

**Routes, Resistance and Survival:  
Production of Cultural Identity in Leon Uris' Select  
Novels**

Thesis submitted to the **University of Calicut** in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy in  
English Language and Literature**

By

**RASMI. P.K.**

Research Supervisor

**Dr. Usha. K.**

Co-Supervisor

**Dr. Abitha Balagopalan**



**PG Department of English and Research Centre**

**Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur**

Affiliated to the University of Calicut

**November 2020**

**Dr. USHA. K.**

**Research Supervisor**

PG Department of English and Research Centre

Sree Kerala Varma College

Thrissur

## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Routes, Resistance and Survival: Production of Cultural Identity in Leon Uris' Select Novels**, submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature**, is a bona fide work carried out by **Rasmi. P.K.**, under my guidance and supervision. Neither the thesis nor any part of it has been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma or title before.

**Dr. USHA. K.,**

**Research Supervisor.**

**Dr. ABITHA BALAGOPALAN,**

**Research Co-Supervisor**

PG Department of English and Research Centre

Sree Kerala Varma College

Thrissur.

Place:

Date:

## **DECLARATION**

I, Rasmi. P.K. hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Routes, Resistance and Survival: Production of Cultural Identity in Leon Uris' Select Novels**, submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is an original, bona fide work of research, carried out by me at the PG Department of English and Research Centre, Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur, under the guidance of Dr. Usha. K., my Research Supervisor and Dr. Abitha Balagopalan, my Research Co-Supervisor, and that it has not formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma or similar title.

RASMI. P. K.

Date:

**Dr. USHA. K**  
Research Guide,  
Associate Professor (Retd.),  
P G & Research centre,  
Department of English,  
Sree Kerala Varma College,  
Thrissur.

### **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the corrections/ suggestions from the adjudicators have been incorporated in the Ph.D thesis entitled **“Routes, Resistance and Survival: Production of Cultural Identity in Leon Uris’ Select Novels. ”** submitted by **Rasmi. P.K**, part-time research scholar, P G & Research Centre, Department of English, Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur. The content of the CD (soft copy in PDF format) is the same as in the hard copy.

**Dr. USHA . K,**  
RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

**Dr. ABITHA BALAGOPALAN,**  
CO-SUPERVISOR,  
Assistant Professor in English,  
P G & Research Department of English,  
Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur.

**PRINCIPAL**  
SREE KERALA VARMA COLLEGE.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

“The culture which develops on the new soil must...be bafflingly alike and different from the parent culture: it will be complicated sometimes by whatever relations are established with some native race and further by immigration from other than the original source” (Eliot, *Notes* 52).

Culture is a paradigmatic term that encompasses varied social, political, and religious aspects. Racial, ethnic, and religious priorities determine the creation and evolution of any individual's cultural awareness. The socio-political milieu of an individual significantly affects the cultural consciousness and the production of cultural identity. Therefore, culture can be viewed as a multidimensional artefact that influences the individual's social and psychological making. According to David R. Matsumoto and Linda Juang, “[H]uman culture [is] a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue happiness and wellbeing, and derive meaning from life” (15). Michael W. Apple defines culture and asserts the inherent relationship between culture and power relations by borrowing the concepts of John Fiske, Bob Hodge, and Graeme Turner in *Cultural Politics and The Text*:

Culture—the way of life of a people, the constant and complex process by which meanings are made and shared—does not grow out of the pregiven unity of a society. Rather, in many ways, it grows out of its divisions. It has to work to construct any unity that it has. The idea of culture should not be used to ‘celebrate an achieved or natural harmony.’ Culture is instead ‘a producer and reproducer of value systems and power relations.’ (179)

Raymond Williams identifies culture as the ‘most complicated word’ and suggests the ambivalent nature of culture. He conceptualises the nature of culture thus:

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought. (87)

An understanding of the fluidity of culture and the intricate process of its evolution and transformation is best represented in the production of Jewish cultural identity. Emphasis has been given to the Jewish culture owing to their pervasive presence in the history of every nation. Such an opportunity has emerged from their historical immigration and the consequent prospect of the Diaspora status. Jewish culture occupies a prominent place in world history as their life in the Diaspora provided them with possibilities of proliferation to the farthest corners of the earth. Jews play a vital role in the making of every culture in the world with their ubiquitous nature. Erica Jong opines in “How I Got to Be Jewish”, “A Jew is a person who can convert to Christianity from now to Doomsday, and still be killed by Hitler if his mother was Jewish” (97).

The title of the thesis “Routes, Resistance and Survival: Production of Cultural Identity in Leon Uris’ Select Novels” conforms to the structure of the analysis undertaken. The study examines the select novels of the Jewish-American writer, Leon Uris (1924-2003) by gradually depicting the uniqueness he attributes to the cultural identity of the Jews. The thesis follows a pattern of validating the hypothesis through an examination of the ‘routes’, their strategies of cultural ‘resistance’ and their ‘survival’ or liberation and establishment of a state. In order to substantiate the



arguments raised in the thesis; the cultural theorist Stuart Hall's notion of identity has been executed. In his seminal essay "Who Needs 'Identity'?" Hall gives significance to the "routes" or the ways through which identities have been created than its "roots" or origin (4). Hall also identifies identity as an incomplete "production" which is always in process in his seminal article "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (223). Uris depicts the journey of the Diaspora Jews towards the homeland as a journey towards their self. Their routes are explored through an analysis of their victimhood, resistance, and survival as victors by attaining liberation. As the study aims to investigate the process of cultural development of the Jews during the Diaspora and after liberation as registered in Uris' select novels, Hall's point of view aptly substantiates the argument.

The voluntary or in-voluntary dispersal or scattering of people to one or more foreign lands due to political, social, religious, or cultural reasons could be described as Diaspora. James Clifford interprets Diaspora in "Diasporas" thus:

Diasporas usually presupposes longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constructive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future. Diasporas also connect multiple commitments of a dispersed population...the term 'diaspora' is a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local-I would prefer to call it place -as a distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement. (304, 308)

The term Diaspora has originally been used to refer to the Jews in exile and later the theoretical discipline included the literary works about communities in exile, that entail Jewish, African, Asian, Armenian, Chinese, Palestinian Diaspora etc.

Robin Cohen's definition of Diaspora is significant, "First, the classical use of the term, usually capitalized as Diaspora and used only in the singular, was mainly

confined to the study of the Jewish experience...” (1). The Jewish problem is rooted in their long-term Diaspora status which validates the significance they assign to their cultural identity and tradition.

The Jewish cultural consciousness is tremendously influenced by their life in Diaspora more than the cultural experiences in their homeland. Their life in exile provided them with reasons for the preservation of their cultural heritage and identity. The origin of the Jewish problem dates back to the early phase of Jewish Exodus. From the early Biblical times of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt led by Moses through the times of Jesus Christ to the present scenario, the Jewish history has undergone various invasions and persecutions.

The Jewish community originated from the historical Israel and Judah by sharing common cultural, religious, ethical, and linguistic patterns and were destined to live in the Diaspora for more than two thousand years. “Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel, was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here, their spiritual, religious, and political identity was shaped. Here they lived as a nation and created cultural values of national and universal importance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books” (Nelson et al 385). Jewish religion—Judaism— strongly advocates monotheism. Although they follow Judaism, their cultural and ethnic inheritance mark their identity than their religion. Their life in ancient Israel has shaped their cultural inheritance. Their exiled life in the Diaspora has significantly contributed to their cultural consciousness. Yedidia Z. Stern, a professor from Israel comments, “Judaism is a composite that includes elements of religion, nationality, society, and culture. In the past, these identity components were perceived as constituting an integrated whole” (4).

Jews follow their Holy Texts—the Tanakh and the Talmud (the Jewish book of laws). The Tanakh or the Hebrew Bible is divided into the Torah, the Nevi'im, and the Ketuvim which include all the books of the Old Testament. These Holy Books direct and define the Jewish cultural and religious praxis. The first book of the Torah or the Book of Genesis documents the origin of Jews from Abraham (Abram), and it validates that the land received the name Israel from his grandson, Jacob (Israel). As the Holy Books chronicle, Moses led the Jews to their Promised Land Canaan by saving them from slavery in Egypt. It has been called the first exodus, which abruptly ended with the death of Moses. Their forty years of nomadic life came to an end when Joshua successfully led them to Canaan. Jewish heritage continued through the reign of the first king of Israel Saul, his rival and successor King David, and David's son Solomon. The construction of the first Temple in Jerusalem was initiated by King David and completed by King Solomon in 1000 BCE.

The two parts of the country known as Israel and Judah were conquered by the Assyrians (around 722 BC) and the Babylonians (around 597 BC) respectively. The Babylonians also destroyed Solomon's Temple which was rebuilt in about 516 BC by Nehemiah. These two prominent conquests have marked the beginning of the Jewish exile and dispersal. A more dominant invasion occurred in 63 BC by the Romans, who conquered most parts of the Jewish kingdom and destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem by leaving the Jews in exile for the rest of their lives.

The following invasions by Byzantine and the Turkish rule along with the foundation of Islam by Muhammed led the Jewish dispersal and their life in Diaspora. The first Crusades by 1099, and the perpetual advances made by Ottoman Turks, Egyptians, Napoleon, etc., contributed to the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic status of

Israel. The Diaspora theorist Robin Cohen exemplifies the Jewish case by referring to one of the psalms from the English prayer books:

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept:

when we remembered thee, O Sion.

As for our harps we hanged them up:

upon the trees that are therein.

For they that led us away captive required of

us then a song, and melody, in our heaviness:

Sing us one of the songs of Sion. (qtd. in Cohen 21)

The immigrant Jews in Europe, referred to as ‘Ashkenazim’, settled in small Jewish cities in Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, etc., until the Twentieth Century. They observed the traditional Jewish values, morals, liturgy, and cultural practices despite their dispersal from the homeland. Their spoken language was Yiddish, a mix of Germanic and Hebrew dialects with Slavic sounds. They preserved Hebrew as a liturgical language, to be used by the Rabbis. They encouraged endogamous marriages to preserve and transmit their cultural and traditional heritage, which helped them to conserve their genetic lineage even in foreign lands.

The commandments and teachings of Judaism are recorded in their Holy books. These books register the belief in one God who blessed Abraham, Moses and Joshua. Judaism advocates practices and hence has been their way of life than merely being a religion. The four types of Judaism prevalent among the Jews have been Conservative, Liberal, Orthodox, and Reform Judaism. They observed ‘Shabbat’ (the seventh day to worship God), ‘Pesach’ or the Passover (in memory of the freedom of Israelites from Egypt), and ‘Yomkippur’ (Day of Atonement). They observed the religious rituals in Jewish Synagogues in three daily services— ‘Shaharit’ (morning

service), ‘Minhah’ (afternoon service), and ‘Maariv’ (evening service). They followed the 613 commandments advised in the Hebrew texts and ‘Tzedakah’— the offering of 10 percent of their income to charity. The Jews preserved these cultural and religious values even in the Diaspora and stayed aloof from the dominant cultures.

Stuart Hall elucidates the inherent connection between cultural identity and the past by depicting the inevitable role of memories, imagination, and mythical histories in the making of one’s identity.

...cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture... It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return...It has its histories - and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects... It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth...Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'. (“Cultural” 226)

This idea forms the crux of this thesis, that the history of the Jews—the Diaspora, victimization, resistance, and liberation— determines their cultural identity and its transformation. The most significant and elongated part of the Jewish history has been their life in Diaspora. Therefore, Jewish cultural consciousness has been shaped by their Diaspora experiences, gained from varied political, social, cultural, religious, geographic, and temporal milieus.

The study enunciates the pattern of the creation, preservation, and evolution of Jewish cultural identity through an investigation of their history of victimization, resistance, liberation, and the reconstruction of the State of Israel as explicated by Leon Uris in his Jewish novels. The thesis attempts to enquire into the concepts of

Jewish cultural identity and Diaspora as rendered by Uris in *Exodus*, *Mila 18*, *QB VII*, and *The Haj* using theories related to culture and identity.

Cultural Studies, as a discipline, originated in the 1950s and 1960s in Europe. According to Lawrence Grossberg, “Cultural studies describes how people’s everyday lives are articulated by and with culture...That is it seeks to understand not only the organizations of power but also the possibilities of survival, struggle, resistance, and change” (8). The prominence of cultural analysis increased with the involvement undertaken by the University of Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), founded by Richard Hoggart in 1964. Stuart Hall designated the present status of CCCS by an inter-disciplinary inclusion of Structuralism, Semiotics, Post-Structuralism, etc.

The eminent figures who contributed to the growth of cultural studies are Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams, Lawrence Grossberg, Edward Said, Paul Gilroy, Graeme Turner, Toby Miller, John Hartley, etc. Cultural Studies offers an inclusive examination of the historical and sociological artefacts of culture than merely following the patterns of Practical criticism. The influential texts of Cultural Studies are, Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Raymond Williams’ *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (1958), etc. Tony Bennett, John Fiske, and John Hartley expanded the scope of Cultural Studies to Australia; Hazel Caby, Michael Denning, and Grossberg extended the discipline to the USA.

The fundamental tenets of Cultural Studies are representation, identity, power politics, popular culture, etc. Stuart Hall assigns significance to the concept of cultural identity and identifies it as perpetually progressing and transforming in “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”.

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (225)

He asserts the nature of identity thus, “The fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with - at least temporarily” (“The Question” 598). Hall further observes “‘cultural identity’ in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (223).

As Hall suggests, “‘Hidden histories’ have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time... Crucially, such images offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas” (“Cultural” 224). The equivocal depiction of the Jewish history and the presupposed notions of their homeland constitute the strongest foundation of their cultural perseverance. Their lives in the host lands have never loosened their traditional ties, rather it enhanced their way of perceiving the cultural inheritance. This could be regarded as the foundation of their national identity as Israelites than merely being the

Jews. This national identity permits considerable space for the Jews with multi-cultural past as observed by Hall, "...in fact, national identities are not things we are born with, but are formed and transformed within and in relation to *representation*" ("The Question" 612).

The significant exponents of Diaspora theory are Robin Cohen, Paul Gilroy, William Safran, Avtar Brah, etc. Safran formulates the criteria to distinguish the Diaspora community from the immigrants, which conforms to the Jewish community. Safran explicitly comments on this in "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return":

[T]hey, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions...retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland...believe that they are not...fully accepted by their host society...regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home...they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland...continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland...(83-84)

While attempting an evaluation of the Diaspora theories propounded by Martin Sökefeld, David Chariandy and William Safran, Robin Cohen alludes that, "... a diaspora is a single, endogamous, ethnic group with a fixed origin, a uniform history, a lifestyle cut off from their fellow citizens in their places of settlement and political aspirations wholly focused on their places of origin" (15).

Home acts as a prominent driving force in the Diaspora experience. The concept of Home as an unattainable entity enunciates the Jewish attitude towards Israel. Bernard Malamud's words in *The Tenants* outline the Jewish concept of a home:



Home is where, if you get there, you won't be murdered; if you are it isn't home. The world is full of invisible people stalking people they don't know. More homeless strangers around than ever before. God since the dawn of man should have made it his business to call out names: Jacob meet Ishmael. "I am not my brother's brother." Who says. (166)

Robin Cohen clearly alludes the idea of a homeland in *Global Diasporas* as:

'home' became more and more generously interpreted to mean the place of origin, or the place of settlement, or a local, national or transnational place, or an imagined virtual community... or a matrix of known experiences and intimate social relations (thus conforming to the popular expression that 'home is where the heart is') (10)

William Safran conceptualises the predominant features and types of Diaspora in "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return". His theory of Jewish Diaspora and the intensity of cultural acclimatization of the refugee Jews in various parts of the world refer to the post-World war II period as the most crucial era in the history of world Diaspora Jewry. Emphasis has not been laid by the European Jews to the "homeland myth" as the "the Holy Land was not open to mass resettlement" for many centuries and the secular Jews attempted to attain "communal autonomy *within* the diaspora" (91). Safran further maintains that the American milieu was different as the Jews enjoyed communal harmony and political complacency until the World War II and hence the "homeland myth" was less significant for them.

Safran suggests:

The myth took on real meaning to many American Jews after World War II—in part because it helped them to assuage their feelings of guilt for not having done enough to save their brethren in the European diaspora. At the same time,

American Jews defined their diaspora in theologically "neutral" terms, that is, as a purely physical dispersion (*golah*), in opposition to much of the Israeli political leadership, which continued to think of Diaspora in terms of its traditional associations with moral degradation, insecurity, and persecution (*galui*). (91)

The treatment of the immigrants in the host countries varies according to the political, cultural, social, and religious priorities. European countries predominantly regarded immigrants as uninvited communities. Safran observes: "Members of diaspora communities are by turns mistreated by the host country as 'strangers within the gates' or welcomed or exploited for the sake of the domestic and diplomatic interests of the host country. Internal social unity has on some occasions required that minorities be kept as diasporas" (92). The religious postulation assigned to the Diaspora status of the Jews legitimated the concept of the "wandering Jew" (92).

Homeland remained as a mythical reality for the Jews as Safran points out in "The Jewish Diaspora and Israel: Problems of A Relationship Since the Gaza Wars": "...for nearly two millennia the homeland was not a concrete reality. It existed in a narrative, imaginary, or eschatological sense and was reflected in religious ritual, including the celebration of festivals and the direction of prayers" (1). The cultural identity of the immigrants significantly depends on their chances of assimilation. Robert Park and Ernest Burgess set forth the definition of assimilation in *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, as, "...a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (735). They further argue that, "There is no process but life itself that can effectually wipe out the immigrant's memory of his past. The inclusion

of the immigrant in our common life may perhaps best be reached, therefore, in cooperation that looks not so much to the past as to the future” (739-740). But the oppression and persecution of the Jews during the Diaspora contributed to their affinity towards their culture and homeland. Though immigrants tend to assimilate the foster culture, most of the Jews preserved their own culture. Cary Nelson, Rachel S Harris and Kenneth W. Stein define the cultural perseverance of the Jews thus “After being forcibly exiled from their homeland, the people kept faith with it throughout their Diaspora. They never ceased to pray and hope for their return to the homeland where they could restore their political freedom” (385). This cultural endurance makes them unique among the immigrant communities.

Homi K. Bhabha assigns a more optimistic dimension to diaspora by centralizing the term “gathering” over “scattering”. Diaspora has been defined by Bhabha as:

Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees; gathering on the edge of foreign cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gathering in the ghettos or cafés of city centre; gathering in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another’s language; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other world lives retroactively; gathering the past in a revival; gathering the present. (291)

This possibility of ghetto gathering helped the Jews find occasions to recreate the past, reiterate the present, and revive the future through cultural unification. The Holocaust period marked the most vehement Jewish persecution and an equally powerful Jewish cultural reunion and resistance. This period records the strength of Jewish consolidation in the history of Diaspora.

The stark difference between Christianity and Judaism affected the Jewish settlements abroad. Although the Puritan countries like America and other Protestant lands welcomed the Jews, difficulty persisted for the Jewish relocation in the Catholic states, including England. The literature of that time validates the prevalent negative image of the Jew. “Fortunately for the Jews in the Protestant parts of Europe, unrelieved theological animosity was seen as being, to some degree, internally inconsistent” (Cohen 27). America acted as a second home for the Jews.

Many writers tried their hands at exploring the unending scope of the Jewish experiences. The Jews’ adherence to their cultural values and practices assigned them their evasive and ambivalent status. The Jewish images in literature validate this fact as well. In Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* (1476), the Prioress tells a tale that depicts the villainy of the Jews:

There was in Asia in a great city,  
Amongest Christian folk, a Jewry,  
Sustained by a lord of that country  
For foul usúre and lucre of villainy  
Hateful to Christ and to his company. (Lines 1678-1682)

Shylock, the legendary Jewish villain in William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (1600) asks certain pertinent questions regarding the stereotyping of his community:

SHYLOCK. I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? (3.1.49–61)

In the Victorian England, Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1839) established the Jewish villainy through the character Fagin, by repeatedly referring to his Jewishness. In the Twentieth Century, the works of Dorothy Richardson, Graham Greene, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot etc., reiterated the negative Jewish image. European literature influences and modifies the works of American literature, and the Jewish and non-Jewish writers of America have established the negative image of the Jew in literature. Anti-Semitic images can be abundantly found in the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, etc., in the Nineteenth Century and Henry James and Jack London in the Twentieth Century. "Jews have played a central role in defining ethnic themes and introducing them into American literature...The situation and the position of the Jewish-American writer has always been different from that of the other ethnicities in America and still remains so until today" (Puşcaş 347), records Corina Puşcaş. Jewish-American Literature occupies a significant status in the literary history of the United States. The beginning of Jewish literature in America can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The Jewish-American literature accelerated its pace of writing in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, its Golden Age. Jewish literature is rooted in their cultural and religious tradition by strictly adhering to Judaism and their other Holy texts. The Jewish literature began with petitions and memoirs compiled by Sephardic immigrants that later flourished into other genres like fiction, poetry, and drama. The works of Milton Goldsmith (*Rabbi and the Priest-1891*), Graetz (*History of the Jews*), and Emma Wolf (*Other Things Being Equal-1892* and *Heirs of Yesterday-1900*) are regarded as significant by the Jewish Publication Society of America. They have employed Jewish stereotypes and compiled works on secular and religious themes.

America has been a safer haven for the Jews than the European countries which treated them heinously with persecution and genocide. Hence it was only

natural for them to prefer a land which accommodated them due to its pluralistic laws. Eric J. Sundquist observes in *Strangers in the Land*, “Despite discrimination and abuse, Jews generally took their place in a pluralist nation of immigrants where religious tolerance and the separation of church and state protected rather than condemned them; and where anti-Semitism was diminished in significant part by the openness with which Jews were able to combat it” (20).

