, defiler of the consecrated wafer, drinker of blood, and ritual murderer of

Christian children.

Ironically, however, the Jewess is treated differently from the hated Jew and illustrates how the same materials can be redeployed to make different points, but come to the same conclusion. Because she did not take part in the death of Jesus, the Jewess retains her virtue. Furthermore, as a biblical character, she, for the most part, keeps her dignity and, in fact, expresses martyred saintliness. However as long as she remains associated with the Jew, she is tainted. The Jewess of medieval English literature therefore takes two different conventional roles when she is linked to the Christ-killing Jew; she is either a convert to Christianity -- leaving her faith -- or else she is a femme fatale, supporting the evil work of her father who represents her odious faith. In medieval drama, with its Christian and folk interpretations of Old Testament narratives, the Jewess's early portraits are as mother-martyr or as convert. In the ballad she also is represented as a martyr -- a virgin sacrificed by her father -- or as a sinister temptress who pursues the satanic mission of her father, the Jew.

The tradition of the Jewess in medieval English literature takes place within a society that had little knowledge of the Jew except as a financial pawn or religious monster. In the Middle Ages, the Jew acted as an "engine

of finance," a condition of his existence that stemmed from the Church's injunction against the practice of usury by Christians and from the Jew's status as pariah which disqualified him from almost all other means of livelihood except usury. As Flannery points out:

The life of the Jews in England had the briefest span in medieval Jewish history. In many ways it is the most instructive example of the instability of the position of the Jews in medieval society and of the part their economic function played in their plight. The story is predominantly one of finances. Although Jews arrived in England prior to the Conquest in small numbers, they were brought for the greater part from France by William the Conqueror (1066-87) in the late eleventh century. They rose to dizzy heights of affluence and financial power in the twelfth century, but declined rapidly and steadily in the thirteenth to encounter their first nation-wide expulsion in 1290.³

Actually, before their expulsion, the Jews of England, on more than one occasion, sued for permission to leave because of cruel treatment -- persecution, anti-Jewish riots and massacres. Their requests were denied, however; "in the opinion of the royal treasurer, they were far too valuable a source of income to the realm, and their expatriation was forbidden."⁴

As pointed out above, the oppression of the Jews in England before their expulsion was aided, if not initiated, by the Church. The following are the formal steps used by the Church in England according to Flannery:

The Jews of England had not been spared the rigors of the customary Church restrictions and popular religious fanaticism. Earlier than in other countries, the decrees of the Lateran Councils were put in force. The Council of Oxford in 1222, under Archbishop Stephen Langton of Canterbury, supplemented them, enforcing the badge and forbidding conmingling of Christians and Jews, even to the point of prohibiting sale of food to Jews -- an ordinance countermanded by Henry III. Synagogue construction and the vocal volume of Jewish services were regulated; blasphemies against Christianity by Jews were penalized by death. In 1280 Jews were required to listen to sermons delivered by Dominicans who petitioned and received a directive from the crown that the sermons be listened to "in a diligent and friendly manner." Finally, four years before the expulsion, Pope Honorius IV (1285-87) complained in a bull of remissness of the English hierarchy in combatting Jewish usuries and proselytizing. Measures were promptly taken by several dioceses.⁵

Both in life and in art, Church doctrine created the atmosphere for slanderous and cruel treatment of the Jew. English drama, the art form that developed within the church from Christian liturgy, reflects the biases of the Church most profoundly. The Church's role in the treatment of the Jew is emphasized because the impression of the Jew created by the Church and inflamed by "popular religious fanaticism" and Jew-baiting folk-lore during the Middle Ages was a formative and persistent one. It prevailed in England during the years that Jews were expelled and acts as an ineradicable tradition in which the Jewess serves an important function -- as the means further to humiliate the Jew,

particularly when she, as martyr, acts as a virtuous contrast to him, and when, as Christian convert, she leaves her father, the Jew, abandoning her faith.

A major formulation among observers of the tradition of the Jew in English literature sheds light on the function of the Jewess. Harold Fisch and Herman Sinsheimer are among those scholars who note the distinction made by the English Christian mind between the Hebrew and the Jew. They believe that, on the one hand, the Hebrew (or Israel) stood for the acceptable pious tradition, the Old Testament roots from which Christianity grew. On the other hand, these observers say, the Jew represented another tradition -- the heretical, satanic one, illustrated by the New Testament betrayer of Christ, Judas. The Jewess verifies this critical scheme, but she also illustrates the inventiveness of Christian anti-Semitism, for the Jewess is enlisted by Christians to denigrate the Jew. Even when she achieves heights of nobility and martyrdom, she is frequently the means to reveal the Jew as vulnerable victim. In her role as martyr, she represents her people for whom, "Everywhere in Europe the Middle Ages constituted a long Jewish martyrdom."⁶ Unlike the scapegoat Jew, however, the Jewess also represents another kind of saintliness compatible with Christian belief and evident in key roles she played in English medieval drama.

English Medieval Drama and the Jewess

The institution responsible for the rise of drama in England, the Christian Church, is also responsible for using Scripture, first in liturgical drama and then in the mystery play. By the twelfth century, practically all of the Bible had been dramatized and staged for two important religious occasions -- Christmas and Easter.⁷ By the fourteenth century, the mystery play had moved from church grounds to secular quarters and settled in town cycles. This conception of English drama in the Christian Church, using the Bible as its prime text, and its subsequent secular development integrating folk elements have an important effect on the portrait of the Jewess in English literature.

Two Old Testament women who appear in medieval English drama, Rachel and Noah's wife, reveal the effect of Christian doctrine and folk elements. Rachel illustrates the imposition of Christian faith on the Jewess. Noah's wife illustrates conversion, but she is also used for comic purposes; an early example of the secular stock character, the shrewish wife, Noah's wife is an expression of popular taste. In addition, a group of characters who are Hebrew mothers exhibit qualities as Jewesses that leave a lasting mark on English literature.

Rachel is the oldest character qualifying as a Jewess

in English drama. Rachel's early role is evident in her appearance in liturgical drama of the eleventh century in the Ordo Rachelis where she speaks one or as many as three short stylized planctus and receives a consoling reply from an angel.⁸ The connection of Rachel with the Old Testament is obvious, but the Rachel used in medieval drama is the Rachel of the New Testament, the Rachel who, according to Matthew, fulfills Jeremiah's prophecy of weeping for her children at the time of Christ's birth. This Rachel represents the grieving mothers of Israel who lament the slaughter of their innocent children by Herod. As a New Testament character, Rachel's archetypal properties serve Christian purposes. While she represents the grieving mothers of Israel who mourn the murder of their children, at the same time, "Rachel is the type of the Church."⁹

In this respect, Rachel is employed as other Old Testament characters are frequently used in the mystery play -- to profess Christian doctrine. For example, in the Wakefield (Towneley) play, The Procession of the Prophets, the Old Testament characters of Moses, David, and Daniel deliver speeches that testify to the coming of Christ. At one point, the character of David says, "God that Adam with his hand wrought/ Shall send his son for our comfort."¹⁰ The explanation for David's and the others' endorsement of Christ as Savior is that this

prophecy play is a version of the Ordo Prophetarum, a ceremony that developed from the sermon, Contra Judaeos, Paganos, et Arianos, an attempt to convince unbelievers out of their own mouths. Thus, when Old Testament characters such as Rachel are treated with respect in medieval English drama, it is due to their ability to endorse Christianity. Rachel, then, is the first Hebrew woman "convert" to Christianity in English literature.

Rachel is not the only mother of Israel in medieval English drama who laments the murder of her children. The mysteries pursue this theme in those nativity plays that deal with The Slaughter of the Innocents. The Hebrew mothers in these plays serve at least two functions. First, like Rachel, they profess Christian fervor. The mothers' acceptance of Christ is evident when the women try to comfort their children before the massacre. One of them says consolingly:

That babe thatt ys borne in Bedlem (Bethlehem), so meke,
He saue my chyld and me from velany!¹¹

Dramatically, too, they emphasize the divine favor bestowed on Christ when they act as a contrast with Mary and Joseph; the mothers of The Slaughter of the Innocents cannot prevent the murder of their children whereas Mary and Joseph successfully do flee from Herod's soldiers. Secondly, the Hebrew mothers of The Slaughter of the Innocents convey emotions that alternate between the comic and the sublime. At first, the mothers react with

hostility and abuse when their children are threatened.
 Brandishing pot-ladles, they strike Herod's soldiers.
 Before hitting one of the soldiers, a woman screams:

He that sleyis my chyld in sight,
 Yff thatt my stokis on hym ma lyght,
 Be he skwyar on knyght,
 I hild hym but lost.
 Se, thow fawls losyngere (rascal)
 A stroke schalt thow beyre me here
 And spare for no cost!¹²

Finally, the women are overcome by the soldiers who slay the children. The women's lamentations increase the horror of the scene of slaughter and frighten the soldiers; one of them says:

Who hard eyuer soche a cry
 Of women thatt there chyldur haue lost?
 And grettly reybukyng chewaldry
 Throgh-owt this reme in eyuere co(a)st;
 Wyche many a mans lyff ys lyke to cost.
 For tha grett wreyche (suffering) that here ys done
 I feyre moche wengance ther-off woll cum.¹³

The noisy screaming of the Hebrew mothers of The Slaughter of the Innocents episode is a tradition remembered so well in English literature that it has been used as an allusion by such writers as Chaucer and Shakespeare. Chaucer uses the screaming for comic effect the in "The Merchant's Tale" when he describes January's reaction to the shocking sight within the tree:

And up he yaf a roryng and a cry,
 As dooth the mooder whan the child shal dye:
 "Out! help; allas! harrow!" he gan to crye.

Shakespeare, however, alludes to the horror of the screaming when he has Henry V threaten the citizens of

Harfleur with the slaughter they will suffer if they do not yield:

Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
While the man mothers with their howls confus'd
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.

Shakespeare's reference emphasizes the elements that have had a lasting effect on the portrait of the Jewess -- the association of the Hebrew wife and mother with slaughter and the resulting horror of her lament. These elements have come to be accepted as part of the convention of the Jewess.

Noah's wife is an Old Testament woman who historically precedes the Hebrews and thus does not strictly qualify as a Jewess. Furthermore, Noah's wife is not found in Jewish legendary lore; she is drawn from Arabic sources where she is represented as beating and mocking her husband. This is how she is shown in the English mystery plays.¹⁴ Nevertheless, because Noah's wife is an ancestor of the Hebrews, and because she undergoes a spiritual change, suggesting conversion, she is identified as a Jewess.

The mysteries in which Noah's wife appears deal with the Flood, of course, and are considered allegorical representations of humanity's redemption.¹⁵ In the opening scenes of these Flood mysteries, Noah accepts the mission God assigns him, but one of his major obstacles is per-

suading his wife to join him. Her refusal to come on board constitutes an allusion, in allegory, that negates salvation in the Church, represented by the Ark. Thus, at first, Noah's wife illustrates the recalcitrant sinner who refuses to repent and enter the Church. Noah's success in finally getting his wife aboard establishes her submission to a man's authority and her conversion to the rule of the Church. Her lack of complaints after boarding the Ark indicates allegorically that she accepts Noah and God's will through the Church.

Noah's wife stands in relation to the Jewess as Eve does. Both are biblical ancestors of the Hebrew woman, as noted above. Also, like Eve, Noah's wife of the mysteries presents the fundamental question of woman's submission to man's authority -- to her husband's and, by extension, to God's. The relationship of Noah's wife with her husband is characterized by the same tensions of disobedience as Eve's relationship with Adam, thus suggesting the basic problems of religious faith and pride as manifested in the Fall. Unlike Eve, however, Noah's wife comes to learn obedience before it is too late. Her conversion is the element that connects her to the Jewess, and her submission to a man's authority extends her identity to a universal one.

The obedience and conversion of Noah's wife in medi-

eval drama are important for the subject of the Jewess in English literature as well as for the Jewess's secular, universal counterpart. Both the Jewess and the secular woman are elucidated by the portrait of Noah's wife of medieval drama. But Noah's wife is responsible for shedding much light on the portrait of the Jewess of the Middle Ages because of the emphatically drawn outline of forced conversion in the Noah plays, a practice not uncommon with Jews in medieval life.¹⁶ The conversion of Noah's wife actually is not an act of inner religious enlightenment, no matter how vigorous the allegory; rather, the conversion of Noah's wife is a battle of wills and blows in which her husband wins her submission. As Noah's wife says before they enter the Ark in the Wakefield (Towneley) play of Noah, "I am beaten so blue/And wish for no more strife."¹⁷ Such dramatic action asserts sexual or power attitudes more than religious convictions and introduces the pervasive theme of sexual as well as religious abuse of the Jewess who is "fair game" -- weak because of her sex as well as her religion. Thus, in its revelation of the imposition of will and the submission to force for sexual and religious control, the Noah plays elucidate the Jewess's dominant role as convert and martyr. As Cecil Roth points out about the Jews during the Diaspora (425-1492), "It is significant that the proportion of martyrs for their

faith was, if anything, higher among women than among men."¹⁸

The Ballad

Reflecting the popular interests and imagination of the people in their times, the ballad existed for centuries in oral tradition, but the end of the Middle Ages is customarily the chronological point to consider it in the history of English literature. Baugh points this out, adding that ballads "were clearly flourishing by the close of the Middle English period."¹⁹ Significantly, the oldest recorded specimen of ballad, one found in a late thirteenth-century manuscript, is Judas, the villain of the New Testament who, as portrayed in mystery plays, became the basis for the odious "stage Jew."²⁰

In her role as Jew's daughter, the Jewess appears repeatedly in English literature since the Middle Ages. However, in the ballads to be considered here, though she is identified as the Jew's daughter, the Jewess is either depicted archetypically as a saintly martyr or as a Fatal Woman. For the Jewess, the ballad, like the mystery play, is the form in which folk and Christian elements are blended but are still recognizable components that elucidate a persistent tradition when analyzed.

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the

Jewess's association with the Jew not only determines how she is treated in English literature, but also reveals the methods used to further humiliate the hated Jew. This clearly is the case in "Sir Hugh, or, the Jew's Daughter," a ballad that repeats the slander of the murder of a young Christian boy by "the Jew's daughter" and recounts the miraculous events that follow. The story, told in eighteen ballad variations,²¹ is said to be based on the incident of the Jews' alleged crucifixion of Hugh of Lincoln as recorded in such contemporary sources as the Annals of Waverley (1255) and the chronicles of Matthew Paris. Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale" also tells this story, testifying to the widespread acceptance of the incident as both evidence of the Jew's contempt for Christianity and the miraculous power of Christian faith. In summing up the motives for the multitudinous charges against the Jews of child murder and host defiling, Thomas Percy, in his ballad collection, Reliques of English Poetry, points out those elements that were responsible for the dissemination of such slander; his catalogue includes both folk and Christian components:

If we consider, on the one hand, the ignorance and superstition of the times when such stories took their rise, the virulent prejudices of the monks who record them, and the eagerness with which they would be caught up by the barbarous populace as a pretence for plunder; on the other hand, the great danger incurred by the

perpetrators, and the inadequate motives they could have to excite them to a crime of so much horror, we may reasonably conclude the whole charge to be groundless and malicious.²²

Noteworthy on Percy's list is the recording of these stories by monks, an act that initiated the process of Christian slander by ecclesiastics themselves. With these forceful elements involved in the creation and distribution of such ballads, it is natural that the horror stories about the Jews persisted in such an unrestrained fashion that they formed part of an entrenched literary tradition that included the sinister Jewess.

Although the purpose of the ballad, "Hugh, or, the Jew's Daughter" is clear, it is instructive to sort out the folk and Christian elements in order to understand how one reinforced the other in the portrait of the Jewess, thus contributing to a persistent literary tradition. In this ballad, the Jew's daughter fulfills the magical and devilish role of a witch of folk-lore. At the outset of the ballad, a boy kicks a ball through the Jew's window. Instead of returning it, the witch-like Jew's daughter entices the child with "an apple red and white" picked from her "father's garden" where the grass grew lang and green." Once in the "Jew's castle," the Jew's daughter takes the boy's life, sticking him "like a swine" and laughing wickedly while "out

and cam the thick, thick bluid/ And out and cam the thin." The murder, with its lurid detail of flowing blood, reflects a conventional feature of the ballad form. After the murder, the monstrous Jew's daughter rolls Hugh in a cake of lead and throws him into a well. At this point, the folk elements are overtaken by the Christian features. The well is Our Lady's, and when the boy's mother seeks him, eventually finding the well, the boy miraculously speaks from there, bidding his mother go make his winding sheet. His mother makes his winding sheet, and the corpse meets her at the back of their town, Lincoln. Ending a series of miraculous events, the town's bells are rung "without men's hands" and all the books read "without man's tongue." Folk and Christian elements are arranged and reinforced in this ballad so that the Jewess, dutiful representative of her evil father and an incarnation of temptation, may engage in a struggle in which her evil is exposed and Christianity emerges victorious. Thus, the supernatural and Christian miracle blend to effect this victory over the dark forces represented by the Jewess as sorceress.

If fatal evil is the salient feature adhering to the Jewess in one ballad, sweet saintliness is the outstanding characteristic found in another ballad in which the Jewess appears. In Thomas Percy's collection, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, the ballad "Jephthah, Judge

of Israel" recounts the biblical narrative of Jephthah's vow and his daughter's willing submission to death in order to honor it. The dramatic tension in the ballad is conveyed by pitting Jephthah against his daughter, his honor against her survival. A conflict or division between father and daughter is repeatedly found in the literature where the Jewess is featured, and usually its effect is to denigrate and shame the Jew by separating the Jew's most valuable treasure, his daughter, from him. Although Jephthah "had one only daughter and no mo," he allows her to sacrifice himself, revealing himself as a pitiful father, though a man of pious honor. His daughter, on the other hand, represents the ultimate in innocence, beauty, and filial devotion. Rushing to greet her father on his victorious return, she is described as a woodland nymph:

And all the way,
 She did play
 On tabret and pipe
 Full many a stripe,
 With note so high,
 For joy that her father is come so nigh.²³

The devotion of Jephthah's daughter to her father ironically initiates her doom, for in her eagerness to greet him, she is the first to arrive on the scene and the first one Jephthah sees, thus the one selected for sacrifice according to the oath Jephthah had made to God. When Jephthah expresses his troubled state, his daughter piously seals her fate saying:

"What thou hast spoke
 Do not revoke:
 What thou hast said,
 Be not afraid;
 Altho' it be I;
 Keep promises to God on high."²⁴

The narrative outline of the ballad follows the comparative biblical verses. Jephthah's daughter asks for some time to "bewail my virginity." Accompanied by "two or three young maids," she departs for the wilderness, "for to mourn, till her dying day."

Aside from her association with her father, the elements of the ballad "Jephthah, Judge of Israel" that are relevant to the portrait of the Jewess in English literature are the daughter's overriding purity -- emanating from her sweetness and her virginity -- and her willing martyrdom. These qualities make her the treasured paragon of virtue that her father tragically loses at her death, a death for which he is responsible. Her saintliness, however, introduces yet another important element elucidating the portrait of the Jewess; that is, her willing martyrdom makes it possible for her to be treated as a woman forsaken, heroically accepting her fate, a convention expressed by Walter Scott in Ivanhoe: "The Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate."

The role of the Jewess as an archetypal Forsaken Woman is frequently evident in subsequent English literature; and the Jewess as an abandoned woman also affects

the portraits of secular women. Without referring to the ballad "Jephthah, Judge of Israel," Christopher Marlowe clearly depicts saintly characteristics in the doomed Abigail, the Jew's daughter of The Jew of Malta.²⁵ Shakespeare, however, does specifically refer to the ballad "Jephthah, Judge of Israel" in Hamlet where he effectively uses it to enrich the themes of woman's infidelity and the Forsaken Woman in that play. In Act II, ii, Hamlet banters with Polonius, reading parts of the ballad from a book, apparently to jest and to make an analogue: Polonius as Jephthah and Ophelia as Jephthah's daughter. The allusion to Jephthah and his daughter by Hamlet serves to introduce the theme of women's infidelity as emanating from the tendency of beauty to corrupt. Hamlet is trying to find an explanation for his mother's actions, and the ballad provides the standards against which he gauges the actions of women and of parents. Jephthah's daughter is one measure, for she is the epitome of devotion and fidelity. The ballad also supplies the means by which Hamlet expresses his resentment against parents who love their children insufficiently. Jephthah, the judge, who has loved his "one fair daughter ... passing well," is for Hamlet the example of parental selfishness, comparable to his mother's infidelity. Thus, the ballad of "Jephthah, Judge of Israel," furnishes Hamlet with the personal analogues that cause and

reflect his emotional turmoil.

Significantly, too, Jephthah's daughter provides Hamlet with justification for forsaking a woman, as Hamlet does Ophelia. Jephthah's daughter is the ideal, obedient, good woman who is praised by Hamlet in his banter with Polonius: "Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!" Using the metaphor of wealth associated with the Jew and his beautiful daughter, Hamlet implies that Ophelia stands in relation to Polonius as Jephthah's devoted, chaste daughter stands in relation to the Jew Jephthah. But because Jephthah's daughter is also the willing victim, she arouses disgust and resentment in Hamlet, evident in Hamlet's treatment of Ophelia in the scene that follows. The basis for forsaking a woman, even treating her abusively, as Hamlet conducts himself with Ophelia, emerges from Shakespeare's reference to the ballad, "Jephthah, Judge of Israel." Hamlet's cruel treatment of Ophelia takes place in the scene following the one when the ballad is mentioned. In this scene, Act III, i, Hamlet confronts the "fair" Ophelia, to whom he refers in his thoughts as "nymph," as she enters at the close of his "To be or not to be?" soliloquy. In this confrontation, Hamlet indicts Ophelia's beauty and honesty: "... the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his

likeness." Hamlet then tells Ophelia that he does not love her; he insults her, raising the question of her virginity and also reveals his own self disgust. Much has been written about Hamlet's disillusioned state of mind, his emotional turmoil. Much of this agitation is due to his limited knowledge of women. Hamlet's comment, "Vanity, thy name is woman," directed to his mother, is a general statement with the appearance of worldliness. I suggest here that for the bookish Hamlet, the ballad "Jephthah, Judge of Israel" triggers the means by which he attempts to understand women and, in his disillusionment, to forsake one. Jephthah's daughter is the model by which a pure and saintly woman may be abandoned, for she is a willing martyr; she is also a Jewess.

FOOTNOTES

¹Montagu Frank Modder, The Jew in the Literature of England to the End of the 19th Century (Philadelphia, 1944, 1939), p. 9.

²"If one takes the trouble to realize the manner of thinking, the emotional and religious life of the medieval man, nothing seems less astonishing than his assumption that the Jews must have a god other than his Christian God. That other god must, of course, be the Devil. Popular feeling thus coincided with the doctrine of the Church." Herman Sinsheimer, Shylock, The History of a Character (New York, 1963, 1947), p. 31.

³Edward Flannery, The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Anti-Semitism (New York, 1965), p. 117.

⁴Modder, p. 7.

⁵Flannery, p. 120.

⁶Arnold Rognow, ed. The Jew in a Gentile World: An Anthology of Writings about Jews by Non-Jews (New York, 1961), p. 70.

⁷Edd Winfield Parks and Richard Croom Beatty, eds., The English Drama: An Anthology 900-1642 (New York, 1963, 1935), p. 2.

⁸E. K. Chambers, The Medieval Stage, vol. 2 (London, 1925, 1903), p. 44 and Rosemary Woolf, The English Mystery Plays (Berkeley, 1972, p. 207.

⁹Woolf, p. 207.

¹⁰Martial Rose, ed., The Wakefield Mystery Plays (New York, 1962), p. 141. Associated with the Wakefield cycle, these plays are called Towneley because for many years the manuscript was in the possession of the Towneley family of Burnley, Lancaster.

FOOTNOTES continued

¹¹Joseph Quincy Adams, ed., Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas (New York, 1924), 164.

¹²Adams, p. 165.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴M. J. Landa, The Jew in Drama (Port Washington, 1968, 1936), p. 43.

¹⁵Rosemary Woolf (op. cit.) presents an excellently argued treatment of Noah's wife as representative of humanity's redemption. Also, according to Woolf, Noah's wife "suggested the stock figure of the shrewish wife common to all misogynistic literature, Latin satire, sermons, and comic poems and fabliaux." p. 138.

¹⁶Many examples prove the use of force to convert Jews. The existence of the Marranos, secret Jews, in western Europe, including England, verifies this practice. In England the year before the York riots of 1190, a wealthy Jew of York had been "beaten and forced by a mob in London to become a Christian." Jacob R. Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book: 315-1791 (New York, 1977), p. 132. Also see in this source book "The Jewess Who Became a Catholic about 1220", pp. 142-44. Concerning the conversion of a Jewess and her father's attempt to secure her return, this selection is from The Dialogue on Miracles, "one of the most popular collections of religious tales of the Middle Ages." (p. 142)

¹⁷Rose, p. 101.

¹⁸Cecil Roth, History of the Jews (New York, 1961, 1954), p. 204.

¹⁹Albert C. Baugh, A Literary History of England (New York, 1967, 1948), p. 308.

²⁰Landa, p. 14.

FOOTNOTES continued

²¹Francis James Child, ed., The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Vol. 3 (New York, 1965, 1882-1894), pp. 243-54.

²²Quoted in Child, vol. 3, pp. 240-41 footnote.

²³Thomas Percy, Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, ed. Robert Aris Willmott (London, 1857), p. 90.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Marlowe's treatment of Abigail and Shakespeare's portrait of Jessica will be explored in chapter 3 of this study.

CHAPTER 3

There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.

The Merchant of Venice, II, v, 42-43

ABIGAIL AND JESSICA: JEWESSES OF THE ENGLISH
RENAISSANCE

In the new awareness of the splendor and challenge of the human-centered world called the Renaissance, the Jewess emerges as both a biblical and secular character reflecting Renaissance themes. As an Old Testament character in scriptural drama, and as the Jew's daughter in secular drama of the sixteenth century, the Jewess is used to advance themes linked to the clash of old and new ideas. Put to this use, the Jewess of English Renaissance literature projects both the mythos of the Old Testament and those elements that form the Renaissance writer's comment on life. This synthesis of the mythos with new secular elements is the major subject of this chapter. Also included, however, are those traditions of Christian anti-Semitism which became part of the stock dramatic repertoire associated with the Jewess. Mentioned in the previous chapter, these persistent traditions of anti-Semitism allow the Jewess of English Renaissance drama to achieve a new stature as she

negotiates in art between the society of her religion and Christian society.

When the Jewess appears in sixteenth century biblical dramas, she takes a prominent part in their most popular themes. Scriptural drama of the English Renaissance turned away from the "saintly, otherworldliness" of the New Testament and devoted itself to the Old Testament and its apocrypha "which paralleled the excitement and stimulus of the Renaissance itself."¹ As Susannah, the Jewess enacts "the locus classicus for the vindication of the falsely accused"; and as Esther, Deborah, and Judith, she represents "the victory of the faithful over the unrighteous."² The Jewess of the Bible is thus called on to buttress the theological confrontation of Protestant and Catholic as "the new drama acquired a polemical tone in which each scriptural dramatist saw in the bible the indisputable vindication of his own sect."³

Non-scriptural drama, the focus of this chapter, delineates the Jewess as a minor character of major significance. Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, the two leading dramatists of Renaissance England, employ the Jewess to promote their themes. In Marlowe's The Jew of Malta (1592), the Jewess, Abigail, represents the tenuous moral force in a thoroughly corrupt world. In Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice (1596), the

Jewess, Jessica, projects an aggressive new breed of scruples attendant on lovers. In addition, although they appear in secular plays, both Jewesses are identified with a specific biblical mythos: Abigail with the narrative of Jephthah and his daughter, and Jessica with the narrative of Rachel taking leave of her father, Laban. In the process of developing their themes, moreover, the playwrights crystallize specific traits in the Jewess that adhere to the mythos: as the rich Jew's beautiful daughter, as a means of wealth, as the dutiful and vulnerable victim, as a rebel, as seductively attractive to Gentile men, as a convert, as a means to achieve exotic contrast, as an intelligent, sympathetic norm, as a woman of the world, and as a moral catalyst. But, above all, the Jewess for Marlowe and Shakespeare exists as a literary device to unify their art. To this end, they capitalize on and embellish traditions associated with Christian anti-Semitism, a pervasive, common attitude, in spite of the fact that few Jews lived in sixteenth-century England. The Jewess is "fair" game in English literature. While she is used to advance the dramatist's art in plot and theme, and while she achieves stature as a character, she is also used to effectively alienate the character of the Jew and to sully her religion. Integrated into the stock literary tradition Marlowe and Shakespeare inherit, this last

strand, Christian anti-Semitism, is woven into their artistic method. It is also woven into the discourse of this chapter.

The Jewess's association with her odious father is obligatory for her literary portrait in English literature from the Renaissance on; her connection with her father is the assumption of her identity. In the dramas examined in this chapter, she is used as a foil to diminish her father and repudiate her religion. Whether he be Barabas or Shylock, her father, the prototypical Judas, is featured foremost in a motif of religious redemption wherein he enacts the role of the devil. The Jewess herself has an important role to play within this motif, but her function goes beyond merely acting as a foil to her father. Although she is introduced as a character identified with her father, she assumes a less dependent role while fulfilling the requisites of dramatic unity. The Jewess's emergence as an independent type, synthesizing her mythos with other elements, derives from the dramatic requirements of plot, character, and theme.

The Jewess's role as the Jew's daughter begins with the assumption of her beauty and with her association with precious jewels and wealth. The first, her beauty, exists as a feature of her mythos. No daughter of Israel, or wife, for that matter, is anything but beautiful.

But in Marlowe and Shakespeare, the Jewess's beauty functions also as a contrast to her old and ugly father; the second, her wealth, also exists as a source of her attraction, but it provides, as well, the means to destroy or deride the Jew, for he is shown as one who actually equates his daughter with his wealth. The depiction of the rich Jew's beautiful daughter as a precious jewel possessed by him is evident in both The Jew of Malta and The Merchant of Venice. The rich Jew's wealth and his daughter are shown as closely related in both dramas, and the exposure of that connection, passionate for the Jew, makes it possible not only to reveal the Jew's twisted values, but also to punish him by the desertion of his daughter and the loss of his gold. As Edgar Rosenberg notes:

For Marlowe and Shakespeare the desertion of the Jewess is the final judgment upon the Jew, and such a judgment becomes all the more incisive and awful when we remember that a Jew's daughter constitutes, after his ducats, his most prized portable property.⁴

Capitalizing on the motif of the ugly Jew and his beautiful daughter, Marlowe and Shakespeare use the pattern thematically, introducing other elements. Appended to the medieval mythos of the usurious Jew is the notion of the beautiful daughter who deserves to be rescued from him. Stemming from this idea are three assumptions found in the dramas featuring Abigail and

Jessica: the Jew's daughter as the true treasure, the treasure as symbolic of her precious sexuality, and the treasure as inadequately protected by her father. All these notions are developed by Marlowe and Shakespeare in their depiction of the relationship between father and daughter.

In The Jew of Malta, Abigail's "matchless" beauty is praised by Mathias who, although a Christian, has romantic designs on her until he learns she has entered a nunnery. Mathias conveys his shock to Lodowick who asks him the reason for this state of amazement:

Lodowick: What was it, prithee?

Mathias: A fair young maid, scarce fourteen
 years of age,
 The sweetest flower in Cytherea's field,
 Cropped from the pleasures of the fruit-
 ful earth,
 And strangely metamorphosed nun.

Lodowick: But say, what was she?

Mathias: Why, the rich Jew's daughter.

Lodowick: Why Barabas, whose goods were lately
 seized?

 Is she so fair?

Mathias: And matchless beautiful;
 As had you seen her it would have
 moved your heart,
 Though countermured with walls of
 brass, to love,
 Or at least to pity.

(II, ii, 370-380)

Mathias's description of Abigail contain images of fertility that complement her beauty and refer to her sexuality. Before relating his shock to Lodowick, Mathias reveals his private thoughts. In a short

monologue, Mathias discloses his lascivious interest in Abigail and introduces the motif of the Jewess's fitness for erotic pleasure:

Who's this? fair Abigail, the rich Jew's daughter,
 Become a nun! Her father's sudden fall
 Has humbled her and brought her down to this,
 Tut, she were fitter for a tale of love
 Than to be tired out with orisons;
 And better would she far become a bed,
 Embraced in a friendly lover's arms,
 Than rise at midnight to a solemn mass.

(II, ii, 259-366)

The Jewess's sexuality, including her suitability for erotic pleasure, is presented through her father's treasure, the preciousness of which may be compared to the daughter's chastity. This notion has sexual implications broached, but not fully developed in the biblical mythos of Jephthah's daughter and Rachel. In Marlowe and Shakespeare, the Jew's true treasure is used thematically to explore the relationship of fathers and daughters, especially in that rite of passage, sexual initiation, when daughter leaves father in the union of marriage. To Barabas, Abigail is his "diamond" which he fraudulently offers to the interested son of Malta's governor. Stripped of his wealth by Lodowick's father, Barabas had hidden a cache in his house now inhabited by nuns. Cunningly, Barabas offers his prime treasure, but privately reveals that he will protect Abigail from Lodowick's lust by killing her as a human sacrifice first:

Lodowick: Well, Barabas, canst help me to a diamond?
 Barabas: O, sir, your father had my diamonds
 Yet I have one left that will serve your turn,
 (aside) I mean my daughter; but ere he shall
 have her,
 I'll sacrifice her on a pile of wood.
 I ha' the poison the the city for him,
 And the white leprosy.

