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# THE JEWISH QUESTION IN VICTORIAN HISTORICAL ROMANCES<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*The essay examines the use of racial stereotyping as a means of tracing the development in the portrayal of Muslim and Jewish communities in Victorian historical romances at “home” in England and “abroad” in the Middle East, through the analysis of three historical romances from the Victorian era: Benjamin Disraeli’s The Wondrous Tale of Alroy (1833), Edward B. Lytton’s Leila or The Siege of Granada (1838) and Hall Caine’s The Scapegoat (1890). As these novels were highly inspired by Sir Walter Scott’s contribution to the genre of historical romances in The Talisman and Ivanhoe, they confirmed and challenged Scott’s racial and cultural stereotypes of Muslim and Jewish communities, and in doing so, prepared for a new version of Orientalism which progressively revised the perception of Jewish communities within Muslim communities “abroad” and within Christian communities at “home” in England and under Christian rule in Spain. Thus these texts not only emphasized the role of the Victorian novel in shaping and reinforcing certain existing racial stereotypes of the Muslim East, Islam and Muslims worldwide that persist until today, but also contributed to the rise in the depiction of an increasingly sympathetic view of Jews in Victorian fiction well pronounced in political novels such as Disraeli’s Tancred (1840) and George Eliot’s Daniel Deronda (1876).*

**Keywords:** racial stereotypes, Orientalism, Muslim and Jewish communities, Victorian Literature, historical romance, “home”, “abroad”.

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In *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (1985), Sander Gilman states that stereotyping entails the reduction of images to a simple and manageable form (rather than simple ignorance or lack of "real" knowledge) in order to process information. Stereotypes, accordingly, function to perpetuate an artificial sense of difference between "self" and "other" (18). Moreover, in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1987), Hayden White notes how some unrealistic facts in the travel works of writers like Darwin, Kant and Leibniz were later incorporated in literary texts to represent non-Europeans as "monstrous" (165).

In *Orientalism* (1979), Edward Said discusses how structured western representation of other cultures is highlighted by individual writers, political thinkers, statesmen, philologists and philosophers such as Flaubert, Lamertine, Kinglake, Nerval, Disraeli, Byron, George Eliot and many others who provided a lens through which the orient could be viewed and controlled (99). Likewise, Homi Bhabha's "The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism" in *The Location of Culture* (1994) believes the stereotype to be a "complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation, as anxious as it is assertive" (70). It is a "form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known as, and something that must be anxiously repeated" (66). As this construction must always be repeated, this makes it a cliché. And as this repetition ensures the others' perception in a certain way, it also questions the very fixity it sets out to guarantee. This is because it implies that that stereotypical construction cannot be proven once and for all, and that it must be repeated over and over again (157).

It is crucial to state the extent to which the Jews contributed to the formation of Muslim identity by serving as foils to Muslim characters in Victorian orientalist fiction. The shift in perspectives between Muslim and Jewish characters is made possible through the various authors' use of the "othering mechanism".<sup>2</sup> In brief, the

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<sup>2</sup> First established by Moraga, Cherríe; Anzaldúa, Gloria (1981), *This Bridge Called My Back*, "othering" is specifically attempting to establish a person as unacceptable based on a certain criterion that fails to be met. This is further developed by G. C.

concept of “othering” builds on a Hegelian heritage, inspired by both feminist and postcolonial theory, which does not focus on the “fascination” with the other, but regards the other as inferior. The concept of othering is basically binary, based on the dichotomy between “the subject” and “the other”. In the words of Gingrich, Spivak “claims that such fundamentally contradictory and different opponents as colonisers and colonised are seen as mutually defining each other’s basic identities” (11). Accordingly, it is this “othering mechanism” used by authors of the selected texts that not only enabled them to distinguish the English race from “other” marginal groups (women, Muslims and Jews), but also maintained the difference between the English and their radicalized “others” and facilitated the consolidation of the white man’s superior qualities against his inferior others--a form of strategic contrast and control which would thrive until our present day. Through this strategic contrast, Muslim characters in these literary texts, as racialised “others”, begin to take on the negative traits formerly associated with Jews, a trend which then gradually led to a fixed or established trope of stereotyping Muslims as “backward”, “evil” or “corrupt” and hence in need of guidance, correction and control.

The historical novel as a literary genre was highly instrumental in discussing urgent national concerns in Victorian England in a creative way that blends historical facts with fiction. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) came to be known as the father of the historical novel, though he was also a poet and a playwright. He was popular throughout the nineteenth century and his works are still currently widely read for his innovation in historical novels that cast a new light unto the orient. Before him, any historical writing had to match historical facts of character and events or else it was looked down upon as misleading the readership.

According to Cavaliero, *The Talisman* is Scott’s best crusade

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Spivak in her 1985 article “The Rani of Sirmur”, where she explicitly discusses different examples in the history of colonialism of the “othering mechanism”. Although she uses the concept – once - in a review of Derrida as early as 1980 (39), it is not until 1985 that Spivak begins to use the concept systematically to analyse “the fabrication of representations of historical reality” (271) in the essay “The Rani of Sirmur”.

novel, as the only one set in the Holy land. Moreover, in his preface, Scott portrays Richard as the flawed leader of the crusade and the embodiment of extreme courage and formidable physical strength, but unlike Saladin, he cannot conquer his arrogance as he is more devoted to knighthood than to the Christian faith (165-6). Saladin, who is known as a 'good paynim', is an exemplary Chivalric hero in the novel, to the extent of being foolish. His idealization by Scott was part of his desire to "dismantle a view of Islam which the crusading myth had perpetuated, to show that Muslims had been and could be again more rational and generally better conducted than the Christians" (167). Despite this positive portrayal of Saladin and overall noble representation of Muslims in *The Talisman*, the origin of Saladin's personality is pronounced by no other than him when he boasts about tracing his lineage back to Eblis/Lucifer (Scott, *The Talisman* 51). The novel is agreeable because of Saladdin's unthreatening portrayal and devilish connection which connotes to the old tropes of fixed, stagnant and unchangeable entity since their characterization in the tenth century *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. In this way, the Muslim orient is established as unthreatening to Western Christians, after the doom of the Ottoman Empire.

Just as Scott's *The Talisman* handles oriental themes of the Crusades in its portrayal of the Holy land and Saladin, *Ivanhoe* is an equally prominent oriental novel, but set in England and depicts the chief theme of the Saxons and Normans' mounting struggle and competition for leadership in Europe. There are only two Muslim characters in the novel – the Saracen servants of Bois-Guilbert who play an insignificant part in the plot. The heroine is Rebecca, the daughter of Issac of York, the stereotype of a Jewish money lender. The villain is a Christian paladin, a Templar knight and the personification of stringent Christian radicalism. All the gentiles, including those for whom Scott feels the strongest sympathy, are highly distrustful and even hate the Jews who can be temporarily exempted from their arrogant prejudice and cruelty. Hence, the gentiles' best treatment of the Jews varies from tolerance to oppression and exploitation. Rebecca's beauty arouses the dark passions of Templar Bois-Guilbert. She defies all accusations of her use of witchcraft, a crime punishable by burning. When she demands

a champion to decide her case before God, her eloquence stirs Templar Lucas Beaumanoir, whose image evokes that of Heinrich Himmler, a perverted romantic who was dedicated to the purification of the world from the Jewish race (Cavaliero 162-3). Before Beaumanoir decides that Rebecca must be purged as a sorceress, Bois-Guilbert makes one last effort to save Rebecca. He proposes that she accepts his love and religion so that he may rescue her from western tyranny and prejudice and enrol as a mercenary at a Christian enclave of the Near East whose rulers do not care to know who fights their battles. Although her refusal means inevitable death, Rebecca is firm in her rejection. Bois-Guilbert is felled by a divine heart attack as he unhorses Ivanhoe who hastens to rescue Rebecca. The supernatural death of Bois-Guilbert and the appearance of Ivanhoe were both perceived as melodramatic, but the novel established the separate identity of Jews from western civilization (165). Nevertheless, *Ivanhoe* contributes to the climate of sympathy in which Disraeli would rise to the rank of Prime Minister while George Eliot was writing *Daniel Deronda* (164-5). After being rescued, Rebecca flees with her father to Spain. This subplot is meant to reflect the European and English intolerance of the Jewish people in contrast to the Muslim coexistence with Christians and Jews in Spain.

In “The Birth of a Nation in Victorian Culture: The Spanish Inquisition, the Converted Daughter, and the “Secret Race”, Michael Ragussis argues that “by locating the origins of modern Spain in the conquest of the Moors at Granada and the banishment of the Jews, nineteenth century historians and novelists alike began to use fifteenth century Spain as a paradigm for the birth of a nation based in racial and religious homogeneity” (477). Consequently, he highlights Scott as the first to start a sort of sequel to *Ivanhoe*, in a number of works amongst which is Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *Leila* or *The Siege of Granada* (479).