Jewish American writing which had its beginnings in the seventeenth century, later evolved into its present status in the twentieth century. Identity conflicts, ethnicity etc dominated the writings. While the First-generation Jewish American writers like Emma Lazarus offered realistic portrayals of Jewish life, the Second and the Third generation of writers including Abraham Cahan and Henry Roth, to name a few, mostly created, imitating their non-Jewish counterparts, the stereotyped Jews to show how well they assimilated in America. *The Rise of David Levinsky* by Abraham Cahan, published in 1917, unfolds the cultural dilemma of the protagonist, who represents the second and third generation American-Jews caught between both the cultures. The Jewish American writers of the 1920s and 1930s mostly dealt with themes of immigration, poverty and urban despair.

The 1950s and 1960s marked the appearance of remarkable works by Jewish immigrant writers like Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, J.D. Salinger, Bernard Malamud, and Chaim Potok. They dealt with the common tropes’ identity crisis, alienation, assimilation, desperation, cultural conflicts, and the Holocaust. Writings of Abraham Cahan, Philip Roth, Meyer Levin, Ludwig Lewison, and Irving Howe often disapprove of the Jews and displayed anti-Semitic traits. were called the anti-Semites. Puşcaş rightly states, “The language employed by these writers is standard American English, they are socially accepted...their texts form part of a recognized

literary canon and belong to the American literary ‘center’ or ‘mainstream,’ as far as this may still be defined today” (348).

The wave of French Existentialism which swept through the world during the Twentieth century, inspired all genres of literature including the Jewish. This subsequently led to the Jewish American Renaissance and the consequent paradigm shifts in the modern Jewish-American writings. Philippe Codde significantly remarks, they “addressed directly the issues of war, imprisonment, and the Holocaust, and its fundamental tenet was the death of God...and their central concerns—the Holocaust, radical theology and Existential themes—found their full expression in the Jewish American novel” (5). Jewish-American fiction incorporates the novels of Jewish authors in America on Jewish and non-Jewish themes. Ruth Wisse opines in *The Modern Jewish Canon* that “...in Jewish [novels] the authors or characters know and let the reader know that they are Jews” (15). Leslie Field and Joyce W. Field define a Jewish-American writer as: “Someone who has Jewish forefathers and whose writing seems to be immersed in something called the Jewish heritage or Judaism or the special burden of Jewish history, and who is living and writing in the United States...” (103).

Prominent Jewish American writers like Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Grace Paley and Allen Ginsberg discuss in their novels a variety of themes like a subjective interpretation of the life of the Jewish immigrants as well as the social disorder that would lead to political change. The American poet Sylvia Plath illustrates the public image of the Jew, compared to that of the Genteel, in her poem “Daddy”:

An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew. (Lines 31-35)

These writers belong to the main-stream American literature and Leon Uris' position among them is a disputable one. He is often relegated to the margins as a propaganda writer for favouring his fellow beings. However, his position as a powerful and different voice after the publication of *Exodus* which shot him to fame cannot be ignored. His works prove that popular novels are not meant to merely languish in the Higgin Bothams shelves but often offer intellectual insights into historical and literary canons. Even though he is usually decentred by the accepted definitions of serious literature, he vehemently argues through his works that popular writings also offer serious readings and scope for academic research. This is the premise which motivated the selection of the author and his works for analysis in the thesis

The mainstream Jewish American Literature in general offers an overview of the Jewish crisis in the historical times by presenting a stereotypical, manipulating Jew, capable of evil, corruption, and atrocity. For instance, Anthony Trollop's novels depicted the Jews in a negative light. According to John Halperin, his works are, "full of obnoxious and greedy Jews—most of them moneylenders—from *The Three Clerks* (1858) to *Mr. Scarborough's Family* (1880)" (160).

Saul Bellow has been widely acclaimed as an American Canadian writer and Nobel Laureate, deploys his characters to delineate the existential dilemma of the immigrant and the importance of assimilation. He hated his Jewish tag. *Dangling Man* (1944), *The Victim* (1947), and *Henderson the Rain King* (1959) deal with the meaninglessness of life and religious hypocrisies. For him Jews stood as a specimen of the humankind and he did not discover any unique feature in their identity worth



appreciating. “Saul Bellow does not portray virtuous Jews alone nor does he glorify their sufferings... Bellow treats the typical Jewish protagonist-- whether as victim, outsider, Shlemiel—as a sort of every man, not as a particular cultural or ethnic type” (Josh 175).

Bellow’s adherence to the existential ideology that ‘God is dead’ gave him the titles ‘Sartrean’ and ‘Camusian’ in the literary tradition. The *Dangling Man* displays his condescending and mocking attitude to the Jews, though he belongs to that community, “The Jew of the ghetto found themselves involved in an immense joke. They were divinely designated to be great and yet they were like mice. History was something happened to them; they did not make it” (15). His novels tend to blame the Jew for his alienation and stereotyping than the society

Bernard Malamud, the American novelist, is known for his impressions of Jewish culture which are overtly influenced by the non-Jewish American ways of life. He is generally considered as a representative of Jewish tradition, though he is more focussed on the idea of assimilation. He has focused on the life of Jews, the Holocaust, imprisonment, and human freedom in his novels *The Natural* (1952), *The Assistant* (1957), *The Magic Barrel* (1958), *The Fixer* (1966), and *The Tenants* (1971).

Isaac Rosenfeld (1918-1956), known for ‘Novels of Negativity and Indifference’, has dealt with the theme of alienation in novels like *Passage from Home* (1962). Edward Lewis Wallant (1926-1962), another novelist of the time, has written only four novels, namely *The Human Season* (1960), *The Pawnbroker* (1961), *The Tenants of Moon bloom* (1963), and *The Children at the Gate* (1964). Daniel Stern (1928-2007) has written three of his significant novels in the 1960’s— *Who Shall Live*, *Who Shall Die* (1963), *After the War* (1965), and *The Suicide Academy* (1968).

Another prominent figure in the history of Jewish-American literature is Norman Kingsley Mailer (1923-2007). *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), the autobiographical debut of Mailer, narrates his military life during World War II. His other significant contributions to literature are *Barbary Shore* (1951), *The Deer Park* (1955), *The Executioner's Song* (1979), and *Harlot's Ghost* (1991). Although Mailer is known to be religiously rooted, his works did not much trace the cultural or ethnical specificities of his community. One of his well-known contemporaries, James Jones (1921-1977), has revealed his personal experiences through the novels like *They Shall Inherit the Laughter*, *From Here to Eternity* (1951), *Some Came Running* (1957), and *The Thin Red Line* (1962).

One of the shining stars of Jewish American literature is Philip Roth, who has made his debut through the novella *Good Bye Columbus* (1959). Even though he has written 31 novels and several short stories, his remarkable contributions to the field of Jewish writings are *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), *The Human Stain* (2000), and *American Pastoral* (1997). His early writings are noted for his anti-Semitic opinions and negative Jewish stereotyping. The Jewish characters are denounced by him as lustful and unpleasant. Jay L. Halio in the paper titled "Reverse Anti-Semitism in the Fiction of Bellow and Roth" talks about Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* thus:

Although brought up in a Jewish household, and even going through bar-mitzvah, Portnoy finds himself unable to connect meaningfully with a Jewish woman. Partly, or perhaps even mainly, this may be because of his domineering mother, Sophie Portnoy, Roth's caricature of the typical "Yiddishe Momma." But however attractive he finds gentile women, he is also unable to conceive of marriage to them. Seduction, yes; his libido, which

seems almost fully in control of his social life, is part of the reason; but there is another reason, too, which brings us to reverse anti-Semitism. (5)

Leon Uris (1924-2003), known and loved as a master of Popular Fiction, is an exception among the Jewish American writers. He has won the hearts of the readers with his master strokes in narrating the saga of the Jews, never missing in his allegiance to their mission. The thesis draws inspiration from the uniqueness of the author in addressing a crucial issue which had to wait for ages to be resolved. The study investigates the role of the author in using his writings to make changes possible in the political scenario as well.

Uris celebrates his Jewish identity, as is revealed in his works. His portrayal of the Jewish history is romantic, glamorous, and unique. His leanings and enthusiasm in celebrating the Jewish cause is evident in his writing style and choice of diction. He achieves his goal of recording the most precious moments of Jewish history in an enhanced and exemplary form other than history. His protagonists symbolically resemble the Angry Young Man or the Tarzan image. Though his themes require an objective examination of history, his novels often tend to be more personal and emotional. Consequently, his Jewish characters differ from those depicted in contemporary literature or history. The events portrayed also contain underlying layers, making them unique and different from the known notions. His endeavours to reconstruct the Jewish history, the patterns of their cultural resistance and the attainment of liberation can be traced in the select novels.

Uris' works are historical recreations depicted chronologically and fictionally. He was born to the Polish immigrant Jew, Wolf William Uris, and the first generation American, Anna Blumberg Uris, in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1924. His surname Uris means 'man of Jerusalem' derived from a Hebrew word 'Yerushalmi' adopted by his

father. Following his unsuccessful schoolings, Uris joined the U.S. Marine Corps before completing his senior year in 1942. This made him take part in the battles of Tarawa and Guadalcanal from 1942-1945 and World War II. Despite his two unsuccessful marriages, he married Jill Peabody, his later editor, a third time. Uris stayed in San Francisco as a driver for the San Call-Bulletin. During this time, he started his writing career, and his initial attempts were rejected by publishers and magazines.

*Esquire Magazine* published an article that Uris wrote on football, and the success made him compile his first novel *Battle Cry* (1953), in which he incorporated his own war experiences with the Marine Corps. *Battle Cry* was a patriotic novel, which has been equally acknowledged by the public and critics with its “unapologetic portrayal of the realities of military service” (*Battle Cry* 88). This has been a new way of depicting the war unlike his contemporaries like Norman Mailer, James Jones and Irwin Shaw who negatively portrayed war. Merle Miller opines about his passionate approach of war as, “...Mr. Uris is not angry or bitter or brooding. He obviously loves the Marine Corps, even its officers. Thus, he may have started a whole new and healthy trend in American war literature” (16). The protagonist Sam Huxley, the bitter-tempered commander hated by everybody was modelled on his officer of the Sixth Regiment of the Second Marine Division. Miller comments about this character, “He is a Marine first and a human being second, and Mr. Uris has made him considerably larger than but also part of life” (16). The novel was also adapted into a film and its screen play was written by Uris himself.

His interest on Israel and the Jewish heritage began with the research he pursued for his second novel *The Angry Hills* (1955). He worked as a war correspondent during Israel’s 1956 campaign in the Sinai Desert, to collect materials

for this novel. The stimulation for writing this novel was the diary entries made by his uncle, who had served with the Palestinian Brigade, in Greece, during World War II. The novel unfolds the story of the Greek-resistance against the Nazi occupation.

