“THE LIFE OF ISRAEL IS IN YOUR VEINS”: EMPIRE, NATIONHOOD, AND JEWISH PASSING IN *DANIEL DERONDA* AND *THE PRIME MINISTER*

by

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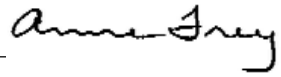

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And to my husband, who is both my anchor and the wind in my sails. You see everything clearly.

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In 1876, at the height of Britain's imperialism, two of Britain's most influential novelists published novels centered around passing Jewish characters. In George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda,* Deronda is a man who discovers his Jewish heritage and becomes a Messianic figure searching for a new Jewish homeland, while in Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister,* the supposedly foreign Ferdinand Lopez is defined by his inability to integrate into polite British society. But despite their myriad differences, both novels anticipate later discussions about race, nationalism, and colonialism both inside and outside the British Empire by highlighting the question of assimilation, or in other words, whether or not a Jewish person can ever truly be considered "English." Furthermore, when placed in conversation with each other these texts have similarly troubling relationships with Victorian British fears around racial purity and nationality that set the stage for the rise of Zionist thought in the 20th century.

INTRODUCTION

In 1876, at the height of Britain's imperialism, two of Britain's most influential novelists published novels centered around Jewish characters. In George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda,* Deronda is a man who discovers his Jewish heritage and becomes a Messianic figure searching for a new Jewish homeland, while in Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister,* Ferdinand Lopez is defined by his inability to integrate into polite British society. But despite their myriad differences, both novels anticipate later discussions about race, nationalism, and colonialism both inside and outside the British Empire by highlighting the question of assimilation, or in other words, whether or not a Jewish person can ever truly be considered "English." Furthermore, when placed in conversation with each other these texts have similarly troubling relationships with Victorian British fears around racial purity and nationality at a time when Britain's colonial arm was both far-reaching and imperiled by local resistance and revolution.

Certainly, these are very different texts, written by very different writers in their approach to novels in general and to Jewish characters in particular. Trollope's text is intensely interested in Britain's political world, while Eliot's is deeply internal and psychological. Likewise, their Jewish characters at first glance could not be further apart: Eliot's Deronda makes friends with and eventually marries a young Jewish woman, and finds his life's purpose in a proto-Zionist cause to found a new Jewish homeland in the Middle East. Trollope's Lopez has no such Jewish wife, community or cause—after a failed attempt to join the House of Parliament, his financial schemes come to nothing, and he eventually commits suicide. These varied depictions prove indicative of their authors: Eliot "gave herself a traditional Jewish… education… was steeped in the sacred Jewish texts, and… had studied Jewish history and Hebrew in preparation for writing *Daniel Deronda,"* according to Mikhal Dekel (791). Conversely, Trollope's Palliser series

"contains the programmatic antisemitism of the era," in one scholar's words, or more scathingly is described as containing "anti-Semitism… unparalleled in the nineteenth century." (Teal, Ragussis 234).

Yet despite their authorial and novelistic differences, at the centers of both *Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* are stories of Jewish characters' ability, or inability, to assimilate into British society—and it is on this question that Eliot and Trollope ultimately come to the same conclusion. For although Deronda and Lopez have different backgrounds, temperaments, and goals, both end up expelled from Britain, Deronda in self-imposed, Messianic exile and Lopez through suicide. *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda,* in other words, are texts that see no place for Jewish characters in British society, texts that reaffirm an essentializing, race-based *difference* that exists in Jewish people, and that precludes them from taking part in the British metropole to the degree that truly English characters can. Furthermore, taken to its logical extreme, *Daniel Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* write and disseminate among British readers a narrative of Jewish identity that necessitates a Jewish imperial, Zionist project which mirrors the politics of Britain's empire. It is a narrative built largely on the logic of racial essentialism, encouraging the conceptual differences between "true" British citizens and Jewish people, while also reinforcing imperial ideologies that justify Britain's imperial ventures abroad.

Racial Passing and Imperial Hegemony

It is perhaps no surprise that there are racial hierarchies present in two novels written at the height of Britain's imperialism. But the novels' interest in identifying and categorizing Jewish characters speaks to British fears surrounding race and empire. Furthermore, they highlight Britain's interaction with a racial/religious Other that exists within Britain's own borders: an Other that cannot be identified by visible markers. In Benedict Anderson's seminal *Imagined Communities,* he argues of the British Empire that

> Colonial racism was a major element in that conception of 'Empire' which attempted to weld dynastic legitimacy and national community. It did so by generalizing a principle of innate, inherited superiority on which its own domestic position was (however shakily) based on the vastness of the overseas possessions, covertly (or not so covertly) conveying the idea that… Englishmen were… superior to the subjected natives (150).

Here, Anderson points out that English racial superiority is intrinsically linked to the British empire's conception of itself. As a result, racially ambiguous groups (such as the Jewish community) that contain both racially "marked" or "unmarked" bodies present an inherent threat to that conception. If a person can pass—i.e., "remain invisible, hidden, or incognito" as a "socially…disfavored identity"—then the racial superiority binary that justifies colonization and that upholds the very idea of empire becomes troubled (Wallach 1, 5).

It is important to note that while the term *passing* was not used in its full modern context in the late 19th century, it has since become a widely understood term to "highlight an illusory sense of certainty in what is actually an area of social ambiguity [i.e., race]" (Sollers 250). In other words, while society generally assumes race to be drawn along visual lines, most often in skin color, reality is much more complex. Scholar Nadine Ehlers argues that *passing* can be contextualized in this way:

> Race is seen to be a 'truth' that the body of the subject announces; the body is viewed as a *legible text* upon which the schema of race is inscribed and through which it is transparently conveyed… the racial body has been positioned within this rhetoric as that which could *belie* 'truth,' escape detection and confound the workings of the hegemonic racial economy that desperately relies upon identifiable demarcation between racial subjects. (Ehlers 51)

This hegemonic racial economy is, as Anderson discusses, a hallmark of imperial ideology and justification for colonization. But understanding Victorian views of the Jewish community in Britain, not to mention the often ambiguously Jewish characters at the center of both novels I examine, necessitates a recognition of the ways racial barriers and demarcations break down when the "truth" of race is not immediately identifiable.

Yet hegemonies require more than simply "identifiable demarcation between racial subjects," as a hegemonic or colonizing figure expects not only visible racial difference, but also that the colonized or marginalized figure "approximate[s], through mimesis, the norms of the colonizing power, norms associated with whiteness" (Rottenberg 440). As a result, hegemonic groups such as Britain's 19th-century white middle and upper classes use race as a way to consolidate and justify power, first by demanding that the Other fully assimilate, and then by insisting they remain different so as not to disrupt racial power structures. This forces the "conceptuality of colonial man as an *object* of regulatory powers, the subject of racial, cultural, national representation" (Bhabha 89). While Bhabha speaks specifically in a colonial context, the idea of a person as an object of regulatory powers applies to many marginalized groups struggling to exist in hegemonic societies. Full assimilation or passing, as characters in both *Daniel Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* attempt to do, allows marginalized figures to "gain admittance to some of the benefits of privilege and power," yet also brings with it intense anxiety: after all, what will the hegemonic powers do when they discover the marginalized figure is not, actually, *one of us*? Bhabha describes this phenomena as mimicry, a "form of difference that is… *almost the same but not quite"* (89). This is a threat humming subtly at the baseline of both Eliot and Trollope's work, as both their passing Jewish figures and non-passing Jewish figures wrestle with the pressure to assimilate and yet remain "different" enough to comfort hegemonic powers.

From a modern, 21st century perspective, it is perhaps uncomfortable to discuss Jewish identity in racial terms, and with good reason. After all, in wake of the Holocaust, as Judith Ruderman writes, "the painful memory of the liquidation of such a large percentage of Europe's Jews on racial grounds is an argument one might understandably make for never using the term race again in connection with the Jewish people." (Ruderman 2) And while I believe that the instability surrounding conceptions of Jews racially makes it a particularly fruitful site on which to locate 19th century British anxieties, it is important to note that race is not the only—or always the appropriate—way to discuss Jewish identity. Certainly, there are other ways to conceptualize Jewishness: alternately, it is a "faith, practice, culture, race, ethnicity, peoplehood, or community," and often these distinctions blur in and out of each other, both in the minds of Jews themselves and in popular understandings of the Jewish community (Ruderman 11). In the modern world, Jewishness has been thought of as an "ethnicity," although this often overlaps with ideas of race and religion. In particular, "the differentiation between race and ethnicity is a tenuous distinction"; ethnicity is a term far more slippery in the public imagination than race (Ruderman 2). And while it is vital to remember the history and race-based antisemitism that fueled the Holocaust, the fact remains that in the Victorian era Jews were often considered racially different from the English—we in the 21st century may recognize that race is an "area of social ambiguity", in Ehlers's words, but in order to consider the way Victorians grappled with this ambiguity, we must discuss Jewish identity as more than merely religion- or culture- based. Certainly, the Nazis were not the first nor the only ones to consider the Jews a separate race. In fact, the Jewish community has often conceived of themselves as a race; as a result, Ruderman argues, "*Race* in its proper contexts is useful for a discussion of Jews and Jewish passing" (Ruderman 2). I agree with Ruderman's point, but due to the tragic history of race-based

antisemetic rhetoric, I would be remiss if I did not explain my reasoning for using race and race-based theories in a Jewish context for this argument.

Furthermore, any discussion of racial passing brings with it a debt to African American studies and history, and it is important to establish that history and explain how it differs from theories of Jewish passing. As African-American author and critic Ta-Nehisi Coates says, "Race is the child of racism, not the father. And the process of naming 'the people' has never been a matter of genealogy and physiognomy so much as one of heirarchy… the [white] people were something else before they were white—Catholic, Corsican, Welsh, Mennonite, Jewish…" (Coates 7). Here, Coates emphasizes the way racial boundaries can shift and change as power shifts and changes, and we see this throughout histories of racial passing. Kerry Wallach argues that a racial "usage of the verb *to pass* originated in the United States with the emergence of a Black population that could pass, first for free and then for white" (Wallach 20). Fear of Black passing in this context led to the creation of multiple Jim Crow race and anti-miscegenation laws, including the infamous "one drop" rule that automatically considered any person with a Black ancestor as "Negro" or "colored". In this context, passing was actively illegal in many states. Naturally, Victorian Britain for Jewish people looked very different than the Jim Crow South did for its Black population, and it is always important to remember that Jewish people of color, including Black Jews, are a substantial, often overlooked portion of the Jewish community both in the United States and abroad. Even so, as Wallach earlier states, "racial passing provides an important basis of comparison for thinking through Jewish passing… though this approach also has notable limitations… because of significant differences in the experiences of those who either self-identified or were identified as Black or Jewish, or both" (Wallach 16). Indeed, "Jews… [had been] long imagined in European culture as being black," although by the late 19th century "'Jews came increasingly to be identified as a race precisely because they were difficult

to differentiate from their fellow citizens'" (Bar-Yosef and Valman 6, Deborah Cohen as quoted in Bar-Yosef and Valman 8). Like Wallach, I find this a useful basis of comparison despite its shortcomings, as it "connects the… Jewish experience to other widely known histories of concealing, including racial passing… and sexual passing" and serves as a revelatory locus on which to place fears about British nationhood and empire, but it is important to note that Jewish passing is a fundamentally different experience from African American passing (Wallach 5).

My use of this term is especially relevant since Eliot herself uses it within the text of *Daniel Deronda;* a character in Mordecai's Jewish intellectual group, Gideon, is described as "a Jew of the red-haired, generous-featured type easily passing for Englishmen of unusually cordial manners…" (Eliot 440). Eliot's usage of this term, although divorced from modern conceptions of African-American passing, nevertheless shows an understanding of the ways in which Jewish people complicated racial boundaries in Victorian England. As Kerry Wallach notes, "Passing confounds widespread notions about the visible properties of racialized difference and lends urgency to the questions of whether and how such difference can be noticed" (16). Passing is deeply destabilizing to the British national-colonial project in Trollope and Eliot's time; and by extension, the Anglo-Jewish body, whose racial "visual parameters… are often blurred or eradicated," becomes a significant threat to British empire (Wallach 20). In short, if the British national-colonial project is entirely predicated on the assumption that being English is superior to being anything else, then a Jewish person whom others assume to be English naturally threatens that superiority. To the British imperial mind, if there are no visual markings of race, if someone of another race can be identified as "one of us," then what ultimately makes "us" different from "them"? Indeed, if there *is* no identifiable difference, then perhaps the principle of superiority that justifies and enables empire is a lie.

Benjamin Disraeli and Jewish Participation in Empire

That both Trollope and Eliot focus on Jewish characters who are able to or attempt to pass as English may perhaps seem surprising, particularly since due to England's ban on Jewish immigration in the years before 1656, the Jewish population was much smaller in England than in the rest of Europe at the time. However, in years preceding the late Victorian period, the Jewish community had grown and gained relatively expansive civil rights; England was far less politically antisemitic than the rest of Europe at the time (Russia, for example, had pogroms against Jews throughout much of the 19th century). In 1753, the "Jew Bill," a parliamentary act, officially "naturalized foreign-born Jews," but it was the "nineteenth century that saw the first sustained discussion of the possibility of Jewish participation in the political life of the nation" (Bar-Yosef and Valman 7). This participation began to occur not only on a small scale, within their own communities, but also in the broader national discourse: in 1858 the first practicing Jewish member of Parliament, Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, joined the House of Commons, and in 1866 "Jews were finally admitted to both Houses of Parliament" (Bar-Yosef and Valman 7). By the late 19th century Jewish men had access to most rights and privileges in Britain, which set the stage for the towering presence of the Jewish Benjamin Disraeli in the Victorian literary and political spheres.

Disraeli's rise to political prominence in the mid- to late- 19th century, and his eventual election to the role of Prime Minister in 1868, forced Britain to reckon with the political possibilities of the small but growing Jewish community. Disraeli, at once the very head of the British Empire, second only to Queen Victoria herself, and *also* considered "a foreigner" by both his contemporaries and those who came after him,[1] benefitted from the expanded rights Jews had in England at this time. Certainly, he was not the only significant Jewish figure in Britain in the

[1] Winston Churchill wrote that "He never became wholly assimilated to English ways of life," despite the fact that Disraeli was born and raised in England, and in fact was a practicing Anglican (Kirsch xx).

late Victorian period,[2] but his status as the first (and so far, only) Jewish prime minister of Britain—and at a time when the Empire was particularly concerned with race and imperial instability—mark him as "one of the nineteenth century's chief points of reference for thinking about Jews and Judaism. Jews and anti-Semites alike looked to Disraeli in constructing their own images of Jewish power" (Kirsch xxviii).