Prescott commended the contributions that Romance could make to historical study, and applauded the way Scott added new value to Romance by basing it on history and embellished history with the charms and graces of Romance (12: 231-2). The specific literary model behind the focus of Victorian romance on the role of

the Jews in medieval Spain was *Ivanhoe's* depiction of Jewish persecution in medieval England. Ragussis argues that by “depicting the persecution of the Jews at a critical moment in history --the founding of the English nation-state--*Ivanhoe* located “the Jewish question” at the heart of English national identity” (478).

Thus, Rebecca's harsh critique of England at the end of *Ivanhoe* and her justification of her impending flight to Spain provoked Scott's successors in the historical romance to dwell on “the Jewish question” in medieval Spain. Scott's portrayal of rebellious Rebecca, in late twelfth-century England, who prefers the protection of King Boabdil of Granada in late fifteenth-century Spain, inspired other authors to challenge Scott's contrast between intolerant England and tolerant Spain. Hence “the persecution of the Jews that dominated fifteenth-century Spain, including the forced conversion of masses of Spanish Jews and the eventual institution of the Inquisition, provided sufficient historical material to challenge Rebecca's choice of Spain over England” (Ragussis 479). In this light, the selected historical romances can be read within a larger field of nineteenth-century English discourse in which different national identities are defined through the implied contrast in this case, between Protestant England and Catholic Spain.

In *Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: The Formation of a Secret*, Ivan Davidson Kalmar examines the historical development of the term “Semite” and consequently how Wilhelm Marr invented the term “anti-Semite” in 1879 when he founded his “Anti-Semite League” organization (136).<sup>3</sup> He then highlights the image of the Jew in Western Christendom, as a mixture of the prophetic and the demonic. The Prophetic aspect is based on the concept that “Jews were God's Chosen People” and the demonic is based on “the biblical suggestion that the Jews betrayed this trust and murdered the

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<sup>3</sup> All these scholars are cited in Kalmar [Niebuhr, Carsten. *Beschreibung Von Arabien Aus Eigenen Beobachtungen Und Im Lande Selbst Gesammelten Nachrichten* (Copenhagen: Müller, 1772); Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Georg Lasson, *Vorlesungen Über Die Philosophie Der Religion. Hrsg. Von Georg Lasson. Mit Einem Bibliographischen Anhang. (Nachdruck Der 1. Aufl. 1925-1927.)* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1966), 18; Ludwig Schlözer, in Johann Gottfried Eichhorn's *Repertorium*, vol. VIII (Leipzig, 1781), 161; Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred, or the New Crusade* (1847)].

Son of God” (Kalmar 137). In this essay, the demonic aspects of despotism and tyranny are highlighted as stereotypes of the Muslim orient, while the witchcraft known of the Jewish is related as part of their intelligence and superiority, making them a prophetic sort of people in the selected works. As the Muslim communities are depicted as simple minded, fatalistic, superstitious and have no prophetic merit about them, their best leaders are no match to gallant Christians and Jewish characters and as such superseded by them. Thus, negative demonic traits are transferred from the Jewish Semite and fixed to the Muslim oriental Semite and the prophetic, heroic, and superior aspects of the Muslim Orient are affixed to the Jewish Semite. This is mainly due to the eminent presence and struggle of the English and European Jews for emancipation in Europe throughout the nineteenth century, who aimed not only to establish their superiority in Europe, but also gain support for their return to Palestine.

In drawing attention to the role repetition of certain racial stereotyping in the representation of both Muslim and Jews in Disraeli’s *Alroy* (1833), Edward B. Lytton’s *Leila* or *The Siege of Granada* (1838), and Hall Caine’s *The Scapegoat* (1890), this essay argues that these literary texts challenge Sir Walter Scott’s stereotype of historical romances, on the one hand, for the Jewish communities by emphasizing the notion of Jewish heroism, which asserts their valuable role in the expansion of the British Empire. On the other hand, through the repetition of racial stereotypes, these texts are in line with Scott’s innovation in manipulating historical characters and events. Muslim communities are either vilified or at best their positive qualities are fixed to that historical span of time and are consequently diminished or even disappear. Furthermore, this essay investigates the influence of Scott on the selected authors and their historical fiction in order to investigate how repetitions of racial and cultural stereotyping of the Muslim and Jewish communities in the selected works contributed to Orientalism and the imperial civilizing mission.

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Benjamin Disraeli’s *Alroy* provides an illuminating view of how ideas about racial stereotyping were developed in the Victorian novel

as a means to assert the merits of the Jewish race and people at “home” in England and in Persia and Iraq through the repetitive use of certain racial stereotypes of Muslims (marginal, divided, and assimilative savages) in contrast to the newly rising admirable racial stereotypes of Jews (rich, cooperative societies, of superior qualities and higher intelligence than others and possessing leadership qualities), Disraeli contributes to the rise in the depiction of increasingly sympathetic views of Jews in Victorian fiction, one that corresponds not only to their glorious past and invites more tolerance and political emancipation at “home”.

The two factors which potentially shaped Benjamin Disraeli’s future, aside from his literary and parliamentary career were his conversion to Christianity and inheriting his father’s library with 25000 (15, 19). Levine explores Disraeli’s earlier works *Vivian Grey* (1827), *The Young Duke* (1830) and *Contrainti Fleming* (1832) which were written before he embarked on his parliamentary career in 1837 and find them influenced by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton and marked by the literary dandyism he was well reputed for. Disraeli’s romantic Semitism attracted the public awareness to his persona. Paul Smith’s brilliant biography of Benjamin Disraeli focuses on his dramatic character of being an English man, a Hebrew prophet, and a sheik of Araby. Kalmar in “Benjamin Disraeli, Romantic Orientalist” asserts that Disraeli attracted the attention of authors such as George Eliot, and likewise, was repelled by others like Anthony Trollope (360). A third factor which shaped his future and has been overlooked by most of Disraeli’s biographers was his tour to the East for sixteen months during which he did not write much, but it hovered over his imagination and played a role in his political treatment of the Eastern question and interests in the Suez Canal.

Despite his Jewish background and middle class status, Disraeli was a persistent believer in his personal cause with the dream of being an aristocratic figure to lead one of England’s most powerful parties. It was his poetic character and literary sensibilities that prepared him for his following political career. His tour in the East was the spark that fired more literary productions, after which Disraeli was finally resolved to enter politics and realize a dream he was certain to achieve, that is to be a Prime Minister.

In his diary in the autumn of 1833, Disraeli confides:

Poetry is the safety-valve of my passions, but I wish to act what I write. My works are the embodiment of my feelings. In *Vivian Grey*, I have portrayed my active and real ambition. In *Alroy* (1833), my ideal ambition. The P.R. (i.e. 'Psychological Romance', the original title of *Contraini Fleming*) (1832) is a development of my poetic character. This trilogy is the secret history of my feelings—I shall write no more about myself.<sup>4</sup>

According to Charles C. Nickerson, in *Vivian Grey* Disraeli foreshadowed his parliamentary ambitions; in *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* with an account of a self-sacrificing hero on a mission to reunite and restore to power his divided and humiliated people, he projects his sense of personal idealism and national destiny. This pair (*Alroy* and *Contraini Fleming*) mark a significant development in the course of Disraeli's literary career, a necessary one which anticipates his political career and political trilogy of *Coningsby*, *Sybil* and *Tancred* (72).

Furthermore, *Alroy* was inspired by Disraeli's actual visits to the tombs of great kings in Jerusalem (73) to ascertain readers of Disraeli's ideal ambition in using his potential and wit to deliver his people to Palestine. His belief in belonging to Jerusalem and which served as further motivation for him to play a key role in emancipating English Jews is stated in *Contraini Fleming*:

Truly may I say, that *on the plains of Syria, I parted for ever with my ambition [...] nor can I conceive, that anything could tempt me from my solitude [...] but the strong conviction that the fortunes of my race depended on my effort, or that I could materially advance that great amelioration of their condition, in the practicability of which I devoutly believe* (my italics, 151-2).