(II, iii, 40-55)

Significantly, this same precious diamond, Abigail, is used by her father before she is killed by him to recover the wealth he had hidden. Abigail consents to Barabas's plan for her to pretend interest in joining the nun's order so that she may gain entry into their home to retrieve the jewels and gold Barabas had hidden there. An unwilling partner to her father's subterfuge, Abigail dutifully does what he asks of her. Upon returning with the bags of his wealth, she refers to them as her father's "happiness." He, in turn, delivers an impassioned response to his money and to his daughter, promising to release Abigail from her confinement as noviate:

 O, my girl,
 My gold, my fortune, my felicity;
 Strength to my soul, death to mine enemy;
 Welcome, the first beginner of my bliss!
 O, Abigail, that I had thee here too,
 Then my desires were fully satisfied;
 But I will practice thy enlargement thence.
 O girl, O gold, O beauty, O my bliss! Hugs his bags.

(II, i, 47-57)

In spite of Barabas's protestations of love for Abigail, he, like Agamemnon and Jephthah, uses his daugh-

ter opportunistically, destroying her opportunity for sexual initiation and marriage. She is sacrificed, not as an appeasement or as a promise fulfilled to a higher power, but as a vehicle in his scheme for self aggrandizement. Barabas convinces his daughter to dissemble as he does characteristically. Abigail not only pretends interest in becoming a nun in order to recover money and jewels for her father, but also allows herself to be promised to two men by her father and enters into Barabas's scheme by leading the two suitors on while loving just one of them. In contracting Abigail to two men, Barabas plans to have them quarrel and fight over her. The motivation behind this scheme is Barabas's desire for revenge for the confiscation of his wealth. As a result of Barabas's machinations, both suitors kill one another, whereupon Abigail decides the only course left for her is to become a nun in earnest, for, as she says:

...now experience purchased with grief,
Has made me see the difference of things,
My sinful soul, alas, hath paced too long
The fatal labyrinth of misbelief,
Far from the Son that gives eternal life.

(III, iii, 61-65)

Abigail's decision to become a Christian and retreat to a nunnery so angers Barabas that he plans and succeeds in poisoning his daughter and the other nuns. As she dies a virgin, her chastity is lamented. Friar

Barnardine listens to Abigail's dying words when she reveals her father's iniquities and also asks two final favors:

Abigail: Death seizeth my heart. Ah, gentle friar,
Convert my father, that he may be saved,
And witness that I die a Christian.

Friar Barnardine: Ay, and a virgin, too; that Dies.
grieves me most.

(III, vi, 38-41)

This last retort by Friar Barnardine crystallizes Abigail's position as the Jew's daughter. Firstly, the friar assumes Abigail's virginity is a wasted treasure. Secondly, Abigail is identified with Jephthah's daughter who also died lamented as a virgin and as a victim of her father's desire for power. Thirdly, Abigail depicts the moral ideal that ultimately is destroyed by a debased society. The extent of the debasement is manifested in the crudeness of the friar's licentious remark and in the tone and outlandish plot of the drama itself. In The Jew of Malta, the biblical mythos of the sacrificed, virgin Jewess is juxtaposed with Marlowe's farcical tone and plot.

The irony and sexual innuendo of Barabas's reckless designs on his own daughter are made explicit by Marlowe, especially with Barabas's cheap pandering of Abigail to Lodowick, his fraudulent promise of Abigail in marriage to two men, and his demand that his chief

treasure acquire more treasure while she, in mock conversion, joins a nunnery where she is exposed to the dangers of illicit sexual practices. The overt affection Barabas feels for Abigail is evident in his reference to her, foreshadowing Romeo's adoration of Juliet:

But stay! what star shines yonder in the east?
The lodestar of my life, if Abigail.

(II, i, 40-41)

Yet he wickedly employs Abigail to promote his material gain. She is the means by which he achieves wealth -- or, at least, she is enlisted in this effort -- her loyalty to her father overcoming her scruples. Moreover, Barabas's most wicked act, his murder of his daughter, finally confirms his warped love and the thwarting of Abigail's sexual initiation, as she dies a virgin. In the relationship of father and daughter delineated by Barabas and Abigail, death is accepted as a substitute for marriage.

To fulfill her function thematically, Abigail not only acts as victim, but as the moral ideal of The Jew of Malta. Always she is portrayed as the beautiful, devoted daughter who obediently defers to her father's evil wishes -- even dying by his hand. Like her last words, Abigail's first words in the drama show her deep concern for her father's condition on the confiscation of his wealth. She offers to plead with the senators of Malta in order to:

...rent their hearts with tearing of my hair
 Till they reduce the wrongs done to my father.
 (I, ii, 134-137)

Echoing the emotion of the Hebrew mothers in The Slaughter of the Innocents (see chapter 2), Abigail's suggestion is refused by her father. Instead, he conceives the scheme to involve her in the recovery of his money and jewels. Abigail's final words to Friar Barnardine also indicate her concern for her father, suggesting to the friar the need to save Barabas by conversion to Christianity. The Jew of Malta thus illustrates the Jewess who willingly accepts her own victimization, assenting to her function as a noble martyr.

As Abigail accepts her role as victim, she also reveals her lofty character. Marlowe portrays her as the wise, sympathetic ideal, the intelligent Jewess who casts her lot with formal Christianity, as opposed to Christians, out of moral righteousness. Marlowe emphasizes Abigail's nobility and purity by creating her as the one and only important character in The Jew of Malta who has such qualities, who rises above base values. All the other major characters are corrupt. She is unquestionably the prime moral force for good in the drama -- and her destruction in the state of sexual purity is part of Marlowe's specific comment on life, a function of his theme. As an agent of virtue, Abigail is, as she tells the abbess upon first requesting entry into the nun's

order, "The hopeless daughter of a hapless Jew." Unable to accept her fate as the evil Jew's daughter, Abigail finally enters the nunnery in earnest. Her perception of the way of the world impels her to retreat from it. She observes:

But I perceive there is no love on earth,
Pity in Jews, nor piety in Turks.
(III, iii, 47-48)

Abigail's nobility and purity are finally crushed by the power of her father's evil and the corruption of the society in which she lives, a society devoid of the Christian sentiments of pity and love.

Money and jewels, the evidence of treasure, are prominent features of The Merchant of Venice wherein Jessica functions thematically as the rich Jew's beautiful daughter. Like that of Abigail, the beauty of Jessica is an accepted premise. "Fair" and "gentle" are the words used by her lover, Lorenzo, to describe her. Jessica's beauty, too, is set against her father's evil demeanor so that daughter and father are opposing representations; as characters, Jessica and Shylock are pointedly and dramatically separated from one another, thus making Jessica's desertion of her father a natural consequence of their difference. When Jessica elopes with her Christian lover, Shylock considers that an act of rebellion. In a dialogue that precedes the famous "Hath not a Jew eyes?" speech, Shylock converses with Salarino and Salanio,

friends of Antonio and Bassanio:

Shylock: My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salanio: Out upon it, old carrion! Rebels it at these years?

Shylock: I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salarino: There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and rhenish.

(III, i, 37-44)

Such is Jessica's beauty and so odious is her father that the question of her origin is raised. Launcelot, the clown-servant speculates that she could not be the Jew's daughter after all:

Launcelot: Yes, truly; for look you the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children; therefore, I promise you, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation [cognition] of the matter; therefore by o' good cheer, for truly I think you are damn'd. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

Jessica: And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Launcelot: Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

Jessica: That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed, So the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Launcelot: Truly then I fear you are damn'd both by father and mother; thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother. Well, you are gone both ways.

Jessica: I shall be sav'd by my husband. He hath made me a Christian.

Launcelot: Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the

price of hogs. If we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not have a rasher on the coals for money.

(III, v, 1-27)

Jessica's response to Launcelot's humor contains her own stock of wit. Her solution to the problem of her origin is the saving grace of a Christian marriage, obliterating her unwanted connection to her father and their religion, a condition Jessica initiates early in the drama. Conversion and acknowledgement of love for a Christian man are important features of the plot of Marlowe's drama, too, but essential differences separate the two Jewesses in more ways than the motivation and nature of their religious conversion; they are represented as two different types, one a victim, the other a rebel, and this difference in character affects the meaning of their conversion.

Besides serving to separate daughter from father, the discussion by Jessica and Launcelot of her origin and religious conversion involves additional implications for characterization and plot that are far removed from the biblical mythos of Rachel taking leave of her father. They concern the Jewess's suitability for marriage, an important component of the theme of The Merchant of Venice. Marriage is the means to come of age and to undergo sexual initiation in The Merchant of Venice. The marriage of the Jewess Jessica to the

Christian Lorenzo, however, raises an important social problem that is explored two centuries later in the English novel with the appearance of the character of the Jewess as the beautiful heiress who is ambivalently desirable to her Christian suitor. With Jessica, Shakespeare introduces the prospect of uncovering a secret identity for the Jewess that affects her status as a marriage partner. That is, because she possesses qualities of beauty and gentleness, the Jewess could not properly be a legitimate daughter of the Jew. This condition presents possibilities for twists of plot involving, for instance, the Jewess who actually is a Christian. The Jewess's marriageability is thus enhanced, and she need not undergo conversion when she had been born a Christian and placed in the Jew's hand by fate. The implication of this secret Christian identity of the Jewess also raises the question of the inadequacy of Christian marriage as a means of religious conversion, for the Jewess, even converted, remains tainted. The mythos of the biblical Jewess, loyal to her faith, disintegrates before the necessity of religious conversion, a prerequisite of the Jewess's entry into Christian society. This is a problem Walter Scott faced with Rebecca in Ivanhoe; his solution stirred the controversy over the suitability of Ivanhoe's choice at the novel's end.

Used thematically, religious conversion results in obedience to a new faith, and conversion through marriage implies obedience to a husband.⁵ In The Merchant of Venice, Jessica's desire for religious conversion through marriage focuses on her rebellious relationship with her father as she comes of age. Jessica's independence stands in marked contrast to Abigail's retiring passivity in her "rite of passage." Barabas treats Abigail as his sacrificial lamb and identifies their relationship with that of Agamemnon and Iphigenia:

I have no charge, nor many children,
But one sole daughter, whom I hold as dear
As Agamemnon did his Iphigen;
(I, i, 134-136)

Jessica, on the other hand, revolts from her father's rule. Not for a nun's existence! Whereas Abigail's destiny is to convert and retreat from the world. Jessica's fate is to convert in order to enter into the world. Abandoning her father and the oppressive somberness of her household, Jessica runs off with her Christian lover for a life of merriment and prodigality. Her first words in the drama are addressed to Launcelot who is also about to leave their household for another. Giving the servant a note to deliver to Lorenzo that details the plan for their elopement, Jessica explains her motivation for running away:

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so.
 Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
 Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.

(II, iii, 1-3)

She further reveals her feelings about her lot as the daughter of a Jew:

Alack, what heinous sin is in me
 To be ashamed to be my father's child!
 But though I am a daughter to his blood,
 I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
 If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
 Become a Christian and thy loving wife.

(II, iii, 16-21)

Jessica's desire to liberate herself from her father's grave, alien household stirs her to initiate the plans for her own elopement, permitting herself the freedom of disguising herself in boy's clothing when she runs off with Lorenzo. For a merry life, she casts her lot with the "prodigal Christian" and the faction aligned against Shylock. Joining the Christian group, she reports to them what she has heard her father say against Antonio:

When I was with him I have heard him swear
 To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
 Than twenty times the value of the sum
 That he did owe him, and I know, my lord,
 If law, authority, and power deny not,
 It will go hard with poor Antonio.

(III, ii, 287-293)

Thus, Jessica informs against her father, assuring her loyalty to the worldly circle of friends around the lovers Portia and Bassanio.

Jessica's own sophistication is evident in her bursts of wit that make her appealing to her Christian lover and show her well suited to take part in high society as a woman of the world, intelligent and literate. When she is asked her opinion of Portia, Bassanio's wife, she replies in a speech of praise:

Past all expressing. It is very meet
 The lord Bassanio live an upright life;
 For, having such a blessing in his lady,
 He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
 And if on earth he do not [merit them],
 In reason he should never come to heaven.
 Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
 And on the wager lay two earthy women,
 And Portia one, there must be something else
 Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
 Hath not her fellow.

(III, v, 78-88)

The most flagrant and insulting gesture of her break with her family is the one that is reported to Shylock by Tubal. After relating to Shylock that Jessica had spent in one night in Genoa four score ducats, money that she had stolen from her father, Tubal reveals that Jessica had also traded a ring for a monkey! The ring, it turns out, is one Shylock had been given by the woman who would become his wife, Jessica's mother, Leah.

In taking leave of her father, Jessica manifests the rebelliousness that the biblical Rachel shows to her father when Rachel runs off with Jacob without Laban's consent. Rachel, too, resorts to stealth, taking with her Laban's household idols. (See chapter 1.) In The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare pointedly refers to the

episode in the biblical narrative that precedes Rachel's break with her father. Through Shylock, who uses the story to defend taking interest, Shakespeare introduces the narrative of Jacob's enterprise in building up Laban's herd while keeping the streaked and pied lambs for himself:

Shylock: ... Mark what Jacob did.
 When Laban and himself were compromis'd
 That all the eanlings which were streak'd
 and pied
 Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes,
 being rank,
 In end of autumn turned to the rams,
 And, when the work of generation was
 Between these woollybreeders in the act,
 The skilful shepherd pill'd me certain wands
 And, in the doing of the deed of kind,
 He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
 Who then conceiving did in eaning time
 Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were
 Jacob's.
 This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
 And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
 (I, iii, 78-91)

In the biblical narrative, once Jacob had accumulated enough wealth in the form of spotted cattle, he and Rachel, with the stolen idols, ran away from Laban, freeing themselves from the tyranny of his bondage. Like Rachel, Jessica shows fierce independence and cunning in leaving her despotic father in order to run off with a forbidden suitor and stolen articles that belong to her father but over which she asserts a claim. Shakespeare's use of the biblical narrative enhances Jessica's character as the rebel Jewess and provides a mythos for the additional elements that are

added to it.

As a rebel, the Jewess Jessica fulfills an important function in the major theme of The Merchant of Venice. Concerned with the nature of love within and against the climate of the profit system, The Merchant of Venice presents characters who are paired and contrasted to develop this theme. Not only is Jessica offered in opposition to her father, Shylock, she is presented as a contrast to the major female character, Portia. Jessica and Portia are compared primarily to reinforce the motif of lovers who give their love freely and generously, living the motto on Portia's favored, leaden casket: "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath." In the process of elucidating this motif, they are also contrasted to reveal the role of their fathers in preparing and protecting their daughter for their rite of passage, their sexual initiation into married love. Ultimately, the contrast of Jessica and Portia is another way of asserting the nature of love as freedom, not bondage. This is shown in their relationships with their fathers and lovers and is frequently revealed allegorically through the symbolic objects of treasure, casket, and ring, all of which are associated with woman's sexuality.⁶

The second scene of The Merchant of Venice establishes the basic theme with the test for the suitor of

the desirable Portia. The man responsible for this test and, therefore, for Portia's fate in marriage is her father. At first Portia laments her father's restriction of choice among the three caskets. She says to her servant, Nerissa:

I may neither choose who I would not refuse nor refuse who I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father.

(I, ii, 22-24)

Yet Portia is liberated, not restricted by her father's test for her suitors. As pointed out by Marjorie Garber:

The legacy left Portia is one of liberation, not of bondage. When Bassanio chooses the right casket, she significantly gives herself to him in a solemn and ceremonious speech culminating in her bestowal of a ring, a deliberate reversal of the traditional marriage ceremony in which the ring is given by the husband, worn by the wife.

Portia's freedom in love's choice under the protection of her father, though deceased, is contrasted with the same elements in Jessica and Shylock. The tyranny of Shylock over Jessica is well documented. His love for his ducats and his love for his daughter reveal the same emotional possessiveness. From his despotism, the rebel Jessica wrests her own freedom, fleeing with Lorenzo and stealing her father's treasure, significantly, in a casket. Jessica, too, offers a ring, one that her mother had given to Shylock before they were married, in exchange for a monkey, "proverbially one of the most

promiscuous of animals."⁸ Thus, Jessica takes responsibility for her own sexual initiation, offering her virginity symbolically with a casket filled with stolen treasure and a stolen ring given to a licentious emblem of her love, Lorenzo, the prodigal. The Jewess Jessica shows she is boldly in control of her own sexuality, arranging for her own "rite of passage."

Jessica's lover also affirms the theme of giving all in love. Shakespeare varies the theme by creating in Lorenzo a spendthrift who praises Jessica's "unthrift love." Lorenzo, however, need not undergo the test to prove he is worthy of her love, as Bassanio did for Portia. The "prodigal Christian" is suited for Jessica because his manner with money matches her, an indication of their generosity of spirit that also invites the prospect of the squandering of Shylock's money in the future.

In The Merchant of Venice, the Jewess plays a significant part in rendering the theme of "love's wealth."⁹ Acting as a contrast to her father and compared to Portia, Jessica provides another way Shakespeare comments on the attitude of lovers. Because much of the important action focuses on marriageable women, Jessica, as a significant one, supplies the means used by women to assert their generosity in love and to give themselves sexually. Jessica does not disguise herself to win the suit for her lover's friend in a court of law, as Portia does.

Instead, she wins Lorenzo's admiration by planning their elopement -- which includes her disguise as a page -- and for remembering the gold and jewels, her claim to her own precious treasure, her virginity. Lorenzo says to Gratiano about a note from Jessica:

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
 How I shall take her from her father's house,
 what gold and jewels she is furnished with,
 What page's suit she hath in readiness.
 If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
 It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;
 And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
 Unless she do it under this excuse,
 This she is issue to a faithless Jew.

(II, iv, 30-38)

Lorenzo appears to love Jessica's gentleness and her managerial skills in executing their elopement, when she remembers the essentials needed for a gentle life in Belmont. This same efficient capability is shown by Portia who leads the way in wisdom and shrewdness in the courtroom scene. In a drama that reveals women using their resources confidently, commandingly, and even playfully,¹⁰ Jessica shows that she is well suited for their society.

Jessica's comparison with Portia stops at the necessity of Jessica's conversion to the Christian faith, a major element that adheres to the portrait of the Jewess. Conversion for Jessica is needed for Shakespeare's scheme of values. It is transparently clear that Shakespeare equates the Jew with mean-spirited bondage

and the Christian with generosity and mercy. In addition, however, conversion, as evidence of obedience to another faith, might be considered the most generous act of Jessica's love for Lorenzo. Regarded this way, it is possible to integrate conversion into the theme of giving and risking all in love. For Jessica, her conversion takes place in the sacrament of marriage, an indication of her obedience and love for her husband and Jesus. Her conversion is the way for her, as the Jewess, to achieve salvation, and also to be saved from the shame "to be my father's child," coming of age as an adult.

As generous as it is in terms of giving in love, Jessica's conversion remains an act of apostasy, Conversion by Christian marriage is the ultimate break with the Jewess's father and faith. The Jewess who retreats to a nunnery is lost to her family and the world, having taken the step, as Abigail does, out of shame and despair. But the Jewess who enters a Christian marriage, as Jessica does, exists in the world openly as an apostate. Although she is brought into the Christian fold, she remains the exotic, forbidden object -- attractive and seductive -- but having abandoned her faith, she also may be abandoned easily. Moreover, whether the Jewess is merely considered for Christian marriage or is finally taken in such a marriage, she is not permitted the luxury of happiness. In spite of her praiseworthy qualities, she is tainted or

doomed, for she is a Christian Jewess.

Jessica's last words in The Merchant of Venice refer to her reaction to listening to music. Acknowledging Lorenzo's praise of the harmony of cosmos and soul that music offers, Jessica pronounces, "I am never merry when I hear sweet music." Lorenzo reassures her, "Your spirits are attentive," and explains a listening attitude of inner harmony that tunes to the harmony of music:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted.

(V, i, 83-88)

As the Jewess who marries a Christian, Jessica is not yet able to finely tune herself to the harmonies of the universe.

FOOTNOTES

¹Murray Roston, Biblical Drama in England from the Middle Ages to the Present Day (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 49.

²Ibid., p. 56, p. 57.

³Ibid., p. 57.

⁴Edgar Rosenberg, From Shylock to Svengali: Jewish Stereotypes in English Fiction (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 88.

⁵An explication of this theme appears in chapter 2, in the discussion of the role of Noah's wife in the Noah mystery play.

⁶A superb study of The Merchant of Venice from an anthropological point of view has been done by Marjorie Garber in Coming of Age in Shakespeare (London: Methuen, 1981). See pp. 159-161 for the convincing arguments associating treasure, casket, and ring with woman's sexuality.

⁷Ibid., p. 40.

⁸Ibid., p. 160.

⁹John Russell Brown, "Love's Wealth and the Judgement of The Merchant of Venice," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Merchant of Venice, ed. Sylvan Barnet (Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970), pp. 81-90.

¹⁰As part of the resolution of The Merchant of Venice, Portia and her servant Nerissa play the "ring trick." They bestow rings upon their husbands, exacting a promise that they never be removed. They then mischievously obtain the rings from their reluctant husbands in payment for services as "doctor" and "clerk" in the victorious case against Shylock. Out of their disguises back home, they accuse their husbands of unfaithfulness and suggest they will recover their rings by consorting with the "doctor" and "clerk." Since they are the "doctor" and "clerk", their suggestion is playful trickery, not an act of infidelity.

CHAPTER 4
THE JEWESS IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL
OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Part One

In the years between the portrayal of Jessica of The Merchant of Venice and the appearance of the first Jewess in the English novel, the Jews, a banished people, returned to England. Though few in number and mostly Marranos at first, they were living proof of the existence of an ancient people available for redemption. The English interest in Jews between William Shakespeare and Tobias Smollett, who created the first Jewess of the English novel, focused on three major elements of the Jews: their connection with the Old Testament, their strangeness, and their suitability for the economic conditions that shifted the center of influence from the landed gentry to the moneyed class of London. These elements not only expressed the English interest in Jews, but also reflected altering social, political, and economic conditions which found their way into the literary portraits of the Jewess. These three elements continued to exert a force in the delineation of the Jewess throughout the modern period. At the same time, however, the forces of literary tradition exercised a profound influence, revealing a long-standing, engrained attitude. In this period, for instance, the

names of Jessica and Rachel for stage characters became generic, thus indicating the crystallization of the Jewess as a type or types.

While the literary tradition of the Jewess, inherited by the novelist, furnished the basis for the portrait of the Jewess in the novel, accelerated social change in nineteenth-century England absorbed the novelist, too. The social, political, and economic conditions that affected the Jews living within the dominant Christian community of England, especially London, influenced the portraits of Jewesses in English novels. The conditions that effected social change and the novelists's personal response to that change were reflected in these portraits also. The Jews' participation in England's changing economic life, efforts to politically emancipate them, their conversion, the waves of Jewish immigration, and their assimilation all affected the way the Jewess was depicted in the English novel. Between the fleeting mention of the stock rich Jew's beautiful daughter in Tobias Smollett's Peregrine Pickle (1751) and the realistic portraits in Israel Zangwill's Children of the Ghetto (1892) lay a world of change in social conditions and literary trends that the novel mirrored. In themselves, the names Israel Zangwill and Amy Levy indicated a major change in the literary marketplace by the mid-nineteenth century as Anglo-Jewish writers found their own voices. The portrait of the Jewess reflected all these conditions.

In the English novel, the Jewess is allowed a range of characterizations that demonstrate her usefulness in construction of plot, development of theme, and appeal as a character. In the span of the two centuries covered in the following two chapters, the Jewess is represented in novels of all styles, in the picaresque, local color, sentimental, historical, romantic, and realistic novel. The English novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries depict the Jewess in such roles as heroine, cosmopolitan, waif, social climber, and rebel. In all her portraits she proves a mediating presence, as she is observed taking part in a society that considers her an outsider -- but often with redeeming qualities. While the Jewess frequently provides the local color, moral fiber, and romance to prop up a lagging plot, she most consistently must find the resources to accept or reject assimilation. The reader is asked to judge her against society, weighing her worthiness to be accepted by a specific social circle or weighing the unworthiness of the society she is asked to join. The Jewess is portrayed as caught between two worlds, considering her choice. Her action in leaving or remaining with her family reflects on herself, the family she leaves (notably, her father), and the society she is asked to enter. Thus, the Jewess is continually asked to forge a new identity while retaining the moral nature of her ancient people. As a mediating presence,

she copes with her Jewishness, shedding light on two societies -- one past and one present.

Corresponding with the roles of the Jewess in the English novel, the divisions of the following chapter treat the Jewess as heiress and romantic heroine; the second part of this topic, the Jewess as adventuress and rebel is treated in chapter 5.

The Jewess as Heiress

"If the inside agrees with the out--
your Jewish heiress will soon be
heard of on 'Change and at Court
too, you'll see."

Harrington (1816)

"Wealth is nobility, now-a-days."
That Boy of Norcott's (1869)

As the rich Jew's beautiful daughter, the Jewess slips easily into the role of heiress. Love and money are both in her purview. All that she needs is social acceptance.

As the court Jew had been used as an "engine of finance" for barons and kings to fulfill their national ambitions, so too the Jewess of the English novel shows she is capable of generating finance -- in the domestic realm where marriage reigns and dowry is the dynamo that forges family honor and status. Of course, the Jewess' religion transmits a traditional hatred in her portrait. But that element adds tension useful in dramatic conflict and contrast, literary necessities. That tainted element also acknowledges the social tensions emitted as Jews

entered English social life of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Along with these tensions, the Jewess as heiress provides the romance and titillation elicited from intimacy with the exotic. At a time of great change in England's economy, with attendant effects on class structure, the Jewess supplies the money needed for marriage as a capitalistic enterprise. Thus, the portrait of the Jewess as heiress in the English novel continues the tradition found in The Merchant of Venice. The Jewess's wealth is a prize -- a sexual treasure as well as a sign of the might of the marketplace where money and marriage vows are exchanged. Vying with that power are love and prejudice. But waiting to validate the whole transaction is social acceptance.

The first Jewess in the English novel is an heiress, "the only daughter of a rich Jew," who appears fleetingly in a picaresque novel in order to add interest, suspense, and humor to a rambling structure. She is mentioned, for created is hardly the word, by Tobias Smollet in his Peregrine Pickle (1751) where she and the Christian man with whom she has eloped are pursued by the hero in a chase of mistaken identity. Peregrine thinks he is pursuing the Jewess and "her attendant," the apprentice of her father, the rich Jew. In this brief episode, the Jewess is portrayed as having been converted to Christianity and married to the apprentice when the newlyweds

learn that "the old Israelite had contrived a scheme to separate them forever." Thus, their flight and their trepidation on seeing Peregrine and his men chasing them: they believe their pursuers have been sent by the Jewess's father. The couple finally make good their escape from the rich Jew, arriving safely in Paris.

The appearance of this Jewess in a picaresque novel establishes her as a stock character, the rich Jew's beautiful daughter who is a "Jessica." Like Jessica of The Merchant of Venice, she is the treasure who is taken from her father and converted to Christianity. Thus, without further development, both her father, "the old Israelite," and Judaism are butts held up to ridicule. Adding to the crude humor are the chase and the error in identity. As for the individualization of the Jewess, although she herself is not described, it is implied that she must be beautiful, resembling the attractive Emilia closely enough for Peregrine to mistake her for his love. The Jewess, too, is considered enough of a prize for the groom to plan their flight and their concealment in France "until the affair could be made up." Smollet's interest in this vignette is short-lived, however. Once the true identity and the predicament of the couple are revealed, Peregrine is off to another adventure, continuing his search for Emilia. The Jewess as heiress has served her purposes.

The Jewess appears in a similar role as wealthy heiress in the next English novel where she surfaces. In Castle Rackrent (1800) by Maria Edgeworth, however, the Jewess is a mechanical device that combines expectations of money with malevolence. As the faithful Irish servant who narrates the novel says, "But from first to last she brought nothing but misfortune amongst us."

When the wild and carefree Sir Kit Rackrent is left the debt-ridden family estate, he travels to Bath and returns with "the grandest heiress in England." This Jewess, however, is ugly, greedy, and stubborn. She is described by the narrator as "little better than a blackamoor, and seemed crippled." The most valuable item of her fortune is, ironically, a diamond cross, and she refuses to part with it. In fact, the Jewess's tenacity in refusing to provide what is expected, is the cause of Sir Kit's downfall. She herself, however, must undergo hardships before she is extracted from her predicament.

A cause of animosity between the newlyweds is the presence of pig meat on the dinner table, a stock element in narrative purporting to deal realistically with Jews. Sir Kit defies Lady Kit's order restricting its serving. As a consequence, Lady Kit retires to her room where her husband locks her in. A victim of conjugal imprisonment, Lady Kit remains there for seven years. During this time, Sir Kit tries to seize her fortune, but "she was too

tough for him." The Jewess whom he had earlier called "my pretty Jessica" is now called by Sir Kit a "stiff-necked Israelite."

A controversy arises over Sir Kit's successor while his Jewess wife is imprisoned. He is challenged to a duel and is killed. Upon Sir Kit's death, the countryside rallies to release Lady Kit, and she immediately leaves for England with her diamond cross which was "at the bottom of it all."

In this novel of Irish local color, told with an irony that reveals affection to favored characters, the Jewess is an outsider, a "foreigner," a city slicker who provides jaded sophistication and malevolence in a story of family solidarity narrated by a peasant wit. In addition, the Jewess, as an exotic, is used as a device to generate plot, to add color, such as conjugal imprisonment, and to provide the humor of reverse expectation. Liberties can be taken with the Jewess. Because she is different, she deserves everything she gets.

The Jewess's exotic associations make her an appropriate character for inclusion in the local color novel. Because Jewish culture is "different," it provides the materials needed for this and other genres similar to it. As Linda Gertner Zaitlin points out:

The "local color" novel, burgeoning from the time of Walter Scott and Maria Edgeworth, emphasizes the milieu, colloquial speech, and life peripheral to that of the dominant Eng-

lish culture. Even manifestly diverse types of fiction, including the historical novel, the Newgate novel, the neo-Gothic novel, the domestic novel, and the "silver fork" novel, reveal kinship to each other in their focus on what it was like to be different. Novels about Judaism thus seem to be neither a peculiar nor a new type.¹

In her later novel, Harrington (1816), Maria Edgeworth develops the first full scale portrait of the Jewess in the English novel. This Jewess, with her differences softened, is shown as entering English society more easily than her predecessors. Significantly, the impetus for the novel came from a real Jewess. In a preface to the novel written in 1817 by Maria Edgeworth's father, the reader is advised:

Harrington was occasioned by an extremely well written letter, which Miss Edgeworth received from America, from a Jewess, complaining of the illiberality with which the Jewish nation had been treated in some of Miss Edgeworth's works.

Thus, Harrington is offered to compensate for the hateful portraits of Jews drawn by Edgeworth in her Moral Tales. Suitably, the theme of this novel concerns social snobbery and manners. In Harrington, the Jewess figures as a means to criticize the pride and prejudice of fashionable society.

The informing notion of Harrington is the reform of an anti-Semite, the title character, whose ingrained prejudice is faced and dispelled by personal contact with the Montenero family, a rich Jew and his beautiful daugh-

ter. Until the end of the novel, Berenice Montenero is presented as an American Jewess of Sephardic origins. She is characterized by "dignified simplicity and graceful modesty," and with her wealthy and elegant father, she visits London where she is shown as an heiress entering fashionable society, eventually winning the hand of Harrington himself. But in the last few pages, when the question of marriage is imminent, Berenice's father reveals that her mother was a Christian, an English Protestant, "a daughter of an English gentleman of good family who accompanied one of your ambassadors to Spain." Berenice's kinship with the Jewish people is not completely severed, however. Although not a Jewess herself, Berenice says she would not marry a man who is prejudiced against Jews.

With the final revelation of Berenice's true identity as a Christian, the questions of intermarriage and conversion are moot. On frequent occasions through the novel, however, Harrington must face the conflict between his prejudice against Jews and his attraction to the Jewess Berenice. Also, before Berenice's true religion comes to light, Harrington attempts to overcome the religious scruples of his parents in order that he may win their permission to marry her. Berenice Montenero's portrait as a Jewess is not negated by the sudden reversal at the conclusion.

Though Berenice Montenero, as a Jewess, is presented

as an outsider, several essential aspects of her portrait make her attractive to the Jew-hater, Harrington. Hers is a "timid sensibility." Berenice is innocent of knowledge of anti-Semitism, called euphemistically, "prepossessions." When Harrington first sees her, she is at the theater, watching a performance of The Merchant of Venice, emitting soft sighs in an effort to repress her emotions at the spectacle on stage. As Berenice's father explains to Harrington, "Till she came to Europe -- to England -- she was not aware ... of the strong prepossessions which still prevail against us Jews." Berenice's life in America is described as an idyll "where religious distinctions are scarcely known."

Berenice's attachment to her father is also a quality in her favor, as Harrington's esteem of Mr. Montenero is essential in remedying his antipathy to Jews. (As a child, Harrington has been traumatized against Jews by a maid servant who had used a Jewish "old clothes man" to frighten him.) Harrington observes, "... when her father spoke, it seemed the same as if she spoke herself." Also Mr. Montenero's artistic sensibility as a collector of fine Spanish paintings wins respect from Harrington. Mr. Montenero's presence is a royal one.