Who, then, was Disraeli, and how did he overcome centuries of prejudice and intolerance to become first a successful novelist and then one of the most powerful politicians of the 19th century? In short, he did not overcome Britain's prejudice against the Jews. Rather, over the course of his long novelistic and political career, he weaponized it—to "lead men and control the destiny of empires… he had to turn his Jewishness from a handicap into a mystique. He had to convince the world, and himself, that the Jews were a noble race, with a glorious past and a great future" (Kirsch xxii). By keeping his name, which proclaimed his heritage for all to see, he made no attempt to hide his background, even using the threat of a duel to defend his honor against antisemitic attacks, and indeed often wrote novels featuring Jewish characters (who were stereotypical to varying degrees). Like Trollope's Lopez and Eliot's Deronda, Disraeli existed at a crossroads between Jewishness and Englishness: born to a Jewish family, he'd nevertheless joined the Church of England at 12, and spent much of his life alternately assimilating into British society and highlighting his Jewish heritage, whatever made the most rhetorical sense at the time. Although his belonging to the Church of England may at first seem contradictory to his insistence on his own Jewishness, biographer Adam Kirsch says he specifically "reimagin[ed] Jewishness as a matter of race rather than belief [or religion]." This emphasis would have in some ways reassured his antisemitic detractors, as his loyalty to the Church of England was also,

[2] See also wealthy families like the Rothschilds and Montefiores, who throughout the century "asserted their right to legal equality and finally won it" (Kirsch xxii).

at its core, a loyalty to the Church's head, or "supreme governor"—always Britain's monarch. In other ways, however, his refusal to adhere to common British understandings of Jews and their religion, would have been seen as threatening, perhaps even dishonest to who a Jew really was at their core. While the lines between Jewishness as race vs. Jewishness as religion remained blurred throughout the 19th century, much as they do today, Disraeli's insistence on his Jewish *blood* would have certainly influenced novels such as *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda.* This strategy worked well for Disraeli: he was,

> As Hannah Arendt wrote, the preeminent example of the nineteenth-century phenomenon of 'exception Jews'—assimilated Jews who imposed themselves on Europe through the force of their genius, but were never allowed to move beyond imposition to genuine, unexceptional belonging. (Kirsch xxvii)

Disraeli's "imposition" on British politics and culture naturally sparked discourse in Britain among Jews and non-Jews alike. But Disraeli's own existence at the top of the British empire not only emphasized Jewish participation in empire, it also highlighted the imperialist rhetoric that would so influence the early Zionist movement.

It is vital to note that Disraeli's vision for England was hardly anti-imperial. Bar-Yosef and Valman argue that he was a "quintessential empire-builder" (18). Indeed, Disraeli took office as Britain solidified its presence in the Middle East and managed its vast holdings in Africa and Asia. Disraeli, like Trollope's fictional Plantagenet Palliser, was not merely prime minister of England, but rather was prime minister of the British Empire, an empire that in Disraeli's time was swiftly approaching the height of its power. To that end, Disraeli purchased "44 per cent of the Suez Canal Company shares without the consent of Parliament… [turning] to [the Jewish] Lionel de Rothschild… for a short-term loan of £4 million." (18). He also organized armies from India and the Mediterranean "to be in place for possible war with Russia,"

in 1878, and pushed for Victoria's official title as Empress of India in 1876 (Kirsch 257, Bar-Yosef and Valman 18). His status as a social outsider did not cause him to question the roots of British imperialism. Rather, his own ambition led him to the highest echelons of the empire itself, negotiating treaties, employing imperialist rhetoric as we see with the "Empress of India" title, and expanding Britain's territories abroad.

Disraeli's actions as Prime Minister no doubt inspired, whether consciously or unconsciously, many of the political and ideological concerns in both *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda.* Both novels were, after all, published within two years of Disraeli's second term (beginning in 1874) as Prime Minister and almost concurrently with his push for the Royal Titles Bill, which crowned Victoria Empress of India. And although Trollope's titular prime minister is Plantagenet Pallacer, the Duke of Omnium, and *not* his shifty, ambitious, questionably Jewish would-be MP Lopez, by the time *The Prime Minister* is published, Trollope's title "ma[de] patent his growing obsession with the real prime minister" (Ragussis 235). Both Trollope and Eliot, furthermore, saw Trollope as not only their predecessor in "Jewish portraiture, but… in the creation and development of an entire genre, the political novel" (Ragussis 235). Trollope's *The Prime Minister* is one such political novel, and while Eliot's *Deronda* is a fairly traditional bildungsroman at first glance, Deronda's own coming-of-age features a profoundly political awakening that goes hand-in-hand with his discovery of his Jewish identity. The pairing of politics and Jewishness would have immediately brought Disraeli to the minds of Trollope's and Eliot's readers: indeed, Eliot feared that readers would have no interest in her Mordecai character, favoring Disraeli's earlier Jewish creation Sidonia (Ragussis 235). Perhaps then it is no wonder that both novels feature Jewish characters so heavily involved in plots of racial passing and political and national power. Disraeli's position as prime minister catapulted conversation surrounding the position of Jews in England to the forefront of Victorian

discourse, and Britain's great Victorian novelists would not have been immune. Their texts, like Victorian discourse at the time, are deeply entwined with English fear of Jewish infiltration and control, Jewish quests for political power and the ability to negotiate and treat with the British government, opportunities for Jews to gain wealth and prestige in the broader British Empire, and of course, the still nascent but growing proto-Zionist movement.

Empire and the Roots of Zionism

It should be no surprise that Jewish people on the whole were a part of Britain's empire-building pursuits. Indeed, it would be virtually impossible to *not* be a part of Britain's empire-building pursuits in some way or other as a person living in late-Victorian England—never mind those Jews who made their homes in the Middle East or Africa. "Numerous Jews were involved in fighting for and administrating the Empire; and even those who remained in Britain could take to the streets and celebrate illustrious imperial moments…" (Bar-Yosef and Valman 19). Wealthy Jewish families funded British interests overseas, as we see with the Rothschild funding of Disraeli's Suez Canal investment; like many British people, Jews often left English shores in search of financial gain and better circumstances abroad. As a result, it is perhaps little wonder that the pervasive rhetoric of imperialism affected early Jewish Zionist thinking.

We cannot engage with Jewish presence in late-Victorian Britain without considering Zionism, not least because Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* has significant proto-Zionist ideologies. Becoming widely discussed in the mid-19th century, proto-Zionist beliefs throughout Europe were initially more a religious ideology than a political project—they were an almost prophetic, messianic vision of Jewish destiny, a promise of restoration to the land of their ancestors (i.e., Palestine). This religious ideology quickly moved into conceptions of Zionism as a distinctly colonial project: even as early as 1851, Disraeli himself

> talked to me [Lord Stanley] with great apparent earnestness on the subject of restoring the Jews to their own land… all that was necessary was to establish colonies, with rights over the soil, and security from ill treatment… these ideas were extensively entertained among the nations. (Kirsch 90-91)

While Disraeli never acted on this idea, visions of Zionism as a potentially colonizing project were "extensively entertained" even before figures such as Theodor Herzl began taking concrete steps at the turn of the 20th century towards the establishment of present-day Israel. As the century wore on, proto-Zionism in Britain gave way to a more political, concrete national response to antisemitism and oppression in Europe. Early Zionists, like their fictional counterparts Deronda and Mordecai in *Daniel Deronda,* discussed creating a Jewish homeland in modern-day Argentina, Uganda, and of course, Palestine. It is important to note that this was a trans-European movement, one that drew particular strength in Eastern Europe, far more than among the relatively privileged Jewish population in Britain. Jewish communities throughout Europe were small, often oppressed minorities, and certainly were not in command of anything that could be considered an empire—or even a nation—in the way that Britain and other European powers could. Indeed, this Zionist movement, although by no means ubiquitous among members of the Jewish community, was meant to address many of their concerns—namely, the ability to communicate with governments and nations on an equal basis, to advocate for Jewish issues and rights nation-to-nation, instead of oppressed-minority-to-empire. Furthermore, as Eve Spangler notes astutely, "Members of a mistreated minority community can come to the conclusion that no combination of resistance, reform, and assimilation will work, and can choose to leave, to exit from a society they regard as hopelessly, irredeemably hostile" (Spangler 105). Many Jewish Zionists saw this as the ultimate goal: to make their own society, one where they could leave European antisemitism behind.

This, of course, begs the question: why would the Zionist movement arise ultimately out of Britain, instead of out of other, more persecuted Jewish communities such as those in Eastern Europe? First, one must remember that Zionism *did* rise out of these other, more persecuted Jewish communities—Herzl himself was Austro-Hungarian, and worked with German Kaiser Wilhelm II and Sultan Abdulhamid II of the Ottoman Empire in his attempts to gain Zionist support. Ultimately, however, the Zionist movement turned to Britain as its imperial patron. Britain's "liberal tradition… relative lack of antisemitism, and even the Evangelical [Christian] interest in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine… [but especially] Britain's imperial power, and… presence in the Middle East" made it the best option for early Zionists looking for powerful, legitimatizing governmental support (Bar-Yosef and Valman 21). As Zionists settled on Palestine as their ultimate goal in the early 1900s, it became more and more clear that Britain was the empire to facilitate their desires.

A significant reason for Britain's suitability for the Zionist project was its consistent presence and interest in Palestine, made most obvious by the Palestine Exploration Fund, a British group founded in 1865 ostensibly focused on exploration and surveying. John James Moscrop details Britain's history in Palestine from the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th and emphasizes that this history is tied to three recurring themes: desire for religious archeological discovery, a surveying of the land in order to create maps, and, eventually, a way to divert attention from British imperial interests and military activity in the area. Indeed, from its earliest days the Palestine Exploration Fund was linked to the British military and by default to British imperial ventures. It relied heavily on the military Royal Engineers in its first few decades, employing only a small group of archaeologists, many of whom were also formerly British military. By the very beginning of World War I, the Palestine Exploration Fund was used as a rather unsubtle cover for British military interests as Britain eyed the lands of the waning

Ottoman Empire. In service of these interests, the Palestine Exploration Fund spent its time oil surveying and creating maps of Palestine, which were few and far between at this time. Archaeologist and future British Intelligence agent T.E. Lawrence, sent to survey the wilderness of Zin, wrote that "We are obviously only meant as red herrings to give an archaeological color to a political job" (Moscrop 207). From the beginning, Britain's presence in Palestine was inextricably linked to its military, politics, and empire-building—even as it protested that its only interests were historical and archaeological. It was the perfect patron for a still-young Zionist movement hoping to create a Jewish nation in Palestine.

Victorian Realism and Imperial Legacies

Perhaps it is little wonder, then, that both *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda* are so invested in Jewish participation in the British Empire both at home and abroad. Eliot's and Trollope's texts, like many Victorian novels, have long been considered traditionally realist—involving "a largely implicit presumption of the existence of diegetic consistency… the illusion of a novelistic world is most compelling when… breakage is kept to a minimum" (Freedgood 3). To have Jewish characters like Deronda and Lopez involved in politics, Zionism, and empire in general speaks to the discourse surrounding Disraeli, Jews and their ability to not only assimilate but also *participate* in governmental and colonial ventures—just as real-life Jews in Britain were participating in governmental and colonial ventures. In other words, it is diegetically consistent. After all, Disraeli's Parliament passed the Royal Titles Act (wherein Victoria was crowned Empress of India) in 1876, the very same year that Trollope finished the serialization of *The Prime Minister* and Eliot published *Daniel Deronda* in eight parts. It is unsurprising, then, that these novels took Jewish characters as major figures in the British Empire and in British life in general. Understanding the historical events and discourse surrounding Elliot and Trollope as

they wrote begs a reading of *Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* that acknowledges the imperial roots of Zionism and the race-based ideology that pervaded Britain at this time.

Yet realism offers us another way of engaging with the Victorian novel: by looking at the texts trans-historically, we are able to tease out Victorian ideologies in all their complexity. Frederic Jameson argues in his monograph *The Antimonies of Realism* that realism sits between story and affect, and furthermore that "the irrevocable antagonism between [these] twin (and entwined) forces… are never reconciled" (as quoted in Thorndike-Breeze 209). He argues that the conflict between story and affect live in "the microstructures of language," and offers a "symptomatic reading" of realism, which allows us to find meaning and interpretation in textual gaps and hidden stories (Thorndike-Breeze 209). Certainly, this is a significant and helpful theoretical framework for many schools of thought, and I am by no means attempting to diminish its importance here. Yet I, as well as other critics from a range of backgrounds,[3] recognize that "a symptomatic approach misses much of what Victorian novels can show us." (Thorndike-Breeze 210). Indeed, the "much" that a symptomatic approach misses is often historical: Harry Shaw writes that "Without reference to her place in history, we cannot indeed grasp the precise nature of Dorothea's psychological situation [in Eliot's *Middlemarch*] or participate in it" (231). Even so, he argues, a historical approach need not limit a modern reader, as "Eliot's metonymical vision of the texture of society, consistently applied, would among other things reveal, to readers placed differently in history than was Eliot, gaps in her own texts" (Shaw 228). These gaps show the seams of Victorian ideology, offering complexities and contradictions that are revealed by history, not washed away by it. Shaw describes realism as "a restless mode

[3] See, for example, Harry Shaw's *Narrating Reality,* Sharon Marcus's *Between Women,* and Lauren Goodlad's article for *Victorian Literature and Culture,* "Cosmopolitanism's Actually Existing Beyond: Toward a Victorian Geopolitical Aesthetic."

whose energy is neither exhausted nor contained by endings," and therefore examining Trollope and Eliot's novels in their historical context *and* in conversation with our own Zionist future allows us to engage with realism in all its ideological difficulties (Shaw 260).