Disraeli believed in the prominence of the Jewish race, their

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<sup>4</sup> Hughenden Papers, Box II, A/III/ C; the entry is dated September. 1, 1833 and occurs in the "Mutilated Diary." See also Levine 29.

purity as “an unmixed race” and dominance over other races for two historical reasons. The first has to do with their persecution and oppression in Europe during and after the Spanish inquisition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the second has to do with their historical premiership and cultural contribution to the whole world which is ruled by the world order of the day. It is by these Judaic laws that England leads its everyday life, which should be acknowledged and appreciated. These two themes held a strong grip over Disraeli amongst other English Jewish authors and were reflected in the life and politics of the man who came to be the Earl of Beaconsfield<sup>5</sup>. Disraeli’s “Jewish career” is well portrayed in *Alroy* and his *Vindication of the English Constitution* (1835) (Levine 52).

Through the heroic depiction of Alroy, *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* challenges Scott’s stereotype of a more tolerant Muslim community to their Jewish counterparts. Sheila A. Spector asserts in her “Critical Introduction to Orientalism” the biographical significance of *Alroy*, with a young Jewish hero trying to confront a non Jewish world (3). Through the characterization of Alroy, Disraeli confronts established racial stereotypes of Jewish communities and identities with a controversial one that challenges and offsets them. Alroy reflects Disraeli’s own dilemma in confronting a Christian majority while retaining strong emotional bonds to his Jewish heritage. Disraeli purposely created a novel which is neither Jewish in culture nor Christian in themes and characterization as the few *giaours* are minor characters undermined by the large Muslim population of Persia then. In a way, Disraeli is reflecting on what might have been his active ambition had he had a Bar Mitzvah as a teenager rather than baptism. Moreover, in light of the overall conditions of the English Jews in England in the early nineteenth century, *Alroy* represents the failed messianic mission graphically which was not possible. Instead conversion was the only means to

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<sup>5</sup> Many biographies, books and reviews on Benjamin Disraeli or any of his works discuss his consistent and persistent Jewishness. Examples include Robert Livingston Schuyler’s *Dizzy: The Life & Personality of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield* by Hesketh Pearson, Todd M. Endelman’s *Disraeli’s Jewishness Reconsidered*.

emancipate English Jewry (Spector 3).

The novel revolves around David Alroy, a Jewish pseudo-Messiah born in Amadiya, Iraq, and as the last descendant of the house of David, the Prince of Captivity, he was well educated in the Torah, Talmud, Muslim literature and was known for his art of magic. He questions his being a captive prince and utilizes the chaotic conditions of the Muslim state to lead an uprising aimed at delivering his people from Iraq to Palestine. His confidence in the glory of his ambition is countered by the divisions of his Jewish race. Alroy's heroic endeavour begins after he stays away from the national festival and wanders outside the gates of the city where he kills Alschiroh in defence of his sister Miriam. It is after he flees to the wilderness that he is schooled by Jabaster, a Jewish Kabbalist whom Disraeli compares to contemporary Jewish fundamentalists who wish to implement a strict theocracy in England. Jabaster would like to be the messiah and despite knowing his inabilities, is jealous of Alroy and would eventually undermine and challenge him. After taking the signet ring from Jabaster, on the path he is instructed to follow, Alroy is caught by a multicultural group of bandits (a Muslim Kurd, a Zoroastrian Persian, a Buddhist Indian, a godless African, and their leader, the half Jewish half Islamic Scherirah) who hate Christians. After Alroy's friendship with Scherirah, he manages to escape. At the House of Pride in Baghdad, Alroy meets Honain, Jabaster's brother, a crypto-Jew<sup>6</sup>, the Caliph's physician who attempts to undermine Alroy's faith through the seduction of Schirene, the half Christian half Muslim Caliph's daughter. Though tempted by Schirene, Alroy recognizes the possible dangers in associating himself with her at this time and resumes his journey to the House of Holiness, to find the Tomb of Solomon in order to get the sceptre from his Temple, the symbol of his election as the messiah. Once he gets the sceptre, Alroy consolidates a multicultural army, including Jabaster and the Jews, Esther the Prophetess, Scherirah and his band of mercenaries without whom the Jews would

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<sup>6</sup> According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, Crypto-Jews are "Jews who secretly practised their religion while officially converting to either Christianity or Islam." <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-1719>

have been defeated. As soon as Alroy conquers the Seljuks, he attempts to guarantee the emir of Baghdad the protection of all Muslims. Jabaster, with all religious zealots, tries to interfere in Alroy's plans, but Alroy decides to "have practical men about [him]" (8:1). Alroy represents the British government in which the throne determines the role of the altar. The two men become enemies when Jabaster sets free some Jewish soldiers who had desecrated mosques without Alroy's approval. Without his Jewish base, Alroy turns to the pragmatic Honain for advice and it is precisely this turn that leads to his downfall and ultimate death. Honain is an oriental villain who cannot be trusted. Alroy's marriage to Schirene results in Esther's anger and attempt to kill him. After losing Jabaster's and the Jews' support, Esther's, as well as Scherirah's and his band's, his marriage to Schirene turns out to be a brief one. Honain and Schirene join up with Alp Arslan the Turkish king of the Karasme, her original suitor destined to defeat Alroy. Honain and Schirene, after Alroy's capture, try to have him admit to seducing Shirene through witchcraft in order for their marriage to be annulled. Alroy proclaims his Jewish identity instead and dies a tragic hero by decapitation<sup>7</sup>. Before his death, his sister meets him to bid him farewell and hails him as a national hero for his accomplishments, despite his failure towards the end.

In examining the political significance of the novel, in repeating and challenging set racial stereotypes, Spector ponders on Britain's attitude towards the Middle East and the Jews in the early nineteenth century. She highlights Napoleon's attempt to establish a base in the region and gain the financial support of wealthy Jews in Europe, and explains how, in 1799 Napoleon declared to the public his intentions to restore the Jews to their homeland. Although he was stopped by British forces at Acre, his incursion facilitated the British establishment of a base in the area and their appropriation of Jewish Zionism as part of their imperial aspirations in the Middle East. It is significant to assert the role of Zionism in the consolidation of British nationalism. As Protestant England had to confront its hypocrisy as an intolerant nation in the anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic riots in 1753

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<sup>7</sup> Sheila Spector in *Interrogating Orientalism* in "Orientalism in Disraeli's Alroy" compares *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* to Spenser's *The Red Crosse Knight* tale in *The Faerie Queene*, 125-33, the full chapter covers 121-36.

and 1780, and after incorporating Ireland into Great Britain, the English felt that emancipation of the Jews would threaten Christian religious identity. Their resolve was to establish the Zionist political enterprise by which they set up the Palestine Association in 1804, with the aim of exploring the holy land and attempting to export the “Jewish problem” out of England under British protection (122). The Evangelical movements’ support for the project was due to their belief that the apocalypse was at hand, and hence, millenarians<sup>8</sup> put in the effort to have the Jews return to the Holy land and convert to Christianity for the second coming. Although Jews did not convert to Christianity, the evangelists played an instrumental role in convincing the British government to establish a consulate in Jerusalem in 1838, the basis of which promoted further influence during the Victorian period which prepared for their role in the political Zionism of the twentieth century. Disraeli in *Alroy* used Alroy to justify his own conversion to Christianity (122-3). He also uses the Middle East in the novel “as a kind of negative laboratory in which to explore the deleterious effects of a government that could not be predicted on the kinds of principles laid out in the *Vindication of the English Constitution*” (124). In his *Vindication*, Disraeli establishes the significance of the government and the Anglican Church to British identity. He then elaborates that “a theocracy would deteriorate into zealous tyranny”, and “a purely secular government would degenerate into amoral utilitarianism”. Accordingly, protestant England should mediate between the two. Disraeli’s means to explore these ideals was by displacing it onto the historical episode of David Alroy (124-5).

By repeating and re-circulating racial stereotypes of Muslim communities, *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* affirms Scott’s innovation to the genre of historical romances of both Muslim and Jewish communities in a way that prepared for the political alliance between Britain and Israel. Spector asserts that Disraeli displaces his contemporary political debate on an exotic setting in a manner not loyal to true historical record of the Middle East by recycling descriptions contained in his own letters written during his grand tour of 1830-1. His misrepresentation of both Muslims and Jews were part

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<sup>8</sup> Relating to belief in millennium or to a thousand years.

of a deliberate manipulation of the history and culture of twelfth century Persia to produce an archetypal empire in order to evoke the spirit of Middle Eastern history whilst reflecting the opposite of nineteenth century England by creating a world with neither a representative government nor an established protestant church (Spector, Critical Introduction of *Alroy* 14).

The portrayal of the Seljuk Turks in the novel is, as Disraeli admits, inaccurate, which affirms racial stereotypes of Muslim communities. This inaccuracy was acceptable to nineteenth century readers since Orientalists have always used the East as their means to project upon and discuss their sensitive social or political issues. It is also part of Scott's legacy in literature which allowed manipulation of historical material to highlight certain wanted literary themes (Critical Introduction of *Alroy* 16)<sup>9</sup>.