In Harrington, Edgeworth uses the Jewess to comment on social snobbery and manners of Christians who snub aristocratic Jews. The Spanish Sephardic origin of the Monteneros religion both elevates and detaches them from

their own religious and social circle. Daughter and father are presented completely isolated from a Jewish community and in such glowing terms as paragons of gentility and integrity that their nominal Jewishness seems besides the point. Indeed, in Berenice's case, her Jewishness turns out to be a mistake. The Jewess's transformation into a Christian is validated by the simple declaration of her regal Jewish father, and the Christians quickly accept this deus ex machina. Berenice's social acceptance, however, had been treated before, when she was known as a Jewess. It was then that she had been wooed not only by Harrington, but by his rival, Lord Mowbray, who showed her attention by attempting to introduce her into fashionable society:

Miss Montenero was a stranger, a Jewess, just entering into the fashionable world; just doubting, as he understood, whether she would make London her future residence, or return to her retirement in the wild of America. Lord Mowbray wished to make her sensible, that his public attentions would bring her at once into fashion; and though his mother, the prejudiced Lady de Brantéfield, could not be prevailed upon to visit a Jewess, yet his lordship had a vast number of high connexions and relations, to all of whom he could introduce Mr. and Miss Montenero.

(p. 119)

Lord Mowbray, however, loses power over Berenice as a leader of fashion when she stands up to its shallow values. Because of her "simplicity," Berenice learns a lesson in snobbery involving conformity to the social mores demanded in London's fashionable circles.

Berenice's hair and dress are "in the Spanish fashion," and she wears a veil "worn by Jewesses." Yet when she puts aside her Spanish dress, it does not stop the gossips' back-biting, whereupon Berenice decides that she is best "curing herself of that morbid sensibility, that excessive susceptibility to the opinions of others." She will not be swayed by the trends of the moment in order to be accepted.

Although the discovery of Berenice Montenero's Christian mother assures the acceptance of her marriage to Harrington, her depiction as a Jewess throughout the novel must carry more weight than the expedient revelation at the end. As a Jewess, Berenice is portrayed as enough of a wealthy exotic to pique the interest of suitors interested in marrying an heiress, and yet she retains such laudable verities as innocence, simplicity, and filial devotion; she would not marry a man who hated the religion of her father. In this early portrait in the gallery of Jewesses in the English novel, Berenice Montenero is a wise ingenue who exposes the false values of the society resisting her acceptance. Her father's wealth endows her with the riches of an inheritance; her personal qualities endow her with the strength of a romantic heroine.

That Boy of Norcott's (1869)

By Charles Lever

"She is the richest heiress in Croatia," an observer says of the Jewess Sara Oppovich of That Boy of Norcott's (1869) by Charles Lever. Sara is the maiden whom Digby Owen, né Digby Norcott, loves. Never mind that she has the reputation as "the haughtiest and vainest damsel in the province." Never mind that she is his employer's daughter. Digby loves her for her commanding ways and a style that is a Jewess's own, including the nostalgia she inspires for her Hebrew predecessors. By the end of the novel, their marriage is announced, thus completing Digby's education in a narrative in which he feels himself "a hero of romance." That Sara is a wealthy Jewess and Digby is the son of a nobleman from whom he has been alienated are significant facts. In the match that is made, the Jewess's wealth and Digby's status are presented as a trade. Digby's gratitude at winning the rich heiress is equalled by the Jewess's delight in attracting a gentleman. In addition to these trading points, however, they are matched as outsiders as well as lovers -- Sara, as a Jewess, and Digby, as a fugitive from his family. Though Digby's marriage to "the rich Austrian Jewess" ends the novel, it is not known how it will fare in England. What is significant is that the frog prince has married the fairy princess. Joined in the partnership of their fairy tale romance, however, are manners

and money.

At sixteen, Digby finds himself on the Adriatic, employed in the family exporting business of the Jew, Ignaz Oppovich. Digby's own family had been a contentious one. His father, Sir Roger Norcott, took pleasure in "astonishing the world." As a Dragoon stationed in Ireland, he had married "a humble watchmaker's daughter." The extended fight over Digby's guardianship resulted in Digby leaving to make his way in the world. When he arrives in Fuime and begins work for the Oppoviches, he self-consciously observes that he has had "a strange education in which M. de Balzac figured as a chief instructor." Digby's romantic self-glorification leads him to see his life after meeting Sara as "a page out of a fairy tale." He describes the fete where he dances with Sara:

I was, indeed, to all intents the enchanted prince of a story who went about with the lovely princess on his arm, for I danced the mazurka with the Fraulein Sara, and was her partner several times during the evening, and finished the fete with her in the cotillion, she declaring in that calm, quiet voice that did not seek to be overheard around, that I alone could dance the waltz à deux temps, and that I slid gently, and did not spring like a Fiumano, or bound like a French bagman. (p. 118)

Digby's evening with Sara leads to his rapid rise in her father's business, his aristocratic manners the reason for his promotion. As for Digby's affection for Sara, he is thrilled by her commanding presence, her shrewd knowledge of the business, and her poised manner

in domestic matters. All these are described in a dining scene that purports to reveal through Digby's eyes, the point of view of a gentleman, the domestic life of Jews:

There was a strange air of half command in what she said, the tone of one who asserted a certain supremacy, as I was soon to see she did in the household. "Sit here, Herr von Owen," said she, pointing to my place, that her words were uttered like an order.

In perfect silence the meal went on; a woman-servant entering to replace the soup by a dish of boiled meat, but not otherwise waiting on us, for Sara rose and removed our plates and served us with fresh ones, an office I would gladly have taken from her, and indeed essayed to do, but at a gesture, and a look that there was no mistaking, I sat down again, and unmindful of my presence, they soon began to talk of business matters, in which, to my astonishment, the young girl seemed thoroughly versed. Cargoes of grain for Athens consigned to one house, were now to be transferred to some other. There were large orders from France for staves, to meet which someone should be promptly dispatched into Hungary. Hemp, too, was wanted for England. There was a troublesome litigation with an Insurance Company at Marseilles, which was evidently going against the House of Oppovich. So unlike was all this the tone of dinner conversation I was used to that I listened in wonderment how they could devote the hour of social enjoyment and relaxation to details so perplexing and so vulgar. (p. 122)

The end of this soirée is especially enlightening for Digby, as he observes the reaction of Oppovich and his daughter to the necessity of paying out a large sum of money in a business affair in order to avoid the reputation of litigiousness. Sara's dowry surfaces as an item in the transaction:

"Twenty-seven thousand gulden!" exclaimed he, with a quivering lip. "And how am I to save

money for your dowry, girl, with losses like these?"

"You forget, sir, we are not alone," said she proudly. "This young Englishman can scarcely feel interested in these details." She arose as she spoke, and placed a few dishes of fruit on the table, and then served us with coffee; the whole done so unobtrusively and in such quiet fashion as to make her services appear a routine that could not call for remark. (p. 123)

The distinction between wealth and station becomes a concern for Digby, as he considers marriage to Sara. On an urgent business trip to Hungary for the House of Oppovich, he learns of new values and an old prejudice. He is told, "Wealth is nobility, now-a-days, and if Ignaz Oppovich was not a Jew, he might have the best blood of Austria for a son-in-law." The same subject is pursued with Digby learning that Jews are said to favor station over wealth:

The discussion soon waxed as to whether Jews did or did not aspire to marriage with Christians of rank, the majority opining to believe that they placed title and station above even riches, and that no people had such an intense appreciation of the value of condition as the Hebrew. (p. 151)

The most worrisome subject for Digby is Sara herself. He wonders if she loves him or if her emotions are too absorbed in acquiring wealth. After receiving a letter from her that solely concerns business, Digby speculates:

Was the Hebrew heart solely on gain? And yet what grand things did the love of these women inspire in olden times! How true and devoted, how self-sacrificing! Sara's beautiful face, in all its calm loveliness, rose before me as I thought these things, and I felt that I loved her more than ever. (p. 155)

The spirit of the Hebrew woman of the Old Testament is transmitted in the Jewess of the present. As she moves among contemporary Christians, the Jewess embodies an ancient people, and through her, devotion and self-sacrifice, the traits of Hebrew women, manifest themselves again and again. This double exposure resolves all reservations and resentments Digby feels. As he plans to tell his mother at the end of the novel:

I was pining to clasp my mother to tell her that I loved a pale Jewish girl, silent and half sad looking, but whose low, soft voice still echoed within my heart; and whose cold hand had left a thrill after its touch that had never ceased to move me.

(p. 200)

The Jewess as Romantic Heroine

Rebecca! she who would prefer death to dishonor must have a proud and powerful soul.

Ivanhoe (1819)

From the study of the Jewess as heiress in That Boy of Norcott's (1869) by Charles Lever, it is evident that the Jewess provides two essential elements associated with fairy tale romance -- exotic beauty and the magical power of money. The Jewess is the fairy princess, albeit a "foreign" one, who is both strangely desirable and, with some difficulty, attainable. A simple assertion of emphasis transforms the Jewess from heiress to romantic heroine. As a heroine, her wealth is less important than

her noble character, a character forged from the lineage of devoted, self-sacrificing women of her Hebrew past.

Without question, the most famous Jewess in all of English literature is the romantic heroine, Rebecca of Ivanhoe (1819) by Walter Scott. A historical romance set in twelfth century England, Ivanhoe boasts 139 editions, including reissues, abridgements translations into foreign languages, and adaptations such as operas and dramas.² The popularity of Ivanhoe is attributed in good measure to the charm of Rebecca whose character caused a controversy over the ending of Ivanhoe. Part of the reading public felt that Wilfred of Ivanhoe should have married the Jewess Rebecca instead of the Christian Rowena. Though an historical romance, Ivanhoe contained materials that encouraged their application to contemporary life. Scott's response to his critics is found in the 1830 Abbotsford edition. In it, he defends his ending by raising the question of poetic justice. Scott's answer and the controversy it addresses imply two notions: the public's desire to consider literary characters in novels as real ones, and a changing attitude toward inter-marriage as a possibility in real life. This is part of Scott's response:

The character of the fair Jewess found so much favor in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca rather than the less in-

teresting Rowena. But, not to mention that the prejudice of the age rendered such a union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity.

Ivanhoe's ending and Scott's justification of it only temporarily closed the door to marriage in the novel between the highly principled Jewess and a Christian hero. Imitators of Scott proliferated after Ivanhoe, so that Rebecca became a generic name for a specific type of idealized Jewess, as Jessica had already become for another type. William Thackeray entered the dispute over Ivanhoe's ending with his satiric Rebecca and Rowena (1852) in which Rebecca becomes a good Christian and marries Wilfred of Ivanhoe after the death of the shrewish Rowena. Other writers, while developing their literary portraits of Jewesses, either allude to Scott's Rebecca or pattern their Jewesses after Scott's model. Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), writing from the principle that glorified the "Hebrew race," created his Rebeccas to complement his Jewish heroes. Richly illustrated "taffeta books," published in the 1840's and 1850's used materials from medieval and modern Jewish life, and included portraits patterned on Scott's Rebecca. Using this approach was Edward Lytton Bulwer (1803-1873) whose Leila (1838) is about the seige of Granada. Its heroine, Leila, like Rebecca, is a highly principled Jewess; yet she is converted to Christianity and is about to be married when

she is stabbed by her outraged father.³ As late as 1897, George Du Maurier, in The Martian, embellished his portrait of the Jewess Leah Gibson with allusions to her as Rebecca. His Jewess marries the Christian hero and settles down to domestic bliss, devotedly raising a family. The wholesome acceptance of this Jewess, an ardent, unblemished partner whose beauty and character break down the barriers of rank, implies a sanctioning of intermarriage not possible earlier in the century.⁴

Scholarship on Scott's Rebecca indicates that she was based on a real Jewess, Rebecca Gratz (1781-1869) of a well-known philanthropic family of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Scott's attention had been drawn to Rebecca Gratz by Washington Irving, an acquaintance of hers. This claim has been substantiated in "The Original of Rebecca in Ivanhoe," in The Century Magazine, 1882, pp. 679-682. A promoter of religious, educational, and charitable institutions, Rebecca Gratz founded the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum in 1815, four years before the publication of Ivanhoe.

While the lofty character of Rebecca of Ivanhoe may have been inspired by the philanthropic American Jewess, Rebecca Gratz, the physical presence of Rebecca of Ivanhoe is based on a biblical Eastern princess. Scott's description intersperses erotic touches to the exotic fantasy:

The figure of Rebecca might indeed have compared with the proudest beauties of England, even though it had been judged by as shrewd a connoisseur as Prince John. Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shewn to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a snow-white neck and bosom as a simarre of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible -- all these constituted a combination of loveliness, which yielded not to the loveliest of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps, which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an agraffe set with brilliants, was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess, scoffed and sneered at by the proud dames who sat above her, but secretly envied by those who affected to deride them.

(p. 68)

Scott's lush description offers strong suggestions that adhere to the Jewess as a romantic figure in the English novel. Firstly, the Jewess's dark beauty is equal to or surpasses the beauty of the proudest English woman. Second, the details of her physique elaborate on the elements described in "The Song of Songs" -- her neck, her teeth, her bosom -- all erotic allusions. Thirdly, the eroticism is intensified by the sensual references --

the turban of yellow silk, the glitter on her dress, the revealing, unfastened vest, the heat, the diamond necklace resting conspicuously on her bosom. The striking, attention-arousing nature of the Jewess's dress increases to a crescendo near the end of this description where Scott introduces an element used in the novel of manners -- the envy of the female onlookers. This tendency of Scott to apply his "historical" materials to contemporary life includes the depiction of the Jewess as an ancient portrait suitable as a model for the present. Maria Edgeworth took this position in Harrington. Contemporaries and friends, Scott and Edgeworth used the Jewess similarly.

Rebecca's other attributes are equal to her spectacular appearance. They include her affection for her father; her generosity, when she returns Ivanhoe's money, payment to her father for the use of horse and armor; her noble defiance in standing up to the Templar's licentiousness, risking death rather than submitting to dishonor, her piety in praying for Ivanhoe and in singing a "Hebrew hymn," translated into English for the reader; her charity in taking care of Ivanhoe's wounds; her resourcefulness and knowledge of the healing art, the use of which causes her to be accused of witchcraft; her intelligence in acting as a spokesperson for her people, especially in responding in humanitarian terms to Ivanhoe's justification

for the bloodshed of the chivalric code; her high-mindedness in adhering to her faith and not confessing her "guilt" for "bewitching" Brian de Bois-Gilbert; her bravery in standing ready to accept her punishment, though unjustly accused; and her shy dignity during her trial. Examples from the narrative are so well known that I have eliminated most quotations, and will focus below on one aspect of her character -- Rebecca's ability to express the acceptance of exclusion while retaining her dignity; she ennobles victimization. This is the quality that adds poignancy to Rebecca's portrait, a depiction which is basically that of a martyr and which leads back to the Bible.

Scott taps several biblical sources in creating Rebecca. Her ability to arouse lust in Brian de Bois-Guilbert may be compared to Susanna in the narrative of the Elders. Her poised rectitude in the face of de Bois-Guilbert's force resembles Sarah with Abimelech. Her wisdom, superior to her father's is like Abigail's whose understanding in her dealings with David is superior to her husband's. When Rebecca is charged with witchcraft, she is called the "second Witch of Endor." The evil of her witchcraft is dispelled, however, when Scott changes her "sorcery" from the black magic of incantation to the white magic of medicinal healing.

There is one biblical element, however, that is more significant than the others because there is one attribute of Rebecca that overrides all the others -- that is the attribute of self-sacrifice. The biblical tradition of martyrdom in a virgin maiden is found in the narrative of Jephthah's daughter. In fact, Scott has Rebecca herself allude to that biblical account of virgin martyrdom. In the letter Rebecca writes to her father during her trial, she asks for a man to do battle for her in her trial by combat. She says, "But if this may not be, let the virgins of our people mourn for me as for one cast off, and for the hart that is stricken by the hunter, and for the flower which is cut down by the scythe of the mower." (p. 314) Although the Bible is not the only source for the character of Rebecca, biblical materials as manifested in the portraits of Hebrew women are the most significant elements from which she is created. Moreover, the martyrdom of Jephthah's daughter and the trial in Susanna and the Elders are essential models for the portrait of Scott's Rebecca.

Although Rebecca's willingness to sacrifice herself contains elements that echo her noble biblical predecessors, her manner is her own. In Rebecca, Scott has created a woman who is commandingly courteous, adhering to a code of chivalry of her own. Rebecca's motto could well be, "Your need is greater than mine." Neither cringing like

her father nor self righteously a religious fanatic, Rebecca remains self accusatory while still proud. This tension in her character creates poignancy and leads to the need for her self-sacrifice. Rebecca reveals this bittersweet quality on those occasions when she must accept her position as one excluded, when her only response, if it is to be noble, is self-sacrifice. With Ivanhoe at the seige of the castle, she recognizes her tender regard for him; yet she contains her feeling, knowing her place as a Jewess: "His warhorse -- his hunting hound, are dearer to him than the despised Jewess." Rebecca's mixed feelings of ardor and exclusion are expressed after Ivanhoe wonders, as a prisoner in the castle, "... how can I protect Rowena and my father?" Rebecca thinks, "He names not the Jew or Jewess ... yet what is our portion in him, and how justly am I punished by Heaven for letting my thoughts dwell upon him!" (p. 227) Just a few paragraphs later, however, Rebecca is ready to endanger herself by standing at the castle window to describe the battle raging outside to Ivanhoe who is too wounded to move.

Although Rebecca survives, rescued by Ivanhoe at the end of the novel, whereupon she and her father leave England for Granada, she is cast throughout the novel as a martyr heroine. She follows a feminine code of honor involving the ultimate generosity and devotion of spirit. She also provides the erotic stimulation that radiates

from her beauty. The most obvious example that combines Rebecca's sexuality with her martyrdom is the famous scene when she threatens to throw herself from the parapet to avoid Brian de Bois-Guilbert's licentious advances. Although that scene could well have had a basis in the real plight and martyrdom of Jewesses during medieval times, as written by Scott, it strikes a note of melodrama reminiscent of Samuel Richardson's Pamela.

A better example that reveals Rebecca's touching quality while she conveys the dualism of eroticism and martyrdom is when she is on trial for witchcraft:

At this period of the trial, the Grand Master commanded Rebecca to unveil herself. Opening her lips for the first time, she replied patiently, but with dignity, -- "That it was not the wont of the daughters of her people to uncover their faces when alone in an assembly of strangers." The sweet tones of her voice, and the softness of her reply, impressed on the audience a sentiment of pity and sympathy. But Beaumanoir, in whose mind the suppression of each feeling of humanity which could interfere with his imagined duty, was a virtue of itself, repeated his commands that his victim should be unveiled. The guards were about to remove her veil accordingly, when she stood up before the Grand Master and said, "Nay, but for the love of your own daughters -- Alas," she said, recollecting herself, "ye have no daughters! -- but for the remembrance of your mothers -- for the love of your sisters, and of female decency, let me not be thus handled in your presence; it suits not a maiden to be disrobed by such rude grooms. I will obey you," she added, with an expression of patient sorrow in her voice, which had almost melted the heart of Beaumanoir himself; "ye are elders among your people, and at your command I will shew the features of an ill-fated maiden."

She withdrew her veil, and looked on them with a countenance in which bashfulness contended with dignity. Her exceeding beauty excited a murmur of surprise, and the younger knights told each

other with their eyes, in silent correspondence, that Brian's best apology was in the power of her real charms, rather than of her imaginary witchcraft.

(p. 305)

Rebecca's response to her treatment here reveals her less as a spokesperson for her religion than as a touching feminine voice reminding men of their manners. She knows how it feels to be degraded, yet she shows neither bitterness nor self-righteousness. Her acceptance of her role as victim, however, contains the recognition that she deserves better treatment. In Scott's hands, she convinces her captors of this. Rebecca's winning way, her last word, makes it possible for her to be a martyr who survives only to risk martyrdom again. This pattern sheds light on the dualism of self-sacrifice and sexuality in her portrait. It also enlightens the function of her character in relation to the audience of Ivanhoe. When it is considered that Ivanhoe was "long since relegated to the category of 'books for boys,'"⁵ the portrait of Rebecca in that book confirms her purpose in answering the psychological needs of immature males similar to that of the American Indian in Western novels. In her way, Rebecca is the Jewess version of the noble savage. She is the living figure rooted in an ancient people, shown as more moral, but yet more sexually arousing than Christian women. Her dignity in accepting her own destruction fulfills her purpose as a character drawn out

of psycholgoical needs. As such, she elucidates other portraits of Jewesses that contain the dualism of eroticism and martyrdom.

FOOTNOTES

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¹Linda Gertner Zaitlin, The Nineteenth Century Anglo-Jewish Novel (Boston: Twayne, 1981), pp. 138-139, n.16.

²"Scott, Walter," British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books, Vol. 217, pub. by Trustees of Britain Museum, London, 1964, p. 620.

³For references to the influence of Scott, see Montagu Frank Modder, The Jew in the Literature of England (Philadelphia; Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 1944), pp. 145-152. Modder's chapter, "The Disraelian Era," pp. 192-216, also offers valuable references on this subject. See also Zaitlin, p. 70 for references to Jewess heroines cast in the Rebecca mode.

⁴By the end of the nineteenth century, the piety of the Jewess of the Rebecca type had eroded into a generalized devotion to family. Her qualities as a "helpmeet and mother" emerge as dominant traits that make her a perfect mate.

Earlier in the century, after Ivanhoe, the piety of the Jewess became a target for conversion by Christians, as the spate of conversion novels published in the first part of that century testify. In these novels, which are little more than tracts written from the drive of evangelical zeal, the Jewess's piety lends itself to conversion when it is accompanied by a benevolent nature. In

Miriam, or The Power of Truth: A Jewish Tale (1829) by Charlotte Anley, the daughter of a wealthy and religious Jew, turns apostate when she forms Christian friends and is influenced by their piety. Miriam's intellect and religious education leads her to raise a fundamental question: "Miriam wished that she better knew upon what authority Jesus had been received as the Messiah." This Jewess's devotion to her father, an essential trait of a good Jewess, might seem to suffer in her state of apostasy. The novel ends with the conversion of Miriam's father, her dying wish, followed by a report of his missionary work as a founder of "many a Christian Church." Thus, an allegory of the conversion of the Jew is formulated -- through the Jewess.

⁵Albert Baugh, ed., A Literary History of England (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 1212.

CHAPTER 5

THE JEWESS IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL
OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

Part Two

The Jewess as Adventuress

Miriam in Hypatia (1853) by Charles Kingsley

"I know everything."
Miriam in Hypatia, p. 277

The witch Miriam in Hypatia is surely a repulsive portrait of a Jewess. More creature than human being, Miriam surfaces among the turbulent fanatics of 5th century Alexandria and represents the barbaric, evil element of sorcery and superstition among the Jews. Dubbed "queen of the go-betweens ... who, in virtue of her profession, had private entry of all fashionable chambers in Alexandria,"¹ Miriam is a plotter and procuress, too. As a sorceress who makes her Machiavellian way among contending Christians, Romans, Goths, Greeks, and Jews, Miriam is assured the position of unscrupulous adventuress. Yet Kingsley's historical novel is, according to him, a plea for religious tolerance in his day. In the last paragraph of the novel, the author says:

I have shown you New Foes under an old Face, -- your own likenesses in toga and tunic, instead of coat and bonnet. One word before we part. The same Devil who tempted these old Egyptians tempts you. The same God who would have saved these old Egyptians if they had willed, will save you, if you will. Their sins are yours, their errors yours, their doom yours, their deliverance yours. There is nothing new under the sun. The thing which has been, it is that which shall be. Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone, whether at Hypatia or Pelagia, Miriam or Raphael, Cyril or Philammon.

Since the Jewess Miriam, the sinister witch, is an important part of Kingsley's antique world of sin that parallels his own, it is enlightening to examine how she is used in his novel. Miriam's pivotal role and its meaning as a portrait of a Jewess can be revealed by focusing primarily on the main elements of plot that pit Miriam against Hypatia and on the surprise ending that reveals change in the Jewess's religious identity. Fundamentally, Miriam portrays an antique, occult form of knowledge that yearns for new spiritual light and power; in acting to achieve her desires, this witch Jewess is an adventuress, a convert, and a voracious mother.

In the flux of ideas, creeds, and races of the 5th century Roman Empire, the beautiful and intellectually inquiring Hypatia, "beloved of Athene," stands as leader of the Neoplatonic school. To create disorder and to assume power for herself, Miriam, the witch Jewess, originates a plot whereby Orestes, the shifty prefect of Alexandria, proposes marriage to Hypatia. This intrigue eventually

leads to Hypatia's violent death and dismemberment by a group of fanatical Christian monks. While Miriam is not directly responsible for Hypatia's murder, she is depicted as the wicked sorceress who had set into motion the fatal events.

Every reference to Miriam establishes her character as a fiendish, half-crazed hag whose ambition is power over others. For this, her appearance is suitable.

Her countenance was haggard and bony, with broad, sharp-cut lips, stamped with a strangely mingled expression of strength and sensuality. But the feature about her which instantly fixed Hypatia's attention, and from which she could not in spite of herself withdraw it, was the dry, glittering, coal-black eyes which glared out from underneath the gray fringe of her swarthy brows, between black locks covered with gold coins. Hypatia could look at nothing but those eyes; and she reddened, and grew all but unphilosophically angry, as she saw that the old woman intended her to look at them, and feel the strange power which she evidently wished them to exercise.

(pp. 48-49)

Like Svengali, Miriam wants to control those whom she succeeds in entrapping under her magic spell. Although Hypatia accepts Orestes proposal of marriage, she manages to elude Miriam's fiendish witchcraft for a while. However, when one of Hypatia's suitors, the cynical Jew Raphael Aben-Ezra, gives her a portion of a mysterious black agate talisman, Miriam relentlessly pursues its retrieval. For this, Miriam attempts to enlist the support of Philammon, the youthful monk who loves Hypatia.

Miriam reveals to Philammon that she, not Hypatia, had sent him his monthly gold piece. Philammon is baffled by Miriam's seemingly gratuitous gift; Miriam sets him right, telling him her malevolent purpose:

"And did you? did you?" gasped Philammon.
 "Have I to thank you, then, for that strange generosity?"

"Not to thank me, but to obey me; for mind, I can prove your debt to me, every obol, and claim it if I choose. But don't fear; I wont [sic] be hard on you, just because you are in my power. I hate every one who is not so. As soon as I have a hold on them, I begin to love them."

(p. 277)

In the same exchange, Miriam further reveals her mysterious, omnipotent powers when she informs Philammon, "I know everything. I know what the swallows say when they pass each other on the wing, and what the fishes think of in the summer sea."²

The high point of Miriam's unscrupulousness involves a promise of revealing hidden knowledge through magic. This deception is perpetrated against Hypatia in order to steal from her the piece of black agate tablet Miriam so desperately craves. To gain Hypatia's presence and cooperation, Miriam promises Hypatia that she will reveal through her legerdemain a sign of the gods, that she will have a Greek god materialize before Hypatia. In characteristic fashion, Hypatia considers this philosophically, finding arguments to justify magic as a belief; to Hypatia, Miriam's tempting offer is irresistible. The following is a portion of her argument for consent.

If spirit pervaded all things, then was magic probable; if nothing but matter had existence, magic was morally certain. All that remained in either case was the test of experience And had not that test been applied in every age, and asserted to succeed? What more rational, more philosophic action, than to try herself those methods and ceremonies which she was assured on every hand had never failed but through the ignorance or unfitness of the neophyte?

(p. 405)

Hypatia succumbs to Miriam's pride and promise: "Shall the old Jewess blast those blue eyes blind to show that she knows more than the heathen?"³

But Hypatia is hopelessly deceived by Miriam. The god who she had thought was Phoebus Apollo turns out to be the startled Philammon. He runs off, leaving a mortified Hypatia:

And poor Hypatia lay half senseless on the floor, with the Jewess watching her bitter tears, -- not merely of disappointment, but of utter shame. For as Philammon fled, she had recognized those well-known features; and the veil was lifted from her eyes, and the hope and self-respect of Theon's daughter were gone for ever. (p. 414)

Hypatia's humiliation at Miriam's trickery and her disappointment at the unfulfilled promise of spiritual knowledge are matched by Miriam's glee as "she picked up from the floor the prize for which she had been plotting so long -- Raphael's half of the black agate."⁴ Miriam's skill at deception seems of greater consequence than her magic.

Indeed, Miriam's true identity, revealed at the conclusion of Hypatia, sheds light on the Jewess not as a witch, but as a convert to Christianity who had reverted to Judaism. Ultimately, however, her religious allegiance will be determined in heaven. Miriam's dying words are:

A good thought it is after all, -- a Jew
the king of heaven and earth! Well, I
shall know soon I loved him once, ...
and perhaps ... perhaps perhaps ...

(p. 472)

These words are spoken to Miriam's son in a melodramatic passage where she reveals to Raphael Aben-Ezra, now a convert to Christianity, that he is her son. Miriam had relentlessly pursued one half of the black agate in order to prove she is Raphael's mother. That portion of the tablet that Miriam steals from Hypatia had belonged to Raphael and it fits next to the other half that Miriam had retained since Raphael was an infant.

It is Miriam's Faust-like desire for knowledge and its power that drives her away from Judaism and into the Christian Church as a nun. She reveals this as she discloses her illustrious lineage and the circumstances of his birth to her son:

Of the house of Jesse, of the seed of Solomon;
not a rabbi from Babylon to Rome dare deny that!
A king's daughter I am, and a king's heart I had,
and have, like Solomon's own, my son! A
kingly heart It made me dread and scorn to
be a slave, a plaything, a soulless doll, such
as Jewish women are condemned to be by their
tyrants, the men. I craved for wisdom, renown,
power -- power -- power; and my nation refused

them to me; because, forsooth, I was a woman! So I left them. I went to the Christian priests They gave me what I asked They gave me more they pampered my woman's vanity, my pride, my self-will, my scorn of wedded bondage, and bade me be a saint, the judge of angels and archangels, the bride of God! Liars! liars! And so -- if you laugh, you kill me, Raphael -- and so, Miriam, the daughter of Jonathan -- Miriam, of the house of David -- Miriam, the descendant of Ruth and Rachab, of Rachel and Sara -- became a Christian nun, and shut herself up to see visions and dream dreams and fattened her own mad self-conceit upon the impious fancy that she was the spouse of the Nazarene, Joshua Bar-Joseph, whom she called Jehovah-Ishi -- Silence! If you stop me a moment, it may be too late. I hear them calling me already; and I made them promise not to take me before I had told all to my son, -- the son of my shame!

(p. 469)

Miriam continues her tale, revealing to Raphael the reason for her disillusionment in Christianity -- the heinous attack on her when the convent was sacked as a result of "a fight between the Christian devils and the Heathen devils." Nine months later her son was born, restoring her sanity. She then returned to her people. "I made them -- the Rabbis, my father, my kin -- I made them all receive me. They could not stand before my eye. I can make people do what I will, Raphael!"⁵

With everything else in this novel, Miriam's story at the conclusion of Hypatia, is meant to verify Kingsley's view of the Roman Empire of the 5th century as "a very hideous, though a very great age."⁶ As part of this turbulent world, Miriam, the Jewess in Hypatia, depicts the

devious, barbaric, and occult elements in Judaism and its warped desire for knowledge and power. As Miriam says during one of her scheming enterprises:

To see those heathen slaves and Christian hounds plotting and vapping, and fancying themselves the masters of the world, and never dreaming that we are pulling the strings, and that they are our puppets! -- we, the children of the promises, -- we, The Nation, -- we, the seed of Abraham!

(p. 279)

In addition, however, in her devious attempts to retrieve the evidence proving to Raphael that he is her son, the Jewess Miriam portrays a mother compelled by half-crazed desperation. In the breast of Miriam, the witch, beats the heart of an all-consuming mother.

Significantly, the novel Hypatia is mentioned in another novel examined in this study -- in Reuben Sachs (1889) by Amy Levy. In that novel, Judith Quixano, a Jewess and a leading character, is said to have read Hypatia; it is part of her library consisting of twenty books given to her by Reuben Sachs, the man and Jew she loves. The major and troubling problem for Judith is deciding whether or not to marry a Christian who had converted to Judaism. She is tormented by the knowledge that she does not love the man. While Levy does not specifically elaborate on the importance of Hypatia on Judith's decision, its reference along with other novels is designed to color the character and the problem of intermarriage.

The Jewess as Adventuress

Madame Goesler in Phineas Redux (1873) by Anthony Trollope

Madame Max is one of Mr. Trollope's more graceful and carefully studied characters. With just enough of the adventuress to have an element of calculation in her nature, and quite sufficient resources and acuteness to be worth more in the ordinary concerns of life than almost any of the personages into competition with whom she comes, the tenderness of her heart gives true fascination to the character.

Unsigned Notice, Spectator, Jan. 3, 1984,
Quoted in Donald Smalley, ed. Trollope: The
Critical Heritage. London; Routledge & Kegan,
1969, p. 379.

"This half-foreigner, this German Jewess, this intriguing unfeminine upstart"⁷ is Marie Goesler, a thirty-year-old attractive widow with extensive financial holdings that periodically take her from Park Lane, London to Vienna. "This strange female, this Moabitish woman," is disparaged further by Lady Laura Kennedy, Madame Goesler's arch rival for Phineas Finn's affection, all these bitter words springing from Lady Laura's jealousy. For while the exotic Madame Goesler, or Madame Max as she is sometimes called, does plot cunningly, she acts on behalf of others, rescuing them from hardship or calamity. This she does so tactfully and with such intelligence and competence that she wins their gratitude, and ultimately benefits herself. As the Jewess who is a social invader, her touch is discreet and she gets results.