David Dempsey opines in *Unwitting Go-Between* thus:

As a slam-bang adventure novel, 'The Angry Hills' is competently plotted and backed up by some vivid reportorial wartime details... the characters move too fast, and the story is a bit too skeletonized, for us to get more than a two-dimensional view. Also, Mr. Uris has a fondness for getting his hero out of trouble by calling frequently on the local gods of the machine... (32)

Uris' research in history for writing *The Angry Hills* made a serious impact on him regarding the Jewish plight. This prompted him to write the all-time best seller *Exodus* (1958), which narrates the incidents which led to the creation of Israel, from the Jewish perspective. The novel recounts the real-life incidents that made the Jews accomplish their dream of homeland despite the Holocaust and the World Wars. This novel could be viewed as a unique portrayal of every Israelite's dream of the Promised Land. Uris employs religious allusions in *Exodus* to assert the notion of the divine purpose behind the Jewish actions. Sharon D. Downey and Richard A. Kallan observe,

In *Exodus*, Uris describes the Jews' chances for victory in their War for Independence as negligible: they are surrounded by enemies, can claim few allies, and possess virtually no military resources; yet they succeed. Uris explains the victory of the small, ill-armed Israeli fighting unit by suggesting an omnipotent presence at work... (201)

The famous director Otto Preminger adapted the novel into a successful film in 1960. The immediate success of the novel made Uris write another book about the Jews,

*Exodus Revisited* (1960). It was a nonfictional photo-essay that includes the photographs taken by the Greek photographer Dimitrios Harissiadis.

In 1961 he published his next novel *Mila 18*, about the Warsaw ghetto Uprising and portrayed the desperate plight of the Jews in ghettos and their resistance strategies. His characters attest to the way the Jews think and act. Downey and Kallan exemplify thus, “Also provided are more specific models of how Jews should think and behave. Through the character of Alexander Brandel [in *Mila 18*] Uris exemplifies the ideal Jew as actively committed to freedom and capable, or at least accepting, of physical force as a defensive weapon” (199). Uris compiled his next novel *QB VII* (1970) that depicts the British legal system and its prejudice against the Jews, inspired by the real-life incident of a case filed against him and the publisher by a Polish doctor for negatively portraying him in *Exodus*. Although the court has ruled in favour of the doctor, it has also ordered the doctor to pay the court fees for both the parties and demanded Uris to pay only one cent.

*The Haj* (1984) stands unique with Uris’ depiction of the Jewish case from the Arab perspective. As Evan Hunter manifests, “Leon Uris’ ‘The Haj’ could have been a different and far better book... The illumination he provides, however, is so thoroughly dimmed by a severely biased viewpoint that the book loses all power as a work of fiction and all credibility as an objective study of that depressing and continuing deadlock” (7). Uris’ obsession for Jewish cultural heritage is evident through this novel.

Uris’ other novels on the Jewish theme are *Armageddon* (1963) *Jerusalem*, *Song of Songs* (1981) and *Mitla Pass* (1986). “Armageddon is a vast panorama of people, places, situations both fictional and quasi-historic, and romantic sentiment rather easy to come by” (Ware 16). *Mitla Pass* is a novel about the Sinai Campaign

where Uris served as a war correspondent. He has also written novels on Irish history like, *Ireland: A Terrible Beauty* (1975), *Trinity* (1976), and *The Redemption* (1995). The 1967 novel *Topaz* is a depiction of the Cold War and attained public and critics' interest. F. A Macklin opines in a review of *Topaz*, "Leon Uris' *Topaz* is an outlandish novel. In an attempt at reality, Uris has wed propaganda and political paranoia" (17). Uris wrote *A God in Ruins* (1999) and *O' Hara's Choice* (2003) before his death in 2003. The two novels deviate from Uris' style of writing and hence critics consider the possibility of external involvement in editing.

Throughout his career, Uris displayed the propensity to advocate the Jewish case unlike his contemporaries. Even though they also lived during the periods of the world wars and Holocaust, they refused to eulogise Jewish culture and identity like Uris. He boldly used the Holocaust as the background of his novels unlike those who feigned ignorance about those atrocities. As Philippe Codde comments:

Quite remarkably, Jewish American Novelists after the Second World War usually refrained from mentioning the Holocaust at all. However, they did refer to the Holocaust in a very oblique way, by addressing a then-current (and less "dangerous") subject: rampant anti-Semitism. Examples of such novels are Arthur Miller's *Focus* (1945), Laura Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), and Saul Bellow's *The Victim* (1947). (35)

The Holocaust has been defined as the mass encounter of almost six million Jews by the Nazi Germany and her allies between 1933 and 1945. Stephen Spencer remarks so, "Zygmunt Bauman (2002) among others has envisioned the Holocaust, the systematic annihilation of 6 million Jews and other marginalised groups as the epitome of the use of rational positivism" (116). This mass homicide of the Jews in the German occupied Europe was an exhibition of German sadism. This genocide,

unheard of in history till then, shocked the intelligentsia and the layman alike.

Lawrence A. Langer, the Holocaust analyst records, “The uniqueness of the experience may be arguable, but beyond dispute is the fact that many writers perceived it as unique and began with the premise that they were working with raw materials unprecedented in the literature of history and the history of literature” (xii).

However, the writings on the holocaust were often determined by socio-political factors which decided parameters for framing ideologies. Hence, the historical, political literary and anthropological deliberations on the logic of the Holocaust varied in its reproductions. Uris’ stand remains undisputedly on the side of the hapless Jews whose suffering is unparalleled in history. The inevitability of resistance is emphasized throughout his fiction by describing the gory details of the Nazi atrocities. This trope of resistance becomes the author’s resistance also, to the literary assumptions regarding the relevance and durability of popular fiction. His objective recording of factual details symbolically represented by both fictional and real characters is an interesting blend of history and fiction which also inspired the making of the thesis.

Uris depicts Zionism, a political movement introduced by Theodor Herzl in 1897, as an endeavour to confront the Jewish problem. “Realizing that Zionism offered the only real political solution for a Jewish people who would forever be considered pariahs within other nations’ states, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), convened The First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897” (Nelson et al. 392). The beginning of Zionism can be traced back to the early years of the nineteenth Century. The early stimulations towards a Jewish confederation were initiated through the writings of Avi Hirsch Kalischer (“Seeking Zion”) and Moses Hess (“Rome



Jerusalem”). The cultural and political enlightenment towards the concept of the redemption of the homeland came into being with such initiatives among the Jews.

The consequent movements culminated in the ‘First Aliyah’, a usage that denotes the return of immigrant Jews to the homeland. “The Jews who migrated to agricultural colonies in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century are described as the First Aliyah of Zionist immigration... The Second Aliyah (1904-1914) embraced a new Hebrew ideology that moved beyond the purely agricultural aspirations of their predecessors” (Nelson et al. 391,394).

Zionism was not seen as a break with Jewish history but rather its legitimate continuation. The diasporic condition had derailed Jewish history from its proper path, and Zionism was going to redirect it toward its intended telos of statehood. Thereafter, Jewish history was rewritten by Zionism; it now became the triumph history of the ancient Hebrews, interrupted by an ignominious European Jewish history of pogroms and oppression culminating in the Jewish Holocaust and then continuing with the triumphant history of Zionism.

(Massad 52)

Uris’ novels depict Zionism as the prototypical means to attain the Jewish mission of a land of their own. His interest in various types of Zionism—political, practical, religious, cultural, and revolutionary—is revealed through his novels. Philippe Codde observes, “Another popular—and acceptable—subject after the war was Zionism, as is demonstrated by Leon Uris’ popular novel *Exodus* (1958)” (35). Codde further condemns the Jewish-American novelists like Norman Mailer, and Joseph Heller, who have not depicted the “Specific fate of the Jews”. He also blames the writers for minimizing the Holocaust horrors and experiences in the concentration

camps as “Irwin Shaw’s *The Young Lions* (1949)” (35). Uris’ novels act as archetypes of Jewish cultural hegemony.

The enigmatic air in which he presents his Jews transcends the Jewish representations of his contemporaries. Sharon D. Downey and Richard A. Kallan observe:

The Jew is cast not just as a fighter, but one possessing strange mystical powers—a superhuman, capable of tasks seemingly impossible... Portraying the Jew as having mystical powers functions to eradicate negative Jewish stereotypes and imbue the quest for sovereignty with religious, metaphysical overtones... The credibility of Uris’ stereotype of the Jew as a Herculean fighter grows out of Israel’s fight for independence in 1948. While a positive stereotype of the Jew serves to foster and enlist the Gentile’s aid in securing Israel’s sovereignty, so does Uris’ negative stereotype of the Nazi. (201-202).

While celebrating the Jewish culture, tradition, and religious practices, Uris denounces those of the Nazis, the Arabs and the British. His Nazis are “...barely domesticated, pagan animals” (Downey et al. 202), his British are cruel oppressors, and his Arabs are villains capable of evil.

The study employs as methodology theories propounded by Stuart Hall, Lawrence Grossberg, and John Storey. Diaspora theories of Robin Cohen and William Safran are also applied, to analyse how realistically the diasporic condition of the Jews are presented in the fiction of Leon Uris. The study analyses the unique status Uris occupies in the Jewish literary history. The analysis is an endeavour to acknowledge the uniqueness assigned to the Jews and the Jewish problem by Uris and to validate its impact on the author, and the Jewish and non-Jewish readers. His contribution to the genre of historic fiction has been extensively researched by

scholars and the focus of this study instead, is on the various strategies Uris has adopted to re-tell the Jewish saga using the cultural, psychological, and political aspects of their life journey. Uris subverts the recorded history in order to make space for the Jewish versions. He attributes a uniqueness to the cultural identity of the Jews. He advocates the theory that identity is not inherent, it is something that is produced during life. It is this notion that the study aims to address.

The study aims to find the cultural, social, ethnic, and psychological issues that caused the Jewish isolation and alienation. The study is an inquiry into Uris' novels that extensively dwell on these paradigms. It also proposes to investigate the themes of Jewish cultural unity, identity, and racial consciousness which they acquired in their life in the Diaspora. It intends to examine how Uris carves a place of his own in the American literary scenario by fighting for the cause of the Jews foregrounding a unique and bold stance about Jewish historicity and to analyse Uris' select novels which would be taken as specimens of his merit as a novelist with his own racial ideologies and political opinions. The study aims to find the identity concerns of the Jews and the author as displayed in these novels. It also analyses the way Uris proclaims the superiority of a subjugated community by offering the merits of being the centre of his enquiry. Concurrently, the study is an attempt to detect the difference between Uris and his Jewish contemporaries in their approach towards the Jews.

This first chapter introduces the topic and the author, explains the title of the thesis, makes a review of literature related to the topic and gives an account of the methodology used to analyse the topic. Based on the idea that cultural identity is produced, the three core chapters trace the trajectory of the Jews which finally lead them to occupy their homeland. The final chapter concludes the thesis by summing up the analysis. The analysis detects the author's perceptions of an ideal Jew in all the

central characters. Instead of re-presenting the established image of the Jew and Israel, Uris' novels offer the positive image of an ideal Jew and Israel. Uris' characters manifest his own identity, and his novels are mirror-images of his own evolution as a successful résistant.

Chapter two titled, "Jewish History: The Trajectory of Endurance", probes into the debris of history to excavate ruins of the Jewish victimhood through ages. The undisputed European hegemony until the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries resulted in the perpetual victimization and scapegoating of the Jews. Retaining their ethnic traits has been part of the Jewish existence since the early days of exile and Diaspora and their perseverant concern about their cultural esteem and ethnic self-make the Jewish case significant in history.