The novel illustrates that the heroic new racial stereotype of Alroy's fails due to the typical Muslim and Jewish communities that surround him, which are not only a criticism and a highlight of these two communities, but also a criticism of the British state then. Through a kind of sympathy-arousing trend, Disraeli uses a romantic epic Hamlet-like hero to assert the right of the Jewish race in leading a life of their own by utilizing their heroism and intelligence in claiming their dignity as a superior race whilst being conquered and controlled by their fellow Arab Semite race<sup>10</sup>.

Levine highlights the way characters in *Alroy* relate significantly to each other and contribute to the thematic purpose of the narrative. He believes that Alroy, a man of commitment and action parted with his mentor Jabaster for his excessive commitment and lack of action, even though it was Jabaster who educated and inspired Alroy to embark on his journey to the House of Holiness where he managed to acquire the sceptre of Solomon. It is when Alroy fails to balance his commitment and actions and rejects his commitments for further action after he marries Schirene that he is defeated and executed. This figure of the Jew whose commitments

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<sup>9</sup> For more on Disraeli's manipulation of events and historical character, see Spector's electronic article "Critical Introduction".

<sup>10</sup> Example of Alroy's reflections on his role as a prince in captivity can be found in his speeches on pages 22-25.

and actions are balanced is then further developed into the instrumental character of Sidonia in *Coningsby* and *Tancred* (53). It is significant to consider the Schirene-Honain world view and its impact on Alroy. Although Honain is Jabaster's brother, he is committed to comfort and power regardless of their being offered by fellow Hebrews, Muslim or Karamsian state. Alroy realizes that he has to continue his quest as a pilgrim and the offspring of his marriage would be compromise and reconciliation, which he rejects and pays off with his life. Disraeli hints with the Honain- Schirene view of the uncommitted though prosperous life parallels the way Young England perceived of old Toryism (54-5).

Alroy's account stands out as the heroic endeavour of a Jewish leader who not only tries to break his Jewish race free from enslavement in Muslim lands, but also represents the only Jewish power that claimed the right over Palestine at that time. Despite his sincere claims and sublime ambitions, he fails because of the divisions amongst the Jews then, and because unlike the Christian and Muslim powers back then, he was too insignificant to challenge them. His legend lived because, as he promised, the Jews did migrate from Iraq to Jerusalem one day, after the Jewish race as a power became far more motivated and consolidated.

In the depiction of Alroy, Disraeli highlights the superiority and integrity of the Jewish race and points to elements that contributed to their failure such as their disunity and insufficient support of each other. He projects Western anxieties of their internal differences and diverse interests unto this romantic orient, using the well known fantasy means to discuss pertinent Victorian current issues. On the other hand, the narrative alludes to the glorious stance of the Jewish people, inspired by the Islamic tradition of martyrdom, also there in Christianity, a fact that happened during Alroy's lifetime, in the Christian crusade in Palestine<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> It is significant to highlight that through the racial stereotyping employed in the portrayal of Alroy and his encounters with other secular and non secular Jews, and the short-sighted, worldly motivated Muslim characters, *Alroy* elaborates, facilitates and justifies the way England should colonize Palestine. A land that is ruled by the despotic and demonic Muslims should be part of their colonies, by means of their superior Jewish agents for whom Palestine is a promised land they have striven to return to even before the twelfth century.

The racial stereotype of Schirene and Mariam contribute to Disraeli meant to confirm set stereotypes of Eastern women, the ones that stand out and the passive lustful ones. Through repetition of these stereotypes, he adds merits and de-merit to Jewish and Muslim women respectively. The Muslim Caliph's daughter, Schirene, is a feasible instrument in this case in two ways. She is an Eastern woman who would and could do anything to achieve her lustful purpose. In other words, her characterization as an evil sorcerer who entraps Alroy contrasts that of Alroy's sister Miriam, the beautiful, honorable and supportive Jewish woman of her brother. According to Masefield, the brother and sister's relation was pure and sublime before which any ambition would vanish and Alroy's relationship with his sister Mariam is highly inspired by Disraeli's real relationship with his sister Sarah (79-81). This relationship is his means of asserting that despite the trials of time, strong family ties still did thrive amongst the Jewish people against that of Jabaster and Honain.

This novel consolidates the British civilizing mission during the reign of the British Empire and its emphatic negative stereotyping of the Muslim Orient as a land of tyranny and injustice where Britain should protect the Jews. Although Alroy is a skilled magician, the novel shows how his ability to use it is limited, and that without wisdom and religious guidance, it is of no use to him. In addition, Alroy's attempt to reconcile all parties and his tragic honourable death cast him in a prophetic light. He fails to be the messiah who leads his people back to Palestine, but his inspiration and faith regenerate them so that he succeeds at the spiritual level. On the other hand, religious extremists and dishonest people such as Scherirah and his band, Jabaster, Honain and Schirene who betray Alroy, contribute to the demonic Muslim orient. The narrative highlights the Palestine "abroad" as the best alternative for a Jewish home, which extends the colonial rule of the Empire "abroad" and displaces the Jews away from Britain as "home".

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In line with Disraeli's *Alroy*, Bulwer Lytton's novel uses ideas of racial stereotyping to assert the merits of the Jewish race and people

at “home” and “abroad”. Through repetitive use of certain racial stereotypes of Spanish Muslims (superstitious, intolerant of other faiths, under disunited rulers) in contrast to the newly rising admirable racial stereotypes of Jews (rich, of superior qualities and higher intelligence than others and possessing leadership qualities), Lytton contributes to the rise in the depiction of increasingly sympathetic views of Jews in Victorian fiction, one that corresponds not only to their glorious past and invites more tolerance and political emancipation at “home” in contrast to that of Muslims and Catholic Christians in Spain.

Known as the first Baron Lytton, Bulwer Lytton was an English novelist, poet, playwright, politician, and an immensely popular writer of a stream of bestselling novels which earned him considerable affluence. The son of William Bulwer and Elizabeth Lytton, he assumed the name of Bulwer Lytton after inheriting the Lytton estate “Knebworth” in 1843 (Kalmar, “Romantic Orientalist” 360).

Aside from his political career<sup>12</sup>, Bulwer-Lytton's literary career began in 1820 with the publication of a book of poems and thrived for much of the nineteenth century. He contributed not only to the historical novel, but also mystery, romance, the occult, and science fiction. His literary output financed his extravagant life. His most famous work is *Pelham* (1828), which earned him public acclaim and established his reputation as a wit and dandy (Drabble 147).

Lytton's historical novel, *Leila or the Siege of Granada*, was originally published with many engraved illustrations. The preface to the novel's 1860 edition explains that its lesser popularity is due to the prejudice of the time, against literary works that may owe part of their value to their illustrations<sup>13</sup>. The novel, as the double title suggests, has a double plot, one on the domestic story of the Jewish daughter Leila and her father Almamen, and the national story of the fall of Granada of Spain in the hands of the Spanish King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

As the title indicates, there are two romantic plots in this narrative. One is the fall of the Moorish threshold, the last to fall to

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<sup>12</sup> See Allingham, *The Victorian Web*.

<sup>13</sup> As highlighted in the novel's preface, 6.

the rule of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and the other is the tragic loss of hope and desperation of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of the city amongst whom is Leila, the daughter of the Jewish Almamen bin Issachar and the Moorish prince Muza bin Abil Gazan. The tale of the fall of Granada is a fictional account of the real historical account to the actual fall of Granada in 1492<sup>14</sup>.

The plot of *Leila* or *The Siege of Granada* has the Muslim Prince Muza in love with a Jewess. Beautiful Leila is the daughter of witty though shrewd magician Almamen, whose goal in life is to secure a peaceful and prosperous life for Jews in Spain, under either Muslims or Christians. He surrenders her to the protection of the Christian King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, who are in the course of a long battle with the Moorish King Boabdil. Despite the negative tendencies and superstitious beliefs of King Boabdil, with the encouragement and support of his army and his cousin Prince Muza, he fights relentlessly for the Moorish cause. When defeated in the end, he signs a peace treaty with the Christian King and Queen and surrenders the city to them. As for Leila, she is eventually killed by her own father when he discovers her conversion to Christianity, during a ceremony to be a nun. Almamen, who struggles in every way to gain the Christians promise to treat Jews with equality and justice, commits suicide by announcing his identity before the Moorish masses gathered to fight for Granada the night before King Boabdil surrenders the city to the Christians. He is slain by them and dies heroically, unlike King Boabdil who lives defeated.