There is one further reason for the importance of examining Eliot and Trollope within their historical context: "Realism, as D.N. Rodowick writes, 'communicates the dominant ideology,' and it does so without letting us know that this is what it is doing." (Freedgood 4) In other words, it is hegemony's most subtle knife, presenting a worldview specifically as though it were not a worldview at all but rather *reality itself.* While there may be gaps to this worldview, as Shaw argues, and indeed ways to read marginalized identities and alternate stories into these texts, the fact remains that realism (and realist novels) nevertheless attempt a coherence, an ideological presentation of the world that is not in fact reality but rather an author's vision of it, subject to all of said author's conscious or unconscious biases, fears, and hopes. While on the surface Eliot and Trollope may seem diametrically opposed on the question of Jewish identity in Victorian Britain, my project teases out similarities in their ideologies despite surface differences. Ultimately, both works offer troublingly antisemitic conclusions and require imperial assimilation and continuation fully in line with Britain's 19th-century imperial project, a continuation exemplified in Lopez's Guatemalan ambitions and *Deronda*'s latent Zionism. To put it another way, they are novels in service of hegemony, a hegemony that despite the severe weakening of the British imperial project continues on not only in a "cultural version of the British Empire [that] took root and sustained itself far beyond the formal end of political rule," but also in present-day political realities for the international Jewish community, the United Kingdom, and the entire Middle East (Ritter 1).

"BLOODY ATOMS ON THE RAILROAD TRACKS": RACE, ASSIMILATION, AND EMPIRE IN *THE PRIME MINISTER*

When the central, charming villain of Anthony Trollope's *The Prime Minister* is found dead on a railway track, nothing on his body is immediately recognizable: "The man had been careful to carry with him no record of identity… the fragments of his body set identity at defiance" (Trollope 523). In this, at least, Lopez is consistent—despite driving much of the plot, neither the reading audience nor the novel's characters know virtually anything about his past. Lopez is merely considered a "foreigner", one with a mystery surrounding his birth: "though a great many men and not a few women knew Ferdinand Lopez very well, none of them knew whence he had come, or what was his family" (Trollope 10). This is a recurring issue in *The Prime Minister*, one that appears in the novel's opening pages and persists, hounding the character until his suicide five hundred pages later. Who is Lopez *really?* Where is he from? Why does he do villainous things? Trollope does not answer these questions. He gestures vaguely at several possible answers—Lopez states once that his father was Portuguese and his mother English although he never knew them, Emily's father refers to him as a "probable Jew"—but offers no other concrete response (Trollope 34). Lopez is, for all intents and purposes, a person sprung whole cloth from nowhere. He possesses no past, no ancestral home, and no family. In his death, even his body is fragmented and belies identification with any group or people. The recurrence of this theme in connection to Lopez returns us to the novel's earlier engagements with Lopez's identity, foreignness, and potential Jewishness. In doing so, it also invites a reading of Lopez as a Jew with questionable ability to pass, and prompts a consideration of the novel's imperial ideologies that block him from truly joining the English nation at every turn.

First, it is important to understand how Lopez's lack of connection to an ancestral home or family influences his character and treatment in *The Prime Minister,* as this lack of family, and therefore of a permanent tie to *place,* is an important aspect of what Paul Delany calls "Trollope's social myth of England… which we may call the 'myth of the land'" (Delany 765).[4] He argues that Trollope considered people

> most real and knowable through their ancestral attachment to a tract of land, an attachment signified by possession of a name that goes with the property… the landowning classes therefore deserve to be the very soul or essence of the English nation; their opposite is the Jews, a people without land, country, or stability of name. (Delany 765)

Delany's argument here is that, to Trollope, Jews are the ultimate opposition to the English nation, as they are unaffiliated with *any* nation or land; their lack of "ancestral attachment" makes them unknowable, untrustworthy, and dangerous. He ties English nationalism, necessarily, to ancestral bloodlines—and therefore also to race, as these ancestral landowning families would be without exception *white.* As a result, Trollope's work sets up a racial binary in which the Jews are necessarily nationless, doubly outcast by virtue of their *lack* of ancestry (and therefore lack of Englishness and lack of whiteness). Each conception feeds into each other. If being English is defined by an attachment to soil, then in Trollope's national myth-making Jews are "dangerous outsiders who can move easily between the nations" (Robertson 348). As such,

[4] While Delany later notes that Trollope's "professed allegiance to the 'myth of the land'… is so much at odds with his personal history that readers… should regard [it] with suspicion," it is still an important aspect of Trollope's professed world view, and worth studying for that reason alone. Moreover, people are complicated, changing creatures, and one's internal worldview is just as likely to be contradictory as consistent. While I do find Delany's take important, for Trollope is a thoughtful and subtle writer whose characters all have sympathetic and unsympathetic qualities, this 'myth of the land' is a telling observation that has significant repercussions for the racial and national aspects of my argument in conjunction with the rest of the novel. As a result, I find it a vital theoretical framework to include.

the novel is not only the story of a charming, villainous interloper; instead, it is the story of a (perceived, at least) Jewish man attempting to inherit England itself—a man without "land, country or stability of name" attempting to gain all three.[5] This "myth of the land" is an important lens through which to view Lopez's quest for monetary and Parliamentary power, and therefore to consider the text's broader concerns surrounding race, nationhood, and assimilation.

As I discuss passing in a broader sense in this project and assimilation more specifically in this chapter and how it relates to Lopez's fractured identity, it is important to establish my definition of assimilation as opposed to racial passing. Certainly the two concepts are connected; passing is virtually impossible without some form of assimilation, and while passing is typically used in connection with physical features, it can also require a certain level of assimilation, for example, in regards to how one dresses or speaks. However, the Oxford English Dictionary describes assimilation as "The action of making or becoming like; the state of being like; similarity, resemblance, likeness," and, in a later definition, as "The becoming conformed *to*; conformity *with*." In both cases, there is an element of agency, whether of *being made* to become like something else, or of *choosing* to become like something else (*OED)*. It is closely connected to Bhabha's conception of "colonial man as an *object* of regulatory powers, the subject of racial, cultural, national representation" (Bhabha 89). *Passing,* on the other hand, can be either intentional or unintentional: "To be accepted as or believed to be, or to represent oneself successfully as, a member of an ethnic or religious group other than one's own, esp. one having higher social status" (*OED).* Moreover, passing implies that there is something to gain

[5] Interestingly, Disraeli purchased an English country estate in Beaconsfield and was named Earl of Beaconsfield by Victoria the same year *Daniel Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* were published—Disraeli's high position and ability to literally purchase English land and gain a title to go with it plays into *The Prime Minister's* intense fear around bad actors gaining access to English power, land, and wealth (Ragussis 235).

from *not* being perceived as a member of "one's own" ethnic or religious group, i.e., that there is a power imbalance between two groups, and passing can provide access to (at least some of) the power of the dominant group.

From the novel's earliest pages, Lopez is defined by his attempts to assimilate and pass for both a gentleman and an Englishman, a quest inherently tied to accessing hegemonic power. Catherine Rottenberg argues that "So long as blackness is coded as undesirable under white supremacist regimes, only those black-identified subjects who strive to embody attributes associated with whiteness will gain admittance to some of the benefits of privilege and power" (443-444). While Rottenberg specifically discusses race in terms of black and white racial interactions here, her point is applicable to Lopez's situation as well. The only way he will access the power and privilege he desires is if he plays the part of a white English gentleman. Yet embodying these attributes never seems to be enough, for even though "It was admitted on all sides that Ferdinand Lopez was a 'gentleman,'" the text consistently casts him as misleading and potentially duplicitous—and this is always connected to Lopez's mysterious background (Trollope 10). The very next line highlights this, as Trollope takes care to note that the definition of a gentleman, despite the fact that "exceptions may exist," is synonymous with "a man of ancestry"—and then states that "It was not generally believed that Ferdinand Lopez was well born" (Trollope 11, 10). The implications of "a man of ancestry" tie back into Trollope's so-called "myth of the land", wherein blood is always connected to land which is always connected to nationhood. Lopez, of course, has no ancestry to speak of. Over and over again, the novel emphasizes Lopez's unknown origins: "though a great many men and not a few women knew Ferdinand Lopez very well, none of them knew whence he had come, or what was his family" (Trollope 10). Trollope weaves suspicion of Lopez throughout the opening description of him, noting that "nobody… ever really knew the state of his affairs" and furthermore that "No one of

those around him knew how much care he took to dress himself well, or how careful he was that no one should know it" (11, 12). Here, the emphasis on Lopez's unknown affairs, even down to his clothing, and the care he takes to keep such matters secret, makes the reader immediately suspicious. After all, no one is so secretive unless they have something to hide—something potentially connected to Lopez's other unknown affair, i.e. his ancestry/blood. But Lopez's secrecy here serves a purpose: he is passing as the image of an English gentleman, a figure defined by his blood connections and, to a lesser degree, by his wealth. Trollope's emphasis on the care Lopez takes to hide the "state of his affairs" and dress himself well offers a clue into Lopez's motivations. He not only has something to hide—he also has something *to gain.* The novel makes it clear that Lopez carefully curates his appearance in order to assimilate, pass as English and gain both social and governmental power and wealth.

Indeed, as Lopez ingratiates himself into the British government, he utilizes his understanding of the importance of appearance as a means of achieving political and financial goals to aid his passing ability. Lopez and Glencora, the Duchess of Omnium and wife of the titular Prime Minister, connect over the importance of appearances, something that the Duke of Omnium has no tolerance for. Upon hearing Mr. Boffin deride the necessity of Glencora's party decorations, he defends her taste: "Flowers and looking-glasses won't prevent the country from being ruled well," Lopez says (Trollope 96). This moment is telling, as it establishes Lopez early on as a man who understands the use of flowers and looking-glasses—of non-essentials—to create an image of prestige, wealth, and in Glencora's own words, to foster popularity, which is "the staff on which alone Ministers can lean in this country" (Trollope 100). This is a recurring theme of Lopez's character, his ability to project a false image in order to gain wealth and power. This is essentially the definition of passing, and Lopez understands its requirements intimately. Furthermore, Lopez appears to be on the cusp of full success, with his outsider status

only referenced obliquely. Glencora "had liked the look and the voice of the man," and makes no comment upon their early meetings of his race or foreignness, neither to his face nor as narrated by Trollope (Trollope 96). There is only one oblique mention to his not *already* being a part of the inner circle, and with that mention comes a "general invitation [to the Duke and Duchess's estate] for the rest of the season": when Lopez refers to Glencora's home as "fairy land," she tells him to "Come and be a fairy then" (Trollope 96). This moment is important for multiple reasons. Firstly, Glencora is explicitly inviting him into the inner circle of the Prime Minister of the British Empire. One could also read this as an invitation not only to the Palliser home, but also into the Palliser government and therefore the nation of England. After all, it is Glencora's friendliness to Lopez that ostensibly prompts him to expect the Duke of Omnium's support in his Parliamentary run, and Glencora's later, similar kindness to Arthur Fletcher rather handily makes him welcome "even by the Duke as the sitting member for Silverbridge [the parliamentary seat for which he had run against Lopez]" (Trollope 528). This early invitation showcases Lopez's desire and teases his ability to "be a fairy"—to fully assimilate, to join the Pallisers in the hallowed halls of British aristocracy. An earlier description of Glencora's receptions calls them "almost imperial"—what better symbol of the heart of the British Empire than the table of the Prime Minister himself? What better way to join a nation than to sit in its seat of government? Lastly, this moment is notable because Glencora does not only invite Lopez to join "fairy land," or England, as he is but instead tells him to *become a fairy*—i.e., assimilate until fairy land becomes his nation too. Lingering in this invitation is a quiet threat: Lopez cannot come to fairy land unless he becomes a fairy, just as he cannot join the English nation unless he assimilates. Of course, this is nothing Lopez doesn't already know. Why else would he so carefully curate his clothing and outward appearances? Still, Glencora's emphasis on Lopez needing to *be* something other than what he is emphasizes the subtle ways English nationalism

and imperialism enacted conforming structures on those considered "outsiders" in their midst. Even in this, the height of Lopez's success—he notes later that "he had nearly succeeded" after being the Palliser's guest—he is reminded that he is not yet a fairy, that he is still Other, still an outsider.

At this point, despite Glencora's comment, it seems Lopez has in every other way passed successfully—he marries Emily, dines with the Pallisers, and in all respects appears to be one of Trollope's few exceptions to the "man of ancestry" rule. Despite this, like Glencora, even characters who are sympathetic to Lopez seem unsure of where to place him on the English-not English binary. Indeed, the dichotomy between his foreign name and his assimilated English actions is an obvious example of the trouble other characters have in categorizing him. Emily Wharton herself pushes back against her father's assertion that Lopez is "a foreigner" in this way, but makes no final judgment of her own: "But is he? And why should not a foreigner be as good as an Englishman? His name is foreign, but he talks English and lives as an Englishman" (Trollope 44). Emily's point here, that the only thing her father could really have against Lopez is his foreign name, asserts how well he has integrated into British society. Yet as successful as Lopez appears to be, there is always an undercurrent of distrust from those around him—even Emily's comment is laced through with suspicion about where Lopez actually fits on the spectrum of English nationality. First, she questions if he is a foreigner at all. Then she asserts that foreigners should be as good as Englishmen, and *then* she notes that his name is foreign but he speaks English and lives an assimilated life. She seems to be unsure of what she actually believes about Lopez's race and Englishness, waffling back and forth between two opposing binaries. As a result, even her defense of Lopez at the height of his success is filled with deep uncertainty about whether Lopez is English or not.

These suspicions are often made in conjunction with comments about Lopez's physical markers of race, or lack thereof, highlighting his ability or inability to pass. His ambiguous racial position in the novel emphasizes how race played into Victorian British conceptions of Jews and other outsiders. After all, Lopez never says that he is a Jew—the text likewise never says this, merely that others suspect him of being so, to the point that most scholarship, as well as characters in the novel, takes this assumption as fact. But the matter is left ambiguous. Trollope highlights this ambiguity consistently in his descriptions of Lopez's physical features. He is "very dark, and very thin, with regular, well-cut features indicating little to the physiognomist unless it be the great gift of self-possession" (Trollope 11). Yet despite this description, which plays into Orientalizing "dark" stereotypes but does not include any specifically antisemitic dog whistles, other characters consistently note that Lopez had "Jewish signs," and in the most racist description of him, Arthur Fletcher's mother describes him as "A black Portuguese nameless Jew… he had a bright eye, and a hook nose, and a glib tongue…" (Trollope 136). These racialized elements, particularly the hook nose, a consistent antisemitic stereotype, emphasize Lopez's continued foreignness despite his assimilation. There is nothing Lopez can *act like* that will erase his physical features. He is, at least to Mr. Wharton and Arthur Fletcher's mother, unable to pass, for his physicality consistently marks him as something *Other*.