In Phineas Finn, Madame Goesler had proposed marriage

to Finn and had been refused. In Phineas Redux, the novel that follows in the "Palliser group," Madame Goesler makes herself indispensable to the Pallisers and to Finn. She springs full blown into the circle of Lady Glencora Palliser with little specific detailed information about her past. As Lady Laura Kennedy says, "Had one ever heard who was her father or who was her mother?"⁸ Purposeful and useful, Madame Goesler's "half-foreign" Jewishness allows her to mediate between English Christian aristocracy within the milieu of English 1870's politics and her Viennese business affairs. To Trollope, Madame Goesler's Jewishness, in the forms of her wealth, dark beauty, and calculation, are potent forces that save the endearing English characters and their way of life in the novel. In spite of the shadowy mystery of Madame Goesler as the foreign Jewess, or precisely because of it, she is able in Phineas Redux to promote the interests of Glencora and her husband, Plantaganet Palliser; their first cousin, Adelaide Palliser, and her lover; Phineas Finn, the Irish politician and central character; and, of course, herself.

Moreover, Madame Goesler's discovery of evidence that eventually helps Finn by absolving him of a murder charge also implicates the villain who is thought to have committed it, "a foreigner and a Jew."⁹ As a lone Jewess, she exposes a Jew, placing him at risk before the law.

Clannishness or favoritism for her people do not enter into Madame Goesler's scheme. In desiring and helping Finn, she is motivated by love for the man. In helping the Pallisers, she is compelled by personal honor and ambition. Nowhere is Jewish piety represented, although Christian discipline does surface in Madame Goesler's thoughts.

In the first part of Phineas Redux, Madame Goesler is involved in a relationship with the old Duke of Omnium which ultimately benefits the Pallisers and their niece and her lover. In the second part of the novel, Madame Goesler is involved with clearing Finn from a charge of murder. These two major actions of Madame Goesler will be explored more closely in order to see the Jewess as an exotic adventuress, a cosmopolite with the power of beauty, wealth, and cunning. Like Jessica in The Merchant of Venice, cut off from her religion but not from her alien origins, this Jewess makes her way knowingly in the world of English high society.

The first mention of Madame Goesler in Phineas Redux emphasizes her beauty and her wealth. Lady Chiltern, one of several women who surround Finn and periodically provide him with solace, invites Madame Goesler for a stay in the country that includes hunting. Lady Chiltern invites Madame Goesler because Finn will be there:

He was a widower, and she remembered of old that he was fond of pretty women, and she knew that in coming days he might probably want money; -- and therefore she had asked Madame Max Goesler to spend a fortnight at Harrington Hall. Madame Max Goesler and Phineas Finn had been acquainted before, as Lady Chiltern was well aware. But perhaps Lady Chiltern, when she summoned Madame Max into the country, did not know how close the acquaintance had been. (Vol. 1, p. 125)

Madame Goesler's beauty is complemented by other qualities outlined by Trollope:

She was a lady who could ride to hounds, -- and who, indeed, could do nearly anything to which she set her mind. She was dark, thin, healthy, good-looking, clever, ambitious, rich, unsatisfied, perhaps unscrupulous, -- but not without a conscience. As had been told in a former portion of this chronicle, she could always seem to be happy with her companion of the day, and yet there was ever present a gnawing desire to do something more and something better than she had as yet achieved. (Vol. 1, pp. 125-6)

Before her reunion with Finn, however, Madame Goesler's restless sense of exalted purpose had directed itself to the "noble wreck," the old Duke of Omnium whose companion she becomes for three years. At first, the old Duke wants to take her as his mistress -- which insulting offer she refuses. He then proposes marriage. Knowing full well how far she might go for social acceptance and showing both pride and self-sacrifice, Madame Goesler refuses marriage with the old Duke. Marriage to him "would have conferred upon her some tangible advantage, such as rank, and wealth, and a great name."¹⁰ But she thought

that "the price to be paid for them was too high, and that life might even yet have something better in store for her."¹¹

Instead of marrying him, Madame Goesler settles for the position of "head nurse" to the senile old man, wasting "three years of what remained to her youth."¹² She justifies her self-sacrifice by recalling that the old Duke "had given all the colour to my life which it possessed."¹³ And she refuses to compromise her reputation by accepting a reward for her burden.

People, at any rate, should not say of her that she had accepted payment for the three years' service by taking a casket of jewels. She would take nothing that should justify any man in saying that she had been enriched by her acquaintance with the Duke of Omnium. It might be that she had been foolish, but she would be more foolish still were she to accept a reward for her folly. As it was there had been something of romance in it, -- though the romance of friendship at the bedside of a sick and selfish old man had hardly been satisfactory.

(Vol. 1, p. 265)

Her companionship with the old Duke not only affords Madame Goesler the opportunity to engage in a noble and adventurous activity, but it also reveals another side of her character -- the desire for social advancement. For this, Lady Glencora is useful and is grateful for Madame Goesler's assistance. In an estimate of her last three years with the dying old Duke, Madame Goesler defers cannily to her friend Lady Glencora Palliser, wife of the man who is the old Duke's heir. Madame Goesler knows that

her friendship with Lady Glencora had been based on an understood agreement between them, "never expressed," that her aristocratic and influential friend would "bestow upon her support, fashion, and all kinds of worldly good things," on condition that she never marry the old Duke. Madame Goesler resigns herself to this and expresses regret that she is seen as a threat, misunderstood.

It was necessary that the Duke should be pampered and kept in good humour. An old man, let him be ever so old, can do what he likes with himself and his belongings. To keep the Duke out of harm's way Lady Glencora had opened her arms to Madame Goesler. Such, at least was the interpretation which Madame Goesler chose to give to the history of the last three years. They had not, she thought, quite understood her. When once she had made up her mind not to marry the Duke, the Duke had been safe from her; -- as his jewels and money should be safe now that he was dead.

(Vol. 1, p. 266)

When the old Duke finally dies, Madame Goesler's sense of fitness and benevolence extends to others. Because she had given up marriage to the old man, the dukedom is inherited without obstacle by his heir, Plantaganet Palliser. The Pallisers thus benefit from Madame Goesler's friendship and are thankful to her. In a conversation with Madame Goesler about the old Duke's obvious affection for her, Lady Glencora expresses her gratitude and elucidates Madame Goesler's character:

"... Poor old man! If you had done what he asked you I wonder whether his affection would have lasted as it has done."

"Certainly not, Lady Glen. He would have known that I had injured him."

"I declare I think you are the wisest woman I ever met, Madame Max. I am sure you are the most discreet. If I had always been as wise as you are!"

"You always have been wise."

"Well, -- never mind. Some people fall on their feet like cats; but you are one of those who never fall at all...." (Vol. 1, p. 220)

In addition to easing the Palliser's inheritance of Omnium, Madame Goesler passes on to Adelaide Palliser the legacy left to her by the old Duke. Because Madame Goesler is unwilling to accept the Duke's money and jewels, she agrees to Lady Glencora's suggestion that she give the legacy to the young Duke's cousin. But, eager for propriety, she corrects Gerald Maule, Adelaide's grateful suitor:

"My dear Mr. Maule," said Madame Goesler, "you literally must not say a word to me about it. The money was not mine, and under no circumstances would or could be mine. I have given nothing, and could not have presumed to make such a present. The money, I take it, does undoubtedly belong to the present Duke, and, as he does not want it, it is very natural that it should go to his cousin. I trust that you may both live to enjoy it long, but I cannot allow any thanks to be given to me by either of you.

(Vol. 2, p. 327)

The Jewess, Madame Goesler, has scruples. Her dedication is not to her people nor to a faith nor to mercenary interests, but to the "womanly enthusiasm for the

cause one has taken up."¹⁴ Her first cause in Phineas Redux is the old Duke. In tending him she had been dazzled by the importance of titled society and with the glamour of mingling with distinguished people. As she confesses to Finn, "For years past I have been used to have my own way, but when there came a question of the entertainment of royalty I found myself reduced to blind obedience. I had to go to Gatherum Castle, to the absolute neglect of my business; and I went."¹⁵

After the old Duke dies, Madame Goesler takes up the cause of Phineas Finn, but not before she does some soul searching, facing a crisis of her existence. In an inventory of her life through her thoughts, Trollope reveals Madame Goesler in the process of growth; she questions her desires, motives, and expresses a need for the discipline of belief -- in a man of noble purpose:

Three years had passed by, and nothing had been done of that which she had intended to do. Three years had passed, which to her, with her desires, were so important. And yet she hardly knew what were her desires, and had never quite defined her intentions. She told herself on this very journey that the time had now gone by, and that in losing these three years she had lost everything. As yet, -- so she declared to herself now, -- the world had done but little for her. Two old men had loved her; one had become her husband, and the other had asked to become so; -- and to both she had done her duty. To both she had been grateful, tender, and self-sacrificing. From the former she had, as his widow, taken wealth which she valued greatly; but the wealth alone had given her no happiness. From the latter, and from

his family, she had accepted a certain position. Some persons, high in repute and fashion, had known her before, but everybody knew her now. And yet what had all this done for her? Dukes and duchesses, dinner-parties and drawing-rooms, what did they all amount to? What was it that she wanted?

(Vol. 1, p. 266)

Madame Goesler's reflections reveal that her desire is nothing less than the dedication of love. She considers her recent devotion to the Duke of Omnium an unsatisfactory "vexatious burden" and speculates whom she may next worship:

...she reflected whether it might not be best for her to become a devotee, -- it did not matter much in which branch of the Christian religion, so that she could assume some form of faith. The sour strictness of the confident Calvinist or the asceticism of St. Francis might suit her equally, -- if she could only believe in Calvin or in St. Francis. She had tried to believe in the Duke of Omnium, but there she had failed. There had been a saint at whose shrine she thought she could have worshipped with a constant and happy devotion, but that saint had repulsed her from his altar.

(Vol. 1, p. 267)

Instead of Calvin or St. Francis, this Jewess settles on the irresistible Phineas Finn, for he gives her the opportunity to use all her skills, potentially molding him into a moral force and eradicating his idleness.

As a penniless Irish politician making his way in and out of the rough and tumble scene of English Parliamentary party politics, Finn has been somewhat of a philanderer, weak in character, but attractive to women, especially to the Ladies Laura Kennedy, Violet Chiltern, Glencora

Palliser, and Madame Goesler. In Phineas Redux, the other women fade into the background as the resourceful and determined Madame Goesler takes command in securing the evidence that eventually releases Finn from the charge of murdering a political enemy. To do this, Madame Goesler, acting as detective, boldly sets out on her own to interrogate witnesses and to pay for the information given:

It was Madame Goesler who got out of the cab at the workhouse corner, and walked from thence to Mrs. Meager's house. This was her third appearance in Northumberland Street, and at each coming she had spoken kind words, and had left behind her liberal recompense for the trouble which she gave. She had no scruples as to paying for the evidence which she desired to obtain, -- no fear of any questions which might afterwards be asked in cross-examination. She dealt with sovereigns -- womanfully, and had Mrs. and Miss Meager at her feet. Before the second visit was completed they were both certain that the Bohemian converted Jew had murdered Mr. Bonteen, and were quite willing to assist in hanging him.

(Vol. 2, p. 144)

Once in possession of the information needed, Madame Goesler tenaciously travels to Prague to successfully and expeditiously track down the evidence that eventually frees Finn. His gratitude is unbounded, and when emotionally expressed in a letter to Madame Goesler, it is met with a modest note from her minimizing her help. Her self-effacing words repeat the posture of propriety that she had assumed with Gerald Maule:

My journey to Prague was nothing. You forget that I am constantly going to Vienna on business connected with my own property there. Prague lies but a few hours out of the route.

(Vol. 2, p. 248)

But she does invite Finn to visit: "Send me a line when you think you can come to me that I may be at home."

Finn's gratitude turns to love. His most significant consideration in deliberating marriage to Madame Goesler is:

He knew of her what nobody else in all the world knew, -- except himself. In that former period of his life, on which he now sometimes looked back as though it had been passed in another world, this woman had offered her hand and fortune to him. She had done so in the enthusiasm of her love, knowing his ambition and knowing his poverty, and believing that her wealth was necessary to the success of his career in life.

(Vol. 2, p. 332)

With this awareness of Madame Goesler's generosity, ambition, and love for him, Finn asks for her hand and is accepted. As Trollope says in the conclusion of the novel, "Of Phineas every one says that of all living men he has been the most fortunate. The present writer will not think so unless he shall soon turn his hand to some useful task." With Madame Goesler as Mrs. Finn, this prospect is assured. For Trollope had informed the reader when the old Duke of Omnium had died, "... her nature was much nobler than his; and she knew that no man should dare to live idly as the Duke had lived."¹⁶

Madame Goesler is an exotic character, an independent Jewess who is an adventuress, but she also qualifies as "a woman of valor." In a novel that frequently scrutinizes the actions of women and their influence behind the scenes of English party politics, this Jewess's achievements and style are singular. Bearing her stigma of Jewess, she disseminates her "womanly enthusiasm for the cause ... [she] has taken up."

The Jewess as Rebel

Mirah Lapidoth and Princess Alcharisi
in Daniel Deronda (1876) by George Eliot

"... the unhappiness in my life came from my being a Jewess" Mirah Lapidoth

"I am suffering. But with a suffering that you cannot comfort." Princess Alcharisi

"I imagine that just as I was thrust into this world some supermundane being plunged these words into my heart with a dagger: 'Yes, have sensibility, see the world as only a few see it, be great, noble; nor can I free you of incessant eternal thought. But I add one more thing: Be a Jewess!' And now my whole life is a slow bleeding to death. By keeping still I can prolong it. Every attempt to stop the bleeding is to die anew, and immobility is only possible for me in death itself I can ascribe everything evil, every misfortune, every vexation that has befallen me from that."

Rahel Levin Varnhagen (1771-1833)

Genuine rebels, the two Jewesses in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda (1876) exhibit at the same time, strong portraits of women tormented by their heritage and wracked with guilt at their own defiance. At stake is

their identity as Jewesses, and they record their anguish with the pain and suffering of martyrs and pariahs, both of them implicating their fathers in their plight. Mirah Lapidoth, the woman Daniel Deronda eventually marries, and Leonora Halm-Eberstein, Deronda's mother, known as Princess Alcharisi, are represented in the quotations above. But a gloss on their characterization is evident in the revelation above of the real-life German Jewess, Rahel Levin Varnhagen, a supreme example of the "enlightened," secular Jewess who finds the accident of her Jewish birth unendurable. Born into a prosperous Jewish merchant family in Berlin, Rahel Levin was raised in Orthodox Jewish surroundings. She was brilliant in perceiving new talent, using her home as a salon for some of the most original thinkers in Germany. Called "the most gifted woman of the universe, a seeress with the influence of Pythia, the first modern woman of German culture," she introduced Goethe and Ranke to the literary world. And at the age of forty-three, she married the thirty-one-year-old writer and diplomat, Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, and converted to the Lutheran faith.¹⁷

It is highly likely that Rahel Levin Varnhagen was known to George Eliot. Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, husband of Rahel, and publisher of her correspondence, was an old friend of George Henry Lewes, Eliot's paramour.

Lewes and Eliot saw Varnhagen frequently during their visit to Berlin in 1854, accompanying the literary arbiter to meetings of a Berlin salon conducted in the tradition of Rahel Levin Varnhagen.¹⁸ The suffering Jewess that Rahel Levin represented is suggested in the portraits of the Jewesses in Daniel Deronda where they manifest a major theme of the novel -- the existence of a national character.¹⁹ Eliot portrays the suffering Jewess as a complement to the suffering Jew whose culture²⁰ is destined to develop, according to the novel's prescient Mordecai, into the establishment of a national homeland for Jews. Mordecai calls for the Jewish people to "choose our full heritage, claim the brotherhood of our nation, and carry into it a new brotherhood with the nations of the Gentiles. The vision is there; it will be fulfilled."²¹

While Mirah Lapidoth and Princess Alcharisi both express their anguish at their Jewish identity, revealing their fathers as villains, they are polar opposites in relation to their acceptance of their religion. Mirah clings to the memory of her mother and the fellowship of her people; Princess Alcharisi, however, resolutely maintains a distance from her people, and defiantly informs her son, Deronda, that when she had given him away to be reared as a Christian, "I relieved you from the bondage of having been born a Jew." As different as they are in devotion to their religion, both Jewesses in Daniel

Deronda compel an examination of the two societies they inhabit: one Christian, the other Jewish, one of the present, the other the heritage of an ancient people. In addition, they project important aspects of Eliot's comment on art, culture, and morality which permeate the novel. Significantly present in Eliot's novel, too, is the awareness of the Jewess as a literary tradition; in this context the Jewess is considered in her two versions, as a noble, righteous figure and as an erotic icon. All this is shown by Eliot in a series of contrasts that deserve examination because she is a major novelist who expressly focuses on Jewish elements in her last novel, Daniel Deronda.

When Deronda first meets Mirah Lapidoth, she is a pathetic picture of misery, in the act of committing suicide on a Thames bank. Deronda saves her, takes her to his friends, the Meyricks, where her history as the victimized daughter of an unscrupulous father is revealed. As her past comes to light, Mirah evokes much sympathy. She is a tempest-tossed waif who yearns to become "a good Jewess" against the odds of her father's sordidness and a Christian society that accepts her epithetically as "the little Jewess," a demure beauty and singer.

Mirah is a delicate-faced, sorrowful, sentimental image of young womanhood who has fled from her evil father. Deronda guesses she is Spanish, but she tells

him, "I am English-born. But I am a Jewess." In her next breath: "'Do you despise me for it?' she said presently in low tones, which had a sadness that pierced like a cry from a small dumb creature in fear."

Mirah's life has been a harsh one. Kidnapped from her mother and older brother by her father when she was seven years old, she traveled with him to America where they worked in the theater, her father as a stage manager and translator of plays, and Mirah, herself, as a fledgling actress and singer. As she grew up, Mirah saw the falsity of the "hard and unloving" theater -- of her treatment as an object "as if I had been a musical box." Furthermore, her religion was a felt absence. Her father did not practice his religion; thus, compelled by her mother's loving memory and "the Hebrew hymns she sang," Mirah secretly attended the synogogue with her landlady who is a Jewess. Her pertinacity in adhering to her religion separated her from her father whom she "began to disbelieve." At the age of thirteen, Mirah moved with her father to Hamburg. She was resigned "to obey and suffer: what else could I do?" On board the ship she overheard a remark about her father and herself that epitomizes her fate: "Oh he is one of those clever Jews -- a rascal, I shouldn't wonder. There's no race like them for cunning in the men and beauty in the women. I wonder what market he means that daughter for."

In relating her past to the Meyricks, Mirah accepts her suffering as her heritage as a martyred Jewess. She is an emblem of tragic knowledge. About the overheard remark, Mirah says, "When I heard this, it darted into my mind that the unhappiness in my life came from my being a Jewess, and that always, to the end, the world would think slightly of me and that I must bear it, for I should be judged by that name; and it comforted me to believe that my suffering was part of the affliction of my people, my part in the long song of mourning that has been going on through ages and ages. For if many of our race were wicked and made merry in their wickedness -- what was that but part of the affliction borne by the just among them, who were despised for the sins of their brethren?"

Finally, life with her father became intolerable for Mirah: "the world seemed like a hell to me."²² Her father gambled, showed hatred of his fellow Jews by mocking them, landed in jail, and encouraged Mirah to accept a liaison with a Count who helped to release him from jail. Torn between her filial duty and her knowledge of her father's wickedness, Mirah fled Dresden and, from there, made her way to London where, forsaken and dejected she contemplated suicide and its connection with the Jews:

... I began to think that my despair was the voice of God telling me to die. But it would take me long to die of hunger. Then I thought

of my People, how they had been driven from land to land and been afflicted, and multitudes had died of misery in their wandering -- was I the first? And in the wars and troubles when Christians were cruelest, our fathers had sometimes slain their children and afterwards themselves; it was to save them from being false apostates. That seemed to make it right for me to put an end to my life; for calamity had closed me in too, and I saw no pathway but to evil.

(p. 263)

The object of Mirah's rebellion is her father, a false Jew. Once freed from him and saved from suicide by Deronda, Mirah begins a search for her mother. This quest, together with Deronda's rescue of Mirah, are pivotal actions for Deronda, for they become the means of his deliverance as well as Mirah's. "The little Jewess" rouses Deronda from the ennui of his life; he is awakened to a new interest -- Judaism:

Mirah, with her terrified flight from one parent, and her yearning after the other, had flashed on him the hitherto neglected reality that Judaism was something still throbbing in human lives, still making for them the only conceivable vesture of the world; and in the idling excursion on which he immediately afterwards set out with Sir Hugo he began to look for the outsides of synagogues, and the titles of books about the Jews. (p. 411)

Eventually, Deronda meets Mirah's brother, Mordecai, who, functioning as a rabbinical guide, influences Deronda to change his life. Mordecai, too, is a catalyst to Mirah's fervent religious consciousness: "He will teach me to be a good Jewess," says Mirah of her brother.

Mirah's noble suffering and striving for goodness is presented as a contrast to the heroine's pride and attraction to wickedness. Although Gwendolen Harleth helps Mirah by employing her as singer, she has no patience for the suffering Jewess. Undoubtedly jealous of Deronda's interest in Mirah, Gwendolen confronts him with, "I have no sympathy with women who are always doing right. I don't believe in their great suffering."

But, according to Eliot, the Jewess Mirah is morally admirable precisely because of her struggles. As a voice of confusion and righteousness, Deronda responds to the irate Gwendolen:

"... those who would be comparatively uninteresting beforehand may become worthier of sympathy when they do something that awakens in them a keen remorse. Lives are enlarged in different ways. I daresay some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions. And when they are suffering in that way one must care for them more than for the comfortably self-satisfied."

(p. 494)

Besides serving as a symbol of the suffering and noble Jewish character, Mirah acts as an example of the struggling, disciplined artist who achieves independence and thus freedom in performance. Hers is not a majestic voice, "not loud and strong, but searching and melting, like the thoughts of what has been." Her natural talent and long training serve her well for singing in private drawing rooms where she achieves some professional renown

and is able to support herself. Again Mirah is contrasted to Gwendolen. Mirah's trained artistry, demure beauty, and pathos are opposed to that of the undisciplined talent, arresting beauty, and spoiled, proud nature of Gwendolen. But early in the novel, even before Mirah appears, Eliot introduces the theme of artistic performance as a commitment, and associates it with the Jewess. When the unmarried Gwendolen considers her prospects, she indulges in the fancy of acting. She compares herself to the famous French actress, Rachel, a Jewess:

She had never acted -- only made a figure in tableaux vivans at school; but she felt assured that she could act well, and having been once or twice to the Theatre Francais, also heard her mamma speak of Rachel, her waking dreams and cogitations as to who would manage her destiny sometimes turned on the question whether she should become an actress like Rachel, since she was more beautiful than that thin Jewess.

(p. 84)

Gwendolen's romantic notions of her "destiny" involve her yearning for admiration and independence as an actress in the manner of "the thin Jewess," the actress Rachel, but she is unwilling to discipline herself to achieve her stated goal as advised by the music teacher Klesmer, a Jew. Instead Gwendolen accepts marriage to the wealthy and imperious Grandcourt with whom she struggles in a battle for supremacy and, ultimately, through suffering, achieves her own moral victory. Mirah and, especially, Deronda are the instruments of

Gwendolen's moral growth.

Eliot, however, also blends the major thematic elements of art, morality, and independence, showing them as significant parts of the character of the Jewess. Somehow, her religion equips the Jewess for artistic performance, Eliot implies. The reasons for this may be found in the harsh discipline of the religion itself and in the emotionalism associated with the Jewess's suffering. The Jewess is simply closer to the sources of art. These ideas are evident in the characterization of Princess Alcharisi too, who breaks with her religion in order to pursue her career as lyric actress.

When Eliot places the Jewess on the stage as she prominently and significantly accomplishes in Daniel Deronda, she signals her desire to have that figure noticed publicly. In spotlighting the Jewess as actress, Eliot fulfills the notion of the "performing heroine" as advanced in feminist criticism. In her groundbreaking book, Literary Women, Ellen Moers isolates the tradition of the heroine as performer, noting this "compelling feminine fantasy" in its many expressions, such as teaching, preaching, acting, singing, speech making. In analyzing Eliot's women, Moers notes the special way her heroines perform:

George Eliot was always concerned with the superior, large-souled woman whose distinction resides not in her deeds but in her capacity to

attract attention and arouse admiration. Her heroines are not intellectuals...; they do not enjoy using their minds or working for those acquirements which George Eliot herself so remarkably achieved. Instead, as Lucy marvels at the phenomenon of Maggie Tulliver, for having absorbed 'Shakespeare and everything' since she left school, it seems to be the result of 'witchcraft ... part of your general uncanniness.' In one way or another, George Eliot's heroines are women of genius noticed by the world.²³

This ability to attract attention is a salient quality of Eliot's Jewesses. Their role as singer-actress is a direct consequence of their function as women on whom the spotlight shines.

Another way Mirah, the Jewess, functions in Daniel Deronda is as a "real" Jewess who confronts a literary tradition. On two occasions Eliot uses the literary character Rebecca of Ivanhoe in order to compare her to Mirah. Both references point to the potent hold of the noble Rebecca on the image of "the Jewess," especially as considered by the unworldly. First, when Deronda initially discovers Mirah, he wonders where he might find her shelter. Settling on the Meyricks, Deronda thinks of "a motherly figure of quakerish neatness, and three girls who hardly knew of any evil closer to them than what lay in history books and dramas, and would at once associate a lovely Jewess with Rebecca in 'Ivanhoe,'" Second, again in the context of the Meyrick women, this time when they are becoming more sophisticated about Jews, the young women have accompanied Mirah to a synagogue and

find fault with the service:

... Mrs. Meyrick did not enter into particulars which would have required her to say that Amy and Mab, who had accompanied Mirah to the synagogue, found the Jewish faith less reconcilable with their wishes in her case than in that of Scott's Rebecca. They kept silence out of delicacy to Mirah, with whom her religion was too tender a subject to be touched lightly; but after a while, Amy, who was much of a practical reformer, could not restrain a question.

Amy's question concerns the separation of the women in the Jewish service. But Mirah's unshaken faith, evidence of her religious attitude as "affections," not as "a set of propositions," defrays further criticism. The Meyrick women merely hope that Mirah's religion "would gradually melt away from her, and she would pass into Christianity like the rest of the world, if she got to love us very much, and never found her mother. It is so strange to be of the Jews' religion now."

In contrast to the noble Rebecca as a literary tradition, Eliot also provides a literary allusion of the Jewess as a sensual creature. This is apparent in the reference to the Jewess Berenice, the first century adventuress who was suspected of living in incest with her brother, Agrippa. Married several times, Berenice was forced to separate from Titus by the Roman hatred of the Jews. In Daniel Deronda, Eliot uses Berenice in an artistic context. The painter, Hans Meyrick, who indicates his romantic interest in Mirah, uses her as a

model for his series of paintings on Berenice. She innocently participates knowing only the "ladies' edition" version of Berenice, as a patriot who "was beguiled by love and ambition into attaching herself to the arch-enemy of her people." Deronda, however, tries to protect Mirah by confronting Meyrick with the prospect of the public's recognition of Mirah and the consequence of her sullied reputation. In creating the situation of an innocent, noble Jewess disguised as an erotic adventuress, Eliot juxtaposes the past and the present, artlessness and craftiness, morality and immorality, and art and "life." In her use of Berenice as well as Rebecca, Eliot shows she is aware of the Jewess as a tradition, as dual icons, of nobility and of wicked sensuality.

The other significant Jewess in Daniel Deronda, Princess Alcharisi, contrasts and shares characteristics with Mirah. Mirah's love of Judaism contrasts with the hatred Princess Alcharisi feels for it. They are similar as Jewesses who perform as singers and who have been tyrannized by their fathers from whom they rebel. The nature of their fathers' religious practice determines the direction of the daughters' rebellion. On the one hand, the mocking, inauthentic Jewishness of Mirah's father causes her to abandon him in order to seek her mother and genuine

Judaism. On the other hand, the strict Jewishness of Princess Alcharisi's father compels her to flee from him, from the oppressive religion he represents, in order to fulfill her destiny in artistic performance. Mirah seeks to reclaim her Jewish identity; Princess Alcharisi tries to abandon it, to no avail.

Although Princess Alcharisi is portrayed in only two scenes in the novel, both of them in Book Seven, "The Mother and the Son," her portrait is of major significance. Essentially, Princess Alcharisi is an emblem of Jewish self-hatred. She is the mother who had willingly given up her two-year-old son to be raised as an English gentleman and Christian and who desires a reunion to settle her moral account now that she knows she is fatally ill. Disclosing her identity to Deronda for the first time, she says, "I am your mother. But you can have no love for me." Her suffering is palpable, theatrical; it engulfs her. She is aware of the magnitude of her sin; yet, at the same time, she is defiantly unremorseful. "Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother?" asks the tormented Princess Alcharisi of the son she had deserted. "Remarkable-looking," she gives Deronda "a painful sense of aloofness." Furthermore, "her worn beauty had a strangeness in it as if she were not quite a human mother, but a Melusina, who had ties with some world which is independent of ours." She is a woman who declares she

is incapable of love. "It is a talent to love -- I lacked it. Others have loved me -- and I have acted their love. I know very well what love makes of men and women -- it is subjection. It takes another for a larger self, enclosing this one," -- she pointed to her own bosom. 'I was never willingly subject to any man. Men have been subject to me.'

Propelling the anguish of this reunion is Princess Alcharisi's justification for giving up her son, for "feeling glad to be freed from you." As she says to Deronda, "I thought that I chose something better for you than being with me. I did not think that I deprived you of anything worth having." To Princess Alcharisi, that worthless thing is not only herself, but Judaism. "With a passionate self defense in her tone," she informs Deronda, "What better could the most loving mother have done? I relieved you from the bondage of having been born a Jew."

Princess Alcharisi's desertion of her son is a reaction to the enslavement she feels by her father and their repressive religion, an attitude that reaches back to Jessica of The Merchant of Venice. In order to win release from her father's despotic rule, Princess Alcharisi had married her cousin, Deronda's father. Forced into this marriage by her father's "wishes and commands," she had consented so that she could be free. Affirming a prin-

ciple of self fulfillment, she says, "I could rule my husband, but not my father. I had a right to seek my freedom from a bondage that I hated." She details the offenses of her father and his religion, saying that her father:

... only thought of fettering me to obedience. I was to be what he called "the Jewish woman" under pain of his curse. I was to feel everything I did not feel, and believe everything I did not believe. I was to feel awe for the bit of parchment in the mezuzah over the door; to dread lest a bit of butter should touch a bit of meat; to think it beautiful that men should bind the tephillin on them, and women not, -- to adore the wisdom of such laws, however silly they might seem to me. I was to love the long prayers in the ugly synagogue, and the howling, and the gabbling, and the dreadful fasts, and the tiresome feasts, and my father's endless discoursing about Our People, which was a thunder without meaning in my ears. I was to care for ever about what Israel had been; and I did not care at all. I cared for the wide world, and all that I could represent in it. I hated living under the shadow of my father's strictness. ... I wanted to live a large life, with freedom to do what every one did, and be carried along in a great current, not obliged to care.

(p. 693)

Her final words to Deronda in this confessional passage contain the seed of her discontent -- her profound sense of alienation: "You are glad to have been born a Jew. You say so. That is because you have not been brought up as a Jew. That separateness seems sweet to you because I saved you from it."

The hatred Princess Alcharisi feels for her father, their religion, and herself is joined with feminist arguments so that Judaism is depicted as a religion that specifically singles out women to tyrannize. As Princess

Alcharisi explains:

... You may try -- but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl. To have a pattern cut out -- "this is the Jewish woman; this is what you must be; this is what you are wanted for; a woman's heart must be of such a size and no larger, else it must be pressed small, like Chinese feet; her happiness is to be made as cakes are, by a fixed receipt." That was what my father wanted. He wished I had been a son; he cared for me as a makeshift link. His heart was set on his Judaism. He hated that Jewish women should be thought of by the Christian world as a sort of ware to make public singers and actresses of. As if we were not the more enviable for that: That is a chance of escaping from bondage.

(p. 694)

In asserting Princess Alcharisi's principles of freedom and self fulfillment, Eliot repeats the theme also expressed through Gwendolen Harleth. Gwendolen undergoes moral growth as she comes to terms with a husband whose object is to dominate her. And in portraying Princess Alcharisi as desirous of widening her horizons, of freeing herself from the restrictions of Jewish society, Eliot turns to the theme expressed through Mirah and Rachel of the Jewess as artistic performer. As shown in those passages that deal with dedication, adulation, and independence in art, the Jewess in Daniel Deronda figures as the ideal. Yet, depicted as a suffering figure, the Jewess as performer pays a price for her self-fulfillment. The noble, righteous Mirah seeks to abandon the falsity of the theater as she abandons her father, ultimately

joining Deronda in his Zionist pursuit. Princess Alcharisi's life is darker, however. Her singleminded pursuit of a musical career is shown as necessitating the abandonment of her son, an act symptomatic of her alienation and ambition. Also, the circumstances of her life in art hinder her. After nine years of living for her art, she finds she must give up her career because she is singing out of tune. Feeling her "greatness sinking away," Princess Alcharisi chooses to marry, this time a Christian. "I made believe that I preferred being the wife of a Russian noble to being the greatest lyric actress of Europe." Her voice returns, too late, however. "I could not go back. All things hindered me -- all things."