Superstition is one of the main racial stereotypes that marks the entire work, a timeless trait seen in both Christians and Muslims. The Muslim's superstitious beliefs, however, surpass that of the Christian's by far. The characterization of the main characters reflects highly Lytton's orientalist perception of the historical character of King Boabdil, Prince Muza bin Abil Gazan and the

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<sup>14</sup> Even though the actual war was a ten year battle between the Christians and Muslims, the narrative focuses on the last few months of it. Hence, the tale not only highlights the war story between King Boabdil and Prince Muza on the Muslim side and King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on the Christian one, but also asserts the suffering of the Muslim and Jewish multitudes residing in Granada during the span of the narrative.

fictitious character of Almamen and all the implications of the fall of a great civilization as that of the Spanish Moors who were never referred to as Spanish in this work despite their affiliation to the land and magnificent, undeniable contributions.

The suffering and prosecution of the Jews under Muslim and Christian rule is another racial stereotype repeated and confirmed by Lytton, as a prominent aspect of this narrative. This is dramatized by Almamen's numerous attempts to seek favour of King Ferdinand and to sign a treaty that secures his Jewish community equality within Christian threshold. Accordingly, the novel connotes the need for sympathy with the chosen people for their hard work, intelligence, knowledge, humanity, their striving for excellence and peace, and the struggle to survive with two other faiths.

The racial stereotype of Almamen, thus, as heroic and prophetic, challenges the typical stereotype known of Jewish men. A most provocative, unconventional and instrumental character in the course of the novel who escapes death by virtue of his diligence and the shrewdness of his people whose determination to uplift the plight of his people resulted in his sacrifice of his one and only offspring, Leila. Through flashbacks, readers come to know that Almamen's father was killed by the Moorish king of Granada for his excessive wealth. The Muslim greed for money, savagery and foolishness is inferred in his murder; as his body was cut open to search for his Jewels. Paradoxically, Jewish shrewdness, diligence and teamwork is inferred in Issachar's ability to hide his wealth successfully in different places aside from the collaboration of the Jews in bringing up his sole heir, Almamen as a Moor with a Jewish faith and upbringing. Almamen is thus determined to kill King Boabdil and make friends with Christians against his Muslim foe. His hopes and dreams for a peaceful existence for the Jews under Christian rule are however shattered when King Ferdinand breaks his promise to him causing Almamen to transfer his allegiance to King Boabdil and Muslim rule. He is unlike the ordinary Jews whose sole purpose in life is to survive and be wealthy, despite his sympathy for their avarice as their means to survive with dignity; he criticizes their disunity and timid and short-sighted traits when he is with them. As a young man, he saves the life of a Christian man and his son whose

wife is eternally indebted to him and who tries to help him flee with Leila when he finds her. His gentle and soft heart is depicted in his concern for his daughter's wellbeing and safety. A man of valour, who fights courageously with the Muslims against the Nazarenes, his witchcraft and shrewdness is best portrayed in his dealing with King Boabdil and King Ferdinand. He uses his magic to enchant his captors and escape their prisons and chains. He also manages to enchant Muza once, when he leads him to watch the murder of Leila. In spite of his love for Leila, his loyalty to the Jewish faith compels him to kill one who chose not only to convert to Christianity, but also to take a vow and be a nun at their church. He refuses to lead a normal life and decides to die fighting the Christians who betrayed his trust and caused his great loss, and fight for the Moors, in spite of his hatred for both of them. His physical power and stamina is best portrayed in his battle field skills, where the Moorish masses attempt to kill him with six swords, but he only falls dead with the seventh towards the end of the novel. Although depicted as an enchanter, he is an admirable character for his bravery, diligence and kindness.

Almamen's witchcraft challenges Scott's portrayal of Rebecca as an idealized innocent. Almamen, like Alroy, is skilled in sorcery which helps him escape the Christian camp twice, and have Muza witness Leila's death. However, Almamen's witchcraft does not save his life at the end, just like Alroy. Thus, their knowledge in witchcraft is nothing more than religious rituals that only such intelligent men are able to perform. The two men are prophet-like figures sent to their people and killed by the insolent Muslims. Like Disraeli, Lytton believes the prophetic to be a Jew, and the demonic a Muslim. The illustrations published alongside the text of the novel also reflect Lytton's deep conviction in the many admirable rituals to the Masonic trend of Judaism.

Another repetitive racial stereotype of Muslim communities in this work is pessimism and inaction, a timeless one confirmed by King Boabdil speech and acts. His past and youth is riddled with dejection and failure to rise to favour in his father's and uncle's eyes. Muslim disunity is reflected here, as it is Boabdil's lack of support for his uncle's troops that results in his uncle's cooperation with the Christians against him. Nicknamed el-Zoghbi, he hesitates in fighting

for his state for fear of loss and doom, not of himself but his people. The moral support he receives from his mother, mistress and Muza bear fruit when he finally decides to fight with his troops against the Christians. His people gather around him in adoration and support and remain faithful to him despite the surrender he is resolved to, to protect their lives. The one combat in which Ferdinand and Boabdil met does not clarify how he lost and how the Muslim's flag fell. His fighters suddenly forsake him and run away from the battle field and even though Muza tries to get them back to fight, they refuse. Lytton perhaps wants to show that the Muslim army can be stricken with cowardice and easily divided. Even though Moorish troops vow to die for their state, when facing the valour of the Nazarenes, they are no match and their sudden awe and loss is proof that it is the will of heaven that King Ferdinand wins and rules Granada. A philosophical man of wisdom and insight, King Boabdil adheres to his promise of surrendering Granada safely to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. When Almamen urges the Moorish masses to take the Christian army by surprise at night, which could have changed the course of history, he stops them, fearing for their loved ones in order to save them from prosecution and death. His last night in his palace and surrender of Alhambra the next morning is the most painful historical fact in the novel elaborated by Lytton, especially when he glances back at Alhambra from a distance, sighs and weeps. It is the moment when his mother tells him "Ay, weep, like a woman, over what thou couldst not defend like a man!" (290). In spite of Boabdil's wisdom and respect for the terms and conditions agreed there upon, history proved him wrong in his surrender. This is because this peaceful treaty led to the forced migration and conversion followed by death to the Muslim inhabitants of Granada who would not willingly convert to Christianity in 1499, when King Ferdinand lost hope in the possibility of peaceful conversion. As the novel ends with the queen mother's famous words to her son, *Leila* ends at that romantic historical moment and does not depict the aftermath of King Boabdil's adherence to truce, but only with Lytton's sense of remorse for the fall of Granada.

Although the depiction of prince Muza stands out as different, his valour and might is overshadowed by King Boabdil's decisions

and choices. Despite their heroism, they fail before the shrewdness of Jews and might of the Christian fighters. Muza bin Abdil Gazan, the noble prince whose sincerity and intelligence are of no compare to other Muslim fighters, seems to be the only prince fighting besides the king for Granada. There are many renowned fighters in the Christian camp fighting with King Ferdinand and the masses, but only one seems to match his bravery and skill in fighting. He is the only man Leila falls in love with and remains loyal to until her death.

The racial stereotype employed in the depiction of King Ferdinand is might, shrewdness and destiny for greatness, surrounded by loyal men and supported by his Queen Isabella. It is with such confidence that they are intolerant of others, both Muslim and Jewish communities and their faiths. King Ferdinand is not loyal to his word and can easily break his promises, as in the case of his treatment of Almamen, whom he promised equal rights with the Christians under his rule. When his priest told him not to trust Almamen, to kill him and break their vow for suspecting his loyalty may be to the Muslims, he does not reflect on Leila as a hostage at his camp, but instead uses the priest's advice as his legitimate excuse to participate in the killing and looting of not only the Jews, but any Christian of Jewish descent to avoid any problems with *marranos* or crypto-Jews. It is because he spread the news of the Jewish attempt to make a deal with him against Muslims that King Boabdil considers them traitors and banishes many of them after confiscating half of their wealth. He is not a man of his word, a staunch Christian who may only accommodate other faiths in the hope of converting them; this is evident in his breaking of the terms and conditions agreed to with King Boabdil upon surrendering the city. Likewise is Queen Isabella a kind, just, intelligent and prudent leader who understands the whims of men. She fulfils the racial stereotype of an intolerant Catholic Christian who must have Muslims and Jews converted or else annihilated. Like King Ferdinand, their depiction is an embodiment of the opposite of Protestant Victorian England, which Lytton seems to believe must differentiate itself from Catholic Spain and be more tolerant of its Jewish subjects. Thus, he expects of Victorian England to include them within the English national identity and make use of Jewish skills and expertise. Although this

racial stereotype is in line with Scott's perception of Christian intolerance towards Jews in Spain, in contrast to Muslims' tolerance, by depicting the Muslim community as intolerant of their Jewish inhabitants, Lytton is challenging Victorian England to distinguish itself from those two intolerant faiths and communities by granting English Jews their emancipation.