It is important to note that Lopez attempts to gain access to English high society in much the same way that any other young English gentleman would. He seeks to marry well, makes friends with high-ranking society members, runs for a seat in Parliament, and attempts to make his fortune in various speculations. Lopez's chosen means of assimilating into the English nation are by no means nefarious: he (like Disraeli) joins the Anglican church, marries a well-bred English woman, and speaks and performs the part of English gentleman flawlessly in the first portions of the novel (Trollope 11). But what is normal and expected for young men like Arthur

Fletcher, Emily Wharton's second husband who comes from an old English family, is inherently threatening when Lopez undertakes it.

> For prejudice in these novels is a stubborn assertion of bias against people who, *in appearance,* have conformed to upper-class English norms. That, indeed, is the problem: Lopez's complete assimilation fuels Wharton's distrust, rather than disarming it. (Delany 778)

We can see the binary Jews in Britain had to operate under: assimilation allows Lopez to marry Emily, even despite Wharton's better judgement, and gain Glencora Palliser's favor, but it only takes him so far. High society Britain requires mimicry from Lopez, but he performs his part too well, as his assimilation inherently threatens national and racial binaries. Lopez is too much like *one of us.* This, then, is the crux of the Lopez plot in the novel: as a result of his race, he is both *too other* and *too similar* to make his English friends and acquaintances comfortable. His ability to pass is inherently questionable—he is both too "foreign" to be English, in his name and his features, and too "English" in his actions and language to be foreign.

Indeed, as much as the racial liminal space Lopez inhabits in the novel is a crucial aspect of Mr. Wharton's prejudice against him, it is also an important aspect of his failed political career—a career that one would be remiss not to read in direct conversation with Disraeli's. Michael Ragussis observes that

> Trollope rewrites contemporary British politics, unseating Disraeli the Jew and replacing him with the perfect English gentleman. Such an act must remind us that novel-writing for Trollope was a consciously political act that had by the 1870s come to take the place of the parliamentary career he lamented not having; so it is no surprise that he describes his novel-writing as an analogous activity to Disraeli's political career… (Ragussis 259)

Ragussis's point here, that Lopez *must* fail because Disraeli succeeded, and moreover that *The Prime Minister* serves as a kind of "Christian fantasy" wherein Lopez/Disraeli is both "ejected from the domestic plot by failing as a husband, and… ejected from the national plot by failing as a candidate for Parliament" is a telling, sharp indictment of the ideologies at work beneath the surface of Trollope's novel (258). But while Ragussis notes both Trollope's personal antisemitism against Disraeli and his broader opinion of the Jewish community,[6] he does not examine the imperial, assimilationist tactics that both allow Lopez to rise as high as he does and ultimately betray him.

My reading offers a continuation of this theme by examining Lopez's assimilation and passing status in conversation with the larger British Empire, a subtext that lurks in the background of the novel's political themes but does not come to the forefront until nearly the novel's end. Indeed, imperialism—and the threat of losing imperial holdings—is the novel's inescapable backstory, a reality that seeps into the characters' everyday lives and conversations despite the text of the novel taking place almost entirely on English soil. Certainly, this should be no surprise. *The Prime Minister,* after all, is a political novel, and the political reality of Victorian Britain was its imperial holdings. The Duke of Omnium is the Prime Minister to an empire, not just a nation. Moreover, we see this imperial presence throughout both major and minor characters, as Phineas Finn, an Englishman working in Ireland and protagonist of previous Palliser novels *Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux*, declares barely 100 pages into the novel that he would never give the Irish "Home Rule" any more than "I would allow a son to ruin himself

[6] Ragussis is one of the few scholars who discusses *Daniel Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* in conversation with each other, and offers an interesting reading of them as either conversion or anti-conversion narratives. And while he argues that "Eliot's critique of the ideology of assimilation and conversion… is in danger of producing… certain conventional anti-Semitic [sic] stereotypes," he ultimately comes to a positive reading of *Daniel Deronda* in comparison with *The Prime Minister:* "at the end of the novel the Jewish characters no longer serve the purpose of helping to define the English national character, but instead work toward the construction of their own national identity" (287, 290)

because he asked me" (Trollope 104). Phineas's comment here shows the characteristic paternalism that so defines colonial-metropole relations, but in doing so also offers the possibility of an Ireland free from British rule. The emphasis on *ruin,* however, show the potentiality of *imperial* ruin, an alternate future wherein the Empire is not the Empire. This tiny moment shows the inherent instability surrounding the Victorian British Empire, and the way fears around losing said empire manifest. Indeed, the preservation of the Empire comes up several other times. At one point, the Duke of Omnium is encouraged to expand the British navy by four warships, in the interest of "the Salvation of the Empire," as the head of the Admiralty explains (Trollope 273). Although "the Duke thought that the Empire was safe, and had been throughout his political life averse to increasing the army and navy estimates," he nevertheless agrees to send a missive recommending that the Queen consider the strength of her navy (Trollope 273). In this moment, the threat of imperial loss, even when brushed aside by the Duke of Omnium, still rises to the highest authority in the land, and allows Victoria to consider her imperial power in ways not dissimilar to Disraeli's own correspondence with the queen.

Yet empire did not only manifest in political and military realities—it was a vital part of Britain's economy, and so perhaps it is unsurprising that Lopez's first brush with empire is an economic scheme. Not even halfway through the text, Lopez discusses "a certain venture in guano", a highly-sought-after natural fertilizer typically sourced from Peruvian bat excrement, as a potential means of making money (Trollope 215). Here, it is early enough in the novel that Lopez's imperial interests keep him solidly on British soil—his recent marriage to Emily as well as his exploitative relationship with Sexty Parker keep him in high spirits about the money he will bring in. This endeavor highlights not only Lopez's financial scheming but also his willingness to assimilate to British upper-class society, and to take part in the financial backbone that kept that society afloat: the exploitation of colonial resources for imperial gain. Perhaps

unsurprisingly, however, Lopez's guano project falls through, and he has to seek other ways to make his fortune.

In light of these earlier imperial references, Lopez's sudden threat to move Emily to Guatemala has several striking differences that prompt further consideration in the context of assimilation and imperial structures. Firstly, it is important to note that Lopez's ability to land the Guatemala position is always questionable, as even this requires more funds than he can materialize. Secondly, as his conversation with Mr. Wharton implies, this may be just another scheme to convince Mr. Wharton to part with his fortune. Furthermore, the sheer suddenness of Lopez's assertion that he "must leave England, and try my fortune in Central America," as well as Mr. Wharton's shock at the proposition, emphasize to the reader that Lopez's actions are drastic (Trollope 420). He is not merely a ship's passage away in Ireland, like Phineas; rather, he is proposing moving his entire household to, essentially, the other side of the world. While this would have been shocking, it would not have been unheard of—other enterprising businessmen made their fortunes across the empire, and often moved their entire households to do so. We as readers are uncertain about Lopez's intent to follow through on his actions and officially join the British imperial project, in part because Lopez has such obvious ulterior motives.

I believe, however, that we can read Lopez's plan to move to Guatemala as serious despite his ulterior motives, since this move could potentially fix Lopez's financial problems. Indeed, access to money and therefore to status is both the core of Lopez's arc *and* the heart of the British Empire itself, and Trollope's specific use of Guatemala in particular and Central and South America in general highlight Lopez's ties to informal empire. At this time, Guatemala and much of Central and South America were not a part of Britain's imperial holdings; indeed, Guatemala had won a war for independence nearly fifty years before, and with the decline of the Spanish Empire Britain saw a way of increasing profit while paying lip-service to Latin

American freedom. While the British Empire certainly exerted significant influence over the region, scholars like Jesse Reeder argue that in comparison to "formal" territories like Hong Kong or India, Britain's presence in Central and South America was a kind of "informal empire": a way of describing "Britain's significant influence over sovereign Latin American nations by means of economic leverage rather than formal occupation" (Reeder 9). Reeder goes on to note that there were

> two competing narratives at work in the idea of informal empire in Latin America: that Britain might increase its commercial supremacy over the new nations, and that these same nations might become increasingly independent from outside control… [resulting in a] dual appeal to subjugation and liberation… (Reeder 91)

This informal empire led to an economic, if not governmental, imperialism over Latin America's fledgling democracies. It allowed Britain to preach a rhetoric of Latin American liberty while at the same time pulling them ever closer to full dependence on the British Empire's network of trade and, in the process, profiting from these nations' economic vulnerability. As a result, it is perhaps no surprise that Lopez chooses Britain's South American informal empire over its formal holdings in the Caribbean or Asia. After all, Lopez has already attempted the route of political-power-to-gain-wealth—and been foiled at every turn. In pivoting to Guatemala, Lopez makes it clear that he is done with the formal empire and its meddling, insular British governmental officials. The informal empire, presumably, would allow him to conduct his financial schemes in peace. In this sense, Guatemala would be an entirely fitting choice.

Moving to Guatemala, however, also fits in neatly to Lopez's assimilatory quest, as Lopez has found himself blocked at every angle in his quest to assimilate and gain higher status in Britain, and must therefore seek another means of gaining the status he desires. To do this, he moves from indirectly participating in empire (through the guano scheme) to threatening a

physical move for himself and Emily—one that, in Benedict Anderson's terms, will allow him to be

> naturally superior… to the subjected natives. …The colonial empire… permitted sizable numbers of bourgeois and petty bourgeois to play aristocrat off center court: i.e., anywhere in the empire except at home. (Anderson 150)

Anderson's point here is telling: leaving England would give Lopez the status he so desires. Too foreign to play aristocrat in "center court," leaving England would give Lopez, as it did many other Jews in this time period, the ability to play aristocrat elsewhere.[7] At this point, in order to be seen as more English, Lopez must *leave* England. Both too foreign and too assimilated, there is no place for a passing Jewish man in the upper echelons of British society. Instead, the empire holds the answer: the chance to start over in a place where he can define Englishness according to his own standards, because the "subjected natives" would have no way to gauge his racial status. The move to Guatemala would assimilate Lopez entirely, turning him into just another British colonizer, searching for sovereignty far from English shores.

Lopez's proposed move to Guatemala is the final, desperate step in a long list of attempted assimilations into the English nation, and Lopez specifically highlights that his scheme is not just a moneymaking enterprise but a national, imperial project. When Lopez, thwarted by his altercation with Arthur Fletcher and unable to convince Mr. Wharton to fund his speculative endeavors any further than he already has, tells Mr. Wharton that he will move Emily with him

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[7] I would like to highlight the fact that early Zionist leaders recognized that they would gain allies among antisemites, and so this reading of Zionism as expulsion is based in significant historical (and current) evidence. Spangler writes that

> "Herzl… went so far as to write in his diary: 'The anti-Semites [sic] will be our most loyal friends; the anti-Semitic countries will be our allies.' This pattern continues to the present where the majority of Zionists in the U.S. are Christian fundamentalists who support Israel only as part of the plan for the return of the Messiah…" (Spangler 108).

Clearly, antisemitism was obviously a factor in Zionism's support among European countries—even after WWII when the West had been confronted with the horrific results of ideologies of racial essentialism.

to Guatemala, he specifically highlights that his project is a national one: "If I cannot succeed in this country," Lopez tells Mr. Wharton, "I must go elsewhere." The use of the word *country* here is telling, as Lopez clearly states the national community he cannot join. Instead, he must go "elsewhere"—perhaps another nation, perhaps another community, in order to succeed. Yet Lopez's idea of success, as he delineates to Lizzie Eustace later, is not merely financial. When discussing Guatemala, his language shifts quickly to that of sovereignty:

> Remember that an income which gives you comfort here will there produce for you every luxury which wealth can purchase. It is to be a king there, or to be but very common among commoners here. (Trollope 472)

Jesse Reeder notes astutely that "Lopez naturally turns to the rhe-toric not of liberation but conquest; his pursuit of… profit w-ill make him 'king,' thus… reinstalling a Eu-ro-pean as ruler of Guatemala" (Reeder 93). Lopez, however, is not merely a European—he is at least assumed to be a Jewish man, occupying a liminal racial space somewhere between *English* and *foreign,* somewhere between *white* and *not-white,* and yet he understands that in England even money will only make him "very common among commoners," while elsewhere he can be king. By using the word king, and highlighting that he cannot succeed "in this country," Lopez emphasizes his own imperial project: he, a man widely recognized as Jewish, will become a "king" overseas, backed by British wealth. As a result, Lopez's proposed move to Guatemala does three things simultaneously: first, it transfers him to a location where he can "succeed" financially and in terms of social status. Secondly, it aligns him with Britain and the British empire in ways that he cannot be aligned while he remains on English soil, as he is too "other." And lastly, it brings out a latent theme of Jewish nation building and sovereignty that bears striking similarities to the nascent Zionist movement.

The Zionist parallels have not been examined by scholars in regards to *The Prime Minister,* and with *Daniel Deronda* published in the same year, it is easy to understand why: what is vaguely implied in *The Prime Minister* is considered in much more nuance and depth in *Deronda.* Yet the image Lopez paints at the end of the novel to Lizzie Eustace, of himself, considered fully English at last, at the head of a colonial project in South America, is not only remarkably similar to what Deronda *actually does* at the end of Eliot's novel, but also bears comparison to early conceptions of Zionism by founding figures like Theodore Herzl. Although Britain and later Zionist leaders eventually settled on Palestine as the location for a new Jewish homeland, in the late 19th century places in Africa (Uganda) and South America (Argentina) were commonly brought up as possible locations for a Zionist nation. Furthermore, just as Lopez views his move to Guatemala as an opportunity to "succeed" and be considered fully English, this kind of imperial mimicry was a significant factor in actual Zionist thinking in the years following *The Prime Minister*'s publication. Daniel Boyarin argues convincingly in his 1997 monograph *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* that for Zionist father Theodore Herzl "it is through mimicry of colonization that the Zionists seek to escape the stigma of Jewish difference. If… being civilized means colonizing, then we [i.e. Herzl and the Zionist movement] too will become colonizers" (Boyarin 303). One can easily imagine Lopez thinking the same thing, as his language when discussing Guatemala indicates his own colonial pursuits, and his desire to rise above "commoners" in ways he is unable to on English soil. Lopez's Guatemalan plan, in other words, is a form of colonial mimicry that manifests itself in much the same ways that Zionism did: as a further means of assimilation, a way of becoming English or European, while at the same time serving as a way to move the unsettling, racially-nebulous Jew away from the metropole.