The most complete sense of Princess Alcharisi's suffering comes from her need to receive forgiveness from Deronda, the son she had banished to protect him from Judaism. This takes place in the second and final meeting when Princess Alcharisi bestows on Deronda the legacy of his Jewish inheritance, his grandfather's chest. In this scene, Deronda rebukes his mother for having renounced him, thus denying him his heritage: "the expression of something stronger, with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundation of sacredness for all men." Princess Alcharisi's dramatic response addresses her renunciation of Deronda as a child and asserts the necessity of his forgiveness even though she was not a "Jewish mother":

... You reproach me that I parted with you. I had joy enough without you then. Now you are come back to me, and I cannot make you a joy. Have you the cursing spirit of the Jew in you? Are you not able to forgive me? Shall you be glad to think that I am punished because I was not a Jewish mother to you?

(p. 727)

In the final analysis, the objects of Princess Alcharisi's hatred -- her father and her religion -- surface as the claims to her soul. The last request made of Deronda by his mother is to say Kaddish for her; only then would she be free of all suffering -- from all punishment. "And I shall see you instead of always seeing your grandfather." Judaism and her father are presented as forces too powerful for Princess Alcharisi's rejection. Expressing their compulsion, she says:

"... I obey something tyrannic" -- she spreads out her hands again -- "I am forced to be withered, to feel pain, to be dying slowly. Do I love that? Well, I have been forced to obey my dead father. I have been forced to tell you that you are a Jew, and deliver to you what he commanded me to deliver."

(p. 693)

The two major Jewesses of Eliot's novel function to prepare and define the hero's Jewishness. Mirah, his wife-to-be, rouses Deronda to the possibility of his destiny as merging with that of his people. While Princess Alcharisi, his mother, discloses to Deronda his secret identity as a Jew. For the study of the Jewess in English literature, Eliot presents rich portraits of the modern suffering

Jewess. She includes in them elements of culture, art, feminism, and tradition, significant parts of the thematic scheme of her novel. Her Jewesses are shown as conscious of their tragic inheritance. While one chooses to identify herself with a new spirit of community in Zionism, the other accepts the force of her religion only when she is near death, after a life of dedication to art sought as a self-fulfilling alternative to stifling Judaism.

Eliot's two major Jewesses of Daniel Deronda provide evidence of the redefinition of the Jewess's identity as reflecting Jewish intellectual thought of Eliot's time. At one extreme of Eliot's two Jewesses is the estrangement and self hatred of Princess Alcharisi, while at the other end is Mirah's sense of renewal in a new national homeland, predating by years the official Zionist creed of Theodor Herzl. Thus Eliot acknowledges the problematic nature of Jewish identity as expressed ambivalently by Jews themselves, especially by German Jews of her day. Eliot brought a mighty intellect to fiction writing. "No one was more thoroughly abreast of the newest thought, the latest French or German theory, the last interpretation of dogma, the most up-to-date results in anthropology, medicine, biology or sociology."²⁴ Observing Eliot's profound knowledge of Judaism, George Lewes wrote to her publisher about the learnedness in Daniel Deronda.

You are surprised at her knowledge of the Jews? But only learned Rabbis are so profoundly versed in Jewish history and literature as she is -- and this will not only make a Rembrandtish background to her dramatic presentation, but I suspect will rouse all Jews of Europe to a fervor of admiration for the great artist who can -- without disguising the ludicrous and ugly aspects -- so marvellously present the ideal side of that strange life. Lydgate in Middlemarch conquered all the medical profession -- and Mordecai will in like manner conquer all the Jews. What a stupendous genius it is!²⁵

Eliot's interest in Jews is said to have been piqued by her reading of Spinoza, an enthusiasm which Lewes shared.²⁶ As a visitor to Germany and as a scholar of German philosophy and literature, Eliot could not have avoided the self scrutiny of mid-nineteenth-century Jews who, in the process of their assimilation into European society, were reforging their identity. Mentioned above is the example of the "enlightened" Jewess, Rahel Levin, wife of Karl August Varnhagen, the man who had escorted Eliot and Lewes on visits to a Berlin salon, and who, in 1834, had published the correspondence of his celebrated wife in Rahel, Ein Buch des Andenkens fuer Ihre Freunde.²⁷ A letter Eliot wrote to her close friend, the freethinker Charles Bray, during her 1854 visit to Berlin elucidates both Varnhagen's connection to Lewes and Eliot's attitude toward the literary treatment of the Jew. Positioned one after the other, Eliot comments first on Varnhagen's cordiality, manifested in his offer of "the use of his library," then on his liberal thought, and finally, on a

drama she attended, a performance of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Nathan, the Wise, the first European play to present a Jew sympathetically:

We reached Berlin last Saturday, or rather a week ago yesterday, and find much to enjoy here. Varnhagen von Ense and Fraulein v. Solmar, old friends of Mr. Lewes's, have received me very kindly, and as they are in the best society of Berlin, this is no slight advantage. Mr. Lewes has not yet had time to call on half his friends, but all whom he has seen appear delighted to meet him again. Fraulein v. Solmar has a salon which is open every evening but Thursday to persons who have been invited once for all. Varnhagen made a little party for us last Thursday, offers the use of his library, and is altogether cordial. He had corresponded with Carlyle for years before Carlyle came to Germany (in 1852) and was terribly disappointed when he came to know him in the flesh. Varnhagen is a courtier, wears an order round his neck and carries a gold headed cane, so you may imagine that Carlyle's roughness and petulance were rather shocking to him. Withal this Varnhagen is a theoretical democrat, and thinks "Past and Present" Carlyle's greatest work, while to his dismay he found that Carlyle talked the fiercest despotism etc. etc.

Last night we went to see "Nathan der Weise." You know, or perhaps you do not know that this play is a sort of dramatic apologue the moral of which is religious tolerance. It thrilled me to think that Lessing dared nearly a hundred years ago to write the grand sentiments and profound thoughts which this play contains for the people's theatre which he dreamed of, but which Germany has never had. In England, the words which call down applause here would make the pit rise in horror.²⁸

Eliot, too, translated, admired, and wrote for the Westminster Review²⁹ about Heinrich Heine who "spoke for unnumbered thousands of nineteenth century Jews who lacked his crystalline eloquence but who shared his tragic ambivalence."³⁰ A Jew, Heine converted to Christianity in

1825, claiming his "baptismal certificate is the ticket of admission to European culture."³¹ Reflecting the turmoil and complexity of the attitude of many German Jews of his day, Heine also had taken part in the inception of a new movement for a scientific Judaism known as Wissenschaft des Judentums.³² Heine revealed his self-hatred in the savage diatribes he wrote against the converted Jewesses of Berlin, "former daughters of Israel [who] wear crosses about their necks longer than their noses."³³ Also disclosing his masochism is the poem "To an Apostate" written on the occasion of the baptism of his friend Edward Gans in December 1825:

Out upon youth's holy flame!
Oh, how quickly it burns low!
Now, thy heated blood grows tame,
Thou agreest to love thy foe!

And thou meekly grovell'st low
At the cross which thou didst spurn;
Which not many weeks ago,
Thou didst wish to crush and burn...³⁴

Heine finally came to terms with his religion in the last years of his life when, in his sickroom he composed his Hebrew Melodies, "poignant, enduring poems and reminiscences of his Jewish childhood, and of Jewish civilization as he now properly understood it."³⁵ Confiding in a friend, he wrote, "I make no secret of my Judaism, to which I have not returned, because I have never left it."³⁶ It is unlikely that Eliot was ignorant of the agitation of assimilating German Jews, including the most prominent of them,

Heinrich Heine, whose literature she studied. "She and George [Lewes] had often discussed Heine with Varnhagen, one of his early friends."³⁷ In fact, Eliot's depiction of a national homeland is the answer she selects for the problem of acculturation from the ideas advanced by Jews of her time. As early as 1862, the idea of a Jewish political nationality in Palestine had been suggested by the German Jew Moses Hess in his Rome and Jerusalem.

Published one month before Heine's death, Eliot's article on that poet is considered "another evidence of George Eliot's position as one of the leading sponsors of German thought and art in nineteenth-century England."³⁸ In it, Eliot revealed not only the first pieces of Heine translated by her for an English audience, but also biographical details and a critical acumen that bears on Heine's religious ambivalence. In this article that, according to S. L. Wormley, "probably did more than any other single work in introducing to English-speaking peoples the genius that was Heine's,"³⁹ Eliot articulates the agony manifested in Heine's religious views. After quoting extensively from his works, Eliot concludes:

For our own part, we regard the paradoxical irreverence with which Heine professes his theoretical reverence as pathological, as the diseased exhibition of a predominant tendency urged into anomalous action by the pressure of pain and mental privation -- as the delirium of wit starved of its proper nourishment. It is not for us to condemn, who have never had the same burthen laid on us; it is not for pigmies

at their ease to criticize the writhings of the Titan chained to the rock.⁴⁰

Thus, Eliot reveals an understanding of Heine's suffering in her criticism. If she placed this understanding anywhere in her fiction, it is in the character of Princess Alcharisi in Daniel Deronda.

A direct source of Eliot's contacts with Judaism was her friend, Emanuel Deutsch. An expert on the Near East and a rabbi's son, he gave Eliot lessons in Hebrew. From Deutsch, Eliot is said to have absorbed the orthodox Jewish element as represented by the character of Mordecai.⁴¹ Deutsch became the leader of a "Back to Palestine" movement in 1869,⁴² thus providing Eliot with the topical appeal of that subject in the early stages of the development of Zionism. Furthermore, Eliot's mastery of the Jewish theme is evident in the favorable reception Daniel Deronda received from Jews. "Letters of fervent gratitude came to George Eliot from Jews all over the world, including the Chief Rabbi, for her depiction of Jewish life."⁴³ In his day, even Sigmund Freud, an ambivalent Jew, acknowledged Eliot's power of intellect and observation. "He was astonished that a non-Jew, George Eliot, could write about Jews and understand things 'we speak of only among ourselves.'"⁴⁴

From the time of its publication, influential Christian critics, however, have considered the Jewish

part of Daniel Deronda weak, tiresome, and ponderous. The most prominent critic taking this position is F. R. Leavis who, in The Great Tradition, suggests cutting the book in two and calling one section Gwendolen Harleth, "as I shall call the good part of Daniel Deronda."⁴⁵ Although more recent critics have demonstrated the cohesion of Daniel Deronda, the subject of its duality and the weakness of the Jewish part frequently still surface.

Of the Jewish part, the most praised section is the depiction of Princess Alcharisi. Richard Holt Hutton writes in the Spectator of September 9, 1876:

The scene in which Deronda's mother describes the invisible force which is upon her in her pain and weakness to make her, -- involuntarily almost, -- revoke her own deliberately executed and apparently successfully executed purpose, -- the magnificence of the picture of the woman, half-queen, half-actress, and yet wholly real, as she discloses her unmaternal character to the son whom she admires, but neither loves nor cares to have loving her, -- the shrinking and yet imploring tenderness which she awakens in her son, -- the constraint and yet the passion of their mutual upbraidings, and their efforts to suppress them, -- all produce an almost magical effect on the imagination, such as cannot be paralleled, we think, in any former work of this writer's. There is in this interview some of the high scenic imagination of Sir Walter Scott, blended with the greater knowledge of the individual heart possessed by George Eliot.⁴⁶

Eliot herself felt strongly in the value of the Jewish element and in the unity of the novel despite her private confession in her journal that it seems "likely to satisfy nobody."⁴⁷ Disappointed at the reception of the publication of those installments that included the Jewish

part, Eliot wrote to her friend Mme. Eugene Bodichon (Barbara Leigh Smith, an active champion of women's rights and a painter of considerable ability) on October 2, 1876:

I have had some very interesting letters both from Jews and from Christians about Deronda. Part of the scene at the club is translated into Hebrew by a German-Jewish newspaper. On the other hand a Christian (highly accomplished) thanks me for embodying the principle by which Christ wrought and will conquer. This is better than the laudation of readers who cut the book into scraps and talk nothing in it but Gwendolen. I mean everything in the book to be related to every thing else there....⁴⁸

The strongest statement by Eliot on her purpose in writing Daniel Deronda reflects on her belief in the unity of the novel as a work of humanitarianism, but it also reveals Eliot's consideration of the Jews as two people -- the ancient Hebrews of the Old Testament as well as the contemporary Jews. It is significant that Eliot addresses this statement to Harriet Beecher Stowe, herself a novelist, though a lesser one, of an oppressed people. In her letter to Stowe, Eliot endorses altruistic motives in righting the wrong of Christian arrogance in the treatment of Jews and, at the same time, she avows the debt Christians owe to the ancient Hebrews. In coupling these ideas, Eliot shows she considers the Jew as living in both the present and the past, a notion that is consistent with her treatment of the Jewess in Daniel Deronda. On October 29, 1876, Eliot wrote to Stowe:

As to the Jewish element in 'Deronda,' I expected from first to last in writing it, that it would create much stronger resistance and even repulsion than it has actually met with. But precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christians towards Jews is -- I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles, I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to. Moreover, not only towards the Jews, but towards all oriental peoples with whom we English come in contact, a spirit of arrogance and contemptuous dictatorialness is observable which has become a national disgrace to us. There is nothing I should care more to do, if it were possible, than to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs. But towards the Hebrews we western people who have been reared in Christianity, have a peculiar debt and, whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment. Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called "educated" making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting? They hardly know that Christ was a Jew. And I find men educated at Rugby supposing that Christ spoke Greek. To my feeling, this deadness to the history which has prepared half our world for us, this inability to find interest in any form of life that is not clad in the same coat-tails and flounces as our own lies very close to the worst kind of irreligion. The best that can be said of it is, that it is a sign of the intellectual narrowness -- in plain English, the stupidity, which is still the average mark of our culture.⁴⁹

The Jewess as Rebel

Isabel and Francesca in The Rebel Queen (1893)

The social system in every age is framed for the submission of women; literature is full of it, poetry is full of it, history is full of it. No other importance given to woman than that attached to her beauty.

The Rebel Queen, p. 48

As evident in a significant number of novels in which the Jewess appears, in The Rebel Queen (1893), the question of the Jewess's identity is linked to the theme of women's emancipation. This connection is not strained, either in The Rebel Queen or in such novels as Daniel Deronda, Hypatia, and Reuben Sachs which subscribe to the connection as well. In fact, the rebel Jewess and the theme of women's rights are logically related under the larger theme of pride. In The Rebel Queen, the character who exhibits egregious pride -- as a woman and as a Jew -- is Isabel Elveda, for she defies both her marriage and her religion. Exceeding Jessica of The Merchant of Venice in her rebellion, Isabel epitomizes the supreme iconoclast, the Jewess who leads a radical movement to affirm her and other women's freedom from the authority of men. Furthermore, she is characterized in opposition to her daughter, Francesca, whose rebellion from her mother endorses her willing submission to men's rule.

Isabel Elveda of The Rebel Queen conforms to the title throughout Walter Besant's novel. Preeminently defiant, Isabel separates from her husband because she refuses to submit to his rule.⁵⁰ An English Jewess, an "Oriental type,"⁵¹ with French and Italian origins, the wealthy heiress, Isabel, marries Emanuel Elveda, a penniless English Sephardic Jew, thinking his scholarly pursuits will allow her the freedom to follow her own interests without the constraints of his authority. Emanuel is a philosopher, scientist, dreamer, and, as turns out later in the novel, prophet-teacher, resembling Mordecai of Daniel Deronda. "Leave me free to act, free to speak, free to come and go as I please, as my reason and the purpose of my life may lead me,"⁵² is Isabel's plea. Notified by his wife after their marriage, Emanuel will not agree to Isabel's plan for her independence. He considers his role of master as emanating from Divine Order.⁵³ This impasse in the battle of the sexes leads to their separation with Isabel refusing to inform Emanuel that she is expecting his child.

The Jewess's defiance of her husband's wishes is shown negatively as a woman's pride, and is asserted three ways in the novel. Besant shows, too, that Isabel's rebellion, and not her daughter's is a destructive force. First of all, Isabel establishes that when she gives up her husband, she also turns her back on the Jewish commun-

ity, her "People":

... I give them up with my husband; I renounce the People. I belong to them no longer. Your old traditions, your jumble and jargon of ceremonies and superstitions, I will follow no longer. I throw them off!" With a fine gesture she renounced her People and her religion.

He shook his head. "You cannot renounce your People. Any other man or woman may renounce his race and enter another nation; you cannot. None of us may renounce our People; on our faces there is a mark set -- the seal of the Lord -- by which we know each other and are known by the world. Your People -- you can no more change them than you can shake off the seal and sign."

(p. 11)

Despite her husband's warning, Isabel severs her religious ties. She renounces her religion and fabricates an ambiguous identity for herself and her daughter, Francesca, as "Spanish Moors." But Isabel's equivocation does not hold water; not only is she condemned for her blindness to the "seal" on her face by a relative, but she also must eventually confront the disapproval of her daughter. Her cousin, Aldebert Angelo, reproaches Isabel furiously:

"Call yourself a Moor! Gar-r-r! All the world knows and laughs. Why--" he took up a hand-glass that lay upon the table and held it before her face brutally -- "what does that tell you? What does it cry aloud? Moor? No, but Jew! Jew! Jew! Jewess! Jewess! Jewess! You to be ashamed of your race? You to hide the truth of her birth from your own daughter? You to make the girl ashamed of her own father?"

(pp. 125-126)

Second, Isabel's defiance of her husband's authority a form of women's pride, also compels her to become a

prominent leader in the cause of women's emancipation. Isabel endorses nothing less than complete equality of the sexes:

"I want equal rights for women and for men. The strong woman must have as much freedom as the strong man; as much right to exercise her strength, which is strength of mind, not of body. For the weak woman I ask no more than is accorded to the weak man. She shall have whatever rights he has."

(p. 17)

She writes a definitive book on the subject of women; a description of her book and Besant's comments on it make Isabel appear foolishly unrealistic.

It [the book] appeared simultaneously in English, French, German, Italian, and Russian; it was published at the same time in London, New York, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Rome -- a bulky volume, crammed with facts and statistics, stories and illustrations. This work was called Women in Western Europe, and it was written by Isabel Elveda. The book, although so big and bulky, was published at an absurdly low price, so that everybody could get it. Unfortunately, it was too complete; it proved an encyclopedia of information on the subject, but was almost as difficult to read as a blue-book. However, the reputation of the author was made for life. She had written the book on this great subject. The position of woman in Europe from the fourth century to the present time was fully and powerfully treated -- what she suffered, how she endured, what she suffers now as wife, as mother, as worker in field and factory, shop and workroom. It was a terrible book to those who had time to read it through; nearly every paper in the world had articles upon it, and then -- people remembered the author and forgot the book. This is the way of things. You move the world easily by a faithful presentation of the truth: the world likes to be moved. Then the world goes on to be moved by something else. The only thing is to keep on

hammering. Now, in the great question of woman, her work and her pay, her hours and her treatment, what we fondly call "interests" are concerned. Many a noble income would become slender if Madame Elveda's doctrines prevailed. Where incomes must be considered, abstract rights must be neglected. I do not think that Madame Elveda's book has advanced the cause of woman's freedom by one single step. The "interests," you see, are colossal and wide-spread; they range from the great and powerful manufacturer to the husband of the laundress.

(pp. 23-24)

Third, the pride of feminism affects Isabel's daughter, for she is reared by her mother under insular conditions and seeks to break away from them. The effect of Isabel's indoctrination of her daughter, Francesca, into the principles of women's emancipation is shown to have contrary consequences. Ironically, Francesca, herself, rebels, leaving her mother's "harem" to learn of the outside world and to discover her identity as Jewess, having had her religion hidden from her by her mother. Francesca's development from an alienated young woman parroting her mother's defiance to a daughter docilely obeying her father and his religion is the point of the novel. Besant's sympathies are clearly on the side of traditional values; he endorses the supremacy of the male and the recognition of the religion of one's ancestors. While Isabel's defiant pride is condemned, Francesca's rebellion from her mother and submission to her father's authority are shown as positive actions. In their re-

bellion, waged as part of their quest for self-identity, mother and daughter are opposed.

Francesca's growth takes up most of The Rebel Queen. When the reader first meets her, Francesca is presenting a play before her mother's "Inner Circle of suffragettes." Francesca has herself written the play, called "The Rebel Queen;" and she, too, enacts the leading role, that of the biblical Vashti, infamous for her disobedience of her husband, King Ahasuerus. Francesca's notion to follow in her mother's footsteps is apparent from her part in the play and also evident in her refusal of marriage to her Christian suitor. Francesca rejects her suitor because she feels she is not suited for the confinement of old-fashioned marriage. She says to him, "How could I do justice to myself if I were always thinking about others -- about you, for instance?"

This desire for self-fulfillment, shown as a product of feminism, is reversed as a result of her education in the hands of her cousins and Emanuel. Her father is especially effective in her transformation, though neither of them know they are related until the conclusion of the novel. Francesca's transformation from a recalcitrant feminist with an ambiguous religion to a submissive Jewess devoted to her father and his religion and, possibly, to a husband as well, is so successful that at the end of the novel, Francesca acknowledges her joy in her de-

votion to her father. To her Christian suitor, Francesca also promises her transformed altruistic, humble self: "Oh, you cannot tell what a happiness it is to hear his voice, only to serve him and to obey him! A little longer, Harold! Then, if it please my Lord, and if his handmaiden still finds favor in his eyes --"54

The triumph of Francesca's submission to the authority of her father and his religion is made to appear as part of her need for a community of blood ties:

"I am happier than I have ever been in all my life before. There is nothing in the world to live for but the life of nature and God's law. I have my father to study and to obey. It is such happiness as I never imagined. And all the world has grown so real -- and I am in it, not outside it. The Passing Show has become part of the Eternal Drama in which I, too, play my humble part. I have my father and my cousins. I am no longer without kith and kin."

Francesca discovers her true identity when she unites with the Jewish community of the present and past. This solidarity is an essential consequence of her education. The Jewish life of the present is elucidated to Isabel by her cousin Clara who leads her on a tour of London's Jewish quarters. They visit a synagogue where Besant describes the women's gallery and Francesca's reaction to the scene followed by his own patronizing response to her vestigial feminism:

The women in the gallery sat or stood. They neither knelt nor sang aloud. They only sat when it was proper to sit, or stood when it

was proper to stand. They were like the women, the village women, in a Spanish or Italian church, for whom everything is done. Francesca, for the moment, felt humiliated that she should be compelled to sit apart from the congregation, railed off in the women's gallery, to have her religion done for her, without a voice of her own at all. So I have heard, indignation sometimes fills the bosom of certain ladies when they reflect upon the fact that they are excluded from the choir and forbidden even to play the organ in their own parish church.

(p. 207)

A visit to a teeming London ghetto where Polish and Russian Jews, miserable refugees of Russian persecution are crowded, opens Francesca to the variety of her people and to harsh social realities. As her cousin Nelly says to her: "You want reality. Francesca -- well -- learn Yiddish and talk to these people."⁵⁵ As guide, Nelly comments on the hopelessness of these Jews and Jewesses whose customs set them apart from the more genteel Sephardic Jews:

These are the poor creatures come over here to drive low wages lower. They've all got wives, because they marry at eighteen, and the women are worse off than the men. You can do nothing. Oh, Fran, what's the use of crying over them.

(p. 219)

But the prime agent of Francesca's spiritual education is Emanuel who, in long discourses, preaches to Francesca on the Jewish people's contribution to civilization. The capstone of Francesca's recognition of her identity as a Jewess is a trip she is planning to make

with her father to the Holy Land, a measure that assures spiritual renewal also in a number of novels in which the Jewess appears.⁵⁶

The two prominent Jewesses in The Rebel Queen, mother and daughter, are shown flouting the traditions under which each had been reared. In both cases, however, submission to a man's rule is the requirement of the Jewess's identity, and the man chosen is cast in the mold of a Hebrew prophet or rabbi. The two Jewesses are opposed in their rebellion: When Isabel defies her husband, she also abandons her religion and is condemned for it. Francesca, on the other hand, assumes her religion at the same time that she submits to her father's rule. Significantly, Francesca must abandon her mother and her independence to achieve spiritual growth. In its depiction of the Jewess, The Rebel Queen uses to advantage the subject of women's emancipation. The identity of the Jewess is explored and connected to the theme of pride as manifested in the cause of women's rights.

FOOTNOTES

¹Charles Kingsley, Hypatia; or New Foes with an Old Face, New York: Macmillan, 1877, first publ. 1853, p. 56, p. 89. All references are from this text.

²pp. 277-278.

³p. 403.

⁴p. 415.

⁵p. 470.

⁶Preface, p. vii.

⁷Anthony Trollope, Phineas Redux, 2 Vols. (London: Oxford University Press), 1951, first publ. 1873, Vol. 2, p. 225. All textual quotations are from this edition.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Phineas Redux, Vol. 2, p. 287: "The interest in the murder by no means came to an end when Phineas Finn was acquitted. The new facts which served so thoroughly to prove him innocent tended with almost equal weight to prove another man guilty. And the other man was already in custody on a charge which had subjected him to the peculiar ill-will of the British public. He is a foreigner and a Jew, by name Yosef Mealyus, -- as everyone was so very careful to call him, -- had come to England, had got himself to be ordained as a clergyman, had called himself Emilius, and had married a rich wife with a title, although he had a former wife in his own country."

¹⁰Phineas Redux, Vol. 1, p. 265.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Phineas Redux, Vol. 1, p. 270.

¹⁴Phineas Redux, Vol. 2, p. 150.

¹⁵Phineas Redux, Vol. 1, p. 150.

¹⁶Phineas Redux, Vol. 1, p. 226.

¹⁷Howard Morley Sachar, The Course of Modern Jewish History (New York: Dell, 1958), p. 141. See also Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History (New York: Oxford U. P., 1980), p. 226, the citation for the quotation by Rahel Levin Varnhagen that precedes this section, the study of Daniel Deronda.

¹⁸Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot: A Biography (New York: Oxford U. P., 1968), p. 169.

¹⁹According to Thomas Pinney, Eliot "made the notion of a determining racial heredity fundamental to The Spanish Gypsy and Daniel Deronda." See Pinney's edition of Essays of George Eliot (New York: Columbia U. P., 1963), p. 387, footnote #3. In an article Eliot wrote for the Pall Mall Gazette, March 7, 1865, she says, "... it is precisely that partition of mankind into races and nations, resulting in various national points of view or varieties of national genius, which has been the means of enriching and rendering more and more complete man's knowledge of the inner and outer world." See "A Word for the Germans" in Pinney's edition just cited.

²⁰See chapter 42 of Daniel Deronda for a full statement of Eliot's theme of national character and destiny as expressed by Mordecai in his espousal of Zionism.

²¹George Eliot, Daniel Deronda (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 598. All textual quotations are from this edition.

²²Mirah's words echo Jessica's of The Merchant of Venice. See page 92. The metaphor of the Jewish father's "world" or "house" as the location of sin and joylessness establishes the necessity of the Jewess's flight from her father and his religion.

²³Ellen Moers, Literary Women (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 194.

FOOTNOTES continued

²⁴Basil Willey, "George Eliot," in A Century of George Eliot Criticism, ed. Gordon S. Haight (Boston: Houghton Mifflin: 1965), p. 260.

²⁵Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot: A Biography (New York: Oxford U. P., 1968), p. 483.

²⁶Walter Allen, George Eliot, Masters of World Literature (New York: Macmillan, 1964), p. 165.

²⁷Varnhagen had been the husband of the celebrated Friederike Rahel, whose correspondence he published. See Gordon Haight, George Eliot: A Biography, op cit, p. 169. Also see Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, ed. The Jew in the Modern World, op cit, p. 226, source note.

²⁸Selections from George Eliot's Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1985), p. 144.

²⁹See "German Wit: Heinrich Heine," in Westminister Review of January 1856, reprinted in Thomas Pinney, ed., Essays of George Eliot, op cit., pp. 216-254.

³⁰In Sachar, op cit, p. 145.

³¹Heinrich Heine, "A Ticket of Admission to European Culture," The Jew in the Modern World, ed. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, op cit, p. 223.

³²See "The Science of Judaism," The Jew in the Modern World, ed. Paul R. Mandes-Flohr, pp. cit., pp. 182-185.

³³Quoted in Sachar, p. 144.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Quoted in Mendes-Flohr, p. 224.

FOOTNOTES continued

³⁷Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot: A Biography, op cit., p. 193.

³⁸Thomas Pinney, op cit., p. 216.

³⁹Quoted in Pinney, p. 216.

⁴⁰"German Wit: Heinrich Heine," in Pinney, p. 245.

⁴¹Selections from George Eliot's Letters, op cit., p. 421.

⁴²Walter Allen, George Eliot, op cit., pp. 165-166.

⁴³Gordon S. Haight, ed., Selections from George Eliot's Letters, p. 421.

⁴⁴Sachar, p. 407.

⁴⁵In A Century of George Eliot Criticism, p. 247.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 95-96.

⁴⁷Quoted in Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot: A Biography, p. 483.

⁴⁸Selections from George Eliot's Letters, p. 475.

⁴⁹Ibid, p. 476.

⁵⁰The novel Daniel Deronda.by George Eliot most thoroughly treats the question of domination in the relationship of men and women. In that novel three women, two of them Jewesses, must deal with a man's oppressive authority. Gwendolen Harleth, the heroine, resists and finally accepts Grandcourt's cruel subjugation. Both Jewesses, Mirah Lapidoth and Princess Alcharisi, share the problem of an authoritarian father from whom they flee.

FOOTNOTES continued

⁵¹The description of Isabel is of interest as she is distinguished as a type of Jewess whose beauty is prevalent in the English novel. The pale visage and the touches of gold are endemic to the physical portrait of the Jewess.

Her face was of the Oriental type, with which of late years we have become somewhat familiar. Formerly it was rarely seen, except occasionally at the theatre. Now we see it everywhere -- at the stalls, at private views, on the stage, in studios, at concerts, at public functions. There are as many Oriental as Occidental types. This girl was not possessed of the almond eyes, black, long, soft, and languishing, which poets used to associate with the East; she could not be painted as Leila, or the Favorite of the Harem, or anything of that kind; nor was her complexion olive; nor had she a mass of black hair. On the contrary, her eyes were brown, clear and cold and keen; tonight there was no languishing in them and no tenderness; her features were finely, clearly cut, the curve of her lips well defined, her mouth full, firm -- even hard -- her nose somewhat aquiline, her forehead more square than seems to some consistent with perfect beauty; her hair, brown, abundant, was rolled up and round her head, confined by a ribbon or band in which gleamed small gold coins; her face was pale, but not anaemic; nor had it that morbid pallor which belongs to low vitality, and causes healthy men to shudder and turn aside. It was pale as certain artful hues of satin are pale, with a faint touch of color to lend it warmth.

(p. 4)

⁵²Walter Besant, The Rebel Queen (New York: Arno Press, 1975), Reprint of 1893 edition published by Harper, New York, p. 10. All quotations cited are from this edition.

⁵³Ibid., p. 8.

FOOTNOTES continued

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 389

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 216.

⁵⁶For example, the premise of Disraeli's Tancred, effected through the title character, is the quest for and the discovery of spiritual and political rebirth in the land of the Bible.

CHAPTER 6

THREE ANGLO-JEWISH WRITERS:
TRADITION IN SELF IMAGES

As political and social restraints of nineteenth-century England lessened, Anglo-Jewish writers raised their voices in a literary marketplace that, before the 1840's, had been virtually monopolized by Christian authors. Writing for a dual audience of Christians and Jews, "Anglo-Jewish novelists who chose to write about Jews presented stereotyped Jews, dilemmas with which the community struggled, attitudes that changed during the century, and projections for the future of Judaism."¹ During a period of accelerated acculturation and assimilation, Anglo-Jewish writers basically reflected, challenged, and redefined Jewish identity. As religious bonds of the Jewish community weakened, and as efforts to convert the Jews intensified,² Anglo-Jewish writers responded to their predicament with references to nostalgia, cosmopolitanism, and estrangement, including self-hate. The Jewess figured prominently in these literary responses where her portrait accommodated traditional elements to the new circumstances and pressures of assimilation. The Jewess's portrait continued to reveal either an obedient martyr or a rebellious

apostate, frequently and significantly associated with her father or her people. Moreover, Anglo-Jewish writers brought to their work their own authenticity as they focused on peculiarities of Jewish customs and as they responded to correct misconceptions about Jews by Christians. Within this context of social and literary change, Anglo-Jewish writers used the traditional Jewess in new ways. As pioneer or apostate or as obedient or prodigal daughter, she continued to manifest rebelliousness or fidelity, however, the Jewess's basic traits in relation to her father and her people.

Invariably, Anglo-Jewish authors who attempted to write realistically about Jews described them in a family setting. In these novels, the Jewess remained an object of conversion, the subject of intermarriage, and the appendage of her father. In novels written by Christians, the Jewess was also frequently the target of conversion as she mediated between Christian society and her father or her people. Although the Jewess enacted similar familiar roles in novels written by Christians and Jews, she was perceived differently by Anglo-Jewish writers primarily because they considered the problem of Judaism differently. The Jewess in Anglo-Jewish novels was used to fulfill the perceptions about Judaism held by these authors. Moreover, as negative intimate details of Jewish manners were exposed by critical Anglo-Jewish authors, the Jewess emerged unflatteringly,

reflecting obnoxious prototypes, such as Noah's shrewish wife. Notions about the current state of Judaism held by Anglo-Jewish writers thus helped to determine how traditional elements associated with the Jewess were used.