Another repeated stereotype by Lytton's work is the innocence and vulnerability of Eastern women whose fate is tied to that of their people. Leila is the only round character in the novel. Portrayed as an oriental woman of extreme attraction and beauty, her beauty only begets her trouble, such as the instances with prince Don Juan and the monk. Lytton's characterization of Leila is similar to Scott's depiction of Rebecca. Unlike Rebecca who manages to seek refuge in Spain, Leila dies there by her own father's hands, a death which allegorizes and highlights the absence of a safe refuge--a geographical area wherein the Jews can lead an honourable life. Moreover, it is meant to emphasize the plight of assimilable, tolerant Jews to Christians in fifteenth century Spain and in Victorian England, which brought about crypto-Jews and which had to now be redressed in the emancipation of English Jews.

Another racial stereotype confirmed by Lytton in *Leila* is that of Jewish disunity. It is, however, meant to stimulate their future unity under Christian support. Lytton asserts that one of those factors that contributed to the persecution of the Jewish population in Granada by both Muslims and Jews is their disunity, as seen when Ximen, Issac and Elias inform King Boabdil who Almamen is to inherit Almamen's gold. Almamen was unlike other Jews, and cared more for their emancipation and honourable life than anything of material value. Disraeli had the same spirit, and it was with his efforts and that of other Jews that waves of migrations of European Jews colonized Palestine, overlooked their differences and created the state of Israel in time.

Despite Lytton's sympathy for the fall of Granada, the racial stereotype is there in his perception of Granada as the only civilized Muslim Empire. Such was the mindset in which Islam, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and Muslim civilization was perceived in Victorian England on one hand, and on the other, this romance shows the fall

of Granada as one of those historical events to be pondered upon, for drastically altering the lives of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of Granada in such a way the British empire, carrying the burden of humanity and aspiring to realize the civilizing mission, had to avoid, for its own good as well as others.

In this novel, “abroad” is the Spanish land where Muslim oriental communities lived for centuries before it became “home” after falling into the hands of Christian Catholics. The Christian Catholic forces are compared to Protestant Christians at “home” in England in their treatment of the Jewish communities. This novel asserts, therefore, the plight of the wandering Jews in their virtual “home” and also as aliens “abroad” in having no land of their own. It further underscores their significance and need to have a “home” of their own. As *Leila* dramatizes the historical event of the fall of Granada, it exaggerates the suffering of the Jews and their prosecution by both parties. Although Moorish Muslim inhabitants of Granada suffered even more, their prosecution is overlooked in favour of that of the Jewish community. This asserts the fact that this narrative was meant to contribute to English national identity, part of which was the rising Jewish question. Just as the fate of the Muslim communities was overlooked by Victorian readers, to a certain extent, their suffering continues to be overlooked today.

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Similar to Disraeli’s *Alroy* and Lytton’s *Leila*, Hall Caine’s *The Scapegoat* uses ideas of racial stereotypes to assert the merits of Jewish communities at “home” and “abroad” in contrast to the demerits of the Muslim communities. Through repetitive use of certain negative racial stereotypes of Moroccan Muslims (such as being superstitious, intolerant of other faiths, divided by their despotic rulers) in contrast to the newly rising admirable racial stereotypes of Jews (intelligent and good-hearted), Caine contributes to the rise in the depiction of an increasingly sympathetic view of Jews in Victorian fiction, one that invites more tolerance and political emancipation at “home” in England.

David Wilson states that Hall Caine was born on 14th May 1853 at Runcorn in Cheshire (“A Brief Biography of Hall Caine”,

*The Victorian Web*). Thomas Henry Hall Caine was the son of John Caine, a Manxman from Cumberland. During his childhood, he was occasionally sent to stay with his uncle at the Isle of Man in a thatched cottage at Ballaugh, where he spent time with his grandmother who told him wondrous tales of Manx fairies and witches and all about the folklore of the island which he would use later as raw materials to draw on in his future career as a novelist. In Liverpool, Caine lived with Dante Gabriel Rossetti until his death as the two became great friends. Under his influence, Caine contributed to *The Academy* and *The Atheneum* as well as other periodicals (Wilson, *The Victorian Web*).

Caine's first and second novels, *The Shadow of a Crime* (1885) and *A Son of Hagar* (1886), were both set in Cumberland following Rossetti's advice to Caine, which was to write Manx stories so that he may become "The Bard of Manxland". (Wilson, *The Victorian Web*). In *The Scapegoat*, and *The White Prophet*, he experimented with oriental stereotypes, confirming some and challenging others. *The Scapegoat* is authoritatively described as one of his highest achievements, as it won him praise of the Jewish community in England, in contrast to *The White Prophet* (Hammond 47).

As a successful Victorian critic, novelist and playwright, he wrote *The Scapegoat*, at which time Caine was aware of the significance of the Jewish question in Victorian England. With acquired knowledge of the orient from his research and travels to Egypt, Palestine and Morocco, he chose the last to be the setting for his oriental novel in which he expresses his sympathy with both Muslims and Jews and their predicament in having to endure a despotic ruler<sup>15</sup>. In his novel, along with the typical racial stereotypes of Muslims and Jewish communities in Morocco, he presents his readers with outstanding men in both of these communities, Israel Ben Oliel and Al-Mahdi.

In *The Scapegoat*, Caine confirms racial stereotypes of both Muslims and Jews. While the majority of the Muslim community is naïve, passive, fatalistic, lusty, despotic, poor, abused by their

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<sup>15</sup> It also shows his perception of oriental peoples and lands as well as his conception of how Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities lead their daily lives and how they felt towards each other.

governor and unable to change their conditions except for pathetic attempts at revolt. Eventually, when a change does come at the end of the narrative, it comes with the aid of the foreign forces. Jews, on the other hand, are usurers and greedy people who contribute negatively to the Muslims suffering around them. Yet both Muslims and Jews are the scapegoats of their tyrant's rule. The novel has romantic versus political dimensions and Muslim versus Jew dimensions. *The Scapegoat* is not only a testimony of Caine's awareness of Jewish history and plight in the Middle-East and Europe, but also a testimony of his awareness of the historical Mahdi movement and the political conditions and despotism in oriental lands.

Like Disraeli's *Alroy* and Lytton's *Leila*, Caine challenges set Jewish stereotypes with his hero, Israel Ben Oriel, around whom the novel is centered. The novel is his tale, from his birth and upbringing in England to his return to Morocco, his marriage to Ruth (a daughter of a Jewish Rabbi), his twenty-five year service under the governor of Tetuan El-Araby (nick named Ben Aboo) and repentance and redemption to his death. The main plot line revolves around him and his services to Ben Aboo during which he inflicts much injustice and suffering unto Muslims and Jews alike, as part of his duty as a tax collector, and also avenges himself as someone immensely despised, offended and ridiculed by both communities. The dramatic shift in the novel begins when he finds out that his blind, deaf and dumb daughter has carried the lot of his sins. He then decides to make the impossible to be redeemed and to have her sighted, hearing and speaking, to realize her mother's vision at her deathbed. By the time all that happens, he has gone through much suffering and dies leaving his Muslim daughter to be taken care of and married to Al-Mahdi, Mohamed Ben Mequeinz. He dies a redeemed pious man, believing in divine justice, content with his daughter's condition and loved and revered as a hero by Muslims and Jews alike.

According to *Encyclopedia Judaica*, the Jewish people have been part of the Moroccan population ever since the destruction of the first temple. More Jews fled to Morocco after the Spanish inquisition of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. They contributed to the economy of Morocco throughout these times, and were used by Moroccan rulers such as Sultan Abdul Haqq in the fifteenth century to

strengthen their finances. When his government was toppled, his Jewish prime minister, as well as others, was assassinated. Generally, Moroccan Berber Jews, as well as other migrants from Spain, were all subjected to oppression and persecution by Muslim<sup>16</sup>. In the eighteenth century, the Sultan's Jewish vizier, Elijah ha-Levi, was sold into slavery after the Sultan's death, and upon his return was humiliated and caused him to flee from Tetuan in a similar manner to that of Israel Ben Oliel's in the novel. Hence, Hall Caine reflects his awareness of such historical records on Moroccan Jews and their plight as a minority there who inflicted injustices on others due to their sense of inferiority, and who ended up badly beaten by circumstance and deeply troubled. Caine's depiction of Israel Ben Oliel's background as a son deprived of his father's love and brought up by his uncles after his mother's death explains his lack of affections for others. The plot of the novel changes Israel from a stiff, hard-hearted man as a consequence of his subjection to ridicule and insult by Moroccan Jews and Muslims, to a kind hearted, gentle, humane and humble charitable figure as a result of his daughter's predicament. Israel's only source of love and affection is his wife, Ruth, after whose death, his love for Naomi and his sympathy for her miserable condition leads him through several attempts to uplift her suffering which in turn makes him identify with the poor, needy, homeless, orphans and persecuted people thwarted by evil circumstance. Israel's identification with the inferior classes in Morocco changes him so that he finds the generous hand and heart to lose everything he has for his daughter's sake and for the poor and needy as well. Moreover, he finds the courage to face the harshest penalties that could be inflicted unto him by the governor of Tetuan. Israel Ben Oliel changes when he realizes that his daughter is the embodiment of his sins. She is punished for his sins and unless he is redeemed, he was to continue to suffer watching her live deprived of her senses (eyesight and hearing).