Indeed, Lopez weaponizes his father-in-law's obvious racism and desire to be rid of him as a last attempt to gain financial support and colonize a new location, but where Mr. Wharton refuses, in part perhaps because Lopez threatens to take Emily with him, the British Empire agrees—not in *The Prime Minister* but in reality, as the decades following the novel's publication saw Britain become the clear patron for the Zionist cause. Just thirty years after *The Prime Minister* appeared in print, the British government, still in the throws of the first World War, promised the Zionist movement that they would have Britain's support in the creation of a national home in Palestine. This, of course, is a promise they fulfilled with modern-day Israel. I am not trying to imply that Trollope, like Elliot, was engaged with proto-Zionist thought or even considered Lopez's Guatemala scheme as a potentially Zionist project. Certainly, as the next chapter will show, *Deronda* is the 1876 novel engaged with Zionism in the Jewish community. Rather, I discuss Zionism here to highlight how pervasive imperialism was in Victorian literature, and how conceptions of Jewish assimilation were inextricable from colonization, and from the imperial ideologies that both inspired proto-Zionism and saw the Anglo-Jewish community as a threat.

But where Eliot allows her passing Jewish characters to sail off into the sunset, Trollope gives Lopez no such happy ending. In Lopez's suicide, Trollope offers a last, bleak coda to his engagement with Jewish assimilation. Unable to gain the funds for his move to Guatemala, his reputation in shambles after his failed Parliament bid and crushingly rejected by Lizzie Eustace, Lopez wonders "If he could not go to Guatemala, what should he do with himself;—where should he go? … Would not a pistol or a razor give him the best solution for all his difficulties?" (Trollope 501) In the end, of course, Lopez chooses neither of these options. Instead, he travels one morning to a train station and "walked down before the flying engine—and in a moment had been knocked into bloody atoms" (Trollope 520). The inherent violence of this death, and

Trollope's rather sensational description, presents Lopez's death as his utter annihilation. There is no body to bury, no funeral to hold, and no gravestone with his name on it. This is clearly a choice on Lopez's part. He could have used a pistol or a razor, but instead he throws himself in front of a train, itself a compelling image of British imperialism: "Throughout the British Empire in the nineteenth century, the railway, in its rapid reach into the interiors of colonies, was arguably the single greatest factor in the extension of Victorian capitalism," Pat Gibbs writes (293). In India, "railways… were primarily introduced to fulfill the economic and military needs of an expanding colonial administration" (Mukhopadhyay 14). Railways served as a literal engine of empire—both transporting resources and bodies from one end of the empire to the other, and metaphorically promoting an industrialized "civilization" to "improve" the colony both "moral[ly] and social[ly]" (Mukhopadhyay 14).[8] As a result, Lopez's chosen vehicle of death lends his suicide significant metaphorical value: he is not annihilated by a razor or a handgun, but by the very vision of Britain's moral and social and economic improvement. In other words, he puts himself at the mercy of the British Empire itself—knowing that when it passes by, nothing will remain of Ferdinand Lopez.

Indeed, Lopez's specific choices in the moments leading up to his death emphasize the toll passing has taken on him, and the ways in which British hegemony has so consumed his identity that nothing remains. Trollope notes that before going to the train station, Lopez

> had been careful to carry with him no record of identity, the nature of which would permit it to outlive the crash of the train… he had been careful to dress himself in shirt

[8] The fin-de-siècle saw significant conversation around a trans-African railroad that would reach from Cape Town, South Africa to Cairo, Egypt. Overall, trains and railroads were considered both a site of imperial and industrial optimism and a dangerous new way of becoming subsumed into the mechanization of the industrial revolution.

> and socks, with handkerchief and collar… which bore no mark… even his watch had been crumpled into ashes. (Trollope 523-524)

It is telling that at the moment of his suicide Lopez seems to abandon all of his assimilatory trappings. Lopez, always the careful dresser, in full control of how others perceived him, chooses to remove all elements of his identity, down to the name on the inside of his collar. We might ask why. Certainly, suicide was still a criminal act in the late 19th century, and there would have been stigma associated with it, but Lopez's abandonment of his clothing is more than an abandonment of his identity. It is instead perhaps the only thing Lopez does in the course of the novel that is not performative—i.e., the only thing he does that is not a passing, assimilationist act. Instead of trying to be English, Lopez seeks to rid himself of any identification with any nationality. All that remains is a body—his questionably foreign, Jewish, never-quite-English-enough body. Glencora Palliser told him to "come and be a fairy," but in Lopez's suicide, he rejects England's fairyland utterly. For the first time, he is not trying to convince anyone of his Englishness. In doing so, he also removes all aspects of his personhood. Mirroring Lopez's own disavowal of himself, the text never uses Lopez's name in this paragraph, referring to him solely as "the man." Unable to assimilate, stripped of even a name, Lopez is merely a body, and soon he is not even that—just "bloody atoms" on the railroad tracks. The specific use of the term "bloody" returns us to the heart of the Lopez question: what his origins are, and whether or not his blood is English. Trollope never gives us an objective answer, but we do not need one by this point in the story, because the characters have made up their minds: whatever Lopez is, he is not *one of us.* As a result, his death on the train tracks is just the obvious example of what Empire does to those whose very existence is a threat.

The utter destruction of Lopez's body is only the last step on his assimilationist journey. In *The Prime Minister,* the British Empire cannot allow anyone, even a man of questionable

ancestry like Lopez, to assimilate. England's upper echelons of power are a closed loop, available only to those whose *blood* passes muster. Suspicion of Lopez in the novel begins not with his actions but with his lack of nationality, ancestry, and whiteness. In other words, it begins with his race, even if Trollope does not say it explicitly. There is nothing that Lopez can do to assimilate that does not also inherently threaten the British Empire, and the insular white hegemony at its head. Lopez ends the novel cast out, left with no recourse but to die by his own hand. Nothing he does to assimilate is enough to wipe out the stain of his tainted, ambiguous blood. If *The Prime Minister* is a story about nationalism and inheritance and assimilation, then it must also be a story about race—about who is *one of us* and who is *one of them.* Lopez, the novel states emphatically, does not belong with *us.* Despite his perfect assimilation, he is not English enough to inherit *our* daughters, *our* money, *our* seats in parliament. Moreover, and perhaps even more troublingly, the unsettling underpinnings of Lopez's arc are such that even in his attempts to leave Britain, and in his own suicide, Lopez serves the will of the Empire. In the first, he would continue the British imperial project off page, removing his troubling presence from the national equation *while also* affirming Britain's imperialism and continuing its colonial efforts—the heart of British nationalist ideology—against other groups. In the second, he takes himself off page entirely: unable to find his place in Britain, he commits suicide and the Empire, not to mention the English whose lives he'd disrupted, benefits. Arthur Fletcher gains a seat in Parliament and a wife; Glencora and Plantagenet Palliser finish their term as prime minister and wife without the threat of political scandal. There is no ending to *The Prime Minister* wherein the Empire loses.

"A SWEET HABIT OF THE BLOOD":

EMPIRE, NATIONALISM, AND JEWISH PASSING IN *DANIEL DERONDA*

It would be easy to consider George Eliot's 1876 novel *Daniel Deronda* the philosemitic cousin of *The Prime Minister.* After all, where Trollope leans into tired stereotypes of Jewish duplicity and greed, Eliot paints her protagonist as gentle, artistic, and overall *moral.* The titular Jewish Deronda is the novel's moral center, not the beautiful, ambitious (and English) Gwendolen Harleth or any of their mutual friends and acquaintances. Where Trollope's English Emily Wharton agonizes at her Jewish husband's avarice, Deronda schools Gwendolen, telling her that she must "Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires" (Eliot 377). And while Deronda's background, like Lopez's, is obscured for much of Eliot's novel, Eliot goes to great pains to present him as a morally upright correction to antisemitic stereotypes. Her research and reading gave her a vastly different perspective from Trollope's: Eliot's own Jewish contemporary David Frishman, an author, poet, and translator, noted that

> Eliot knows the Jewish literature. She is proficient in phrases from the holy books and their judgments; she knows how to support her claims when needed. Jewish history is always before her… Indeed, George Eliot knows… the wisdom of Israel, and at times she knows more than some of the learned of Israel themselves. (Dekel 793)

In light of Eliot's research and effort into understanding Jewish learning and culture, *Deronda* and *The Prime Minister* seem destined to take opposite ideological views. Yet despite their myriad differences, they share one major similarity: both center on characters who are ostensibly able to pass as English, despite being of questionable heritage in Lopez's case and being Jewish in Deronda's. That both Eliot and Trollope, authors approaching Jewish characters from exceptionally different perspectives, would choose to center their realist novels not only on

Jewish characters but specifically on *passing* Jewish characters highlights the concern around racial passing in Victorian Britain.

Unlike Lopez, however, Deronda's ability to pass is never in question. After all, we are introduced to Deronda as an English gentleman. He has already achieved the assimilationist position that Lopez so desired. Moreover, his Jewish heritage is hidden (from both Deronda and the reader) for most of the book. Because Deronda spends much of his life—and much of the novel—passing for English, he inherently disrupts to an even greater degree than Lopez did, the self-other racial binaries that uphold colonial projects. If Deronda can pass for both, then the implied question is *what makes one Jewish,* or rather, *what makes one English?* In other words, Deronda's position in the novel as both Jewish *and* not-Jewish, both English *and* not-English, forces the reader to reckon with the nature of nationalism, English identity, and the doctrine of racial superiority that justifies one group's colonization of another. Deronda's very existence showcases the text's troubled relationship with Victorian British fears around racial purity, no matter Eliot's research and reading. Furthermore, the text's engagement with nationalism shows troubling links to historic and present rhetoric around the race-nation. *Daniel Deronda* narrates British fear of the erasure of racial hierarchies by focusing on the Jewish person who can pass, infiltrating British society undetected. Moreover, like *The Prime Minister,* the text largely reinforces a national definition of non-coexistence; sympathetic Jewish characters, in the end, must be relegated to insular communities or exiled, to found their own nation somewhere else, reifying the self-other binary necessitated by the race-nation. Indeed, the text answers the fear of Jewish infiltration by imagining a Jewish national-colonial project to take place elsewhere (and take the Jewish people elsewhere), re-forming the British populous to reflect the definitional standard of the pure-blooded, racialized nation.

The conversation around Jewishness and nationalism in *Daniel Deronda* is significant, with many scholars examining the novel's reaffirmation of racial/national boundaries at the end of the text. Susan Meyer's 1993 article "'Safely to Their Own Borders': Proto-Zionism, Feminism, and Nationalism in Daniel Deronda" argues that the text is deeply antisemitic, and idealizes a "'refined' Jew"—i.e., "one who has become more like the English", often at the loss of feminine selfhood and identity (Meyer 746). Moreover, she posits, "in the… novel Eliot is concerned with maintaining what are, ultimately, national boundaries" (Meyer 755). Amanda Anderson's reading is far less damning, but still notes that "[Eliot] has recourse… to a dangerous romantic nationalism…." (145). Eliot's take on nationalism—both the British imperial conception of it and the question of Jewish nationalism in the text—is a recurring theme among scholarship. Aamir Mufti argues that "It is not so much the presence of the Jews in Western society that is itself the problem but rather their non-national relationship to any of these societies." This is an excellent observation on the threatening ambiguity that Jewish people pose to the empire—since they can be neither racially identified nor nationally located, they exist in a liminal space that inherently breaks down the self-Other binary that, Benedict Anderson argues, enables the imperial project. Monica O'Brien argues from an Arendtian perspective that "Eliot's focus on race as the impetus to bind the Jewish people together and guide their politics reduced what is rightfully the political and public realm to biological necessity, thus disallowing her fabricated Jews the freedom to rebel against their political fate," noting, as I do, the importance of biology in Eliot's conception of nation (although she doesn't examine this in light of empire or racial passing) (O'Brien). Ultimately, scholars agree that the relationship between nationalism, assimilation and passing, and Jewishness are significant themes in the text, and ones that are moreover inextricably tied up with each other.

Certainly, not every reading of *Deronda's* imperial elements comes to a postcolonial conclusion. Nancy Henry's 2002 monograph *George Eliot and the British Empire* examines Eliot's personal life and writings, and ultimately argues of *Deronda* that "'imperialist ideology' is a term that not only fails to describe but actually misdescribes the complex relationship between nineteenth-century authors, their works, and the British Empire," criticizing scholars like Edward Said and Susan Meyer as essentially teleologically-focused readers who implicate Eliot in a Zionist project decades removed from her writing (114). In conversation with Mary Poovey, she argues that "what we call imperialist ideology was unrecognizable until imperialism was embraced as a political position," and furthermore that "Criticism of *Deronda* that searches for an ideology to condemn has narrowed the notion of context to a morally blameworthy imperialism, distorting our understanding of the text's mimetic and moral subtleties" (Henry 126, 113). While Henry adds helpful nuance thorough historical research and linguistic clarity to longstanding conversations around imperialism and ideology, I would argue that while ideology may not have been understood in its full context in the 1870s (the Oxford English Dictionary defines it in the 1890s as "a systematic scheme of ideas, usually relating to politics, economics, or society and forming the basis of action or policy… [or] the forming or holding of such a scheme of ideas"), that does not mean that people did not have such systematic schemes of ideas, whether as part of a political position or not. Moreover, it certainly does not mean that people did not act on the basis of their belief systems surrounding imperialism; Henry herself notes that the "uneven development of imperialist ideology may be traced throughout the nineteenth century" (127). While the development may have been "uneven," that does not mean that the concept of imperialism, or the racial binaries that upheld it, did not serve, to some degree at least, as excuses for empire. Furthermore, while Eliot's life and writings do include vocal criticisms of

colonialism and racism,[9] my purpose is neither to exonerate Eliot nor condemn her based on her personal beliefs (or those of Trollope, for that matter). Rather, it is to identify the ways in which historical and literary context contribute to present-day rhetoric and ideologies, and as a result of our growing awareness, shine light into our own ideological blind spots. Novels are not frozen in amber at the time of their writing. To discuss a novel solely in conversation with what its author would have been exposed to, known, or consciously believed is to severely limit any understanding of its future impact. Like all artistic works, novels deserve analysis in both their current moment and in recognition of their conversation and affect on broader culture and future events. Henry argues for the full context of *Deronda* in its place in history, but history does not end with the publication of *Deronda,* or any novel. As a result, I would be remiss if I did not address *Deronda's* broader ideological conversation that reaches into the present.