In effect, the Jewess in Anglo-Jewish novels is the means by which the Jew's changing social status may be measured. She is also a reflection of Jewish self-hatred in those Anglo-Jewish novels that expose the materialistic or trivial values which had supplanted ancient beliefs as a result of assimilation. The Anglo-Jewish novelists who are critical of Jews create powerful and bitter portraits that vie with the evil Jews created by Christian writers. But not all Anglo-Jewish writers use the Jewess negatively. The Jewess stands ready to act as a savior of her people when nobility is needed as a solution to a condition perceived by the Anglo-Jewish writer as a crisis of Judaism.

Each of the three novelists discussed in this section have special concerns that are representative of Anglo-Jewish writers. Of this group, Julia Frankau, writing as a social critic, presents the strongest negative portraits of Jews and Jewesses. In Dr. Phillips: A Powerful Realistic Novel (1889)³ Frankau exposes the superficiality of Jewish middle class society and the wickedness of the title character. In Children of the Ghetto (1892), Israel Zangwill creates a complex East End community, revealing the social, economic, and political dynamics that are changing

its Orthodox Jewish inhabitants under the pressure of assimilation. Among the colorful characters Zangwill creates is the ghetto Jewess who forges a pioneering, cosmopolitan Jewish identity under the influence of her environment. In Lesser's Daughter (1894), Cecily Ullman Sidgwick⁴ concentrates on the nature of anti-Semitism and the estrangement of a Jewish father and his daughter. The Jewess takes part significantly in these novels in which social manners, assimilation, and anti-Semitism are respectively treated.

J U L I A F R A N K A U

Training an unsparing, critical eye on the prosperous Jewish middle class that populated the Maida Vale section of London of the 1880's, Julia Frankau "aroused a storm of indignation," necessitating a preface to the second edition of Dr. Phillips, A Maida Vale Idyll (first printed in 1887) wherein "she denied that she had attacked the people whom she described, and of whom she was one."⁵ As a writer who stirs controversy among the reading public, Frankau is a precursor of Philip Roth whose early work, Goodbye Columbus (1959), was greeted with strong protests from the traditional Jewish community in the United States for similar reasons. An early "angry" Anglo-Jewish writer, Frankau expresses bitterness as she describes her Jews as nouveaux

riches. Her Jewesses are, for the most part, silly, vulgar, graceless, narrow-minded women and her title character is an evil adulterer and murderer who deceives his wife and the other gullible Jewish women by introducing his secret Christian mistress into the Jewesses's social circle where she is admired by them because of her outer refinement.

Frankau's anger is directed at the folly of Jewish parochialism, materialism, and social ambition. Theirs is a society, according to Frankau, in a state of flux; she must describe it as it is before "as must be in the natural order of things, it decays or amalgamates." (p. 117) Before she begins the narration, Frankau inserts her cynical view of the condition of English Judaism of the 1880's. Frankau follows a description of a typical soirée of Portsmouth Road with the invective of a biblical prophet:

The red light still played on the money, on the cards, the diamonds, on eager faces and grasping fingers. The play went on almost in silence; no light jest or merry quip, no sacrilegious sound of laughter disturbed the devotion of Judaism to its living God. such mystic words as "Solo," "Misere," "You're loo again," alone broke the silence.

Many religions have had their day upon this earth, have been born and exalted, whether in the stable or on the Mount, but the great Single Deity, the "I am the Lord thy God, and thou shalt have no other," that binds Judaism together, is as invincible now as it was when Moses had to destroy the Golden Calf on Mount Horeb. And that Deity is Gain. (p. 12)

Card playing and the acquisition of wealth are vehemently criticized as symptoms of a failing, stifling, isolating faith. Frankau captures the anxiety and emptiness of the affluent Anglo-Jewish society of her day as follows:

There is a whole nation dwelling apart in an inviolable seclusion, which they at once cultivate, boast of, and are ashamed at. There are houses upon houses in the West Central district, in Maida Vale, in the City which are barred to Christians, to which the very name of Jew is an open sesame.

All the burning questions of the hour are to them a dead letter; art, literature and politics exist not for them. They have but one aim, the acquisition of wealth. Playing cards at each other's houses is their sole experience of the charms of social intercourse; their interests are bounded by their homes and those of their neighboring bretheren.

(p. 118)

Within this narrow community, Jewesses play significant roles. Those Jewesses who remain in Maida Vale earn Frankau's invective; the little Jewess, Florrie, who leaves, is treated cynically. A figure of parody, Florrie, the meek Jewess rebel, is treated as a mock heroine who breaks with a "noble," empty tradition when she runs away to marry her Christian lover.

Both the plot and subplot of Frankau's novel reflect the provincialism of Maida Vale where the only Jew who is permitted worldliness is the Machiavellian Dr. Phillips. The major plot follows the escapades of Dr. Phillips whose royal station as a "ladies' doctor" gives him the freedom

to carry on a secret affair with the Christian Mrs. Cameron. The subplot involves the elopement of the Jew-ess, Florrie Collings, with her Christian lover, Alec Murphy, assisted by Mrs. Cameron. Florrie's attempt to break away from the constraints of her family and its narrow traditions, reveal a compliant Jewess, like Abigail of The Jew of Malta, who is, nowever, called upon to rebel against her family and her people like Jessica of The Merchant of Venice.

First and foremost, Florrie is submissive, and is pursued by her Christian lover precisely because of this quality:

A season's waltzing, a few days together on the river, an evening or two like the present had proved to him conclusively that Florrie Collings was the girl in the world to make him happy. She was yielding; he was masterful. He knew or thought he knew she loved him; and a certain subtle flattery in that preference gratified his vanity; perhaps turned his liking into love. (p. 81)

Significantly, Alec does not desire Florrie for her father's money. He informs Mr. Collings emphatically and insultingly:

"Did I ask you for money, or think of your money? You can keep your dirty money-bags; the only thing any of you seem to have any care for. I neither want you, nor your money. I want your daughter" (p. 116)

Florrie is not presented as an heiress. When she deserts her family, she leaves without any inheritance. Her simplicity, submission, and her disheveled prettiness are pre-

sented as qualities that elect her for Christian rescue. Florrie's sister, Ray, is presented as the "bad sister," a contrast to Florrie's appearance as a desirably timid, untidy French china doll:

Mrs. Collings' daughters were considered to be well brought up girls. The elder was stout and dark. She wore glasses and her manner was dictatorial.

Her sister was her exact antithesis. She had hair of an auburn shade, and blue eyes. Her curls were untidy and dishevelled, and the color in her cheeks was vivid and glowing. Her lips were carmine, and her figure had none of the angularities of girlhood; it was ample, almost redundant. She looked like a French china doll, but was more disorderly in her make up, and more irregular in her coloring. (pp. 7-8)

Obedient and simple, Florrie is prepared for her rebellious act, her capitulation to a Christian marriage, by an awakening -- to love and to bigotry. Frankau enters the mind of the love-sick Florrie to describe a vision of love that overrides religious differences:

How wide a vista opened out in the mind of the little Jewish girl, as she lay there in the arms of Christianity. How centuries of bigotry and generations of prejudice melted away in the flame of her passion. The spirit of separation that had rolled heavy between her love and her self seemed uplifted. She could see no Judaism and feel no Christianity. Formless visions of light and knowledge floated before her with their vanishing shadows flitting by the azure heavens beyond. It was love, love, nothing but love, and the whole world must be love, now that she was of that world of love. He clasped her ever closer, and she floated with him into azure skies, and drifted with him into fathomless seas, and all of love. (p. 79)

Yet, recognizing the obstacles to marrying a Christian, Florrie herself tries to explain to Alec "something of the Draconian laws of the creed in which she had been educated." (p. 81) Not to be dissuaded, Alec does not understand. Seeking another way to have Alec, Florrie ingenuously asks the sophisticated Mrs. Cameron if Alec would become a Jew. Mary Cameron's response opens "a new view of her religion for Florrie," for the answer is, "Good Heavens! do you think a white man would consent to go about with his face permanently blackened?"

The education of the simple Jewess, Florrie, ends with her acceptance of a Christian marriage. Frankau follows the thinking of young Florrie as she contemplates elopement with a Christian. In this passage, Frankau's ironic style cynically conveys her view of Florrie's heroism. A simple, weak, love-sick Jewess is called on to act nobly, heroically, breaking the bonds of "generations of fidelity."

Frankau's little heroine thinks:

The idea of a runaway marriage at a registrar's office was an appalling one to this jealously guarded and well brought up Jewish maiden. The idea of losing her lover was equally terrible. Between the two agonizing alternatives, she knew no way to choose. The misery of her lonely and unsympathetic life with Ray, [her sister] uncheered by hope -- for Alec had said he would never see her any more -- contrasted with the terrors of an immediate marriage and the abandonment of her people.

She loved her father and her mother, her little brothers and her sister. How the Jewish people

cling and have clung to each and to their creed, is a matter of history; it was the strength born of generations of fidelity, that kept Florrie from her lover's arms.

But she was very weak, miserably weak, and she loved him very dearly. . . . So Florrie was hurried to the train. (pp. 123-124)

The central and final object of Frankau's criticism is the Jewish family itself, as it rigidly adheres to superficial standards of morality that rule out human compassion and forgiveness. In the Collings family, the Jewess's father is willing to forgive his "favorite daughter," but Florrie's mother is unyielding in her narrow conventionality. The Collings are described at a social evening with their friends, the other Jewish families of Maida Vale who gather together to play cards.

Mrs. Collings came too, tearful and broken in spirit; her resentment against Florrie was deep, and grew deeper every time Mrs. Lucas or Mrs. Montague Levy made some sneering remark about "well brought-up girls;" but Mr. Collings was yearning for his favorite daughter, and the Collings' ménage was rendered uncomfortable by this difference in sentiment among the elders. Mr. Collings wanted to forgive his child and receive her again; but Mrs. Collings dwelt on the bad example that would be to the others.... (p. 167)

I S R A E L Z A N G W I L L

She was the heroine of her own book; yes, and the hero, too, for he was but another side of herself translated into the masculine.

Children of the Ghetto, p. 457

In Children of the Ghetto (1892), Israel Zangwill's East End London teems with Orthodox Jews and their children

struggling in poverty as they confront within their families conflicts of generations, culture, and beliefs -- the problems of assimilation. The struggles of these Jews are heroic, yet humorous, for Zangwill writes with "laughter behind the tears," the tragi-comic mode characteristic of Yiddish story telling. Above all, Zangwill is sympathetic, and his compassion, emanating from his nostalgia, makes him treat his characters affectionately. His worst characters are not evil; they are eccentric, objects not of ridicule, but of loving, indulgent humor or of pity. In fact, the subtitle of Children of the Ghetto, called A Study of a Peculiar People, emphasizes his characters as unique types while it comments on his artistic form. Of all the Anglo-Jewish writers, Israel Zangwill is the most important artistically and ideologically. The five English editions and four American editions of his Children of the Ghetto attest to his popularity as well.

Zangwill dignifies the ghetto experience. Lyrically, he enobles Judaism's ritual and symbol as civilized forces there:

The Ghetto welcomed the Bride with proud song and humble feast, and sped her parting with optimistic symbolisms of fire and wine, of spice and light and shadow. All around their neighbors sought distraction in the blazing public-houses, and their tipsy bellowings resounded through the streets and mingled with the Hebrew hymns. Here and there the voice of a beaten woman rose on the air. But no Son of the Covenant was among the revellers or the

wife-beaters; the Jews remained a chosen race, a peculiar people, faulty enough, but redeemed at least from the grosser vices, a little human islet won from the waters of animalism by the genius of ancient engineers. For while the genius of the Greek or the Roman, the Egyptian or the Pheonician, survives but in word and stone, the Hebrew word alone was made flesh.

(p. 234)

The Jewesses who populate Zangwill's ghetto fulfill, for the most part, essential roles as sustainers of domestic life under harsh conditions. In the rich texture of ghetto life, Zangwill's Jewesses squeeze the most value out of a penny when they shop, fry fish expertly, sew button-holes in a sweatshop, take part in the playful and serious pursuit of match-making, and tyrannize over their married children. Zangwill's attitude toward his ghetto Jewesses reveals sentiment and melodrama. In a typical passage he elucidates the ghetto Jewess's sexuality -- earthy and terrifyingly seductive:

Yet there was an indefinable touch of romance and pathos about the tawdriness and witch-like ugliness, and an underlying identity about the crowd of Polish, Russian, German, Dutch Jewesses, mutually apathetic, and pressing forwards. Some of them had infants at their bare breasts, who drowsed quietly with intervals of ululation. The women devoid of shawls had nothing around their necks to protect them from the cold, the dusky throats were exposed, and sometimes even the first hooks and eyes of the bodice were unnecessarily undone. The majority wore cheap earrings and black wigs with preternaturally polished hair; where there was no wig, the hair was touzled.

(p. 5)

Zangwill explores the "romance and pathos" of these ghetto Jewesses, but also introduces in the centrally cast character of the Jewess, Esther Answell, a writer and intellectual who, in an environment of profound transition, seeks to redeem her people, to lead them to a promised land in a messianic quest. Standing as a symbol of her people, Esther is clearly placed in a biblical and Jewish tradition that considers the matriarchs and other virtuous Hebrew women as self-sacrificing saviors of their people.⁶ Not only is Zangwill's leading Jewess named after the biblical Esther, but she is also identified in her first reference as "looking in her oriental coloring like a miniature Rebecca going to the well." (p. 3) Zangwill does not belabor the obvious connections between his modern day Jewess redeemer and her biblical prototypes. Instead he concentrates on developing a character who undergoes a spiritual journey of deliverance that refers to the religious, political, and social ferment of Anglo-Judaism of the 1880's. The use of Esther as a symbolic character representing Judaism is explicitly stated in Zangwill's narrative. Prior to proposing marriage to Esther, the Oxford educated Orthodox newspaper editor, Raphael Leon, says to her:

"... Somehow you seem to stand for Judaism, too. I cannot disentwine my hopes; I have come to conceive your life as an allegory of Judaism, the offspring of a great and tragic past with the germs of a rich blossoming, yet wasting

with an inward canker. I have grown to think
of its future as somehow bound up with yours.
(p. 535)

In Book One of Children of the Ghetto, Esther travels the first part of her journey, experiencing the poverty and Orthodoxy of the East End ghetto itself as the formative beginning of her quest for spiritual fulfillment. By the end of Book Two, "Grandchildren of the Ghetto," the second and final part of Esther's journey, she leaves England altogether for the "hopes and dreams across the great waters towards the New World."

During this journey and education, Esther gives up opportunities that would provide her security or love: a comfortable position as intellectual and writer in a rich Jewish household and marriage to an Orthodox newspaper editor who is also an Oxford don. Self-abnegation is a key idea for Zangwill in Esther's development. It is complemented by his notion of schnorring, the begging of poor Jews who serve an essential social and religious purpose by allowing the rich to extend charity to them. Esther is considered "the schnorrer's daughter,"⁷ and thus must accept this ambiguously grand and low aspect of her Jewish identity. Thus, to an allegorically cast Jewess who represents Judaism, Zangwill joins the tradition of her self-sacrifice as well as that of the motif of the Jew's Daughter, particularly in his notion of "the schnorrer's daughter."

At first, Esther Ansell is presented as the "little mother" in a household that includes a permanently unemployed father, a complaining grandmother, and several younger children. Her experience as a dutiful Jewish "child of the ghetto" is formative.

... she was pious to the point of fanaticism and could scarce conceive the depths of degradation of which she heard vague horror-struck talk. There were Jews about -- grown-up men and women, not insane -- who struck lucifer matches on the Sabbath and housewives who carelessly mixed their butter-plates with their meat-plates even when they did not actually eat butter with meat. Esther promised herself that, please God, she would never do anything so wicked when she grew up. She at least would never fail to light the Sabbath candles nor to kasher the meat. Never was child more alive to the beauty of duty, more open to the appeal of virtue, self-control, abnegation. She fasted till two o'clock on the Great White Fast when she was seven and accomplished the perfect feat at nine. When she read a simple little story in a prize-book, inculcating the homely moralities at which the cynic sneers, her eyes filled with tears and her breast with unselfish and dutiful determination. She had something of the temperament of the stoic, fortified by that spiritual pride which does not look for equal goodness in others....

(pp. 102-103)

Characterized by self-abnegation, Esther's Jewish identity is accompanied by her sense as an English girl. "Esther led a double life, just as she spoke two tongues." Her schooling is responsible for her vivid realization of herself as English; yet the experience of the Jewish ghetto remains everlasting and dominant:

... far keener than her pride in Judas Maccabaeus was her pride in Nelson and Wellington; she rejoiced to find that her ancestors had always beaten the French from the days of Cressy and Poitiers to the days of Waterloo, that Alfred the Great was the wisest of kings, and that Englishmen dominated the world and had planted colonies in every corner of it, that the English language was the noblest in the world and men speaking it had invented railway trains, steamships, telegraphs, and everything worth inventing. Esther absorbed these ideas from the school reading books. The experience of a month will overlay the hereditary bequest of a century. And yet, beneath all, the prepared plate remains most sensitive to the old impressions.

(p. 103)

In the ghetto, Esther's book learning is accomplished in school and in the rooms of Dutch Derby, a lone Jewess seamstress with an old collection of the London Journal, "more precious to Esther than mines of Ind." With this background, Esther grows into "a young woman avid of martyrdom for the happiness of the world." (p. 397) Her intellectual precocity and writing ability become her tickets to admission to the Jewish society outside of the ghetto. Her patrons, the wealthy Henry Goldsmiths, take her into their West End home. Esther's yearning for "a fuller, wider life, for larger knowledge" is realized when she is educated by them at London University where she receives a scholarship in logic. Based on her observations of the new Jewish society in which she is placed, Esther writes a book that is published under a pseudonym.

Bitterly critical of West End Jewish society in the manner of Julia Frankau and Amy Levy, this book, Mordecai Josephs, scandalizes the community that had welcomed her. In fact, Zangwill shows that this affluent, privileged Jewish community does include elements of Jewish soul-searching in the arguments and ideologies of some of the characters, but they are ineffectively petty, jaded, or impractical to Esther. Revealing her authorship to one person only, Raphael Leon, the Oxford-educated editor of an Orthodox newspaper, Esther leaves the Goldsmith's protection because, as she informs Mrs. Goldsmith, "the sphere in which you move is too high for me; I cannot assimilate with it." Repelled by the notion of remaining a schnorrer, "abusing the bounty of her benefactors," she returns as a teacher to her "humble sphere" on Royal Street in the ghetto:

She would go back to them, back to her true home, where loving faces waited to welcome her, where hearts were open and life was simple and the weary brain could find rest from the stress and struggle of obstinate questionings of destiny. Life was so simple at bottom; it was she that was so perversely complex. She would go back to her father whose naive devout face swam glorified upon a sea of tears; yea, and back to her father's primitive faith like a tired lost child that spies its home at last.

(p. 461)

In the scene with Raphael Leon in which Esther reveals her authorship of Mordecai Josephs and announces her decision to leave the protection of the Goldsmiths,

a critical juncture in the narrative, Zangwill makes a point essential to his theme and efficacious to his allegory. He shows that Esther and Raphael are two parts of one principle of an evolving Jewish identity. Esther is the standard bearer of sacrifice and altruism, but also a prophet and social critic who exposes "mean and evil things," while Raphael is a spokesman for traditional Orthodox Judaism in a contemporary English form:

He started reading Mordecai Josephs, forgetting to close the drawer. Passage after passage suffused his eyes with tears; a soft magic hovered over the nervous sentences; he read her eager little soul in every line. Now he understood. How blind he had been! How could he have missed seeing? Esther stared at him from every page. She was the heroine of her own book; yes, and the hero, too, for he was but another side of herself translated into the masculine. The whole book was Esther, the whole Esther and nothing but Esther, for even the satirical descriptions were but the revolt of Esther's soul against mean and evil things. He turned to the great love-scene of the book, and read on, fascinated, without getting further than the chapter.

(p. 457)

Esther neither remains in the ghetto of her childhood nor accepts the marriage proposal of Raphael Leon. The spiritual center of Esther's childhood no longer exists in the ghetto where the new generation has drifted away:

The synagogue did not attract; it spoke Hebrew to those whose mother-tongue was English; its appeal was made through channels which conveyed nothing to them; it was out of touch with their real lives; its liturgy prayed for the restoration of sacrifices which

they did not want and for the welfare of Babylonian colleges that had ceased to exist. The old generation merely believed its beliefs; if the new as much as professed them, it was only by virtue of the old home associations and the inertia of indifference. Practically, it was without religion.
(p. 439)

Raphael Leon seeks Esther in the ghetto to convince her of the authenticity of her Jewishness: "You are a Jewess not only in blood, but in spirit. Deny it as you may, you have all the Jewish ideals, -- they are implied in your attack on our society." (p. 531) Repeating the theme of self-sacrifice, Raphael appeals to Esther to accept him on this principle:

"Selfishness is the only real atheism; aspiration unselfishness, the only real religion. In the language of our Hillel, this is the text of the Law; the rest is commentary. You and I are at one in believing that, despite all and after all, the world turns on righteousness, on justice" -- his voice became a whisper -- "on love."

(p. 531)

Esther, however, chooses another way to seek her identity as a Jew. She leaves for America where the promise of a new Judaism beckons. Significantly, she books passage in steerage, "not because she could not afford cabin fare, but from her morbid impulse to identify with poverty." (p. 542) Representing a people existing for centuries in despair, Esther articulates the permanent condition of the Jew. Suffering, the habitual state of martyrdom, characterizes the Jew, and the Jewess Esther, is singled

out to identify unremittingly with the downtrodden, carrying the burden of perpetual despair:

Bent on self-effacement, attuned to the peace of despair, she almost resented the solicitation to be happy; she had suffered so much that she had grown to think suffering her natural element, out of which she could not breathe; she was almost in love with misery. And in so sad a world was there not something ignoble about happiness, a selfish aloofness from the life of humanity? And, illogically blent with this questioning, and strengthening her recoil, was an obstinate conviction that there could never be happiness for her, a being of ignominious birth, without roots in life, futile, shadowy, out of relation to the tangible solidities of ordinary existence.

(p. 534)

Sailing for America on the same ship with Esther is another "child of the ghetto" by way of Russia, the Rev. Joseph Strelitski, who, like Esther, is quitting the effete Jewish community of London's West End. His powerful imagery and rhetoric permeate the conclusion of Children of the Ghetto, leaving the reader with the impression that Strelitski serves an allegorical purpose in accompanying Esther to the New World. This is a sample of the Rabbi Strelitski's view of contemporary Anglo-Judaism and his vision for the future:

"This English community, with its squabbles about rituals, its four Chief Rabbis all in love with one another, its stupid Sephardim, its narrow-minded Reformers, its fatuous self-importance, its invincible ignorance, is but an ant-hill, a negligible quantity in the future of the faith. ... It is in America, then, that the last great battle of Judaism will be fought out; amid the temples of the New World it will make its last struggle to survive. ... Our racial isolation is a mere superstition unless

turned to great purposes. We have done nothing as Jews for centuries, though our Old Testament has always been an arsenal of texts for the European champions of civil and religious liberty. We have been unconsciously pioneers of modern commerce, diffusers of folklore and what not. Cannot we be a conscious force making for nobler ends? Could we not, for instance, be the link of federation among the nations, acting everywhere in favor of Peace? Could we not be the centre of a new sociologic movement in each country, as a few American Jews have been the centre of the Ethical Culture movement?"

(pp. 516-517)

Thus, in his studies of Anglo-Jewish immigrant life in Children of the Ghetto, Israel Zangwill invents a parable that expresses the Anglo-Jew's search for spiritual fulfillment during a period of profound social change. Singled out is a Jewess and intellectual, Esther Ansell, who symbolizes her people's quest for a religious resurgence. Forging her identity in the poverty and Orthodoxy of London's East End ghetto, the training ground for self sacrifice, Esther is awakened to the possibility of a wider life through education. Her experience in London, however, leaves her desire for noble self-sacrifice unfulfilled. Esther therefore sails for America where she hopes to take part in a spiritual rebirth. Esther's destiny, after her arrival in America is unknown. The possibility, however, of joining the Zionist movement is not ruled out, only "impractical for the moment." (p. 517)

In Children of the Ghetto, Israel Zangwill makes three salient points linked to Jewish life in late nineteenth-century England: One, the future of Judaism is not in England. Two, the ghetto experience is spiritually formative. And three, the reclamer of Israel is a child of the ghetto -- an intellectual, a martyr, and a Jewess.

C E C I L Y U L L M A N S I D G W I C K

The three subjects of intermarriage, anti-Semitism, and the estrangement of a daughter from her Jewish father are treated by Cecily Ullman Sidgwick in her novel of the upper middle class in Lesser's Daughter (1894). Together, these subjects reflect on the motif of the Jew's Daughter and on the portrait of the Jewess as victim or rebel. In this realistic novel, the Jew's Daughter overcomes her alienation from her father by severing her bond with her Christian, anti-Semitic mother and the obnoxious values she represents. The basic elements of parental loyalty are similar to those depicted by Walter Besant in The Rebel Queen (1892) in which an emancipated, headstrong daughter, the product of her mother's imperiousness, is reconciled with her Jewish father and his conservative tradi-

tions. In Lesser's Daughter, however, the question of filial devotion is directly connected to anti-Semitism so that the reconciliation of father and daughter is perceived as a just compensation of the Jewish father for his mistreatment by his anti-Semitic wife.

Sidgwick's premise is the ill-fated match of a Jew and a bigot. Lesser Bremen, a poor English Jew who inherits a fortune, marries the beautiful, intolerant Corona Czernovitz from Austria. From this union is produced a daughter, Aline, who acts as a pawn in her parent's warped relationship. As a husband, Lesser is depicted as a passive, "distressingly plain" person, dominated by his wife who treats him contemptuously. Presented as a foreign expression that is more hateful than its English version, Corona's anti-Semitism is described in this fashion:

His wife's tone, when she alluded to the race from which he sprang, always offended him sorely. The fact that her marriage was not recognized by her own Church had deepened her prejudice and quickened her dislike. She held aloof from her husband's people with a violence that in England is quite unusual. She had brought traditions with her that twenty years of freer, more generous air did not help her throw off.

(p. 36)

Corona had married his money; but she turned from him with aversion. She had never cast off the prejudice her race harbours against him. Even London, so tolerant, hospitable, and quick of appreciation, could not teach

her better. Her real objection to her husband was that he had Jewish blood in his veins.

(p. 54-55)

As a father, however, Lesser extends to his daughter the protection she does not give to herself in her injudicious social escapades. Moreover, he offers to his daughter the love she does not return until the end of the novel. Lesser's solicitude for his daughter is indeed difficult for him to reveal in view of his wife's imperiousness. A half-Jewess, Aline does show in her appearance her Jewish inheritance, much to her mother's dislike:

Aline Bremen, though she could not compare with her mother, was by no means without good looks. She had inherited her father's insignificant stature, but her figure was light and lissome. She had thick, fair hair, lively eyes of no particular shade, and an unremarkable nose and mouth. But the general effect of her features distinctly showed her Jewish descent, and this in her mother's opinion destroyed their charm.

(p. 11)

Although Corona battles Lesser over control of Aline, Corona is unable to accept the girl because of her own irrepressible prejudice: "How can I be mother to such a Ghetto face?" (p. 18)

Lesser is not demonstrative, yet he yearns for a loving, loyal relationship with his daughter. He is distressed at his daughter's flighty behavior, a result

of his wife's influence in advancing shallow, modish manners, especially social climbing. Sidgwick describes Lesser's traditional values, the disappointment he feels at his marriage, and the hope he places in his daughter:

The way in which his daughter used her eyes vexed Mr. Bremen, so did a certain toss of the head and an affected pout. His feminine ideal matched his conservative, honourable, and rather dull opinions. He admired a simple, handsome creature who obeyed her parents or her husband, and grew a little stout towards middle age. It distressed him terribly to see his daughter given up to dress and pleasure; to observe that she could flirt. His marriage had brought him grief instead of happiness; so he had set his heart on his child. Surely she would not fail him.

(pp. 52-53)

Lesser further recognizes that his daughter's marriage would affect his relationship with her. Knowing he has little influence on Aline, Lesser reflects on the man who will marry her: "Aline's marriage was a matter of great moment to Mr. Bremen. Whether she drifted wholly from him or approached him with growing affection depended largely on her future husband's influence." (p. 31)

Lesser's recognition of his daughter's husband as instrumental to his own relationship with her may be seen as an elaboration of the motif of the Jew's Daughter, a pervasive tradition in the portrait of the Jewess. An essential element in the motif of the Jew's Daughter

is the father's ability to protect his daughter from a predatory male, the suitor. The Jew's weak position has always added to the Jewess's vulnerability. In Lesser's Daughter, the father's weakness, established throughout most of the novel, is dispelled at the moment Lesser plans with an acceptable suitor for his daughter a strategy to save her from his wife's reckless social ambitions. (The suitor Corona selects for Aline turns out to be an imposter.) In order to rescue his daughter from her wicked mother and to assure his own connection to her, Lesser forms an alliance with Charley Redruth, the acceptable suitor for Aline. At the conclusion of the novel, before he dies from the effort, Lesser manages to rescue his daughter who has been kidnapped by the suitor selected by his wife. In the final reconciliation scene, Lesser is vindicated by his daughter's act of breaking with his wife: "She shrank from her mother's touch as if it seared her." In addition, Aline dramatically accepts responsibility for her father's death, implicating Corona, as well: "We have killed him, you and I," Aline says. Thus, the Jew's Daughter is firmly established as her father's daughter in this family conflict between husband and wife. By accepting her own share of responsibility for her father's death, she implicates her mother, driving her away. By accepting her

father's choice of marriage partner, she perpetuates his influence in her new role as wife.

Lesser's choice, Charley Redruth, is not "well born;" his grandfather was a tobacconist. Neither is he a Jew. But Charlie seems genuinely in love with Aline: "Charley Redruth ... knew very well that most people believed the heiress attracted him more than the girl. But as a matter of fact, this was not true, and the girl's father had been acute enough to see it." (p. 31) This is the deciding factor in Charley's favor. In return for her filial devotion, the Jew's Daughter will marry the man whom her father understands will be suitable for her. In Lesser's Daughter, although the Jew's Daughter marries a Christian, she accepts the wisdom and authority of her father, a Jew who makes his decision in a secular, accultured context, but in reaction to an anti-Semitic wife.

FOOTNOTES

Cited Texts:

Julia Frankau, Dr. Phillips: A Powerful Realistic Novel (New York: Minerva Pub. Co., 1889).

Israel Zangwill, Children of the Ghetto in Selected Works of Israel Zangwill (Philadelphia: Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 1938).

Cecily Ullman Sidgwick, Lesser's Daughter (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894).

¹Linda Gertner Zatlin, The Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Jewish Novel (Boston: Twayne, 1981), p. 133.

²Efforts to convert the Jews intensified as a result of the Jews' acculturation, a process that Christian missionaries assumed made them susceptible to conversion. The London Society for Promoting Christianity among Jews was founded in 1809. The nineteenth century also witnessed the political emancipation of the Jews in England. In 1858, the removal of civil and legal disabilities made Jews eligible for election to the House of Commons, and in 1866, Jews became eligible for election to the House of Lords.

³The original title published in England in 1887 was Dr. Phillips: A Maida Vale Idyll. Julia Frankau also wrote under the name Frank Danby.

⁴Cecily Ullman Sidgwick (Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick) also wrote under the name of Mrs. Andrew Dean.

⁵Montagu Frank Modder, The Jew in the Literature of England to the End of the Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia: Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 1944), p. 325.

FOOTNOTES continued

⁶The Jewess as symbol of Israel's piety is a tradition evident in the Talmud and the Midrash. These sources "ascribe the redemption of Israel from Egypt to the chastity of the Jewish women and their faithfulness to the Jewish nationality." Moses Hess, "Returning Home" in The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History, ed. Paul R. Mendes Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (New York: Oxford U. P., 1980), p. 239.

The rabbinical tradition also reveals "a great love of feminine imagery. Again and again the most poignant passages to be found in rabbinic literature will involve a female voice or image. One need think perhaps only of one of the most famous of rabbinic homilies on the destruction of Jerusalem, in which, after the Patriarchs, Moses, Jeremiah, and the Prophets all stand up to accuse God of His unfaithfulness in allowing His Temple to be destroyed, it is only mother Rachel, in talking about how she set aside her jealousy of Leah, who can shame God into setting aside his jealousy of the petty and foolish idols that Israel had taken to worship." Arthur Green, "Bride, Spouse, Daughter: Images of the Feminine in Classical Jewish Sources" in On Being a Jewish Feminist, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Schocken, 1983), p. 254.

A learned Jew and a lyrical writer, Zangwill reveals the influence of this rabbinical tradition in his own work.

⁷Zangwill is the author of The King of the Schnorrers (1894) in which his notion is developed in a full-scale treatment of what is considered a classic of Anglo-Jewish fiction.