Robin Cohen asserts the features of victim diaspora as, "In both established and embryonic victim diasporas the wrench from home must survive...that restoring the homeland or even returning there becomes an important focus for social mobilization, and the mould in which their popular cultures and political attitudes are formed" (4). The study explores the reconstruction of the past incidents by the author in order to question the historicity of the available sources regarding the Jewish victimization. Uris' indirect indictment of his contemporaries is also noted in these novels. As Andrew I. Killigore exemplifies, "Though Uris never names names, it's easy to guess who are the main Jewish American artists whose work the novelist longs to see strewn on the cutting room floor. Among fiction writers, Philip Roth is the obvious candidate" (10). This chapter detects the significance the novelist assigns to the cultural tradition of the Jews which they retain even when they are ill-treated or humiliated by others.

Chapter three named, “Survival Through Cultural Resistance”, is an exploration of the strategies of Jewish cultural Resistance. In the Jewish case, the preservation of their language Hebrew and Jewish names, the recitation of Holy Texts, the observation of cultural rituals, and the teaching of religious practices acted as the foundation of their racial consciousness in order to retain their ethnic uniqueness in various multi-cultural spaces. An inquiry into the Jewish history proves that their diasporic state was rather trouble free till the end of World War I. They lived as a disconnected minority community by following their tradition, speaking their language, and maintaining a lifestyle of their own in Eastern Europe. But in Western Europe, the Jews were accommodated more decently, allowing them access to education and normal life that encouraged them to mingle with the mainstream community. They tried to assimilate into the alien culture though reluctantly, even while holding on to their cultural roots. Professor Monika Richarz makes a significant comment in this regard, “Jews were expected to open up to the surrounding world and to leave their cultural ghetto to become individual Jewish citizens...But in Poland and Russia the large Jewish population for the most part maintained their cultural traditions” (80).

Resistance stemmed from the alienation experienced due to the intolerance of the host communities. Hence, they focused on retaining memories of their ethnic roots and became more isolated for that reason. The resistance of the Jews passed through various phases and various routes. This chapter investigates the various strategies of resistance adopted by the Jews in different circumstances through an examination of the characters who represent each type. It is an exploration of the ideological conflict between the résistants and the stereotypes. Uris’ attempts can be viewed as an assertion of his own obligation towards his community. He resists every

attack on his culture and people through designing a new saga of Jewry for the future generations to refer. His confessions of his identity through the novels become his way of eulogizing the culture.

The cultural and political liberation of the Jews is a very fruitful one for them and a controversial one for the rest of the world. These aspects are investigated in the fourth chapter titled “Liberation: The Prospect of Identity in the Homeland.” An exhaustive exploration of the geopolitical, psychological, and cultural aspects of liberation is attempted. The study appreciates the creation of the State of Israel as the attainment of political liberation. But the ambivalence of the concept of liberation is also analysed in the chapter.

The concluding chapter is the summation of the research findings by validating the hypothesis. The thesis examines the merit of Leon Uris as a master craftsman who wields his pen to resist hegemonic versions about the Jewish strategies to attain liberation. It posits that popular fiction has a decisive role in influencing the perception of the reader, and in this case making visible changes in the destiny of a community. The thesis also argues that academic scholars have to take this writer more seriously as many unexplored areas still remain to be investigated in his works.

The position of the Jews as the ‘other’ throughout their trajectory authenticates their determination to survive, braving oppression and discrimination. Upholding their Jewishness became more pertinent for them due to fresh and more severe attacks with the arrival of anti-Semitism and the racial propaganda which came along with it. The concept of cultural identity thus developed with a divine purpose, being linked with Judaism which is both a religion and orthopraxy that parallelly advocates practice and belief. Sharon D. Downey and Richard A. Kallan remark on the fictional discourses of Uris thus, “The dominant theme of these works is that the Jew must live

in sovereignty. Throughout, Uris contends that Jewish survival rests on the establishment and maintenance of a sovereign state—the ultimate solution/deterrent to injustice against Jews...In a sense, Uris reflects the Jewish hope from the time they were scattered 2,000 years ago: Israel must be reborn” (194). Their journey, therefore, is one of self-realization and reaffirmation of their identity as well.

The trying voyage of the Jews through the rough seas of bitter experiences and their undeterred determination to steer their ship to a land of their own, make their story a unique one in the history of mankind. Hence the formation of the state of Israel means to them a reclamation of homeland and at the same time the creation or production of their cultural identity.

## Chapter 2

### **Jewish History: The Trajectory of Endurance**

The Jews are the oldest diaspora; they lacked a ‘homeland’ for two millennia but thought about it constantly and the idea of a return to it—at first an eschatological conception and much later a concrete one—remained part of their collective consciousness. Their diasporic condition was a long-lasting and unhappy one, reflected in the Yiddish conception of the epitome of duration: ‘*lang vi der goles*’ (as long as [our] exile). (Safran, “The Jewish Diaspora” 37)

Research on the history of the Jews has a long tradition that has recognized the Jewish Diaspora as being an intriguing area in the field of investigation. The cultural specificity and religiosity of the Jews are also a seminal discipline of examination. History is always relative as it depends on the interpretation furnished by the historian. The eminent British deconstructionist historiographer Alan Munslow explicates in his book *Deconstructing History* that, “The past is not discovered or found. It is created and represented by the historian as a text, which in turn is consumed by the reader” (190). The history of Jewry and Jewish Diaspora has generally been reckoned with the community’s catastrophic trajectory from a third person objective point of view.

Preliminary inquiries into the fundamental characteristics of the Jewish Diaspora significantly focused on the antiquity, ubiquity, and specificity of the Jewish culture. As Daniel J. Elazar appropriately remarks in “The Jewish People as the Classic Diaspora: A Political Analysis”, “Jewish self-preservation through religious and cultural differentiation and endogamy are... worthy of examination from a sociological perspective. For example, the way in which the Jews as a diaspora



community created a way of life of their own... setting them apart from their neighbors, is worthy of the closest study” (1). Jewish Diaspora has become the prime focus of theorists like Robin Cohen, William Safran, Stuart Hall etc. whose critical discourses distinctively define the nature and evolution of Jewish diaspora over time.

Political scientists and theorists have identified the history of Jewry as the repository of cultural manifestations. For instance, William Safran addresses the uniqueness of Jewish diaspora thus, “[T]he Jewish diaspora continues to be used as prototype because it combines such features as ethnicity, religion, minority status, a consciousness of peoplehood, a long history of migration, expulsion, adaptation to a variety of host lands whose welcome was conditional and unreliable, and a continuing orientation to a homeland and to a narrative and ethno-symbols related to it” (“The Jewish Diaspora” 39). A few researchers have also focused on the question of cultural and ethnic identity of the Jews. Stuart Z. Charmé observes thus in “Varieties of Authenticity in Contemporary Jewish Identity”, “One of the first questions that arises in exploring the issue of ‘authentic Jewish identity’ is whether the authenticity aimed at refers to the Jewish content of identity or to an existential quality in the structure of a Jewish person’s identity—that is, whether ‘authentic’ modifies ‘Jewish’ or whether it modifies ‘identity’ (135). However, the discourses on Jewish history apparently expose the uniqueness of the Jewish diaspora and cultural identity.

A remarkable feature of the expatriated Jews had been a sense of alienation or ‘Othering’ in the host land which persuaded them to keep fighting relentlessly for their cultural freedom and selfhood. Maristella Botticini defines Jewish Diaspora by identifying significant traits thus, “Despite the unique characteristics each Jewish community has displayed across space and time...Jews have been a minority in almost

any of the places in which they have lived” (204). Robin Cohen exemplifies this in *Global Diasporas*,

The seventeenth century philosopher Pascal...noted that of all the peoples of antiquity only the Jewish people remained intact. He considered the Jews' endurance to be divinely sanctioned because the suffering of the 'carnal Jews' had to be patently visible to all, in order to demonstrate the veracity of Christianity. The presence of Jews in the Christian world therefore acted as a form of living witness to the truth of biblical claims. (25)

The manifestation of the binary relationship between the dominant culture and the 'others', had far-reaching consequences in the orientation and conceptualization of the Jewish cultural identity. Victimization of the Jews at the hands of the dominant cultures where anti-Semitism was highly operative had been an upshot of this positional representation of people on cultural basis.

### **Victim Diaspora**

The term victimization suits the condition of Jewish diaspora right from their early dispersal to various parts of the world. They continued to be ill-treated throughout history irrespective of spatial or temporal changes, creating a profound impact on the physical, psychological, cultural, social and religious wellbeing of the Jews. Robin Cohen classifies the Jews as “victim diaspora”, whose “inauspicious histories are either self-affirmed or accepted by outside observers as determining their essential character” (513). He explicates further: “For all the victim diasporas, their experiences in modern nation-states have been enriching and creative as well as enervating and fearful. The Jews' considerable intellectual and spiritual achievements simply could not have happened in a narrow tribal society like that of ancient Judea”

(ibid). The Jewish search for identity owes its strength to their bitterdiasporic experiences over the ages.

The geographical and regional experiences in various host lands decided the way the Jews perceived their own culture and homeland. The more they suffered, the harder they craved for freedom. The Holocaust had been the most trying time when the Jews yearned and strove for their homeland than in any other period in their life's journey. The Holocaust experiences acted as the best chisel for carving their path to fight for freedom. The eminent Welsh Philosopher Richard Price denounces the Jews for being self-centered in his work *Political Writings*, "What was the love of their country among the Jews, but a wretched partiality to themselves, and a proud contempt of all other nations?" (179). However, the prominence the Jews assign to their past can be regarded as a natural attribute of Diaspora communities who build their dreams of a peaceful future on the foundation of a painful past. This collective consciousness is well explained by Wolfgang Bosswick and Charles Husband in *Comparative European Research in Migration, Diversity and Identities* thus:

During the migration an identity develops and is based on the feeling of sharing a common origin, be it real or supposed. This feeling of belonging to a same group with a common origin makes-up a collective identity of ethnic nature in the sense given by Max Weber... Therefore, this identity is past-oriented, towards the preservation of a memory of origins and the building-up of a history of these origins. (35)

The literary recreation of history concomitantly interacts with the fictional and historical elements in the text which could manifest the unexplored regimes of both. While examining Literature about or even by the Jews in general and the dimensions given to the status of the Jews in world history it is interesting to note that the Jewish

perspective is mostly ignored, and they are labelled either as uncouth savages or a self-centred community capable of mischief to win their ends. The themes usually revolve around the expatriate state of the Jews and diaspora experiences like assimilation, identity crisis etc. Michael P. Kramer observes that there is much more to Jewish literature than these stereotyped themes:

Let me state bluntly here at the outset that when I say ‘literature written by Jews,’ I indeed mean all Jews, regardless of any relationship to Judaism or yiddishkayt or any of the many versions of Jewishness that have strutted across the stage of modern Jewish history. To be considered a Jewish writer, in my view, one need not use a ‘Jewish’ language, or exhibit certain ‘Jewish’ literary characteristics, or address certain ‘Jewish’ subjects, or even know how to ask the ‘Jewish’ question. One need only be a writer of Jewish extraction, a member of the Jewish race. (289-90)

The Jewish author Jonathan Ray also makes similar observations in his essay “New Approaches to the Jewish Diaspora: The Sephardim as a Sub-Ethnic Group”,

The persistence of many of the ideological assumptions of this older approach that equates the Jewish diaspora with galut [Jewish exile] privileges the idea of longing for an ancient and semi-mythic homeland over more concrete ties developed to the lands of more recent residence...The sweeping and sentimental identification of the Jewish diaspora as galut continues to be accepted and promoted by scholars within the field of Jewish Studies and without. (13)

This tendency had overlooked the prospect of Jewish victimization and the evolution of Jewish identity through their history of scapegoating and Othering.