On this note, we must discuss antisemitic stereotypes that affect conceptions of Jewishness, for, crucially, a Jewish person's ability to pass is also a Jewish person's ability to *infiltrate.* Although *Daniel Deronda* precedes many of the most famous antisemitic texts about fear of Jewish passing and infiltration of the nation, the seeds of those fears are present in Eliot's novel. In Ritchie Robertson's 2017 article "Jesuits, Jews and Thugs: Myths of Conspiracy and Infiltration from Dickens to Thomas Mann",[10] he posits that

> Myths about dangerous outsiders do not provide such secure self-definition as do images of other nations which can be imagined as homogeneous and predictable blocks based on

[9] Such as, for example, a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe which posits that ". . . 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" (As quoted in Henry 109).

[10] Robertson's illuminating article discusses an early antisemitic text, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* which began circulation in Tsarist Russia and later makes its way to Germany and the United States post World War I. Despite denouncements in publications like *The New York Times,* it greatly influenced the propaganda and views of Germany's National Socialism (Nazi) party.

> a limited territory. For the outsiders, bound together in conspiratorial organizations, disguise their foreignness by taking on the appearance of every nation they inhabit. Their invisibility enables them to penetrate and infiltrate the nation, to work underground and undermine the national culture. Such myths accordingly reveal the insecurity that haunts national communities. Their controlling metaphors are those of conspiracy and infiltration. (348)

As Robertson attests in the above quote, the fear of Jewish passing is at heart a fear of Jewish infiltration of the nation. Indeed, the term *infiltration* itself implies a national threat—after all, spies infiltrate, enemies infiltrate. No country has ever been infiltrated by its own people; by definition, it cannot. Yet this has been a recurring narrative around the Jewish community since long before Eliot's time, showcasing their outsider status. And while Robertson discusses antisemitism in the 20th century specifically, I find it worth noting that the same fears around nationalism and Jewish infiltration appear in *Daniel Deronda*. This framework is vital to my engagement with *Deronda*'s racial and national themes.

Yet as much scholarship as there is on Jewishness, Zionism and identity in *Daniel Deronda,* most scholars have not chosen to examine Deronda in conversation with theories of racial passing, and hold differing opinions as to whether Deronda is able to pass at all. Understanding this context is helpful as it exemplifies not only the significance of the themes I examine to the text, but also the difficulty of reading Wallach's "visible properties of racialized difference" into Deronda. Audrey Jaffe's chapter on *Daniel Deronda* in her book *Scenes of Sympathy* emphasizes Deronda's ability to pass. She points out that "Eliot's ideal bourgeois subject [i.e., Deronda himself] is… not the Jew who is generally discernible as one, who has no choice; he is instead the gentleman who chooses to identify as a Jew" (156). But not all scholars agree that Deronda is visually passing. Julian Wolfreys argues that Deronda is "of course,

physically, very much other, being dark-skinned and somewhat oriental (in Said's sense)" (28). This disagreement is especially interesting; it occurs consistently throughout articles on *Daniel Deronda,* and serves as a fascinating mirror to the novel's own conflicting statements about Deronda's visual markers (or lack thereof) of race. Mikhal Dekel's compelling 2010 article "Jews, Modernity, and the End of the European Bildungsroman" offers a brief section where she discusses *Daniel Deronda* in connection with the genre of racially passing novels (including Nella Larson's *Passing*) and notes that "Deronda's dark physiognomy is repeatedly contrasted in the first half of the novel with the fair-skinned complexion and reddish-blond hair of Mallinger Grandcourt" (51). Ultimately, however, Dekel argues that Deronda "is imagined, by Mordecai and by Eliot herself, as nothing else but the bodily matter on which the national message will be inscribed" (56). In this case, academics, like the novel's characters, are highly invested in evaluating Deronda's Jewishness based on his physical characteristics, and how that relates to whether or not he is *truly* Jewish. The fact that their conclusions are as varied as the novel's own speaks to the enduring siren call of racial categorizations—categories that Deronda's presence serves to disrupt. Dekel's brief engagement notwithstanding, I find discussing *Deronda* in conversation with racial passing to be an important gap in scholarship, and one that deserves to be examined further in conversation with nationalism, considering the text's own preoccupation with racial markers and their threat to empire.

Make no mistake: *Daniel Deronda* is, like *The Prime Minister,* concerned with the instability of the British empire. The narrator observes that "[Gwendolen] had no notion how her maternal grandfather got the fortune inherited by his two daughters; but he had been a West Indian, which seemed to exclude further question…" (Eliot 17). While Gwendolen may find the "West Indian" answer to not invite further questions, it raises a plethora for a critique of *Daniel Deronda*'s engagement with empire. For despite the lack of further questions, this reference

connects not only the "fortune" inherited by Gwendolen's mother and aunt, but also the *lack* of fortune, as whatever wealth Gwendolen's grandfather had accumulated runs dry by the novel's halfway point. This brief moment establishes multiple vital points: the insidious presence of the colonial project, even in a novel that takes place nearly entirely on the continent of Europe; the inherent instability of that colonial project, and following, the consequences of what will happen when the colonial project finally comes to an end. Later, when Gwendolen learns that she and her mother have lost everything, her mother says that "There were great speculations… [we were] meant to gain. It was all about mines and things of that sort" (Eliot 195). The specific reference to mines implies other imperialist ventures—most famously, the discovery of diamond mines in South Africa and the resulting "diamond rush" in 1870 (Encyclopedia Brittanica). Importantly, however, it also connects imperialist ventures to instability, risk, and ultimately loss. Gwendolen's family is nearly destitute; her marriage to Grandcourt is predicated on the understanding that he will support them because they are unable to support themselves. To put it differently, Britain's national-colonial project is not merely central to *Daniel Deronda*—in many ways it *is* the impetus that kickstarts Gwendolen's half of the story. But the threat of *loss* of the national-colonial project, and of the resources gained therein, is also inextricably tied to the novel's imperialism.[11] The British empire as represented in *Daniel Deronda* is deeply aware of its own instability, and therefore it must also be oriented around self-protection and self-preservation.

[11] This should be no surprise. Empires in the Victorian era—and the British Empire is no exception—while arguably at the height of their influence and power, had also spent the past century attempting to quash rebellions and revolutions, whether in Spain's South American colonies that fought for their own independence, or the Haitian uprising against French colonial rule, to Britain's own American colonies rebelling in 1776 and the sepoy-led Indian Rebellion of 1857 against the British East India Company. Any conception of empire at this time was also a fear of imperial loss, something that can be clearly seen in both *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda.*

In light of this, one could read Deronda's excoriation of Gwendolen in the novel as, to some degree at least, a critique of British imperialism and the British Empire in general. Gwendolen is associated with empire from the novel's earliest pages—Eliot describes her as a "princess in exile, who in time of famine was to have her breakfast-roll made of the finest-bolted flour from the seven thin ears of wheat, and… was to have her silver fork;" later, Gwendolen's relationship to her siblings and mother is described as her "domestic empire" (Eliot 32-33). Always, her power over her family is linked to excess, as seen in the above quote of her "princess in exile" description, and to casual instability, as the first thing we see Gwendolen do in the novel is gamble her privilege and limited wealth abroad (much to Deronda's judgement). Continuing this thought, when deciding whether or not to accept Grandcourt's proposal, Gwendolen "seemed to be getting a sort of empire over her own life. But how to use it?" (Eliot 244). In this instance, Eliot seems interested in the potential uses of empire, even an empire confined to a person's life, and indicts Gwendolen's careless, haughty actions. There's a personal agency implied in her association of empire with Gwendolen, and the question, "but how to use it?" is particularly telling. In this case, empire in the text of *Daniel Deronda* is something to be wielded, whether for good or ill. This is only confirmed later in the text, when Gwendolen realizes that the letter Mrs. Glasher wrote her after her marriage to Grandcourt "had begun her husband's empire of fear," a tyranny that would not have had such an effect if Gwendolen had not known "all before she married, and in marrying him had broken her word… the… dread was lest the veil of secrecy should fall… and give [Grandcourt] the right to taunt her" (Eliot 358). In comparison, Deronda wields his power over Gwendolen for good, encouraging her to think beyond herself and come into a greater knowledge of her place in British society, shaping Gwendolen's "empire over her own life" into something "that may be a blessing," as Deronda describes it after Grandcourt's death (Eliot 589). Following this reading,

Deronda himself serves as a critique of the British Empire, urging it to use its power to bless the world.

Yet this in and of itself is a profoundly imperialist belief, as imperial rhetoric of this time often argued that Britain brought civilization and Christianity (i.e., a blessing) to heathen nations in the process of colonizing them. And while certainly there are gendered concerns to examine in this reading of Gwendolen's connection to empire, and her subsequent relation to Grandcourt's tyranny and Deronda's moral superiority, such is not the purpose of my project. Rather, in recognizing the novel's in-text references to empire, I strive to emphasize its pervasiveness across the entire novel. While it would be easy to consider the Deronda half of the novel to be the novel's "political half" while the Gwendolen plot is "domestic," this bifurcation is unnecessary. Certainly, politics play a large role across the novel—as do domestic plots, as Deronda's relationship to Mirah is a significant factor in his chapters—and empire is the heartbeat at the center, sinking its tendrils into both Deronda's proto-Zionist future and Gwendolen's marriage plot.

On this note, before I discuss imperial self-preservation against *Daniel Deronda's* passing Jewish threats, I find it important to note that in *Deronda,* as in *The Prime Minister,* there is no such thing as a hybridized, Anglo-Jewish identity—not because such identities do not appear in the text (and certainly not because such identities did not exist in Victorian Britain) but because the novel's tension rests on Deronda's inherently threatening position as *both* Jewish and English, and on which side he will eventually land. The whole question of passing is a question of racial binaries—a person passes as something they are not. By definition, a person cannot pass as something they already are. As a result, Eliot's novel hinges on Deronda's identity as either English or Jewish, not both. This question reaches its zenith in Deronda himself—will he follow his nurture, and sit at his guardian Sir Hugo's side, marry Gwendolen,

and have the future of an English gentleman that his mother "secured" for him? Or will he follow Mordecai and marry Mirah, take up his "birthright" and accept his Jewish heritage? By choosing a protagonist (the text's main protagonist, for despite the significance of Gwendolen's arc, the novel is named after Deronda) whose internal emotional conflict mirrors the national and imperial racial concerns of the novel, Eliot offers her reader a personal stake in the question of *what makes an English gentleman,* and, following, *what makes one English.*

Ultimately, however, Eliot makes it clear that in *Daniel Deronda,* there is only one path for her Jewish protagonist to take. For while the text may initially present the option of Anglo-Jewish racial fluidity, a careful reader will recognize that this is a false hope. Deronda's inherent difference from English gentlemen has been made apparent from the novel's opening pages, and his Jewishness is presented as a matter of racial destiny, a latent difference that is finally explained away by the reveal of his parentage. Gwendolen, and the reader's, first encounter with him emphasizes this fact. Gwendolen says "I think he is not like young men in general," despite the fact that "he was young, handsome, distinguished in appearance" and that he had been already confirmed as an Englishman by Mr. Vandernoodt earlier in the conversation (Eliot 17). We the reader are given no reason why Deronda should not be "like young men in general," apart from the "dreadful look" he gives Gwendolen, and the sense that she is being judged by him. There is no physical description for why she feels this way; as established, even scholars differ as to their conception of Deronda's physical features. Still, she senses a *difference* in him, and as a result the reader also expects to find a difference in Deronda. And while the novel sets him up as an unusually thoughtful and sensitive young man, this in and of itself does not seem to be a reason for Gwendolen to immediately sense a difference in him—particularly since she has never had a conversation with him at this point, and would have no reason to recognize his kindness or sensitivity from his "dreadful look." What in Deronda is so different that

Gwendolen can see it at first glance? While a first-time reader is left to wonder, a reader who already knows the secret of Deronda's heritage understands: the difference is that Deronda is not English. Dekel argues that "In *Deronda,* Daniel is spotted as Jew by a fellow Jew, and from this point on… his Jewishness is revealed as an open secret: the reader discovers that the signs were always there" (55). Indeed, when we learn of Deronda's Jewish heritage, we are meant to feel, as Deronda does, that this is the culmination of his arc of self-discovery—when his mother asks "What difference will it make to you that I have told you about your birth?" Deronda responds, "A very great difference… I can hardly think of anything that would make a greater difference" (Eliot 556). Yet while this may make a great difference to Deronda, it only affirms what we the audience already know. This, then, is the difference Gwendolen saw in him at the novel's beginning, and the difference Deronda sees in himself now: the secret of his Jewish birth, the secret of his Jewish *blood* makes him different. He is not, cannot be English. Instead, he is something else, and no matter what he does, the truth of his heritage is written on him in ways that even Eliot cannot articulate as anything other than his inherent difference from the English. Paul Delany argues that Eliot's position on Jewish identity in *Daniel Deronda* is "a mystical faith that 'blood will tell' in the long run. That is George Eliot's… atavistic Zionism" (781). While the novel may present a chance for Deronda to fully assimilate, in the end Deronda's blood dictates his assimilation—or lack thereof.