CHAPTER 7

THE JEWESS WRITES:

GRACE AGUILAR AND AMY LEVY

As Jewesses who write, Grace Aguilar (1816-1847) and Amy Levy (1861-1889) are a study in contrasts. Separated in time by about fifty years, they epitomize the change in the Anglo-Jewish novel that took place in nineteenth-century England from the thirties to the eighties. "Generally writing to a dual audience of Christians and Jews after mid-century, later Anglo-Jewish novelists examined Jews more critically, evincing concern about behavior which could prompt anti-Semitic responses."¹ A sentimental novelist and writer of didactic non-fiction, Aguilar presses an essentially Christian piety on her Jewish characters.² In contrast, Levy's astringent portraits of middle class Jewish family life are bitterly realistic in detail. A popular novelist in her period, Aguilar is important as a pioneer of Anglo-Jewish fiction. By 1844, "she was known to her Christian public as an authentic spokesman for Judaism."³ Though not as widely read in her day, Levy's writing has more artistic merit than Aguilar's. A poet, an essayist as well as a novelist, Levy ended her life as a suicide,

leaving behind a legacy of brooding, melancholy writing in the tradition of Sylvia Plath. Together, Aguilar and Levy represent the opposing portraits of Jewesses that are evident in English literature, one obedient, the other rebellious. In spite of these contrasts, however, Aguilar and Levy, as Anglo-Jewish writers, contribute their definitions of Jewish identity by presenting a similar view of the Jewess as an alienated victim.

Grace Aguilar's The Vale of Cedars; or the Martyr, written between 1831 and 1835 and published posthumously in 1850, is an historical novel set in Catholic Spain during the Inquisition. Using the historical novel, like Scott in Ivanhoe to comment on contemporary life, Aguilar creates a heroine, Marie Morales, who is a Marrano, a secret Jewess. The plot concerns Marie's fidelity to her religion and obedience to her father, a steadfastness under conditions of religious temptation and danger which elicit her martyrdom. Refusing to convert to marry the man she loves, an English Catholic, Marie marries instead her father's choice, the wealthy Marrano Ferdinand Morales. She is caught in the web of the Inquisition, however, when it becomes known that she is a Jewess. She is tortured and eventually dies from the punishment inflicted, but before her death, Queen Isabella allows her to escape to the home of her childhood, the Vale of

Cedars, the secret enclave of her Marrano family, where she dies a Jewess and a martyr in the arms of her first love, the English Catholic, Arthur Stanley.

Speaking for Judaism among Christians, Aguilar, a descendant of a family of Sephardic Jews, seeks to bestow on the Jews their rightful place as martyrs so that they are considered heroic examples of their faith equal to Christian martyrs. In a preface to a group of tales, Aguilar says:

The page of modern history, more especially of the middle ages, teems with the awful sufferings and martyrdoms of the Hebrews, yet the facts are passed over, with scarcely a notice, as the justly ordained punishment for our awful sin of rejection, when eternal salvation and temporal happiness were so mercifully proffered.

We will observe that if persecution and intolerance be always the signs of divine chastisement, how shall we account for the massacres and cruelties inflicted on the Protestants, and, in their early stages of supremacy, by them on the Catholics? Yet, in both cases, martyrdom has always been considered the proof of truth, fidelity, and divine support

Why then should not faithfulness to a religion far more persecuted than any other in the world, be considered in the same glorious light when applied to the children of God? Yet who draws example from the Jews? Who lingers on the page of history when it is related to them? Although in these tales the incidents, even as the actors, are fictitious, yet their originals may be found many times repeated in the history of the Jews during their secret existence in Portugal and Spain. Their mode of living, the extraordinary means by which their secret was preserved, the power which enabled them through severest tortures and long imprisonment so to

retain that secret -- all this is known to persons living now, as having been encountered by their own immediate ancestors, and hanging over their own childhood.⁴

Evidently, to Aguilar, the history of the Marranos was as formative an experience in the Jews' history, "hanging over their childhood," as Israel Zangwill's ghetto experience. For both authors, each experience evokes martyrdom, suffering being the repeated experience of the Jews. Even more significant for Aguilar's portrait of the Jewess, however, is her comparison of Jewish with Christian martyrs. Her premise is that Jews who remain loyal to their faith are as heroic as Christian martyrs. To effect this premise in her fiction, she creates a Jewess and Christianizes her. This Christianized Jewess reclaims the heroism of Judaism in her martyrdom.

Marie Morales, the Jewess in The Vale of Cedars is created in the mold of the faithful martyr Abigail in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta. Like her, Marie assumes the role of sacrificial lamb, giving up her own love to defer to her father's wishes. Marie's father is, of course, not like the monster Barbaras of The Jew of Malta who ultimately is responsible for his daughter's death. Barbaras' prototype is Jephthah, but the martyr motif of "Jephthah and His Daughter" is applicable to Aguilar as well as to Marlowe. In The Vale of Cedars, Marie acts

as the obedient Jew's Daughter, tenderly complying with her ailing father's wish for her marriage with one of her own faith. The Jewess's obedience to her father is as an essential part of her faith, sealing her doom as a martyr.

Firstly, Marie shows her obedience to her father and her faith by refusing Arthur Stanley's offer of marriage. She informs him, "There is a love, a duty stronger than I bear to you. I would resign all else, but not my father's God."⁵ Secondly, she accedes to her father's emotional plea when he learns that she still loves the Catholic and is reluctant to marry anyone else. Appealing to Marie's family loyalty and sense of guilt, her father says, "My child, so to love the stranger as to reject, to scorn her own! Oh God, my God, why hast thou so forsaken me? Would I had died before!" Such wrenching, emotional tones wring from Marie the response, "Oh, my father, do what thou wilt, command me as thou wilt -- I am henceforth wholly thine." Marie weds the Marrano Ferdinand in the same ceremony that witnesses her father collapse in death. In this narrative turn, the Jewess remains a dependent of her father and his faith by marrying the man he has chosen for her; his death affirms the finality of her destiny.⁶ Thirdly, Marie is willing to

sacrifice her own life rather than become an apostate. When Queen Isabella learns that Marie is a Jewess, she offers her the opportunity to save her life by converting. Marie's response to her Sovereign's appeal is, "... the word thou demandest I cannot speak! Thy favor, Arthur's love, I resign them all! 'Tis the bidding of God, and he will strengthen me to bear it. Imprison, torture, slay, with the lingering misery of a broken heart, but I cannot deny my faith!"⁷ With this example of "martyr spirit," Aguilar indicates that the Jewess's duty, her devotion to her father and his faith, is stronger than her passionate attachment to a "stranger" and to her own existence.

Yet Aguilar raises significant additional features of plot and characterization that point to ecumenical concessions surrounding the portrait of the Jewess. She implies that the Jewess is supremely accessible to Christian experience for which her sense of duty and piety prepare her.⁸ Not only does Aguilar arrange for Marie to die in the arms of the "stranger" after disposing of Ferdinand, but also creates in the dying words of Marie the impression of a tolerant Heaven. She informs Stanley:

"In heaven I feel there is no distinction of creed or faith; we shall all love God and one another there, and earth's fearful distinctions can never come between us. I know such is not the creed of thy people, nor of some of mine, but when thou standest on the verge of eternity

as I do now, thou wilt feel this too."⁹

In the physical description of the Jewess, Aguilar suppresses traditional Jewish elements, using the same method in her description of Jewish customs. In order for Aguilar to elevate the Jews to heroic martyrdom, she translates Judaism into Christian terms. For instance, Jewish holidays are named by their Christian near equivalent: "... solemn festivals which generally fell about the period of the Catholic Easter and Michaelmas."¹⁰ Aguilar's tendency to egalitize leads to generalization and to the concealment of authentic detail. This method is evident in the description of the Jewess Marie whose only specific connection with tradition, a convention of the Jewess in Christian English literature, is her ability to cast a spell, an attribute used positively by Aguilar in a description of Marie's face and figure:

The exquisite proportions of the rounded figure: the very perfection of each feature, the delicate clearness of the complexion -- brunette when brought in close contact with the Saxon, blonde when compared with the Spaniard -- all attractions in themselves, were literally forgotten, or at least unheeded beneath the spell which dwelt in the expression of her countenance. Truth, purity, holiness, something scarcely of this nether world, yet blended indescribably with all a woman's nature, had rested there, attracting the most unobservant and riveting all whose own hearts contained a spark of the same lofty attributes. Her dress, too, was

peculiar -- a full loose petticoat of dark blue silk, reaching only to the ankle, and so displaying the beautifully-shaped foot; a jacket of pale yellow, the texture seeming of the finest woven wool, reaching to the throat; with sleeves tight on the shoulders, but falling in wide folds as low as the wrist, and so with every movement displaying the round soft arm beneath. An antique brooch of curiously wrought silver confined the jacket at the throat. The collar, made either to stand up or fall, was this evening unclosed and thrown back, its silver fringe gleaming through the clustering tresses that fell in all their native richness and raven blackness over her shoulders, parted and braided on her brow, so as to heighten the chaste and classic expression of her features.¹¹

Not only does Aguilar focus on the all-purposeness of Marie's complexion, which is both brunette and blonde, but also emphasizes her nobility and piety, characteristics that may be found in women of all religions. Even in the specifics of dress, what is described as "peculiar" are features that permit the exposure of sexually titillating details of Marie's figure -- her display of "beautifully-shaped foot," her exhibit of "round soft arm," culminating in the "chaste and classic expression of her features" that is Aguilar's final attempt to idealize and purify the portrait. Furthermore, Aguilar's technique is elucidated in a comparison of the description of Marie with Rebecca of Ivanhoe. While the colors, textures, and exposure of erotic areas are similar in the two Jewesses, the colors of

Marie's portrait are muted, the sparkle dampened to a sheen, and the dress simplified in design.

Aguilar goes further than suppressing authentic or conventional detail in her portrait of the Jewess. She actually separates the Jewess from her religion, in effect, alienating her, and she does this while elevating the Jewess to martyrdom because of her fidelity to her faith. Although Aguilar avoids offering details of Jewish religious practice, she does offer general social concepts, such as might be noted by an outsider, a Christian. Judaism is a "mysterious bond of brotherhood,"¹² according to Aguilar. This position allows her to consider the Jewess, Marie, as an exception of her people, one who is singularly capable of arousing love in a Christian, but whose religious connections are still abhorrent to the "stranger." This is evident when Marie reveals the secret of her religion to her lover, Stanley:

...Arthur staggered back, relinquishing the hands he had so fondly clasped, casting on her one look in which love and aversion were strangely and fearfully blended, and then burying his face in his hands, his whole frame shook as with some sudden and irrepressible anguish.¹³

Recovering, Stanley offers to return to England with Marie, generously saying, "What to me is race or

blood?" Marie, however, asks for her father's protection also: "'Wilt thou protect him too? wilt thou for my sake forget what he is, and be to him a son?' He turned from her with a stifled groan." Marie's request is too much for Stanley. He would accept the Jew's Daughter, but not the Jew.

According to Aguilar, the Christian's love for an individual Jew cannot overcome his hatred for the entire people. Only in Heaven may Christian and Jew find peace together. This is the lesson Marie evinces when she is near death. Informing Stanley that people of different creeds will love one another in Heaven, she says, "Thy love for Marie is stronger than thy hatred of her race."¹⁴ Thus, Aguilar's martyr Jewess, Marie Morales, embodies three essential traits. She is singular as a Jew in arousing love, and because she is obedient, filially devoted, she is prepared to sacrifice herself -- for her father and her faith. Aguilar's Jewess shows she is worthy of Christian society as she is properly an ideal Christian martyr. Consequently, her third characteristic is, ironically, that of a Jewess who is alienated from her own religion.

* * * *

Whether or not the Jewess is depicted by a Jewish writer, the Jewess's portrait involves placing her in a family drama in which she either conforms, obeying traditional values, or rebels, asserting values that are representative of "outside" influences. This family drama invariably includes the motif of the Jew's Daughter, since obedience or opposition to faith is shown as manifested first in filial piety.

In Grace Aguilar's The Vale of Cedars; or the Martyr, the author portrays a Jewess who endorses traditional Jewish belief, but she translates that belief into Christian terms. Thus, the Jewess portrayed by Aguilar is filtered through an accultured Anglo-Jewish consciousness from which authentic details of tradition are removed. To this accultured sensibility, traditional faith is found in the past, and it is nostalgically and in egalitarian fashion revered by Aguilar as an age of martyrdom like that found in the past of other religions. From this past, the Jewess learns and accepts her role as self sacrificing heroine who dispenses benevolence while arousing love, which includes sexual elements. Thus, the portrait of the Anglo-Jewess found in Aguilar recognizes the Jewess as victim who is, however, accessible to the sisterhood

of martyrs of all religions. In fact, for Aguilar, the essential quality of womanhood may very well be self sacrifice itself, the ultimate form of obedience. Aguilar confirms the observation made in other parts of this study: obedience is an essential trait of the Jewess martyr, embodying filial piety, nobility, and sexuality, qualities that accommodate victimization.

The portrait of the Jewess in Amy Levy is also a victim. Significantly, however, she is the victim of her own Jewish community. Because the individuals in her own Jewish circle manifest the greed and warped desire for social ambition, directing the Jewess to separate herself from traditional Judaism, as will be shown, they appear as Marlowe's Barbaras, writ small. Unlike Aguilar's Jewess, Levy's Jewess is not involved in a test of her faith from which she emerges victorious as the martyr. Levy's Jewess is simply abandoned, exiled. The assimilating society of Levy's Jewess is a shallow show of forms, of mockery, social climbing, and trivial busyness. At best, Judaism provides a mystique or local color, more imaginatively satisfying to the outsider than to the assimilating Jew. Thus, the process of the alienation of the Jewess in the Anglo-Jewish novel begun by Aguilar is evident full

blown in Amy Levy's Reuben Sachs (1888). Here the Anglo-Jewish writer identifies so strongly with the oppressor that the novel reeks with self hate at the same time that it angrily yearns for a touchstone of venerable Jewishness. While Levy explores the growth of an obedient and dutiful Jewess, she interjects the bitter voice of disappointment and rebellion that permeates her novel.

Among the sallow, untidy, domineering, or acid-tongued Jewesses of Reuben Sachs, Judith Quixano stands out as "better bred:"

She was twenty-two years of age, in the very prime of her youth and beauty; a tall, regal-looking creature, with an exquisite dark head, features like those of a face cut on gem or cameo, and wonderful, lustrous, mournful eyes, entirely out of keeping with the accepted characteristics of their owner.

Her smooth, oval cheek glowed with a rich, yet subdued, hue of perfect health; and her tight-fitting fashionable white evening dress showed to advantage the generous lines of a figure which was distinguished for stateliness rather than grace.¹⁵

Of Sephardic origin and living as a poor relation with the rich German-Jewish Sachs of Lancaster Gate where "with her beauty, her intelligence, her power of feeling [she] saw herself merely as one of a vast crowd of girls awaiting their promotion by marriage,"¹⁶

Judith Quixano is the central focus of Levy's observations in a novel that is essentially a sociological sketch including a romance. Observed by the author is an Anglo-Jewish pluralistic community consisting of several middle classes -- the Lancaster Gate Anglo-German Jew Sachses, the Maida Vale Polish strain Sachses, and the Walterton Road Sephardic element. Levy's ironic sociological stance is evident in her repeated references to "tribal" characteristics. The following is a sample of her observations of the social customs of the dominant Leuniger family:

The Leunigers had of course their Gentile acquaintance, chiefly people of the sham "smart," pseudo-fashionable variety, whose parties at Bayswater or South Kensington they attended. But the business of their lives, its main interests, lay almost entirely within the tribal limits. It was as Hebrews of the Hebrews that Solomon Sachs and his son-in-law took their stand.

In the Community, with its innumerable trivial class differences, its sets within sets, its fine-drawn distinctions of caste, utterly incomprehensible to an outsider, they held a good, though not the best position. They were, as yet, socially on their promotion. The Sachses and the Leunigers, in their elder branches, troubled themselves, as we have seen, little enough about their relations to the outer world; but the younger members of the family, Reuben, Leo, even Adelaide and Esther in their own crude fashion, showed symptoms of a desire to strike out from the tribal duck pond into the wider and deeper waters of society. Such symptoms, their position and training considered, were of course, inevitable; and the elders looked on with pride and approval, not understanding the full meaning of the change.¹⁷

Within the "tribal duck pond" is a culture where merchants are considered the "vielle noblesse" and where feeble interest is expressed in intellectual life: "Books were a luxury in the Leuniger household. We all have our economies, even the richest of us; and the Leunigers, who begrudged no money for food, clothes or furniture, who went constantly to the stalls of the theatre, without considering the expense, regarded every shilling spent on books as pure extravagance."¹⁸

Along with such consideration of social stratification, changes in values brought about by the pressure of assimilation, and generational differences, Levy brings up the personal and social differences between Jewish men and women. The relationship of Judith Quixano and Reuben Sachs, significant in the novel, is observed with attention to the Jewess's subservient and limited position: "Their friendship, unusual enough in a society which retains, in relation to women at least, so many traces of orientalism, had sprung up at first unnoticed in the intimacy of family life."¹⁹

But the most bitterly expressed instance of the difference between Jewish men and women is the example of the Montague Cohens. Magnified by orthodox belief which favors men, the supremacy of Montague Cohen is

countermanded by the waning of orthodoxy and by the imperiousness of a Jewess, his wife, Adelaide Sachs Cohen, who rules their social life. Levy's acrimony at the Jewish man's prerogative and the Jewess's domineering response is unmistakable:

Montague Cohen, Adelaide Sachs's husband, belonged to that rapidly dwindling section of the Community which attaches importance to the observation of the Mosaic and Rabbinical laws in various minute points.

He would have half-starved himself sooner than eat meat killed according to Gentile fashion, or leavened bread in the Passover week.

Adelaide chafed at the restrictions imposed by this constant making clean of the outside of the cup and platter; but it was a point on which her husband, amenable in everything else, remained firm.

He was an anaemic young man, destitute of the more brilliant qualities of his race, with a rooted belief in himself and every thing that belonged to him.

He was proud of his house, his wife and children. He was proud, Heaven knows why, of his personal appearance, his mental qualities, and his sex; this last to an even greater extent than most men of his race, with whom pride of sex is a characteristic quality.

"Blessed art Thou, O lord my God, who hast not made me a woman."

No prayer goes up from the synagogue with greater fervor than this.

This fact notwithstanding, it must be acknowledged that, save in the one matter of religious observation, Montague Cohen was led by the nose by his wife, whose intelligence and vitality far exceeded his own. Borne along in her wake, he passed his life in pursuit of a shadow which is called social advancement; going uncomplainingly over quagmires, into stony places, up and down uncomfortable declivities; following patiently and faithfully wherever the restless, energetic Adelaide led.²⁰

Levy's sociological observations of the middle class Anglo-Jewish community, in which the Jewess is prominently featured, contain several pertinent, literary references that elucidate her aim and indicate her attempt to place her novel within a tradition. Levy shows she is aware of the Anglo-Christian attitude toward the Jews, and her writing indicates her use of that tradition to shed light on her contemporary people. Deploing "the fact that English fiction, even Daniel Deronda, presents 'no serious treatment of Jewish life and Jewish character nor any true picture of contemporary Anglo-Jewish life,'"²¹ Levy attempts to create in Reuben Sachs a treatment of the contemporary Anglo-Jewish community that she felt was missing from English fiction. For this treatment, she refers significantly to George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, a book that haunts her and her characters and that helps her depict her leading Jewess, Judith Quixano, as an exile.

In Reuben Sachs, the references to George Eliot's Daniel Deronda are especially significant for they affirm Levy's literary ambition to create a sociological and moral world like Eliot's novel. Though less epic in its sweep and briefer in its introspective passages than Daniel Deronda, Reuben Sachs does focus insightfully,

if acrimoniously, on the customs and manners of a stratified society where moral and religious questions are raised. Unlike Eliot, however, Levy does not divide her focus between two communities, the English aristocrats and the Jews. Most of Levy's attention is devoted to the Jews who are graceless, ignoble creatures, certainly not the zealots of Palestinian nationalism of Daniel Deronda. In fact, Levy pointedly disassociates her characters from the noble Jewish figures in Daniel Deronda. Christians are featured by Levy as subjects to emulate or ingratiate. One Christian, Bertie Lee-Harrison, is attracted to the Sachs' circle as a convert to Judaism. When one of the Sachs' clan wonders what Bertie thinks of them, the conversational response is:

"I think," said Leo, "that he was shocked at finding us so little like the people in Daniel Deronda."

"Did he expect," cried Esther, "to see our boxes in the hall, ready packed and labelled Palestine?"
 "I have always been touched," said Leo, "at the immense good faith with which George Eliot carried out that elaborate misconception of hers."²²

By having her characters repudiate their connection with Eliot's Jews, Levy not only establishes their versimilitude as literary creations of a Jewish writer, but also their materialism and lack of ideals, accusations made

by Leo Sachs as the argument continues.

Most pertinent in her use of Daniel Deronda is Levy's exploration of the psychology and maturation of a young woman who decides to marry a man she does not love, yet is drawn to another. In Daniel Deronda, Gwendolen Harleth expediently marries Henleigh Grandcourt, although she is attracted to Daniel Deronda whose Jewish birth is learned in the last section of the novel. In Reuben Sachs, Judith Quixano, in personal straits similar to Gwendolen's, reticently accepts marriage to Bertie Lee-Harrison, the convert to Judaism, although she loves Reuben Sachs, one of her own people. As Levy develops Judith's character, her use of Daniel Deronda affirms Eliot's influence on her. For instance, after Judith's engagement to Bertie is announced, she accepts his attentions as "not unpleasant...respectful devotion," yet she remains indifferent. Levy is able to explore the subtlety of Judith's mood with: "Bertie, as Gwendolen Harleth said of Grandcourt, was not disgusting."²³

In using such an allusion, Levy pairs the stately Judith Quixano with the elegant Gwendolen Harleth. Of different religions, they are similar in personal circumstances and in their potential for growth. From a woman ignorant of "her own nature, her own possibilities,

her own passions,"²⁴ Judith becomes "strangely wise," learning the meaning of her marriage to Bertie Lee-Harrison whose conversion to Judaism seems a whimsical act.

Yes, she knew now more clearly what before she had only dimly and instinctively felt: the nature and extent of the wrong which had been perpetrated; which had been dealt her; which she in her turn had dealt herself and another person.²⁵

Within Levy's exploration of the growth of a young Jewess, she continues to comment on "tribal" customs and traditional themes associated with the Jewess. The origin of the Jewess's obedience, an essential trait of the Jewess as victim, is elucidated. Judith's loyalty to her parents, especially to her elegant Sephardic father, is displayed and commented on ironically. After Judith returns from visiting "her people" on Walterton Street, Rose Sachs says to her, "How late you are. What filial piety!"²⁶ Judith's obedience, a character trait fostered by her ignorance, extends to her religious practice. She dutifully accepts the rituals of a fossilized religion that Levy claims has no application to her:

Judith Quixano went through her devotions upheld by that sense of fitness, of obedience to law and order, which characterized her every action.

But it cannot be said that her religion had any strong hold over her; she accepted it unthinkingly.

These prayers, read so diligently, in a language of which her knowledge was exceedingly imperfect; these reiterated praises of an austere tribal deity, these expressions of a hope whose consummation was neither desired nor expected, what connection could they have with the personal needs, the human longings of this touchingly ignorant and limited creature?²⁷

Furthermore, Judith's obedience is seen as part of her conventional, conservative nature that is linked to material self interest:

The practical, if not the theoretical, teaching of her life had been to treat as absurd any close or strong feeling which had not its foundation in material interests. There must be no undue giving away of one's self in friendship, in the pursuit of ideas, in charity, in a public cause. Only gushing fools did that sort of thing, and their folly generally met with its reward.

And this teaching, sensible enough in its way, had been accepted without question by the clannish, exclusive, conservative soul of Judith.

Where your interests lie, there should lie your duties; and where your duties, your feelings. A wholesome doctrine no doubt, if not one that will always meet the far-reaching and complicated needs of a human soul.²⁸

Thus, Judith's conventionality helps to execute the injury committed by the Jewish community when it encourages Judith to accept the convert to Judaism as her husband. Presented as a dilettante of religion who considers Judaism a picturesque religion and Judith his Queen Esther, Bertie Lee-Harrison is Judith's opportunity

to remove herself from an impossible situation, for the prospect of marriage to her cousin, Reuben Sachs, is futile; he and his family have higher social ambitions: "To her blind misery, her ignorance, Bertie was nothing more than a polite little figure holding open for her a door of escape."²⁹ Significantly, this bleak opportunity for Judith is not characteristic for the typical Jewess. Using another tradition of the Jewess, Levy affirms the habitual custom of marriage for the Jewess: "Generally speaking, the race instincts of Rebecca of York are strong, and she is less apt to give her heart to Ivanhoe, the Saxon knight, than might be imagined."³⁰

In Reuben Sachs, a bitter view of contemporary Anglo-Jewish life, Amy Levy portrays her leading Jewess, Judith Quixano, as obediently accepting the Jewish community's conspiracy to endorse her prospective husband's "spurious Judaism" as genuine. Once married, she may not impede the Sachs' family plan to arrange for Reuben to marry money and further his political career. Once married to the convert to Judaism, however, Judith severs her tie with her people, becoming the sad, cold Jewess who, on the final page, is "a figure of stone." Judith's alienation is complete at the end

of the novel. Married to Bertie for three months, Judith recognizes her estrangement:

It came over her that she was in a fair way to drift off completely from her own people; they and she were borne on dividing currents.

A sudden longing for the old faces, the old ties and associations came over her as she stood there; a strange fit of home sickness, an in-rushing sense of exile.

Her people -- oh, her people! -- to be back once more among them! When all was said, she had been so happy there.³¹

Levy's Jewess, a beautiful, ignorant young woman who gains insight, is shown as compelled by her obedient, conventional nature to accept the fate allotted to her by her own people. To Levy, Judith Quixano is a Jewish Gwendolen Harleth, making her way between two worlds -- one from which she is exiled and the other in which she feels alien. Aware of the literary tradition of the Jewess, Levy uses those conventions while elevating her Jewess to the status of an Eliot Christian heroine.

FOOTNOTES

¹Linda Gertner Zatlín, The Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Jewish Novel (Boston; Twayne, 1981), p. 40.

²"Aguilar's Judaism is a Christianized version.... Pervading Aguilar's fiction and non-fiction, and witnessed by her six books on non-Jewish subjects, is an acculturated consciousness." Linda Gertner Zatlín, op. cit., p. 39.

³Ibid., p. 33.

⁴Quoted in Montagu Frank Modder, The Jew in the Literature of England to the End of the Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia: Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 1944), pp. 183-184.

⁵Grace Aguilar, The Vale of Cedars; or the Martyr (New York: D. Appleton, 1850), p. 21.

⁶The death of a Jewess's father under the emotional circumstances of her separation from him is described by Aguilar in "The Peretz Family," a story of contemporary Jewish home life in Home Scenes and Heart Studies (New York, D. Appleton, 1901, first pub. 1843). The devoted and noble daughter, Sarah, stands by her misguided father who had been jailed for a crime of which he is innocent. Sarah is prepared to accompany her father anywhere he is sent for his sentence. Her father's only fear is "they will send me from you, and I shall sin again. I shall fall away from the good you taught me." (p. 83) Evidence is brought in to clear Sarah's father, but as the charges are dismissed, he collapses in death.

⁷The Vale of Cedars, p. 232.

⁸Aguilar affirms the attitude of writers of conversion novels in which pious Jewesses, usually after reading the New Testament, accept it as a fulfillment of the Old Testament with which they are already familiar. Thus, they become ideal converts to Christianity.

FOOTNOTES continued

⁹The Vale of Cedars, p. 248. This view of a tolerant Heaven is similar to Miriam's in Hypatia. See p.

¹⁰The Vale of Cedars, p. 35.

¹¹The Vale of Cedars, pp. 17-18.

¹²The Vale of Cedars, p. 35.

¹³The Vale of Cedars, p. 20.

¹⁴The Vale of Cedars, p. 249.

¹⁵Amy Levy, Reuben Sachs: A Sketch (New York: AMS Press, 1973), pp. 20-21. [Reprint of edition of 1888 by Macmillan.].

¹⁶Reuben Sachs, p. 35.

¹⁷Reuben Sachs, pp. 36-37.

¹⁸Reuben Sachs, p. 38.

¹⁹Reuben Sachs, p. 39.

²⁰Reuben Sachs, pp. 48-49.

²¹Zatlin, op cit. p. 90.

²²Reuben Sachs, pp. 115-116.

²³Reuben Sachs, p. 237.

²⁴Reuben Sachs, p. 183.

²⁵Reuben Sachs, pp. 255-256.

²⁶Reuben Sachs, p. 81

FOOTNOTES continued

²⁷Reuben Sachs, pp. 92-93.

²⁸Reuben Sachs, pp. 201-202.

²⁹Reuben Sachs, p. 220.

³⁰Reuben Sachs, p. 103.

³¹Reuben Sachs, p. 258.

CHAPTER 8

JAMES JOYCE AND THE JEWESS:

IN SEARCH OF THE ETERNALLY FEMININE

"... I knew what was coming next only natural weakness it was he excited me I don't know how the first night ever we met when I was living in Rehoboth terrace we stood staring at one another for about 10 minutes as if we met somewhere I suppose on account of my being jewess looking after my mother he used to amuse me the things he said with the half sloothering smile on him...."

Molly Bloom in Ulysses by James Joyce

The Jewess in English literature embodies a clear and continuous tradition with specific conventions that emphasize her sexuality and her association with her father, representative of her people. With these basic requirements, the Jewess rebels or submits as she mediates between Jewish and Christian societies, reclaiming her identity, the object and agent of redemption. As Jewess, she is both the object of conversion when she rebels and the savior of her people when she acquiesces to her origins.

Recognizing the tradition of the Jewess, English authors have adapted the Jewess's portrait to express their personal and cultural ideals, aspirations, and

values as times and literary fashions have changed. Anglo-Christian novelists enlist the Jewess to portray heiress, romantic heroine, rebel, and adventuress, the latter of the noble as well as of the fatal type. Anglo-Jewish writers, too, recognize the symbolic suitability of the Jewess even while depicting her realistically. The Jewess's connection to her Old Testament Hebrew archetypes and to the motifs and conventions of her tradition render a mystique that has been useful for centuries.

For no author, Christian or Jew, is the Jewess more an embodiment of her ancient and traditional elements than for James Joyce in whose Ulysses the character Molly Bloom is a "perfectly sane full amoral fertilizable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent Weib."¹ For Joyce, Molly Bloom is an elemental feminine principle reflecting the unconscious, as opposed to the masculine conscious, endowed with special knowledge and capable of psychic transformation.² As such, she is dangerous, possessing properties of the femme fatale. A powerful, primordial figure, Molly Bloom is drawn also as both redeemer and muse, savior and inspiration of the artist. Molly Bloom commands these attributes because she is a Jewess, the original woman, precursor of the Virgin Mary. Her role as medi-

ator between two societies is crystallized in her identity as a Jewess with a Christian father, who had abandoned her, and a Spanish-Jewish mother. She negotiates between the sensuality of her Jewish origins and the pungency of her Irish Christian voice. In addition, as the Jew's daughter, she is instrumental in expediting the father-son theme central to Ulysses.

Joyce's life and work reveal a similar view of the Jewess. Information from Joyce's biography confirms his special interest in the Jewess as fascinating and mysterious, source of the eternally feminine. As Richard Ellmann points out, Joyce had a "desire for dark, unknown, passionate, preferably Semitic women who would envelop him in their arms."³ His attitude towards the Jewess is reflected in his romantic attachment to the two Jewesses who were models for several of his women characters in Ulysses. His relationship with them not only elucidates his use of the tradition of the Jewess in Ulysses, but also reveals his basic tendency toward women in general, a tendency that is magnified in the woman who is Jewess, the avatar of Woman.

The two Jewesses in whom Joyce expressed romantic interest are Amalia Popper, said to be one of the models for Molly Bloom,⁴ and Marthe Fleischmann, reputed to be one of the prototypes of Gerty MacDowell, Joyce's

Nausicca, and, in part, the model of Martha Clifford, to whom Bloom writes letters.⁵ Joyce's relationship with these women reveal his infatuation with the Jewess as a source of sexuality and secret knowledge. Emphasizing Joyce's fixation on Semitic women, Richard Ellman reveals, "Marthe Fleischmann took ... the place that Amalia Popper had occupied."⁶

One of Joyce's language students in Trieste, Amalia Popper "was the daughter of a Jewish businessman whose first name was Leopoldo."⁷ Joyce's relationship with Amalia Popper, "an affair of eyes rather than of bodies,"⁸ stirred Joyce to write verse again after declaring to G. Molyneux Palmer on July 19, 1909, "There is no likelihood of my writing any more verse unless something unforeseen happens to my brain."⁹ Apparently the unexpected occurred, for "the poems which Joyce composed between 1912 and 1916 reflect his relationship with Signoria Popper."¹⁰ Biographical evidence thus establishes that Joyce made use of a real Jewess as muse.

Kept in his unpublished notebook, Giocomo Joyce, Joyce's poems and prose reveal his morbid fascination with Amalia Popper as a Jewess "rounded by the lathe of intermarriage and ripened in the forcing-house of the seclusion of her race."¹¹ A love scene from Joyce's

notebook reveals the Jewess Amalia Popper as a seductive force whose danger is associated with two central symbols, a snake and a star:

She coils towards me along the crumpled lounge,
I cannot move or speak. Coiling approach of
star born flesh. Adultery of wisdom. No, I
will go, I will

--Jim, love!--

Soft sucking lips kiss my left armpit, a coiling
kiss on myriad veins. I burn! I crumple
like a burning leaf! From my right armpit a
fang of flame leaps out. A starry snake has
kissed me: a cold nightsnake. I am lost!¹²

The blend of the sexually enticing with the repulsive in the star-of-David snake woman reveals a pattern of desire, guilt, and masochism in which the Jewess is the central object of the lover's fantasy, and affirms the motif of the Jewess as femme fatale.