Jewish-American literature mostly aimed at detailing the Jewish cultural specificities, either by praising or by condemning them. The eminent Jewish writer Philip Roth in his work *Operation Shylock* (1993) ridicules the Jewish religiosity, commenting that the community was obsessed with their own unique culture and tradition:

Hebrew school wasn't school at all but a part of the deal that our parents had cut with their parents, the sop to pacify the old generation—who wanted the grandchildren to be Jews the way that they were Jews, bound as they were to the old millennial ways—and, at the same time, the leash to restrain the breakaway young, who had it in their heads to be Jews in a way no one had ever dared to be a Jew in our three-thousand-year history: speaking and thinking American English, only American English, with all the apostasy that was bound to beget. (312)

The cultural efficacy of the Jews in their perusal of Holy texts has been a subject of criticism over time. That this so-called excessive significance they assigned to their culture and religion had resulted in the making of their history and identity is generally ignored.

Raymond Williams maintains thus in *Culture and Society*, “The culture has its own history. Historical past decides the future of the present and experience gained from past efforts gives birth to the new ideas and ultimately rituals” (1985). The deep-rooted cultural past of the Jews, imprinted in their racial memory has helped them survive the audacities of the present, encouraging them to disdain undifferentiated identity categories of the diaspora and stick together in their struggle for liberation. Writing about, by, or on Jewish history and Jewish identity crisis is a very intricate problem as endorsed by writings till date.

The American historian Erich S. Gruen observes in the essay “Diaspora and Homeland” that, “The images of up rootedness, dispersal, and wandering haunt Jewish identity throughout. Jews have written about it incessantly, lamented it or justified it, dismissed it or grappled with it, embraced it or deplored it” (18). Harold Bloom makes a similar remark in his Introduction to Olivier Revault’s *Musical Variations on Jewish Thought*, “We no longer know just what makes a book Jewish, or a person Jewish, because we have no authority to instruct us as to what is or is not Jewish thought” (30), suggesting the complex nature of Jewish history in literature.

This complexity is usually ignored or manipulated in order to create a stereotypical version by historians and litterateurs alike. The eminent critic Louis Harap in his work, *The Image of Jew in American Literature*, investigates how the Jewish history is stereotyped. While analysing the historical novel *The Bravo* (1831) written by James Fenimore Cooper, he remarks, “His depiction of the Jewish jeweller and moneylender Hosea is in the worst tradition of the stereotype, and the novel is peppered with pejorative references to the Jews—some in the mouth of the characters, and others as interjections by the author” (189). Harap’s review of William Gilmore Simms’ historical novel *Pelayo* (1839) is also significant in this context because there he observes that, “The Jews in the novel are stereotypes, not individuals” (193). The fictional representation of the Jews was determined by the prevalent stereotyping as the assimilating community. Most of the writers have dealt with Jewish history by representing the dominant culture. Leslie A. Fiedler aptly evaluates the depiction of the Jews in literature in *The Jew in the American Novel*:

Such early novelists begin to establish an image of the Jew capable not only of satisfying the Jews themselves, but also of representing them to their Gentile neighbors. The writing of the American-Jewish novel is essentially, then, an

act of assimilation: a demonstration that there is an American Jew (whose Jewishness and Americanism enrich each other) and that he feels at home! (5)

The literary representations of the stereotype Jew in the works of the mainstream Jewish American writers like Earnest Hemingway and Philip Roth were also detrimental and delusive, and in tune with the prevailing anti-Semitic trend as observed by Leslie A. Fiedler:

For a long time, indeed, it is hard for the Jewish novelist to compete with the Gentile in the creation of images of Jewishness. Ludwig Lewisohn's *The Island Within* may not be recorded in the standard history, but *The Sun Also Rises* is; for it is a subtler and truer book, and Robert Cohn, middleweight boxing champion from Princeton, is a realer Jew than any of Lewisohn's. That he is the product of anti-Semitic malice rather than love is from a literary point of view irrelevant. For better or worse, it is Hemingway's image of the Jew which survives the twenties: an overgrown boy scout and hangdog lover—an outsider still even among outsiders and in self-imposed exile. (6)

The negative image of the Jew created by the popular mainstream writers through subversions contributed much to the layman's attitude towards the community, thus making them more alienated in the host land. Fiedler's comments Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917) is also noteworthy:

Certainly, *David Levinsky*... is also the account of a Jew who dissipated the promise of his life in the pursuit of wealth; it is a rich and complex book, a retrospective and loving essay on the failures of his people by a man nearly sixty when he wrote it. An anti-Semitic book, the conservative Jewish reviewers blindly called it: "Had the book been published anonymously, we

might have taken it for cruel caricature of a hated race by some anti-Semite..."

(17-18)

He makes another significant remark about the Jewish literature of the 1930s:

Though there were American Jewish novelists of real distinction in the first three decades of the twentieth century, it is not until the 'thirties that such writers play a critical role in the total development of American literature.

From that point on, they have felt themselves and have been felt by the general public as more than pioneers and interlopers, more than exotics and eccentrics.

Indeed, the patterns of Jewish speech, the experiences of Jewish childhood and adolescence, the smells and tastes of the Jewish kitchen, the sounds of the Jewish synagogue have become, since 1930, staples of the American novel.

(25)

In "Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History", Linda Hutcheon maintains that, "Historiographic metafiction works to situate itself within historical discourse without surrendering its autonomy as fiction. And it is a kind of seriously ironic parody that effects both aims: the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel (though not equal) status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the 'world' and literature" (4). The novels of Leon Uris, though not parodic in nature like metafiction, aim at questioning the hegemonic constructs of historiography mainly the dominant western interpretation of Jewish history. Through the reconstruction of known facts, Uris taps into the possibility of foregrounding the Jewish perspective while examining the history of the west.

Uris' novels chronicle the history of Jewish subjugation, their blood curdling experiences, their alienation continuum, and their determined relentless march towards freedom. This chapter addresses how Uris writes the history of the unsung



heroes of the Jewish community, their journey through the annals of time, how they were 'othered' in the course of their journey, and the factors which led to their resistance and final liberation. The interest of Uris as a novelist is not merely to reiterated known political or historical incident related to the Jewish diaspora, but rather detail the cultural specificities of the community, usually ignored by other writers. He delves deep into their religious rites and rituals, their lifestyle etc., and shamelessly claims to be one among them, thus celebrating his identity and identification with the characters in his works. A. L. Rogers II comments thus about him, "Throughout his career, Uris has stirred up millions of readers with novels focusing on cultures that are tragically at odds. Historical though his subjects typically are, his obvious partisanship has led some to label his books as propaganda novels. In several books, Uris works to enlist the reader's sympathy for the Jews..." (506).

Uris' novels are fictional records of facts. Dan Brown significantly remarks thus in his *The da Vinci Code*, "History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser obliterated, and the winner writes the history books... books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. As Napoleon once said, 'What is history, but a fable agreed upon'" (340). The historical details are recorded honestly but history functions only as backdrop to the fictional scenes enacted by both real and fictitious characters, thus blurring the boundaries of fact and fiction. This strategy offers scope for subversions or reconstructions of accepted versions of history and provides authenticity to the fictional discourse. The novelist thereby succeeds in his effort to shift the historical axis by placing the decentred Jews in the centre and looking at Jewish history. As E.H. Carr maintains, "It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides which facts to give the floor, and in

what order or context” (11-12). His novels could be regarded as an attempt to restructure history from the Jewish perspective.

This chapter situates the scrutiny of the novels of Leon Uris in relation to their representation of victimhood in order to foreground their ideologies of resistance and liberation. An enquiry is made to investigate how the works attempt an alternative to traditional authority of history through re-mappings of the intersections of history and fiction in historic fiction. Uris raises certain poignant questions against the general assumption that the Jews are the problem makers by arguing that they were vulnerable to constant attacks and tortures which forced them to retain their cultural memory and retaliate in order to sustain themselves. *Exodus* (1958), *Mila 18* (1961), *The Haj* (1984) and *QB VII* (1972) are taken for close investigation here. Uris who upholds the community’s ideology that their goal can be achieved only by holding on to their religiosity and cultural uniqueness, proudly uses his characters to deliver this message. Hence the major characters in his novels exemplify Jewishness by displaying various facets of the Jewish culture hitherto ignored by writers. The “Preface” to the reprinted edition of *Exodus* (1969) validates this argument:

All the cliché Jewish characters who have cluttered up our American fiction—the clever businessman, the brilliant doctor, the sneaky lawyer, the sulking artist...all those good folks who spend their chapters hating themselves [and] the world...all those steeped in pity...all those golden riders of the psychoanalysis couch...all these have been left where they rightfully belong, on the cutting room floor...*Exodus* is about fighting people, people who do not apologise for being born Jews or the right to live in human dignity. Their story was a revelation to me as I discovered it in the farms and cities of Israel.

And...it has been a revelation to...readers, Jewish and Gentile, alike. (*Exodus* Preface)

Uris' novels are historical narratives which use memory, flash back techniques, documenting real incidents etc. Quotations from the Bible also are seen in plenty in order to endorse his faith in Judaism to connect notions of birth, death, rebirth etc., and to affirm the Jews' confidence that God who decides destiny will come as a saviour to rescue the Jew from his peril.

Sharon D. Downey and Richard A. Kallan remark, "... when Uris quotes the Bible as predicting Israel's inevitable rebirth, and when those predictions appear to concur with specific events reported by Uris, the right of Israel's sovereignty must seem obvious" (199). Uris employs past as a significant factor that determines the future of the Jews. The present of the Jews becomes an evolution from the past of holding on to the memory of their cultural roots and later on planting them in a land of their own. Thus his works become a platform to showcase the Jewish expedition from subjugation to survival, while historicizing fiction and his characters become iconoclasts for destroying known images. Dan Wakefield rightly comments thus:

The characters are firmly type-cast, but their main function is to carry along the plot that history had already written...Mr. Uris does an extraordinary job of weaving that drama together, reaching back to its roots in the Dreyfus case, in Nazi Germany, in Czarist Russia. He sometimes does it through flashbacks of his characters... Sometimes he does it by stretches of purely historical narrative...long accounts of the Balfour declaration or the British White Paper or the Palestine Riots... (318-319)

Uris' contribution to the genre of historic fiction mainly owes to his magnum opus *Exodus* and the later *Mila 18* as they cover an entire cross section of world

history related to the Jewish cause. His role as a historic fictionalist is unique in the sense that he looks at the whole situation not only from the Jewish perspective but from a subjective angle as well. These novels also address the themes of Jewish scapegoating, defense, and resistance. *The Haj* and *QB VII* also depict history from the perspective of the Jews. Sharon D Downey and Richard A Kallan's comments are noteworthy:

The plight of Jews is one major injustice Uris attempts to resolve... *Exodus*, a story about Israel's inceptional period and her fight for independence; *Mila 18*, a recreation of the Warsaw ghetto uprising... The dominant theme of these works is that the Jew must live in sovereignty. Throughout, Uris contends that Jewish survival rests on the establishment and maintenance of a sovereign state—the ultimate solution/deterrent to injustice against Jews... In a sense, Uris reflects the Jewish hope from the time they were scattered 2,000 years ago: Israel must be reborn. (194)

The exploration of Jewish Diaspora in different countries through these novels validate the concept of cultural unity of the Jews. He perpetuates his ideologies through his narrative structure, character delineation, historical documentation and cultural paradigms.