Israel's romantic characterization is heroic for his bravely defying old stereotypes of submissiveness and the prophetic for attaining redemption of his daughter at the expense of all he had, even his own life. Although he was meant to lead a passive life under Ben Abo's rule, he refuses to be the ruler's scapegoat and in turn saves his

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Morocco.html>

daughter from being his scapegoat. Redemption in the novel is thus on two levels. The first is achieved through his spiritual growth and positive change and the second is achieved after his society realizes its mistake in accusing him for Ben Aboo's tyranny. Once they realize their unjust treatment and wrong verdict in attempting to kill Israel and then casting him out of Tetuan to Sema when their governor is in fact the villain, they manage to topple Ben Aboo and kill him once they have the chance after the Spanish involvement.

Another ground breaking challenging stereotype is that of Al-Mahdi. Caine's novel utilizes an episode based on a real historical event in Egypt to fit into his Moroccan narrative. It is reported by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that towards the end of this world, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven and fight infidels with Al-Mahdi's troops and that Mahdi will be a Muslim leader whose real name would be Muhammad Ben Abdullah, like the Prophet's name. Together with Jesus Christ, they will be victorious and until this world comes to an end, Al-Mahdi will rule justly and establish peace and happiness. As a consequence of the Prophet's report, several heretics throughout the centuries claimed to be Al-Mahdi at different locations of the Muslim world (Arjomand 134-6). One of them was a Muslim cleric named Muhammad Ahmad in the 1870s in Sudan. He preached renewal of the faith and liberation of the land, and attracted some followers. Soon, in open revolt against the Egyptians, he proclaimed himself the Mahdi, the promised redeemer of the Islamic world. He revolted against the oppressions of the Ottomans and the Egyptian administration of Sudan at that time and won several victories. Just like Caine depicted his Mahdi men in Morocco, this historical Mahdi's troop members were poorly clothed, half starving, and armed only with sticks and stones. Muhammad Ahmad died right after his victory in 1885, and was succeeded by Khalifa Abdallahi ibn Muhammad, who proved his leadership ability, albeit ruthlessly. The Mahdist state ruled until Abdullah was killed in 1889, and with his death the Mahdist regime ended (Churchill 458).

From the outset of the novel, racial stereotypes of Muslims and Jews were meant to be romanticized with the manipulated historical episodes of Jewish financiers and Al-Mahdi. Caine's perception of the

political and social conditions in Morocco is at first established in his preface where he describes Morocco as

a land wherein government is oppression, wherein law is tyranny, wherein justice is bought and sold, wherein it is a terror to be rich and a danger to be poor, wherein man may still be the slave of man, and women is no more than a creature of lust--a reproach to Europe, a disgrace to the century, an outrage on humanity, a blight on religion!. (6)

From this point onwards, the well established negative stereotypes of the Muslim and Jewish orient is evident in every page, as people who are in need of Western guidance and tutelage. On the other hand, establishing Allah's divine doctrine of nature as represented in the character of Al- Mahdi and his followers indicates that the East can redeem itself by getting rid of its despotism and establishing equality and justice amongst different ethnicities and faiths. Obviously, such a doctrine cannot be imposed as it lacks a proper system of a ruling state that secures a good future and equal opportunities for everyone, leaving Morocco in desperate need of the civilizing mission. Furthermore, in the preface to *The Scapegoat*, Al-Mahdi is described as:

appealing to God against tyranny and corruption and shame [...] and wheresoever men are broken they go to him, and wheresoever women are fallen and wrecked they seek the mercy and the shelter of his face. He is poor, and has nothing to give them save one thing only, but that is the best thing of all--it is hope. Not hope in life, but hope in death, the sublime hope whose radiance is always around him. Man that veils his face before the mysteries of the hereafter, and science that reckons the laws of nature and ignores the power of God, have no place with the Mahdi. The unseen is his certainty; the miracle is all in all to him; he throngs the air with marvels; God speaks to him in dreams when he sleeps, and warns and directs him by signs when he is awake (6).

Al-Mahdi's wife is Israel Ben Oliel's daughter, and the couple lead the Moroccan masses

Together these two, with their ragged fellowship of the poor behind them, having no homes and no possessions, pass from place to place, unharmed and unhindered, through that land of intolerance and iniquity, being protected and revered by virtue of the superstition which accepts them for Saints? (7).

Despite the prophetic atmosphere around and about the Mahdi, his heroism, bravery and will to lead a peaceful just life is a romantic unpractical one. The Mahdi portrayed by Caine is content with his ignorance and illiteracy, unlike Prophet Muhammad, who urged his followers to learn and contemplate, read and write despite his own illiteracy. Although "read" was the first word revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) from Allah, an educated man who believes in science does not belong to this Mahdi. Prophet Muhammad was followed by not only the poor and the lower classes of people in Makkah and Madinah, but also by noble men from high ranks. Thus the contrast Caine portrays in the name of the same religious faith is sharp, which he justifies as the aforementioned Moroccan reality. This depiction also echoes the author's perception of what has become of Islam in the nineteenth century, a religion which accommodates the poor and needy, yet leads them to death.

Al-Mahdi Mohamed Ben Mequinez is a man who has always lived in poverty with the poor, a man who lived to die for justice. A fearless prophet-like man who could not be seduced by all the gold of this world to commit any injustice, his charisma is best portrayed in his threat to Ben Aboo and his prophecy of Ben Aboo's eventual death. He leads not only Muslims, but also poor Jews, and by whose doctrine Israel is convinced to follow. Before Israel's death, he is anxious for Naomi's safety, but when Al-Mahdi tells him that he will marry her and protect her, he dies in peace. In a way, Caine made one positively controversial Jewish character and a positively controversial Muslim one. The contrast between these two men is vast though, as Israel matures throughout the course of the novel, and becomes a hero, whilst Al-Mahdi is a flat, visionary prophet-like

character throughout. His name invokes the sense of an extreme sect of Islam and linked with anti-modernism, anti-urbanism. A man who could not become a leader for other than a poor majority, a man who could rule their spirits and hearts, but not make a significant national change for people to depend on. This is why Israel perceives that a new life for a Jew, in an established country like England, will be far better than any in the East.

For the stereotype of Israel Ben Oriel, Caine provides a pro-Jewish sympathetic depiction. This novel was praised by English Jews, not only for its sympathetic treatment of their race, but also for justifying some negative Jewish stereotypes. Another reason for the novel's approval is its indication of England as a better country for a practicing Jew to live in peacefully in comparison to the Muslim Orient. The notion of a far more tolerant British Empire as a "home" for the Jews is set in contrast to a despotic oppressive Muslim orient "abroad", as inferred in Israel's advice to Ali, his foster son, to depart from Morocco and live in England "a place where a Jewish man could lead a good life", and his intention to take Naomi along from their last station in Semsu to make a new "home" in England, which does not happen because of Israel's sickness and eventual death as well as Naomi's conversion. The novel also highlights the plight of a Jewish nation in having to be scattered in different lands in Europe and Asia, away from their one promised land. In contrast to Disraeli and Eliot, Caine does not hint of the significance of having Eastern and European Jews migrate to Palestine in his plot, but instead suggests that they settle and assimilate in England. Caine was anti-Zionist, like Israel Zangwill, a friend of his literary circle, who broke away from the Zionist movement fearing the displacement of the indigenous Arab populations (Felsenstein 724). Even though the novel comes in line with the previous two novels in its sympathetic portrayal of the Jews, it does not promote Zionism, but rather Jewish emancipation in England.

The racial stereotype of tolerance versus intolerance is one of that romanticized in this novel. There is a certain extent to which the Muslims and Jews in Morocco seem to tolerate each other and ally against tyranny, but Caine certainly reveals the heartfelt antagonism they express frankly for each other in their daily dealings in the urban

cities of Morocco. Thus, the Muslims and Jewish inhabitants of Tetuan are anything, but idealistic in their treatment of each other, as evident in the maledictions they utter against each other.