A consequence of the lover yielding to the lamia is his lost soul, a dissolving self. In the following passage, Joyce describes this submission to the Jewess now portrayed as an odalisque and associated with Abraham, the Hebrew patriarch:

My voice, dying in the echoes of its words,
dies like the wisdom-wearied voice of the
Eternal calling on Abraham through echoing
hills. She leans back against the pillowed
wall: odalisque-featured in the luxurious
obscurity. Her eyes have drunk my thoughts:
and into the moist warm yielding welcoming
darkness of her womanhood my soul, itself
dissolving, has streamed and poured and
flooded a liquid and abundant seed
Take her now who will! ...¹³

The question of Marthe Fleischmann's religion is problematic. Although she may not have been Jewish, Joyce thought she was when he first saw her, and his letters to her indicate "an extraordinarily impressive and powerful self-portrait of the artist in a critical phase of his life."¹⁴

Joyce met Marthe Fleischmann in Zurich in December 1918 when he noticed her walking ahead of him as he returned to his flat at 29 Universitatstrasse.¹⁵ She appeared for Joyce, according to Ellmann, as a compelling muse:

She moved with a slight limp, her head held high. As she turned to enter a house he saw her face, and his own was lit up -- as she discreetly noted -- "mit grosstem Erstaunen." [with great amazement] For it seemed to Joyce that he was seeing again the girl he had seen in 1898 by the strand, wading in the Irish Sea with her skirts tucked up. That girl had appeared to him like a vision of secular beauty, a pagan Mary beckoning him to the life of art which knows no distinction of spirit and body. The sight of this woman who looked so much like her -- for she was not of course the same -- struck Joyce as of equal talismanic significance. His passion for coincidence impelled him towards a passion for her.¹⁶

In a letter to Marthe Fleischmann that same month, Joyce confides his first impression, indicating his fixation on the idea of her as an erotic Jewess. Significantly, Joyce implies that part of his infatuation with

the Jewess is her direct line to Mary who carried Jesus in her womb; thus, an affair with a Jewess might shed light on that mystery:

My first impression of you.

Here it is.

You were dressed in black, wearing a big hat with waving feathers. The colour suited you very well.

And I thought: a pretty animal.

Because there was something frank and almost shameless in your allure. Then, as I watched you, I noticed the softness and the regularity of your features, and the gentleness of your eyes. And I thought: a Jewess. If I am wrong, you must not be offended. Jesus Christ put on his human body: in the womb of a Jewish woman.

I thought of you often, and later, when I recognized you at the window, I watched you with a kind of fascination from which I cannot free myself.¹⁷

Later, in the same letter, Joyce is explicit about what he wants from her -- nothing less than the understanding of the meaning of life gained through her body:

I do not know what I want.

I would like to talk to you.

I imagine a misty evening to myself. I am waiting -- and I see you coming towards me, dressed in black, young, strange, and gentle. I look into your eyes, and my eyes tell you that I am a poor seeker in this world, that I understand nothing of my destiny, nor of the destinies of others, that I have lived and sinned and created, and that one day I shall leave, having understood nothing in the darkness which gave birth to both of us. Perhaps you understand the mystery of your body when you look at yourself in the mirror, where the wild light in your eyes comes from: the color of your hair?¹⁸

The same letter also reveals Joyce considering Marthe Fleischmann as both goddess and muse, object of worship and agent of inspiration. Referring to his age

as thirty-five, he reminds Marthe that was the age when "Shakespeare conceived his dolorous passion for the 'dark lady.' It is the age at which Dante entered the night of his being."¹⁹ Essential to Joyce's attraction for Marthe is her exotic Jewish darkness, a quality that Joyce desires to penetrate for poetic enlightenment. With her as his love and inspiration, Joyce sees himself as poet following in direct line from Dante and Shakespeare.

Although it is not likely that Marthe Fleischmann was Jewish, Joyce seemed convinced of it or wanted to verify it, and so he staged on February 2, 1919 a strange ritual to celebrate two events that took place on that day -- his birthday and Candlemas, a festival celebrating the purification of the Virgin Mary and the presentation of the infant Christ in the temple. Joyce borrowed a Chanukah candelabrum and, bringing it and Marthe to his friend Frank Budgen's studio, he lit the Chankukah candelabrum ceremoniously in order to see Marthe more clearly. When asked later why he did this, Joyce replied "For a black mass."²⁰

Joyce's relationship with Marthe Fleischmann came to an end at the intercession of Marthe's "guardian," Rudolf Hiltpold, who met with Joyce in June 1919 after

Marthe had revealed her secret correspondence. The strong emotion Joyce had felt for Marthe Fleischmann as a Jewess, he later tapped for his novel Ulysses. In fact, both Amalia Popper and Marthe Fleischmann function for Joyce as the means for him to fathom the mystery of Woman and Art. As women who embody the Feminine Principle by virtue of their ancient ties, these Jewesses appealed to an author versed in tradition and ready to yield to their fatal mystery. Joyce conveyed his awe at their power and secret knowledge and expressed his desire to penetrate their mystery in order to grow as an artist.

Joyce's fascination with the Jewess, as manifested in his relationships with Amalia Popper and Marthe Fleischmann, is reflected in his use of the Jewess as a character in Ulysses. In his portrait of the Jewess Molly Bloom, James Joyce reaches back to integrate three major conventions of the Jewess: 1. The elemental archetypes, the Hebrew matriarchs of the Old Testament who introduce the theme of the urgency of sexuality and fertility and who prefigure the Virgin Mary. 2. the Jew's Daughter of the medieval ballad who conveys the danger of the fatal woman. 3. The extension of the Jew's Daughter in the motif of La Belle Juive, a continental tradition of the mid-nineteenth century whereby the

Jewess is considered as having lost her father which results in her transformation into a good-natured prostitute or adventuress.²¹

These three conventions are tempered by Joyce's humor, however. In his serio-comical Ulysses, Joyce uses the Jewess Molly Bloom²² as a modern Penelope and femme fatale in the same manner that he uses Leopold Bloom as a modern day Ulysses and hero. Thus, the portrait of Molly Bloom as the fatal woman is punctuated with humor and irony that defuse her danger at the same time that they provide, through her famous interior monologue, insight into the sources of that danger. Molly Bloom's reputation as "Gea Tellus" is well established. Her terrible and transforming aspects, identified by Joyce with the Jewess as femme fatale, are prominent features of her character. In addition, these same fear-inspiring qualities are attached to all women in Ulysses, since every woman, according to Joyce, shares the biological mystery of the Womb -- with the Jewess as progenitor. Furthermore the aspects of Molly Bloom's earth-goddess nature, the elements that inspire fear as well as art, help to shed light on the central father-son theme of Ulysses.

From the "Calypso" chapter where Molly Bloom is introduced to the final interior monologue of "Penelope,"

Molly conveys qualities that give as well as destroy life. In the "Calypso" chapter, she is presented as the wife who makes her husband a willing captive. Bloom is obsessed with her, deferring to her wishes as a hen-pecked husband -- preparing her breakfast; picking up her soiled drawers; finding her a book, Ruby: the Pride of the Ring; promising to find her another by the same author; and, most of all, accepting her affair with Blazes Boylan. Infidelity and the destructiveness of women are repeated themes in Ulysses, conveyed as a natural condition that men must face. Kitty O'Shea, Parnell's mistress, and Anne Shakespeare are provided as real-life examples of sirens. Women are depicted as conspiring to entrap and undermine men's sexuality. The sinister Jewish prostitute, Bella Cohen, debases Bloom, exposing his masochism, in the Nighttown episode of "Circe." As Bloom complains about Gerty MacDowell, Joyce's Nausicca, "Drained all the manhood out of me, little wretch." (p. 371)

As an analogue to these assumptions about women and as a crystallization of Bloom's plight with Molly, Joyce introduces the motif of the Jew's Daughter. Although this motif can be expected in a novel concerned with a Jew²³ who is both a husband and a father, the theme of Ulysses is also specifically linked to the

Jewess as femme fatale. The connection is made explicitly in the chapter "Ithaca" which precedes Molly Bloom's concluding monologue. "Ithaca," with its stilted "mathe-matico-astronomico-physico-mechanico-geometrico-chemico"²⁴ style and question and answer format, like a catechism, prominently includes a version of the ballad, "The Jew's Daughter,"²⁵ printed with both words and music. Recited by Stephen Dedalus, the ballad is meant to personalize through literary allusion the setting and the action, but, like everything else in Ulysses, it serves several purposes, including to integrate Molly into the trinity of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold and Molly Bloom.²⁶

Early on July 17, 1904, Leopold Bloom brings Stephen Dedalus to his flat at 7 Eccles Street, where, after drinking cocoa, they discuss sundry subjects. Immediately after consuming the cocoa, which Joyce implies is a communion, "a massproduct, the creature cocoa," Bloom encourages Stephen "to chant in a modulated voice a strange lesson on an allied theme." That song is rendered in two sections in order to distinguish Bloom's reaction to each part. The first part of the "chanted legend" is:

Little Henry Hughes and all his schoolfellows all
Went out for to play ball.
And the very first ball little Harry Hughes played
He drove it o'er the jew's garden wall.
And the very second ball little Harry Hughes played
He broke the jew's windows all.

Passively accepting the calamity of the Jew's broken windows as a customary act of Jew hatred, Bloom reacts initially to the ballad with "unmixed feeling. Smiling, a jew, he heard with pleasure and saw the unbroken kitchen window." (p. 691) Significantly, Joyce describes this reaction as originating from the "son of Rudolph," that is, from the alienated son of a father who had been a practicing Jew. The second reaction of Bloom to the ballad, however, is as "the father of Millicent." As the father of the Jewess, Bloom responds "with mixed feelings," for the remainder of the ballad describes the murder of the schoolboy by the Jew's Daughter.

Then out there came the jew's daughter
 And she all dressed in green.
 'Come back, come back, you pretty little boy,
 And play your ball again.'

'I can't come back and I won't come back
 Without my schoolfellows all,
 For if my master he did hear
 He'd make it a sorry ball.'

She took him by the lilywhite hand
 And let him along the hall
 Until she led him to a room
 Where none could hear him call.

She took a penknife out of her pocket
 And cut off his little head,
 And now he'll play his ball no more
 For he lies among the dead.

The second part of the ballad elicits from Bloom a "mixed" sense of astonishment. "Unsmiling, he heard and saw with wonder a jew's daughter, all dressed in green."

(p. 691) Bloom's reaction to the figure of the Jew's Daughter is likened to the fearful awe felt in the presence of a supernatural phenomenon, such as an Earth Witch. Rooted in folklore, the ballad expresses fear of the Jew's partner in ritual murder, that is, the Jewess femme fatale, but to Bloom, who is the father of a young Jewess, the poem is also the catalyst for him to ruminate about Milly, his daughter, and to speculate on the possibility of "a permanent eventuality of reconciliatory union between a schoolfellow and a jew's daughter"

(p. 695). Of course, the union Bloom contemplates is that of the schoolfellow Stephen Dedalus, his "son," and Milly Bloom, his daughter. But Milly has been sent away. Her presence is not essential, however. In fact, her absence is preferred, as evident in Bloom's thoughts: "Because the way to daughter led through mother, the way to mother through daughter" (p. 695).

In other words, mother and daughter, Molly and Milly, are one²⁷ in Ulysses. Bloom often thinks of them simultaneously, and implies their bond as originating in their biological development in which menstruation figures significantly. Milly is maturing physically in the same way and with the same inclinations as Molly. Her behavior is "getting out of bounds" (p. 766). In a letter to Bloom that arrives the day after her fif-

teenth birthday, Milly expresses interest in a young student, Bannon, whose name echoes that of her mother's lover, Boylan. Milly, like the youthful Molly in Gibraltar, reports freely on an intended picnic, and she mentions a concert, a repeat of Molly's activity as a singer.²⁸ After deliberately reading her letter three times, Bloom thinks regretfully of Milly's sexual maturation. Molly, Milly, and other women flicker in his thoughts.

Milly too. Young kisses: the first. Far away now past. Mrs. Marion. Reading lying back now, counting the strands of her hair, smiling braiding.

A soft qualm regret, flowed down his backbone, increasing. Will happen, yes. Prevent. Useless: can't move. Girl's sweet light lips. Will happen too. He felt the flowing qualm spread over him. Useless to move now. Lips kissed, kissing, kissed. Full gluey woman's lips. (p. 67)

The union of Molly and Milly is most significantly evident in their fertility which is manifested in their menstruation. It is that biological fact that renders them and all women demonic and dangerous. Mysteriously, menstruation, with its connection to woman's fertility, is able to affect and even to transform elements in the world. Bloom thinks:

Devils they are when that's coming on them. Dark devilish appearance. Molly often told me feel things a ton weight. Scratch the sole of my foot. O that way! O, that's exquisite! Feel it myself too. Good to rest once in a way. Turns milk, makes fiddlestrings snap.

Something about withering plants I read in a garden. Besides they say if the flower withers she wears she's a flirt. All are.
(p. 369)

Menstruation also functions as triggering the estrangement of Molly and Bloom. In the "Ithaca" chapter, a catechism explains the different perceptions that Molly and Bloom hold of the limitations of their marriage. On the one hand, Molly considers their marriage impaired by Bloom's impotence which started almost eleven years ago, about the time of the death of their infant son. On the other hand, Bloom perceives their marriage to be limited by "mental and corporal" activity that implicates their daughter:

... inasmuch as complete mental intercourse between himself and the listener had not taken place since the consummation of puberty, indicated by catamenic hemorrhage, of the female issue of narrator and listener, 15 September 1903, there remained a period of 9 months and 1 day during which in consequence of a preestablished natural comprehension in incomprehension between the consummated females (listener and issue), complete corporal liberty of action had been circumscribed.

(p. 736)

Thus, the estrangement of Bloom from Molly is exacerbated by the alliance of Milly and Molly in a secret matriarchy in which they are trying to contain Bloom by restricting his freedom outside the household. The date of this "mental" divorce coincides with the onset of Milly's menarche.

Women's sexuality is closely associated with her fertility in Ulysses, which explains Bloom's impotence with Molly upon their infant son's death. Since barrenness and infant death are condemned signs of infertility in a woman, Rudy's death taints Molly's fertility and impairs Bloom's sexual gratification with her. Furthermore, the cyclical nature of menstruation links woman with the moon and endows her with special knowledge. To Bloom, the "special affinities" that exist between the moon and woman are listed in a Joycean catalogue that emphasizes primordial, goddess-like qualities and affirm Bloom's awe of woman's mystery as reflected in his visualization of the Jew's Daughter dressed in green:

Her antiquity in preceding and surviving successive tellurian generations: her nocturnal predominance: her satellitic dependence: her luminary reflection: her constancy under all her phases, rising and setting by her appointed times, waxing and waning: the forced invariability of her aspect: her indeterminate response to inaffirmative interrogation: her potency over effluent and re-fluent waters: her power to enamour, to mortify, to invest with beauty, to render insane, to incite to and aid delinquency: the tranquil inscrutability of her visage: the terribility of her isolated dominant implacable resplendent propinquity: her omens of tempest and of calm: the stimulation of her light, her motion and her presence: the admonition of her craters, her arid seas, her silence: her splendor, when visible: her attraction when invisible.

(p. 702)

The alliance of Molly and Milly reaches back to a third generation, to Molly's Jewish mother, Lunita Laredo, whose name establishes Molly's connection with the moon and whose features "eyes and figure" (p. 763) have been passed along to her daughter. Molly's Jewish mother also conveys an exotic pattern, living as a Spanish Jewess on Gibraltar in a Moroccan setting that applies as well to Molly's years as a young girl growing up. In fact, Lunita Laredo's exotic, ambiguous presence in Molly's heritage creates its own mystique of the Jewess's mother. But most important of all, Molly's Jewish mother establishes her connection with the female of the species of a people whose antiquity reaches back to biblical creation, that is, to Eve and the Hebrew matriarchs and beyond, to primordial goddesses, the earliest archetypes of the Great Mother, and forward to the Jewess who is the mother of Jesus.

Molly's exotic background is frequently used to explain her enticing nature. In the phantasmagoric Nighttown episode, which elucidates Bloom's anxieties and neuroses as manifested in his unconscious, Molly is seen as a seductress, and though dressed as a harem woman in enslavement, she actually depicts the intimidating mistress. Molly appears in this episode as "a handsome woman in Turkish costume Opulent curves

fill out her scarlet trousers and jacket slashed with gold. A wide yellow cummerbund girdles her. A white yashmak violet in the night, covers her face, leaving free only her large dark eyes and raven hair" (p. 439). Such a description links Molly to her "oriental Jewess" prototype. Her exotic and erotic costume, however, contradicts her speech and actions which instill terror in Leopold Bloom. The scene is a burlesque of the Garden of Eden;

BLOOM

Molly!

MARION

Welly? Mrs. Marion from this out, my dear man, when you speak to me. (Satirically.) Has poor little hubby cold feet waiting so long?

BLOOM

(Shifts from foot to foot.) No, no. Not the least bit.

(He breathes in deep agitation, swallowing gulps of air, questions, hopes, craves for her supper, things to tell her, excuses, desire, spellbound. A coin gleams on her forehead. On her feet are jewelled toerings. Her ankles are linked by a slender fetterchain. Beside her a camel, hooded with a turreting turban, waits. A silk ladder of innumerable rungs climbs to his bobbing howdab. He ambles near with disgruntled hindquarters. Fiercely she slaps his haunch, her gold-curb wristbangles angriling, scolding him in Moorish.)

MARION

Nebrakada! Feminimum.

(The camel, lifting a foreleg, plucks from a tree a large mango fruit, offers it to his mistress, blinking, in his cloven hoof, then droops his head and, grunting, with uplifted neck, fumbles to kneel. Bloom stoops his back for leapfrog.)

BLOOM

I can give you ... I mean as your business menagerer ... Mrs. Marion... if you ...

MARION

So you notice some change? (Her hands passing slowly over her trinketed stomacher. A slow friendly mockery in her eyes.) O Poldy, Poldy, you are a poor old stick in the mud! Go and see life. See the wide world.

BLOOM

I was just going back for that lotion white-wax, orangeflower water. Shop closes early on Thursday. But the first thing on the morning. (He pats divers pockets.) This moving kidney. Ah!

(pp. 439-440)

Molly's traits, exotic, erotic, and frightening, emerge from her identity as a Jewess. Joyce also implies that her mystery and her special knowledge as a Jewess equip her to empower others. As Bloom returns home to Molly, he invites Stephen to accompany him. Bloom has shown Stephen a photograph of Molly taken some years before when she was in her prime. Molly,

too, has been prepared for the new guest, and in her monologue, she imagines herself as "not too old for him." In fact, Molly's monologue reveals her imagining herself as both mistress and mother to Stephen, relationships that would strengthen him.

As his mistress, she would please Stephen by educating herself. Recognizing her intellectual limitations, however, she plans to teach Stephen the subject in which she excels, thereby inspiring him as his muse:

Im sure itll be grand if I can only get in
with a handsome young poet at my age Ill
throw them the 1st thing in the morning
till I see if the wishcard comes out or
Ill try pairing the lady herself and see
if he comes out Ill read and study all I
can find or learn a bit off by heart if I
knew who he likes so he wont think me stupid
if he thinks all women are the same I can
teach him the other part Ill make him feel
all over him till he half faints under me
then hell write about me lover and mis-
tress publicly too with our 2 photographs
in all the papers when he becomes famous
(p. 776)

Molly's plan to mother Stephen emerges from her testimonial to motherhood. Speculating on Stephen's mother as absent or unappreciative, she notes the lack of her own son, implying she would be a protective, nurturing mother to Stephen, encouraging his studying and maintaining a home free from quarrels:

[men] dont know what it is to be a woman
and a mother how could they where would they
all of them be if they hadnt all a mother to

look after them what I never had thats why
 I supose hes running wild now out at night
 away from his books and studies and not
 living at home on account of the usual
 rowy house I suppose well its a poor case
 that those that have a fine son like that
 theyre not satisfied and I none
 (p. 778)

Thus, without their meeting, Molly and Stephen are prepared for this prospect through Bloom's plans and Molly's fantasy. The basis for Stephen Dedalus being initiated by Molly Bloom into the mysteries of sexual experience is clearly evident. But even more important, is the possibility of his psychic transformation and growth through his connection with her. For this union, Bloom is prepared to relinquish his place. The desire of Bloom, the father, to be displaced by Stephen in a "union of a schoolfellow and a jew's daughter" describes the classic displacement of the father by the suitor of the daughter, with the Jew's Daughter represented by Molly Bloom. In the displacement of the father by the suitor, the biblical prototype is Laban's replacement by Jacob for Rachel with one major difference: Laban does not yield willingly whereas Bloom is prepared to resign. This displacement also affirms the Homeric parallel requiring Ulysses to murder Penelope's suitors. If Bloom must kill Blazes Boylan, Molly's suitor, he does this by substituting Stephen in his place, for

Stephen will win Molly, dispelling Boylan.

The elements of Stephen's transformation are available in both Bloom and Molly, but Molly is the determinant, the goal, of the action in Ulysses because of what she promises. As Stephen's "father," Bloom initiates the idea of a "union of school fellow and a jew's daughter," prepares Stephen for his own displacement and reveals his anxieties and neuroses in dealing with Molly, thus projecting her fatal side. Above all, Bloom is most suited to pass the torch to Stephen because he had been selected by Molly to be her husband. In a well known passage from Molly's monologue, she thinks of the day that she made Bloom propose to her on Howth Hill. Exhibiting her earth-goddess qualities in her association with seedcake, flower, and the sexual gratification she gave Bloom, Molly reveals that she wanted to marry him because "I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him." (p. 782) In other words, Bloom is willing to worship the goddess.

Molly's contribution to Stephen's psychic transformation derives from her portrait as an elemental principle of Woman, one who nourishes, protects, and transforms. Molly's sensuality emerges from the "four cardinal points" of Joyce's depiction. Explaining Molly's chapter, "Penelope," to his friend Frank Budgen on August

16, 1921, Joyce writes:

It turns like the huge earth ball slowly and surely and evenly round and round spinning. Its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and [word suppressed by editor who notes it is "easily imagined by adult readers"] expressed by the words because, bottom (in all senses, bottom button, bottom of the glass, bottom of the sea, bottom of his heart) woman, yes. Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to me to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilisable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent Weib. Ich bin das Fleisch das stets bejaht. 29

These four cardinal points of Molly's portrait correspond to the elements of the primordial goddess, especially of the goddess of fertility "who was looked upon throughout the world as the goddess of pregnancy and childbearing, and who, as a cult object not only of women but also of men, represents the archetypal symbol of fertility and of the sheltering, protecting, and nourishing elementary character."³⁰ From Molly's identity as a goddess of fertility, a goddess worshiped by men, Joyce extracts her fatal side, for her magical power to transform, emanating from her sexuality, is the goal or reward of the man who yields to her terrible authority. The price of psychic or spiritual transformation is the self.

Joyce provides Molly with the means for ritual transformation. The vessel, considered "the central

symbol of the Feminine,"³¹ is Molly's ever-present chamber pot. Repository of urine and menstrual blood, Molly's chamber pot, as her "attribute and instrument," is "the kettle of transformation [that] is identical with the sacrificial blood bowl whose content the priestess requires in order to achieve her magical purpose."³² Already identified with another mantic symbol, the moon, Molly is the woman capable of understanding magic through her Tarot cards³³ and conjuring magic through the vessel of her body and the vessel on which she sits during her monologue. As an agent of spiritual transformation and renewal, she plans to become an inspiring muse to Stephen Dedalus. All that is needed is Stephen's willingness to accept the "lilywhite hand" of the Jew's Daughter so that she might, in ritual murder, "cut off his little head." In yielding himself to Molly, the intellectual schoolfellow, Stephen, will die and be reborn. He will achieve transformation by the goddess who "is bound up with the all-generating life principle, which is a creative nature and a culture-creating principle in one."³⁴ Joyce applied this power of transformation to his wife. Writing to Nora Barnacle on September 5, 1909, he said:

Guide me, my saint, my angel. Lead me forward. Everything that is noble and exalted and deep and true and moving in what I write

comes, I believe, from you. O take me into your soul of souls and then I will become indeed the poet of my race. I feel this, Nora, as I write it. My body soon will penetrate into yours, O that my soul could too! O that I could nestle in your womb like a child born of your flesh, and blood, be fed by your blood, sleep in the warm secret gloom of your body! 35

Joyce's use of the motif of the Jew's Daughter shows that he is certain of the tradition and even relishes manipulating it in the following ways. He doubles the Jew's Daughter in Molly-Milly. Creating a fatal side to his Jew's Daughter by introducing the medieval ballad, Joyce portrays her as a primordial fertility goddess who will become muse, ready to transform Stephen into a poet of his people.³⁶ And Joyce portrays a Jewish father who is neither stern -- demanding obedience -- nor completely abandoned by the rebellious daughter. All this is evidence of Joyce's originality and the compulsion of his own interests,³⁷ moving easily within literary traditions, "creating a labyrinth world of images and associations whose roots extend into the depths of Western cultural memory."³⁸

The basis for Joyce's portrait of the Jewess Molly Bloom is her connection to her elemental feminine origins which emphasize her fertility and mystery. These origins are Hebrew and are found in the Old Testament matriarchs whose narratives reveal their fertility as

an essential feature of their identity and who, as saviors of their people and their husbands, willingly use their sexuality for the noble cause of mothering nations.

In his use of the motif of the Jew's Daughter, Joyce manipulates the medieval strand of that tradition, emphasizing the Jewess as femme fatale. Other writers have also depicted the Jewess's dangerous side. Such characters as Rebecca of Ivanhoe and Miriam, the witch, of Hypatia, are both associated with magic and with the casting of spells. In spite of Rebecca's beneficial use of magic to cure Ivanhoe's wounds, she is accused of sorcery at her trial, an indication of the fear she inspires as Jewess. Joyce, however, acknowledges the mystery of the Jewess as transformational and implies that her sexuality is the means of rebirth. She is useful to the artist, for the Jewess is the conveyer of inspiration.

In his use of the motif of La Belle Juive, Joyce creates a Jewess who has lost her father and who acts as adventuress. The unprotected, abandoned Jewess is evident in such portraits as Mirah Lapidoth and Princess Alcharisi of Daniel Deronda, Madame Goesler of Phineas Redux and Judith Quixano of Reuben Sachs. These abandoned Jewesses remain resourceful or pitiful exiles

unless they find their way back to their people. Joyce, however, uses the abandoned Jewess to affirm his central theme of paternity. Having lost her father, Molly Bloom is available to unite with a suitor who has taken her father's place. Eventually, Molly serves as the conduit for Bloom's reconciliation with his "son," Stephen Dedalus, thus acting as the instrument that compensates Bloom for the loss of little Rudy. Her availability to serve the larger theme of paternity not only affirms the generosity of La Belle Juive but also indicates her ambiguous desirability as a love partner. As La Belle Juive, Molly Bloom generously gives herself sexually, but because she is a Jewess, she inspires fear of the unknown. (See the quotation that prefaces this chapter.)

Joyce's use of the Jewess confirms his method of interweaving motifs, of creating a "chaffering all-including most farraginous chronicle" (p. 423). In creating his portrait of the Jewess Molly Bloom with the basic components of her tradition, including the Hebrew matriarchs and the Jewess Madonna, Joyce encompasses and integrates the elements from "Jew" and "Christian." His Jewess thus resolves the need for mediation as she herself combines and equals all.

FOOTNOTES

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James Joyce, Ulysses (New York: Random House, 1961).

Ulysses was first published in 1922 in Paris by Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company.

¹Letters of James Joyce, ed. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Viking Press, 1957), p. 170.

²My inquiry into James Joyce's view of the Jewess is influenced by Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). This book was first published in 1955.

The following is one of Neumann's enlightening analyses relevant to Joyce's search for the eternally Feminine:

"...Thus modern man, on a different plane, discovers what primordial man experienced through an overpowering intuition; namely that in the generating and nourishing, protective and transformative, feminine power of the unconscious, a wisdom is at work that is infinitely superior to the wisdom of man's waking consciousness, and that, as source of vision and symbol, of ritual and law, poetry and vision, intervenes, summoned or unsummoned, to save man and give direction to his life." (p. 330)

³Richard Ellmann, James Joyce (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 464.

⁴According to Ellmann, "...the seductiveness of Molly came, of course, from Signorina Popper," whereas Molly's voice came from Joyce's wife Nora who "had a similar gift for concentrated, pungent expression." James Joyce, p. 387.

⁵James Joyce, p. 563.

⁶James Joyce, p. 464.

FOOTNOTES Continued

⁷James Joyce, p. 353.

⁸James Joyce, pp. 358-359.

⁹Letters of James Joyce, ed. Stuart Gilbert, p. 67.

¹⁰James Joyce, p. 356.

¹¹From Giocomo Joyce, a notebook kept by James Joyce, the title of which implies his connection with the great lover Casanova. Quoted in Richard Ellmann, James Joyce, p. 354.

¹²Quoted in D. O'Brian, "Some Determinants of Molly Bloom," Approaches to Ulysses, ed. Thomas Stoley and Bernard Benstock (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976), p. 146.

¹³Quoted in James Joyce, p. 359.

¹⁴Heinrich Straumann, "Four Letters to Martha [sic] Fleischmann," Letters of James Joyce, Vol. 2 and 3, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1966), p. 431.

¹⁵James Joyce, p. 462.

¹⁶James Joyce, p. 462.

¹⁷Letters of James Joyce, Vol. 2 and 3, ed. Richard Ellmann, p. 433.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰James Joyce, p. 465.

FOOTNOTES Continued

²¹See Livia Bitton-Jackson, Madonna or Courtesan? The Jewish Woman in Christian Literature (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), especially the chapter, "La Belle Juive: the Jewish Courtesan," pp. 69-80. Also see Hyam Maccoby, "The Delectable Daughter," Midstream, 16, No. 9 (1970), pp. 50-60, especially p. 59.

²²Actually Molly Bloom is half Jewish, but the religion of her mother and her partnership with her husband, the Jew, Leopold Bloom, confer on her the identity of Jewess.

²³Bloom's mother, Ellen Higgins, is not identified as a Jewess in any way. Bloom's father, the Hungarian Rudolph Virag, is described as a Jew and is associated with traditional religious practice.

²⁴James Joyce referred to the "Ithaca" chapter this way in a letter to Claud W. Sykes, spring 1921. In Letters of James Joyce, ed. Stuart Gilbert, p. 164.

²⁵See chapter 2, "The English Jewess Emerges in the Drama and Ballad of Medieval England," especially pp. 56-59.

²⁶William York Tindall in A Reader's Guide to James Joyce (New York: Noonday Press, 1959) considers the three main characters of Ulysses: "Stephen Dedalus, Mr. Bloom, and Mrs. Bloom, the three Dubliners, compose a trinity, the first member of which is least important, the last most important, and the central one, central. Likely at first to single Stephen out, we discover Bloom next, and finally, after many readings, Mrs. Bloom. Understanding her is the sign of understanding and its achievement. These three are individuals; yet, more than individuals, they represent man and two of his aspects. Stephen is intellect, Mrs. Bloom, flesh, and central Mr. Bloom, uniting the extremes, is almost everybody. Everybody and his incomplete extremes, taken together, compose mankind, which Ulysses celebrates. Celebrating it on Bloomsday or any other day, we celebrate art and man." (p. 124)

FOOTNOTES Continued

²⁷In her monologue, Molly reveals "father left me." Thus abandoned by her father, Major Brian Cooper Tweedy, and with an absent or ailing mother, Molly fulfills the role of La Belle Juive, but after marriage and the birth of a daughter, Molly as Molly-Milly also assumes the role of the Jew's Daughter.

²⁸The association of the Jewess with singing or public performance is a tradition noted in Daniel Deronda and exhibited in the Jewesses Mirah Lapidoth and Princess Alcharisi. The French actress Rachel, famous as a Jewess, and referred to in Daniel Deronda as a performing model for Gwendolen Harleth, represents "La Belle Juive." As singer, Joyce's Molly Bloom emerges from this background.

²⁹Letters of James Joyce, ed. Stuart Gilbert, p. 170.

³⁰Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, p. 96.

³¹Ibid., p. 287.

³²Ibid., p. 288.

³³For Molly's reference to using Tarot cards, see the quotation on p. 270, middle.

³⁴Erich Neumann, The Great Mother, p. 305.

³⁵Letters of James Joyce, Vol. 2 and 3, ed. Richard Ellmann, p. 248.

³⁶In her association with the earth and in her obedient, acquiescent "yes," Joyce's Jewess fulfills one of her traditional roles as redeemer of the land and as savior, affirmer, of life. Joyce establishes the rebelliousness of the Jewess in Molly's infidelity and in the prospect of her departure from Bloom to

FOOTNOTES Continued

Stephen Dedalus who "inherits" her in a leave-taking initiated by the Jewess's father, Bloom himself.

³⁷The concluding words of Stephen Dedalus in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man function to elucidate Joyce's intentions in Ulysses. In order to accomplish his vow "to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscious of my race," Stephen must first, as an aspiring artist, explore his own unconscious, an opportunity that Molly Bloom provides.

³⁸Nehama Aschkenasy, "Biblical Females in a Joyce Episode: the Strange Woman Scene in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," MLS, 15, No. 5, (1985), p. 39.

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