It stands to reason, then, that there is such a concern around identifying Jewish characters in the text. After all, as previously established, Deronda cannot be *both* English and Jewish. He must be one or the other—and if he *appears* English but his *blood* is Jewish, then his motives are inherently suspect. If the empire's self-preservation depends on the strict binaries of superior-English and inferior-Other, then an "other" who is indistinguishable from an English person—who can pass—is a serious threat. As a result, the text is deeply concerned with recognizing

Jewish characters. For example, Mordecai continually tells Deronda that he will "take the sacred inheritance of the Jews", despite Deronda's repeated insistence that he is not Jewish (Eliot 423). Later, the text notes that Mordecai is "too entirely possessed by the supreme importance of the relation between himself and Deronda to have any other care in his speech…" (Eliot 423). Here again, the emphasis is on blood relation—is Deronda Jewish? This question is so all-consuming that even the thoughtful, "refined"[12] Mordecai can speak of nothing else. Mordecai is not the only one preoccupied by the question of blood and race. Long before he knows his own heritage, the English-educated Deronda poses the inverse of the same question to Mirah: "You are English? You must be—speaking English so perfectly" (Eliot 161). And while the narrator notes that "any one… might simply have guessed her to be Spanish", Deronda "inwardly wonder[s] that he had not said [that she was a Jew] to himself before" (Eliot 162). Despite Mirah's passing as English, or potentially Spanish, Deronda finds himself wondering that he hadn't realized she was Jewish. The implication here is that Deronda assumes there must be *some* visual marking that will allow him to categorize her as Jewish, and becomes troubled when he learns there is not. Mirah's ability to pass is concerning to Deronda, who at this point believes himself to be English. This initial breach of the binary that upholds empire, and Deronda's English-educated reaction to it, serves as an example of England's deep fears around the Jewish community, and its ability to move undetected throughout English society. In short, identifying Jewish characters becomes a matter of imperial self-preservation. It is no wonder that characters in the novel are so invested in discovering each other's racial heritage.

Furthermore, Deronda himself is the ultimate embodiment of this fear, for he not only passes as an Englishman in the world of the novel as Lopez does, but he *also* infiltrates the text

[12] See Susan Meyer's article, "'Safely to Their Own Borders': Proto-Zionism, Feminism, and Nationalism in Daniel Deronda."

of the novel itself. While the Trollope reader recognizes that there is something suspicious about Lopez's background from the novel's opening pages, the first-time *Deronda* reader does not know that he is Jewish until nearly the end of the book. Before then, multiple characters including Deronda assert his Englishness at different times. Early on, Gwendolen, upon hearing Deronda's last name, asks Mr. Vandernoodt if he is an Englishman; Vandernoodt responds in the affirmative. As described earlier, Deronda asserts his own Englishness to Mordecai on multiple occasions, and when Joseph Kalonymos asks him what his parentage is in the Frankfurt synagogue, Deronda "had a strongly resistant feeling… he… said coldly, 'I am an Englishman.'" (Eliot 308). Deronda's aversion to being assumed Jewish, as well as the text's continued insistence on his Englishness, makes the reveal that he does have Jewish blood all the more surprising. While Deronda's difference from other young men has been telegraphed from the novel's beginning, we are not led to associate it with Jewishness until much later, and even then Deronda continually asserts his English heritage. Of course, by the time he learns the truth of his background Deronda has become invested in the Jewish community, and is no longer resistant. But the fact that the novel's structure itself upholds these fears of Jewish infiltration at the highest levels of society—for Deronda is a wealthy, well-educated gentleman—and places the reader in the position of being misled about his Jewish identity, is deeply troubling. And his Jewish heritage only further upsets a first-time reader's conception of the novel's genre and purpose. As K.M. Newton's introduction the Oxford Edition attests, "First-time readers of the novel may expect Gwendolen and Deronda to go on to have an adulterous affair given the closeness of their emotional relationship" (Newton xv). Indeed, since much of the novel plays on audience expectations of the marriage plot and/or the bildungsroman, Deronda's infiltration of the text is yet another subversion of these expectations. If Deronda the Jew is able to infiltrate even the text of the British novel, and the reader's *idea* of who Deronda is and what the novel

that bears his name will be, then the unspoken question remains: what else can Deronda infiltrate? What else can *the Jews* infiltrate? Moreover, what kind of ending can the work give a character who shakes the foundations of empire itself? This question the text answers in no uncertain terms: like Lopez in *The Prime Minister,* Deronda (and, by extension, the Jewish population) is too much of a threat to British conceptions of nationalism and empire to remain on British soil. Exile is the only option available to him.

This plot should feel familiar. A wealthy English gentleman who is secretly Jewish? A potential marriage plot between a beautiful young English woman and a man whose heritage is obscured? An upper-class society virtually obsessed with one's racial background and a passing man who prepares to leave British shores with his wife? These are hallmarks of *The Prime Minister,* and there are such similarities between the two novels that we may ask whether Eliot read Trollope's novel as she was writing her own. While Eliot noted in a letter that

When I am writing, or only thinking of writing fiction of my own, I cannot risk the reading of other English fiction. I was obliged to tell Anthony Trollope so when he sent the first part of his Prime Minister, though this must seem sadly ungracious to those who don't share my susceptibilities. (As quoted in Ragussis 235)

Ragussis goes on to say that

> What [Eliot's partner] Lewes may have told her about *The Prime Minister,* we can only speculate; Lewes recorded reading Trollope's latest Jewish novel and remarking to Eliot's publisher about its handsome wide margins as a possible model for *Daniel Deronda.* (Ragussis 235)

Ultimately, however, whatever Eliot knew of Trollope's novel, it is clear that the similarities between both texts only serve to emphasize the conversation surrounding Jews in the wake of Disraeli's ascension to the prime ministerial position. Could a Jew ever become *one of us?* Yet

where Trollope presents his Jewish antagonist as utterly disconnected from any community or family life, even the upper-class British one he attempts to join, Eliot's novel is consumed by Deronda's search for his heritage and his slow movement into greater (and Jewish) community. Lopez is a lone agent; Deronda becomes a proto-Zionist leader. As a result, Eliot has more Jewish characters through which to consider her themes of nationalism and Jewish racial identity, and through which to consider passing in her novel, leading to a more thorough examination of British reactions to passing Jews than Trollope offers us.

Yet despite the many English reactions to Deronda's discovery of his Jewish heritage in the latter half of the novel, they all follow a similar pattern: disappointment, as Deronda has ceased to be *one of us* and is now *one of them*. The novel emphasizes a consistent redrawing of the racial lines between Deronda's English community and himself in these moments, with no possibility for any kind of hybridity or Anglo-Jewish identity. For example, Deronda's friend Hans Meyrick tells Deronda that Mirah and her brother Ezra celebrated Deronda's news, but "You may imagine we [Hans and his family] can't rejoice as they do" (Eliot 660). Hans's comment is particularly interesting, as it implies that Deronda is close enough to *us* to "imagine" Hans and his family's feelings on Deronda's newfound heritage. Hans speaks to Deronda as if nothing has changed, and as if Deronda can clearly understand why "we can't rejoice" in Deronda's discovery, although "they" (i.e., other Jews) can. In short, he speaks to Deronda as if Deronda is an Englishman, despite the fact that in the same breath he acknowledges that Deronda is not. Even more fascinating, Deronda notes that he *can* imagine: "I quite understand that you can't share my feeling [of gladness]" (Eliot 660). Here, we see Deronda shifting between his own feelings of happiness at learning his Jewish heritage and his recognition that Hans's feelings, much like Deronda's when he was taken for a Jew in Frankfurt, are very different. Deronda's bicultural, Anglo-English identity is caught in the liminal space between Jewishness

and Englishness, and his insider's experience tells him that he has essentially become a lesser race, something different and separate from the English he was raised among. It is a rare acknowledgement of Deronda's hybrid identity, his ability to walk the line between English and Jewish, yet it still comes at a cost: the barrier that has come between Deronda and his friend. For while Deronda may be able to understand Hans's disappointment, he is not able to share it. This, then, is the insurmountable truth of race in the novel: Jewish characters may understand the English, may even model a "national centre" after them, but the English do not understand or rejoice with the Jews (Eliot 677). Understanding and joy are built around racial lines, and Deronda's place in the middle is suspect. What can the novel do with a man who can both "understand" the English, and yet is not one of them? What can the empire do with those who do not share its feelings of English superiority?

The answer, of course, should be obvious: like Lopez before him, Deronda and the novel's other passing Jewish characters must be brought into line. The plethora of Jewish characters in *Daniel Deronda* offer multiple examples of how the text upholds an ideology of racial/national separatism, only made more apparent by Deronda and Mirah's exile. The consistency of Eliot's racially separate vision is perhaps more nuanced than Trollope's, yet her passing characters still serve as a threat to the empire, which necessitates their exile. Deronda and his mother both pass (unconsciously, in Deronda's case) for many years as non-Jewish, and while Mirah always attempts to forefront her heritage, she has the ability to pass in ways that her brother, whose "face… might have belonged to the prophet Ezekiel" cannot (Eliot 440). Leonora dies soon after her meeting with Deronda, in what Susan Meyer calls a "an obvious punishment for her transgression"—i.e., her assimilation and passing into non-Jewish society (Meyer 743). And while other Jewish characters, such as the Cohens or Julius Klesmer, remain alive and well in London, they are crucially easily recognizable as Jews: or in Klesmer's case "a… combination

of the German, the Sclave, and the Semite" (Eliot 38). In other words, they are not the real threat, because the empire can easily identify them as other—as racially inferior, unable to pass, and therefore able to be neatly sorted into the self-Other binary that upholds empire. They may serve as racialized Others, but the empire has entire colonies full of the racial Other that it easily dismisses as inferior—what's one more miniature Jewish community in the heart of London? But Deronda and Mirah are not so easily dealt with. As virtuous Jews, who have not committed the cardinal sin of intentional assimilation, and yet still serve as a threat to the British national-colonial project, they are "deferred, onto the imaginary site, the unending narrative of the quest for a homeland" (Wolfreys 27). The ending of the novel, therefore, reinforces an ideology of separatism—the Cohens, separate in their Jewish community; Klesmer, married to an English woman but easily racially identified; Mordecai and Leonora, dead; and Deronda and Mirah sent far away from British shores, off to found a new nation where their racial ambiguity is unable to threaten the British empire. Their exodus allows the empire to return to a place of stability, free from internal, infiltrative threats.

Certainly, this is a much more positive ending than *The Prime Minister.* Where Trollope's passing, questionably Jewish character is an outright villain who is utterly annihilated by the text's end, Eliot's passing Jewish hero marries a young Jewish girl (not, it should be noted, the novel's beautiful and spirited English heroine) and becomes more complete in his knowledge of himself and his origins. His choice to leave England at the end of the novel is exactly that: his *choice.* Still, we may ask why Deronda chooses to leave, and in answer, he lays out a clear Zionist narrative: "The idea that I am possessed with is that of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe…" (Eliot 677). Deronda's Zionism is at its core a nation-building project, but not *only* a nation-building project. He sees

the Jewish people as, like Herzl after him, a colonizing project in the vein of the British Empire, whose citizens are also "scattered over the face of the globe." Like Lopez, Deronda makes plans to leave Britain, but where Lopez's plans to live like a king in Guatemala are at best shifty and undefined, Deronda's goals are much more idealistic, and perhaps all the more troubling for their subtlety. After all, where Lopez seeks to assimilate and join the British Empire, Deronda has already assimilated. His goal is not to join, but to *reproduce* Empire, both literally and figuratively as his marriage with Mirah will presumably result in children who may also share his nation-building goals. In doing so, he also removes his own troubling presence from Britain.

Like Trollope before her and Herzl after, Eliot cannot conceive of a Jewish nation unless it mirrors Britain's own imperial project. Deronda makes this explicit: he tells Gwendolen, as mentioned earlier, that he wants to "give them [the Jews] a national centre, such as the English have…" (Eliot 677). And while Deronda uses the language of nationhood, the truth is that he cannot give the Jews a national center like the English have, because the English do not only have a nation, they have an empire. To give the Jews a national center requires him to give them a *place,* a "well-rooted[ness] in some spot of a native land…a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, and kindly acquaintance with all neighbors… may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood" (Eliot 16). While Eliot writes that this lack of connection to land had been "wanting in Gwendolen's life," the same is certainly true of Deronda, and of the Jews in general, who had been characterized even then as "wandering," as *Daniel Deronda's* Klesmer describes himself (Eliot 16, 202). In this sense, Eliot, like Trollope, believes that people are better when connected to an "ancestral attachment to a tract of land" (Delany 766). It is Eliot's own "myth of the land," reproduced for *Deronda* in ways that Trollope would recognize and probably agree with. Moreover, her emphasis on the "sweet habit of the blood" inextricably ties this myth to race. Kindness and

affection are genetic habits, emphasized by a bloodline. Certainly, the heart of Zionism is its position simultaneously as both an ideological return to a homeland where one presumably has a "sweet habit of the blood" *and* as a settler-colonial project in practice. In Eliot's view, since the Jews do not have access to "a native land," they must make one somewhere, modeling themselves on the very empire that cannot abide their presence. In this way, Eliot's proto-Zionism is still an assimilatory project, just as it was for Herzl. For in making Deronda a proto-Zionist, she also makes him, in essence, even more British. Eliot imbues in Deronda the most quintessentially British value of the time: she makes him an empire-builder.

Yet as I noted earlier, where Lopez works alone, Deronda is defined by his movement into community, and with this community comes, crucially, leadership: Deronda seeks to lead a Jewish revival, to "awaken a movement in other minds," as he tells Gwendolen (Eliot 677). Importantly, Zionism as explicitly articulated by Deronda in Eliot's novel is generally vague. Deronda does not lay out an invasion plan for Palestine, or anywhere else. He does not express any desire to exploit local land or resources, petition Britain's parliament for support, scout out land for a settlement or any other hallmark of colonization. Deronda's mention to Gwendolen that he wishes to "restor[e] a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have" is the strongest articulation of his stated goals in the text (Eliot 677). It is a bloodless, romanticized vision of nation-building. Yet in the very vagueness of Deronda's stated goals we can see again the ubiquitousness of Britain's own imperial project, as Britain carved new colonies from previously disunited groups throughout Asia and Africa. Deronda's hazy vision proposes the creation of a new empire not as a military or even an economic enterprise, but rather as a thought-movement, a "movement in other minds" (677). Deronda presents his goals as the leader of a movement of ideas that culminate in a country, fomenting not a bloody invasion or Jewish revolution but a bloodless, mystical nation

built in England's own image, comprised of those English society has left behind (i.e., the Jews). Even so, there can be no full understanding of imperialism without a recognition of the indigenous people affected by it. While Deronda does not explicitly name a place where he will found his Jewish nation, he mentions "the East," and indeed Jerusalem was a popular possibility from the very beginnings of Zionist thought, due to its historical and religious significance for the Jews. The Middle East at this time, of course, was populated; Jerusalem in 1876 had been under the control of the declining Ottoman Empire for centuries. And while Eliot could not have imagined all the outcomes of Zionism in 1876, we today have the gift of hindsight: the creation of a Jewish nation in the Middle East, like the partition of India and other British colonial projects, has led to years of war and conflict. Deronda may idealistically imagine a Jewish nation growing whole cloth out of his "movement in other minds" as he travels to "the East," but this is a gross romanticization. Empires, after all, do not grow unless they conquer.