The typical Muslim tyrant and villain who dominates the plot is El-Araby or Ben Aboo is a stereotype that stands out in this novel. He is a vulgar, ugly despotic Muslim ruler who lives to increase his wealth and victimize the poor lower class Muslim and Jewish men. He rules with an iron fist, and kills with cold blood and without any sense of remorse. Paradoxically, his fourth Spanish wife, Katrina, controls him, as many of his decisions are implementations of her advice. He is moved at times due to his cowardice, but is a flat character as he never changes, a figure whose tyranny had set him way beyond redemption. He is not afraid of God, but only Sultan Abd Rahman III and no one else. He is despised not only by his subjects, but also by his wives, a Circassian, a French woman and a Jewess who try their best to lure Naomi to fall into their trap by becoming one of El-Araby's concubines. He is indeed a prototype of other nineteenth and twentieth century Muslim rulers.

The novel also asserts said stereotypes of the harem quarters. The description of the governor's house, the harem inmates dressing, their lethargic lifestyle and boredom is typical of the harem, nothing outstanding or unusual. In fact, Caine asserts the negative stereotyping through his depiction of the harem quarters of Ben Aboo as well as his selection of wives. In fact, making El-Araby's wives of different faiths and ethnicities is but a reflection of the common Ottoman variety and assortment of slave women. The fear of captivity is heightened and dramatized by Naomi's forced conversion and attempts to entrap her in concubinage. In spite of her childish character, she has the strength to withstand a forceful intrigue because such a house with a weak essence is no better than a flimsy spider web bound to collapse and fall apart with one blow. Before Ben Aboo's death, he seeks refuge with his three wives, but they do not open the door for him, either out of fear or vengeance. Katrina, his fourth wife of Spanish origin, tries to escape with him, but not succeeding in getting him up, runs away with his guards. Ultimately Ben Aboo is wounded by Ali before being stoned to death by his Muslim subjects.

Caine further emphasizes hypocrisy as a trait associated with Muslims in the novel. Muslims are depicted as simpletons, gullible and hypocritical when fearing calamity, as they were all happy in welcoming Abdul Rahman and the next day are all eager to see him removed. They do not resist the Spanish forces, and they take this opportunity to shut their doors in the face of Ben Aboo before stoning him to death. This whole depiction of Arab Muslims revolting against an oppressive regime, sacking down and killing their governor is a living example of what has happened and continues to happen in the Middle East. The speedy departure of Abdul Rahman hiding from the Spanish together with the murder of Ben Aboo reminds readers of the Arab spring which started in Tunisia and extended to Libya, Egypt, and Syria with respect to the variance of circumstances.

Caine's political description of an improvised Eastern nation under tyrant rule in *The Scapegoat* forshadows the vivid deployment of Orientalist stereotypes in Western depictions of the contemporary Middle East and one that continues to flourish in a cultural environment permeated by Islamophobia. Compared to Disraeli's *Alroy*, *The Scapegoat* is more reflective of the social and political circumstances in the Muslim orient in spite of recycling tenth-century oriental stereotypes in its portrayal of the Muslim communities. The political upheaval in the Middle East in the twenty first century is preconditioned in the same manner it was many centuries ago. While promoting England as a home for Jews and casting Morocco in a demonic light, as a land ruled by despotism and tyranny, the novel challenges negative stereotypes in its sympathetic representation of the innocent majority of Muslim communities, but this is overwhelmed by a far more progressive view of Jewish characters. Thus the novel casts a prophetic light on Israel ben Oliel and the Mahdi figures, but while Israel's aim is to lead a peaceful and prosperous life, Al-Mahdi's is to be the embodiment of good values, even if it leads him and his followers to death. Despite his prophetic idealistic spirit, he represents a Muslim orient in desperate need of western involvement, rule and emancipation, in contrast to Israel, whose likes could assimilate in English society and benefit it with their diligence and wit.

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In conclusion, the three Victorian authors discussed in this essay deployed shifting ideas of racial stereotyping in their novels in favour of empowering Jewish communities. Disraeli, Lytton and Caine were inspired by Scott's historical romances to assert the historical suffering and plight of the Jews at "home" and "abroad" in their own novels. In confirming and challenging certain stereotypes of both the Muslim and Jewish communities, they produced and influenced a version of Orientalism which progressively revised the role of both communities in consolidating the aims of British colonialism and the imperial civilizing mission. The selected works thus reflect the increasing pertinence of the Jewish question to Europe and England during the Victorian period and the marginal significance of the Muslim orient in contrast. With the Jews' struggle for emancipation and its eminence as a superior race in Europe and the beginning of their migrations to Palestine by the 1880s, their demonic traits were progressively modified and considered as part of their admirable heroic prophetic qualities. Their will, physical stamina, skill in witchcraft and sharp wit dominate the selected works in comparison to a fixed, fatalistic, despotic and fossilized Muslim orient. England as "home" for the Jews is contrasted with Iran and Iraq in *Alroy*, Spain in *Leila* and Morocco in *The Scapegoat*. As such, these "foreign" countries "abroad" are represented according to set Orientalist stereotypes, in contrast to Scott's idealized representation of a more tolerant East. The question these literary works also seems to raise is, where should the Jewish community establish their "home"? Even though Scott's historical novels inferred that "abroad" should be a better "home" for them, these three novels suggest that England would also benefit from their presence, and that implicitly, such an "admirable" race deserves to establish their "home" as they wish—whether in England or elsewhere. Ultimately, these three historical novels reveal and validate the uniqueness of the Jewish race over others, especially in their historical contribution to the political developments in Christian Europe and the Arab Muslim regions.

## TRANSLITERATION TABLE

### CONSONANTS

Ar=Arabic, Pr=Persian, OT=Ottoman Turkish, Ur=Urdu

Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	Ar	Pr	OT	UR	
ء	'	'	'	ز	z	z	z	ک	—	g	g	g
ب	b	b	b	ژ	—	—	ʒ	ل	l	l	l	l
پ	p	p	p	ژ	—	zh	zh	م	m	m	m	m
ت	t	t	t	س	s	s	s	ن	n	n	n	n
ث	—	—	ṭ	ش	sh	sh	ʃ	ه	h	h	h <sup>1</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>
ث	th	th	th	ص	ṣ	ṣ	ʃ	و	w	v/u	v	v/u
ج	j	j	c	ض	ḍ	ḍ	ʒ	ی	y	y	y	y
چ	—	ch	çh	ط	ṭ	ṭ	ṭ	ة	-ah			-a <sup>2</sup>
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ḥ	ظ	ẓ	ẓ	ẓ	ال	al <sup>3</sup>			
خ	kh	kh	kh	ع	‘	‘	‘					
د	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	ğh					
ڈ	—	—	d	ف	f	f	f					
ذ	dh	dh	dh	ق	q	q	q					
ر	r	r	r	ک	k	k/g	k/ñ					

<sup>1</sup> – when not final  
<sup>2</sup> – at in construct state  
<sup>3</sup> – (article) al - or l-

### VOWELS

	Arabic and Persian	Urdu	Ottoman Turkish
Long	ا	ā	ā
	آ	Ā	—
	و	ū	ū
	ي	ī	ī
Doubled	ي	iy (final form i)	iy (final form i)
	و	uww (final form ū)	uvv
		uvv (for Persian)	uvv
Diphthongs	و	au or aw	ev
	ی	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	ا	u	u or ü
	ا	i	o or ö
	ا	i	i

### URDU ASPIRATED SOUNDS

For aspirated sounds not used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish add h after the letter and underline both the letters e.g. چھ jh گھ gh

For Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish orthography may be used.

AL-SHAJARAH  
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*Contents*

ARTICLES IN VOL. 22, No. 1, 2017

THE NEVER-ENDING KASHMIR DISPUTE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND PEACE <i>Abdullah al-Ahsan</i>	1
THE TRUE INVENTOR OF SOME EARLY MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEVICES AND MECHANISMS <i>Waleed Fekry Faris</i> <i>Salah Elmoselhy</i>	29
MODERN CRITICISM OF THE <i>SAHABAH</i> : AN APPRAISAL <i>Serdar Demirel</i>	65
THE CONCEPT OF EUROPE AS A CULTURAL IDENTITY <i>Fatmir Shehu</i> <i>Bukuri Zejno</i>	85
THE JEWISH QUESTION IN VICTORIAN HISTORICAL ROMANCES <i>Mafaz M. Mustafa</i> <i>Sharifah Aishah binti Osman</i>	113
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	147

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