Uris' bestseller novel *Exodus* can be regarded as a historical paradigm of addressing the motif of Jewish subjugation and marginalization at the hands of the Europeans. It is a pro-Jewish novel which delineates the trajectory of Jewish struggles towards victory. Dan Wakefield remarks about Uris' blending of history and fiction in *Exodus*, "The real achievement of *Exodus* lies not so much in its virtues as a novel, as in its skilful rendering of the furiously complex history of modern Israel in a palatable, popular form that is usually faithful to the spirit of the complicated realities.

That is no small feat...” (319). The novel fictionalizes the ways in which the state of Israel is created. The endurance and sacrifice of the Jews become the focus of the novel and the Jew is presented as the one who stands for justice, truth, and life. The Jew is the epitome of physical and mental strength, capable of making influential changes in the thought processes of even the enemies, as shown by Ari Ben Canaan, the protagonist in the novel. David Ben Ami, another striking character also personifies the ideal Jew. The novelist’s intention here is to subvert the known representation of the Jews. A. L Rogers’ rightly remarks that, “In overturning stereotypes of Jews as passive and weak by depicting them as courageous warriors, Uris has become one of the world’s most recognized ambassadors for the Jewish people” (507).

*Exodus* is set in 1946 in Cyprus as part of the greatest Jewish plan to rescue three hundred refugee children detained by the British in the camps at Caraolos near Cyprus. The illegal Jewish immigration agency called Mossad Aliyah Bet employs Ari Ben Canaan, the Jewish crack agent, as the person in charge of this high-risk task of rescuing a large number of Jews to Palestine and sends him to Famagusta in Cyprus. The novel begins when the American Journalist Mark Parker reaches Cyprus and associates with the Jewish plan called Operation Gideon to transport the Jews in the immigrant ship named Exodus. The actual event of transporting adult Jews from France to the British Mandate of Palestine in the ship SS Exodus in 1946 is fictionalized in the novel by presenting the Jews on board as children.

The creation of the state of Israel as depicted in the novel represents the construction of the Jewish identity, both of which are won after a long wait and a long-lasting struggle. Hence the occupation of Israel becomes justifiable as an achievement made possible by their own determination and focussed vision. The

novelist being a Jew, easily succeeds in creating an array of various categories like Jews, half-Jews, Arabs and American, Greek, English, Russian, and Polish Jews. This vast canvas enables him to traverse through history connecting all these places which offer the required socio-political milieu for endorsing his stand that the Jew was a constantly hunted down community and deserves better treatment. Dan Wakefield makes an interesting observation about this aspect “The plot is so exciting that the characters become exciting too; not because of their individuality or depth, but because of the historic drama they are involved in” (318). The novel thus becomes in its entirety a celebration of Jewish ethnicity.

Uris meticulously plans his plots in such a convincing manner that the reader feels the trauma of the Jew who suffered endlessly in various lands and contexts. The most significant factor that shapes and modifies the Jewish identity is the experiences they had over time. The novel painstakingly deals with the refugee camps and the traumatic encounters of the inmates. In order to highlight the grave conditions in refugee camps and ghettos, Uris recounts the incidents of the camp at Caracolos in Cyprus, Greece. Even though they were not criminals, the Jews were treated as prisoners behind barbed wires and were guarded by British officials and CIDs.

The known factors like subjugation, discrimination which exist in any master-slave relation gains added significance in *Exodus* which details all the gruesome horrors of the concentration camps. The alienation they suffered in host lands where imaginary boundaries were created between the natives and the Jews also are highlighted to articulate the author’s intention to elevate their position who had been pushed to the margins in fiction hitherto written. The novel tries to engage the readers’ attention to the prospects of Jewish culture by manifesting their ubiquity and participation in the making of the world history. Barbara A. Babcock rightly maintains

thus, in *Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*, “what is socially peripheral is often symbolically centred” (32). *Exodus* assigns centrality to the socially and culturally marginalized Jews using characters who suffered subjugation due to which they combated oppression and strived to reclaim their lost selves. These include the Jews, non-Jews who favour them, half-Jews, and the anti-Semites.

Uris’ anti-British and anti-German attitude along with his pro-American sympathies are also apparent in the novel. The pro-Jewish characters represent the empathetical stand they adopt towards the Jewish cause and the general disappointment about the way England and Germany treat them. The American Journalist Mark Parker’s association with the Jewish leaders and his denouncement of the British policies reflect the author’s stand on the same. For instance, Mark Parker’s words to the British Major Fred Caldwell on the prospects of English colonialism validate the author’s perspective, “You’re going to lose the whole shooting match... first it’s going to be India, then Africa, then the Middle East, I’ll be there to watch you lose the Palestine Mandate... The sun is setting on the empire... (*Exodus* 11). Also, the Greek Cypriot, Mandria’s involvement in assisting David Ben Ami— a Jewish Palmachian agent in charge of the transportation of Jews from camps — depicts the sympathy of such non-Jews. He also associates with the Jews in Operation Gideon. Mandria represents the whole Greek community, who wishes for the victory of Jews over the British, in the hope that it would also help in the consequent liberation of Greece from British reign.

The Jews in *Exodus* can be classified into two types—the victims and the fighters. Although the victims demonstrate obedience even while silently preserving their culture, the fighters use newer strategies like strong adherence to their cultural beliefs by stubbornly resisting ridicule or silencing. The victimized Jews are depicted

as detained in the ghettos and camps under the British and German suppressors, permanently separated from their family and home. The meaninglessness of their lives in the ghettos and the desire to be united with their family and community lead to their evolution from victims to fighters or challengers. This chapter attempts to trace the trajectory of the diasporic Jews from victimhood to resistance, which actually turns out to be a journey towards self- discovery.

### **The Jew as Victim**

Stuart Hall comments thus about the evolution of identity in “The local and the global: Globalization and Ethnicity”: “Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself” (21). According to Uris, the Jew’s lost identity is the result of the shame and guilt imposed upon them by the others and their reclamation of the lost self is affected by the desire to overcome those feelings. He portrays these aspects by demythifying the known history, including the Jewish versions also.

*Exodus* chronicles Germany’s failure in the First World War and the subsequent accession of the newly established government called the Weimar Republic in 1919. The novel also shows Germany’s disappointment at losing the war and its accusation of the Republic and the Jews for causing the failure. The Nazis curbed the Jewish takeoff by restricting immigration rules and this curtailed the Jewish hopes of escape from Europe.

The novel highlights the effects of the world war and the subsequent political upheavals in the lives of the Jews through the story of the Clement family. It shows how rules were imposed by the host country, which suddenly turned hostile, to force



them to quit their ethnic identity if they wanted to live there anymore. Thus the Clements are forced to sign a document that denounces their Jewish heritage by declaring that “I am not now or never have been of the Jewish religion. I am an Aryan...” (*Exodus* 62). Even though the persistent ill-treatment forced many Jews to leave Germany, Clement was confident about his safety and identified himself with German culture though he had to face with conspicuous anti-Semitism often. But on November 19, 1938, the Nazis proclaimed new regulations which completely denied the Jews freedom and social life and unofficially inaugurated the mass slaughter of the Jews. They were earmarked with a yellow arm band with a Star of David to denote their journey towards death. With this turn of events, Clement decides to uphold his identity at any cost, rather than subject himself to a meaningless and cowardly existence. He decides to leave Germany by sending his children to safe places with the help of Mossad Aliyah Beth.

*Exodus* depicts the mental trauma of Clement as his signature would eliminate his Jewish past by providing a peaceful life in Germany. But the decision made by Clement validates the prominence the Jews assign to their culture. In this context it is interesting to note the comment of Zygmunt Bauman regarding identity as explained in his “From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity”:

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioural styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence. 'Identity' is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty. (19)

The Nazi propaganda of Aryan supremacy and anti-Semitism gradually reflected in all the fields of life. “First there had been wild talk and then printed accusations and insinuations. Then came a boycott of Jewish business and professional people, then the public humiliations: beatings and beard pullings. Then came the night terror of the Brown Shirts. Then came the concentration camps” (*Exodus* 60).

Karen, the daughter of Clement, represents the German Jews who had to face inexplicable spiritual trauma for being born as Jew. According to her, her father was just one among the assimilated Jews like “Heine and Rothschild and Karl Marx and Mendelssohn and Freud... These men like Johann Clement himself, were Germans first, last and always” (60) until the tables turned after the arrival of Hitler and along with him the advent of anti-Semitism. She is separated from her family and adopted by the Hansen family in Denmark, due to which she has to choose Hansen as the second name. This incident saves her from the hands of the Nazis, while at the same time it lands her in a dilemma of living with a dual identity, a plight faced by many Jewish children of that time. These requirements make her apprehensive of the future of her community, “Do the Danish people hate the Jews too?” (66). Uris pens the Jewish spiritual journey along with the historic developments using such sequences in order to negate the monologic interpretations of the Jewish history, which does not admit that the Jews had a real cause for resistance.

The history of Germany and Denmark is re-examined by unmuting the silenced voices. Karen willingly joins the refugee camps, desperate to reunite with her family and thereby reclaim her past even at the cost of suffering torture. By tracing her journey from one camp to the other the novel exposes the horrifying experiences of the Jews in various such slaughterhouses.

Parker's friend Kitty Fremont is an American nurse who associates with the Jews after her initial hesitation to acknowledge the Jewish problem. She finds in Karen some semblance with her late daughter Sandra which brings them close, and Karen finds solace in her company. Karen's past turns out to be a chip of the Jewish history in Germany and Denmark which till the two world wars began were peaceful homes for the Jew. She recalls thus to Kitty:

Once, during the Middle Ages, there had been a wave of hatred and ignorance as the Crusaders killed off Jews. But the day had passed when Jews were blamed for the Black Death and for poisoning the wells of Christians. During the enlightenment that followed the French Revolution the Christians themselves had torn down the gates of the ghettos. In this new era the Jews and the greatness of Germany had been inseparable. (*Exodus* 60)

Karen's spiritual struggle begins with her life in the Hansen family where she is always reminded that she is different and that her identity is something to be hidden from the public "The mystery of her family and her past ran parallel with this mystery of being Jewish. In order to take her place forever as a Dane she had to close the door on these burning questions... an invisible wall—her past and her religion—always stood between her and the Hansens" (77). Even though she became part of the family, there was always "an invisible barrier between them". Her foster father Aage had warned her not to reveal her identity, making her feel insecure, "... she could not keep from wondering why she was different from other people and exactly what this difference was that endangered her very life. It was a question she could never ask and therefore it was never answered. She felt herself to be like other people and she looked like other people. Yet the invisible barrier was there" (*Exodus* 76).