On this note, *Daniel Deronda* argues overall that the stability of the empire cannot be fully restored without the exodus of the Jews *en masse* and the creation of a new Jewish nation-state. While it is vital to consider the real-life consequences of the Zionist project on Palestinians, I find the ideology behind Eliot's Zionism troubling on an even larger scale than the bloody outcomes of present-day Israel. The Jewish nation that *Daniel Deronda* argues in favor of is, necessarily, a race-state—a nation built on the foundation of racial homogeneity. Mordecai makes this explicit: "I say that the effect of [Jewish] separateness will not be completed and have its highest transformation unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality" (Eliot 450). Mordecai's words here are undeniable—his description of the desirability of separateness is directly related to race and nationhood. Furthermore, and despite Mordecai's later description of a "nationality whose members may still stretch to the ends of the earth", this line makes it clear that in order for the Jewish people to become fully separate, they must become a nation;

and not only a nation but a nation comprised of Jews alone (Eliot 457). The natural consequence of Jewish people forming a nation is that they will leave the nations they are currently within, and *those* nations will be returned to a state of racial and national purity. Therefore, not only is *Daniel Deronda*'s imagined Jewish state a race-nation, but the creation of this race-nation reaffirms the self-Other binary so essential to the creation (and continuation) of empire—the same binary so threatened by the presence of Jews in the nation. This creation of a separate Jewish race-nation allows England to be "for the English" again, having expelled the dangerous outsider from its borders. Writ more broadly, *Daniel Deronda*'s final definition of nationhood is predicated on an ideology of racial purity in the Jewish nation, and by extension, of racial purity in England and other European countries. As Benedict Anderson notes, in this ideology "Jews [are] forever Jews, no matter what passport they carry or what languages they speak and read" (149). The only solution to this racial threat is the creation of a race-state; only then will their passport identify them with their "true" heritage and nationality, and only then will England be freed of the threat of infiltration. After all, there can be no threat to racial superiority—or to empire—if the only people within the borders of England are racially, nationally, unquestionably English.

Over halfway through *Danield Deronda,* Mordecai tells Deronda that "The life of Israel is in your veins" (483). In response, Deronda "sat perfectly still, but felt his face tingling. It was impossible either to deny or assent" (Eliot 483). Mordecai's emphasis on the life of Israel the nation being directly connected to the blood in Deronda's veins serves as an important example of the race-nation in the text's imagination. There is no founding of Israel, no national-colonial project, if Deronda's *blood* is not Jewish. And while Deronda, in this moment, finds it "impossible either to deny or assent" to Mordecai's charge, those of us reading *Daniel Deronda* with the history of the 20th century behind us are uniquely equipped to recognize the danger of

this race-nation rhetoric. Novels do not exist in a vacuum—these fears around racial passing and a breakdown of the principle of racial superiority, while certainly not original to Eliot, can be traced through *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda,* into the aspiring Nazi race-nation of Hitler's Germany, and beyond into modern QAnon cults. That *Daniel Deronda* ends with its passing Jewish characters leaving to create a Jewish national-colonial project is troubling enough—especially when such a thing *did* happen, wreaking unimaginable harm on Palestinians and serving as an arm of Western imperialism throughout the latter half of the 20th century and well into the 21st. But if so much of the novel is preoccupied with the question of *what makes one Jewish* or *what makes one English,* and the complications that passing Jewish characters pose to this binary, then the ending argues that the creation of a race-nation is the only resolution to these questions. Furthermore, the novel's insistence on a definition of nationhood as racially pure and therefore free from infiltrative threats has a direct through-line to the kind of Nazi rhetoric that enabled the Holocaust. In light of this rhetoric, we as readers and scholars cannot afford to "find it impossible to either deny or assent", as Deronda does. We must deny this rhetoric when we see it, and discuss the lasting implications of such ideology on a present still shaped by the holocausts and colonial horrors of the 20th century.

CONCLUSION

It is perhaps easy from a Western perspective to consider empire a thing of the past. The Ottoman Empire fell at the beginning of the 20th century. In the years since the Second World War, the British Empire has lost the vast majority of its colonies, transitioning to a less obviously exploitative commonwealth model. Still, as countless former colonies, including Ireland, Scotland, India, Barbados, Hong Kong, Australia, and Egypt (to name a few) will attest, the material and immaterial legacies of British colonization are far from over. Among these hallmarks of imperial rule, the present-day state of Israel is an uneasy companion—so uneasy, in fact, that many would not consider it a colonial project at all. Because of their persecuted and minority status, Jewish Zionists even pre-WWI saw a brighter future for their people away from Europe. Christians were, in many ways, quick to agree: Abigail Green convincingly argues in her article "The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?" that Britain's self-professed role as protector of human rights abroad meant that "economics and humanitarianism were… hand in hand [for the Jews and the British Empire]," as Christian Zionists considered the Zionist cause a way to "promote the cause of 'civil and religious liberty' abroad"—even as Jews served as "proxies for British imperial interests" (Green 205, 203, 199). This kind of ideological imperialism appears throughout Trollope and Eliot's work, with Trollope recognizing the economics inherent in Jewish participation in empire and Eliot seeing her Jewish characters as vessels for the restoration of Jewish nationalism. In both cases, one can trace a direct line from this imperial ideology to the Israeli national-colonial project. For as much as Zionism benefited the Anglo-English Jews, it also benefited the British Empire.

Indeed, the mutually beneficial relationship between Zionism and the British Empire and its reproduction is the determining factor in the creation of the state of Israel, for instead of aligning themselves with other, more- or less- persecuted minority groups, such as the Irish or

the Romani, Jewish Zionists aligned themselves ideologically and politically with the British Empire, correctly seeing it as the path through which they could establish a nation. During World War I, Jewish Zionists became a distinct aid to Britain's intelligence gathering in Palestine and the Middle East, creating a profitable connection that bolstered both Zionism's support in British politics and gave the British "some of their most invaluable battlefield intelligence" against the Ottoman Empire (Scott Anderson 15). This was the beginning of a mutually beneficial relationship between British interests and the Zionist project, a relationship that would only expand when Israel became a state. As WWI ended, Britain and other European powers discussed brokering peace—a plan which quickly turned into "The Great Loot," a scramble for the land of the collapsed Ottoman Empire. With Jerusalem essentially under British control, the stage was set for the creation of Israel just thirty years later.

And while Gardner Thompson notes in *Legacy of Empire: Britain, Zionism, and the Creation of Israel* that post-WWII Zionism called "unequivocal[ly]… for the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish state without restrictions… unlike the 1917 advocacy of a Jewish homeland within Palestine," one must remember that even from the turn of the 20th century, and farther back into texts like *Daniel Deronda*, Zionism was conceived of in colonial terms (Thompson 253). Zionists went into Palestine with an understanding (however hazy) that Jewish people would immigrate, settle, and make a nation in a place where there was already a local population. Despite Israel's perceived distance from traditional presentations of colonialism and imperial posturing, Zionism's past and present sources directly from Britain's imperialism. Undoubtedly, without Britain's political backing, the state of Israel as we know it would not exist today.

And although it is tempting to view Israel and Palestine as two complicated protagonists, fighting for land on equal footing, make no mistake: Zionism had the power of the British

Empire behind it, and a disunited Palestine had centuries of imperial hands attempting to rob it of its resources, land, and the lives of its population. "In its core ingredients, [Israel's] settler-colonialism was no more 'complex' than a number of 19th-century parallels… Here was a posited (Jewish) national movement for survival, hitched to conventional (British) imperialism," according to Thompson (290). Unlike Deronda's romanticized visions of a "movement of other minds," the return of diaspora Jews to Palestine brought war—both at the time, as Egypt, Jordan, and other Middle Eastern countries immediately moved troops into the area, and today, as tension and casualties still define the relationship between Palestine and Israel. As seminal postcolonial (and Palestinian) scholar Edward Said writes in his piece "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,"

> Britain's support for the creation of the state of Israel "was made (a) by a European power (b) about a non-European territory (c) in a flat disregard of both the presences and the wishes of the native majority resident in that territory, and (d) it took the form of a promise about this same territory to another foreign group, that this foreign group might, quite literally, *make* this territory a national home for the Jewish people. (Said 9-10)

The colonization and dispossession of Palestine is a direct result of British imperial interests. Zionism chose Britain because of its colonial past and Palestinian meddling; in turn, Britain chose Zionism because it saw the possibility of a mutually-beneficial relationship, one that would allow it a foothold in the oil-rich Middle East, in which "Israel is still deemed to have considerable strategic significance for the West" (Thompson 280). The obvious results of this mutual relationship are made clear simply in the United Nations roster: while Israel was admitted into the UN in 1949, Palestine has yet to be recognized, continuing as a non-member observer state.

While this is a very brief overview of the aftereffects of British Zionism, I believe my examination of racial passing and its connection to empire in these novels is only more relevant in light of the present-day Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Eve Spangler argues that the rampant Islamophobia that sparked in the western world and particularly the United States after 9/11

> provided Israel with a significant opportunity to advance its own interests. It encouraged Americans and Europeans to identify Arabs as enemies and the Israeli state, as it has always wanted to be seen since Herzl's day, as the 'rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.' (Spangler 80-81)

Herzl's incredibly racially charged language here—"civilization as opposed to barbarism"—immediately brings to mind imperial rhetoric. Britain's ongoing characterization of its imperial project as the "White Man's Burden," as Rudyard Kipling saw it, saw itself as fulfilling this civilizing role. But the modern state of Israel is not only an imperial project—it is also predicated on the assumption of an "ethnic-religiously exclusive state", as Spangler describes it (108). While I have already discussed in my introduction that race, ethnicity, and religion often blur into each other, it bears reiterating: for Jews and gentiles around the world, these are not clean lines, neatly demarcated by skin tone or religion or parentage. Following this logic, we can see Israel as a nation built not only on ethnic-religious exclusivity, but also on *racial* exclusivity. For the reality of Israel's "successful self-promotion as the 'only democracy in the Middle East' [is] a propaganda success whose not very deeply hidden subtext is 'we're the only white guys in the Middle East'" (Spangler 108-109). To pretend that the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not about race, about conceptions of civilization and barbarism, about imperialism at its core is to willingly close one's eyes to Zionism's own stated goals—from the Victorian period to the present.

As a result, we must recognize both *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda* as *also* about race and imperialism, which makes my reading of racial passing in these novels particularly relevant. Trollope presents any kind of racial assimilation or hybridized identity as utterly impossible. Lopez's racial differences, despite his questionable ability to pass and his intentional attempts to assimilate, are insurmountable. In the end, excluded from any semblance of belonging in the upper-class circles he tries desperately to join, Lopez commits suicide and removes his racialized, Jewish body from the imperial equation, literally removing any identifying aspects from his clothing and body. He is no longer an infiltrative threat, merely a body; and after the train "annihilates" him, he is not even that. In his absence, his English widow can remarry an English husband, the Pallisers are protected from further scandal, and the nation returns to a state of harmony without any dangerous outsiders to infiltrate their ranks. Similarly, while Eliot offers her Jewish characters on the whole much happier endings, her passing Jewish protagonist so adopts English imperialism that he leaves to found his own Zionist nation modeled after the British Empire. Unable to remain an English gentleman, Eliot presents Deronda as a Messianic figure meant to restore Israel to the Jews. In doing so, Deronda also leaves England. Like Lopez, in his absence the nation returns to a state of harmony. If writing a novel is a kind of essential triumph of imagination over reality, an ability to create a world from a blank page and a pen, then the true tragedy here is that neither the antisemitic Trollope nor the philosemitic Eliot can offer any kind of Anglo-Jewish identity, or indeed any vision of nationalism that does not devolve into a race-nation, protected from the *Other* first by forcing them to assimilate into Britishness ideologically, and then by expelling them from England's borders via an empire-building project or, in Lopez's case, via suicide. What we are discussing here is a failure of imagination: an inability to recognize hybridized forms of identity as a positive potentiality instead of a threat to racial and imperial binaries. Both Eliot and Trollope's

characters are defined by their blood—by their not-Englishness—above all else. This, in turn, translates to their threat to the empire. Lopez's foreign blood renders him untrustworthy, villainous; Deronda's destines him for a Messianic future. Here, we see clearly the way empire strangles difference and hybridity and flattens it into biological binaries. In doing so, it also strangles imagination. Ultimately, these are stories about racial and national destinies, and about the limits of even our greatest English novelists to envision racial and national integration.

The question, then, becomes a matter of our conceptual limits around race, nationhood, and empire. With the history of the 20th century behind us, it is difficult at times to read both *The Prime Minister* and *Daniel Deronda*; the one for its blatant antisemitic stereotyping and exclusionary vision, and the second for, as Victorian Anglo-Jewish essayist, poet, and novelist Amy Levy wrote, "the immense good faith with which George Eliot carried out that elaborate misconception of hers [i.e., the depiction of Zionism and the Jews in *Daniel Deronda*]" (Levy 78). Yet these misconceptions follow us into the present day: we do not consider Israel to be a colonial project, we do not consider Palestine a nation, and we do not know how to wrestle with the aftereffects of European antisemitism and how those effects have led to the persecution of another vulnerable group of people and nearly 70 years of war and conflict in the Middle East. Mostly, we do not know how to wrestle the tangible afterlives of empire, and its insidious, infiltrative voice that echoes throughout the British literary canon, even from those authors who attempt to resist it. Moreover, while the racial and national ideologies that enable imperial projects live on, so too does the empire—casting its long shadow from the pages of our novels into the meeting rooms of our nations, and into the lives of their citizens.

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