In “Identity and Cultural Studies: Is That All There Is?” Lawrence Grossberg rightly explicates that:

Struggling against existing constructions of a particular identity takes the form of contesting negative images with positive ones, and of trying to discover the 'authentic' and 'original' content of the identity. Basically, the struggle over representations of identity here takes the form of offering one fully constituted, separate and distinct identity in place of another. (89)

Through Karen’s dilemma, the author posits certain poignant statements regarding the issues of faith and culture that always disturbed the thinking of the Jews. Karen was always sceptical about the way the Jews were being treated in the Christian countries, because the Old Testament had ascertained the status of the Jews as the chosen people of God. “If this was all true then why was it so dangerous to be Jewish and why were the Jews hated so? If Jesus were to return to the earth she was certain He would go to a synagogue rather than a church. Why could people worship Jesus and hate His people?” (*Exodus* 77). Lawrence Grossberg observes that, “Identities are always relational and incomplete, in process. Any identity depends upon its difference from, its negation of, some other term, even as the identity of the latter term depends upon its difference from, its negation of, the former” (“Identity” 89). Karen’s negation of her foster identity arises from her desire to embrace her true self and decides her route of evolution from victimhood to resistance. “Being Karen Hansen was merely playing a game. She made the need of becoming Karen Clement urgent. She tried to reconstruct threads of her past life; to remember her father, her mother, and her brothers... she made her longing constant” (*Exodus* 77-8).

When Germany invaded Denmark in 1940 by defeating the Bolsheviks and promising the Danes a model protectorate, the lives of the Jews in Denmark also

turned out to be in jeopardy. The captives were put in ghettos which worked on the fundamental principles of annihilation. “[The ghettos were] over crowded, short of everything and the spectre of death seemed to haunt the inmates. To them, all Europe had become a coffin” (78). The novel intends to highlight the effect of the seminal historical incidents on the Jews rather than prosaically document the historical facts. Thus, the story of the Hansens’ efforts to help Karen find her family becomes meaningful because it is linked with the German occupation of Denmark. They are forced to flee to Copenhagen for Karen’s safety. But there too the lives of the Jews became miserable due to the German occupation of Copenhagen until the Danes attained freedom on May 4, 1945. The Hansens had expected to find Karen’s parents with the end of the World War II, but it was a very challenging task as most of the Jews were killed and the remaining were dispersed all over the world. Hence Karen had no other choice but to remain in the ghettos unless she found her family as she was sure that they must have been detained in one of them.

The novelist dramatizes historical incidents, interpolating them with fictional narratives, thus blurring the boundaries between the two. The atrocities of the concentration camps are depicted realistically by placing real life characters along with the fictional:

[Karen] heard of SS *Hauptsturmführer* Fitz Gebauer, who specialized in strangling women and children barehanded and who liked watching infants die in barrels of freezing water... Heinen, who perfected a method of killing several people in a row with one bullet... Frank Warzok, who liked to bet on how long a human could live hanging by the feet... *Obersturmbannführer* Rokita, who ripped bodies apart... Steiner, who bored holes into prisoner’s heads and stomachs and pulled fingernails and gouged eyes and liked to swing

naked women from poles by their hair...Professor Hirts' Anatomical Institute at Strasbourg and his scientists... Dachau was the biggest of the scientific centres. (80)

The camps in Auschwitz, which were the centres of misanthropy and sadism and notorious for massacring three million Jews are reproduced graphically in the novel as in history. The German efficacy to remove the traces and evidence of violence is, according to Uris, due to their feeling of insecurity. The extent of the Nazi's cruelty is illustrated by showing real life incidents like how they revelled in distorting the dead bodies. Their act of pulling out the golden teeth from the dead bodies of the Jews and altering the perfectly shaped skulls to be used as paper weights etc., are some gruesome incidents which find place in the novel. The Uris emotionally names the Holocaust as "A dance of death with six million dancers!" (*Exodus* 78). He bitterly accuses Hitler for using Genocide as the only Final Solution or '*Endlösung*' to erase the Jewish race.

Karen's alienation and fear of being orphaned symbolises the fate of the Jewish children of the time. "Every child in a La Ciotat had one thing in common. Every one of them believed their parents were alive" (82). Her frantic search for her family becomes her search for her cultural roots which alone will sustain her in this world.

Karen wept and she was dazed and she was haunted. Her nights were sleepless and the names of the land tore through her brain. Had her father and mother and brothers been sent to Buchenwald or had they met death in the horror of Dachau? Maybe it was Chelmno with a million dead or Maidanek with seven hundred and fifty thousand. Or Belzec or Treblinka with its lines of vans or Sobibor or Trawniki or Poniatow or Krivoj Rog. Had they been shot in the pits

of Krasnik or burned at the stake at Klooga or torn apart by dogs at Diedzyn or tortured to death at Stutthof? The lash! The ice bath! The electric shock! The soldering iron! Genocide! (81)

On discovering that she had lost her mother and brothers, and that her father remained but with acute memory loss, “Karen Hansen Clement sank deep in melancholy. She heard till she could hear no more. She saw until she could see no more. She was exhausted and confused, and the will to go on was drained from her blood. Then as so often happens when one reaches the end of the line, there was a turning upward and she emerged into light” (81). The traumatic incidents in turn become a turning point in her life as she evolves from a victim to a fighter. She becomes a seeker of identity, which shifts according to the changes in equations as mentioned by Grossberg, “Identity is always a temporary and unstable effect of relations which define identities by marking differences” (89). In “Victimization: Some Comments by an Israeli”, Alouph Hareven makes an interesting observation regarding the passivity of the Jews regarding their alienation:

The defencelessness of the Jews was the consequence of the collapse of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel in the first and second centuries AD, and the subsequent exile and dispersion of Jews in many foreign lands. For nearly 2000 years, wherever they lived, including the Land of Israel, the Jews were a minority, and a defenceless one. Defencelessness was imposed by the non-Jewish majority; it also became part of the Jewish world outlook. (150)

Imposition of defencelessness was a mechanism employed in Poland to alienate the Jews by the Germans who convinced the natives that those pessimistic people should be kept at bay for the good of the nation. This unpleasant truth is illustrated in the novel using the experience of the character named Dov Landau, an

adolescent Jew trapped in a Polish Ghetto. Dov who is evasive and an introvert and Karen who socialises represent polarities in the attitude of the Jews towards victimization. Lawrence Grossberg appropriately remarks that, "...struggles over identity no longer involve questions of adequacy or distortion, but of the politics of representation itself. That is, politics involves questioning how identities are produced and taken up through practices of representation" ("Identity" 90). Dov also represents the determined Jew who remains strong and stubborn when it comes to the question of asserting identity.

When Ari Ben Canaan approaches Dov for help to forge the British authorized signatures in the immigrant list to Palestine, he sternly refuses, as he explains later to Karen, "... Ben Ami gave me a list of three hundred kids here in our compound... There's a Mossad ship out there someplace. It's going to Palestine... Our name isn't listed. I'm not going to fix these papers unless they let us go too" (*Exodus* 109). Uris here advocates the need to resist subjugation which is a better alternative to passively accept it and suffer endlessly, "For seven hundred years the Jews in Poland had been subjected the persecution of one kind or another..." (112).

The history of Poland always reveals its hegemonic attitude towards the Jews. They had never got a chance to feel at home there and hence no possibility of assimilation at any period. Dov Landau's father Mendel Landau, a baker in Warsaw who spent most of his time in the ghettos, illustrates this point. The Jews in Poland were always branded by the rulers as problem makers who brought ill fate to the country. This hapless community consisted of migrants from Germany, Austria, and Bohemia after the Crusades. The novel enumerates various dark periods in the history of Poland like the of mass Jewish slaughters during the Cossack uprising of the 1648. "The Jews locked in ghettos, made ready scapegoats for any



Polish disaster...the Dark Ages, which came to an end in western Europe, seemed to linger on over the Polish ghettos. The enormous tragedy of 1648, together with hundreds of years of continuous persecution, created strange phenomena within the ghetto walls” (113). Uris’ politics of identifying with the Jewish cause in his writing is revealed in these detailing.

Even when Poland became a republic in 1939 and the Jews were let free, the discrimination and ‘othering’ of the Jews continued through the practice of unequal taxation. The ghettos were demolished but spiritual annihilation went on in the form of anti-Jewish pogroms, “After seven centuries in Poland, Mendel Landau was still an intruder and he knew it” (114). This awareness impacted the cultural consciousness of the Jews and prompted them to adhere to their rites and observe their specific holidays, cherishing their dream of reaching a land of their own. “What Mendel Landau gave his children was an idea. It was remote and it was a dream and it was unrealistic... the idea that the Jews must someday return to Palestine and re-establish their ancient state. Only as a nation could they ever find equality” (114-5). This ideology, which is also the fundamental theory of Zionism constitutes Dov’s identity as a Jew. The Polish-Jews categorised themselves into various prongs of Zionism—the religious, labor, militant and middle-class merchant Zionists. Mendel Landau was associated with the labor Zionists known as the Redeemers.

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, “Most of Poland’s Jews, being more hopeful than realistic, felt nothing would happen to them and adopted a ‘wait and see’ attitude... They were positive that grave danger lay ahead with Germans in occupation” (*Exodus* 116). Incongruous to their hopes, the Germans upheld the idea that Polish invasion was meant to save Poland from the “Jewish Bolsheviks” (ibid). Although Poland was a home to more than three-and-a-half million Jews, it was

selected as the suitable place for Jewish resettlement. New regulations were implemented for the Jews like, “Worship, forbidden; travel, limited; taxation, excessive. Jews were barred from bread lines...public places...schools” (ibid). The Polish literary critic, Jan Blonski's article "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto" re-examines history thus:

There were also those... who were secretly pleased that Hitler had solved for us "the Jewish problem." We could not even welcome and honour the survivors, even if they were embittered, disorientated and perhaps sometimes tiresome. I repeat: instead of haggling and justifying ourselves, we should first consider our own faults and weaknesses. This is the moral revolution which is imperative when considering the Polish-Jewish past. It is only this that can gradually cleanse our desecrated soil. (46)

Many Jews were slaughtered with Polish support to accommodate the new inmates. The novel lays bare the Poles' hypocrisy towards the Jewish cause. “Very few Poles ran the risk of harboring a Jew. Others extorted every penny from the Jews and then turned them over to the Germans for a reward” (*Exodus* 117).

The boundary between history and fiction becomes porous as the atrocities in the deadly ghettos are unravelled through Dov's memory. Grossberg significantly remarks that, “Identity is ultimately returned to history, and the subaltern's place is subsumed within a history of movements and an experience of oppression which privileges particular exemplars as the 'proper' figures of identity” (92). *Exodus* registers the voice of the Jewish subaltern in their host lands.

The Landau family's association with the Zionist resistance missions, the subsequent murder of Mendel Landau and Mundek Landau's—Dov's elder brother—affiliation with the Redeemers acted as the prominent reasons other than their

Jewishness for their resettlement to the ghetto at Warsaw and “life inside the wall gradually became a day-to-day struggle to stay alive” (118). The Jews braved the tortures in the ghettos and managed to arrange weekly music concerts, regular schools and a ghetto newspaper. Religious training and dialectic discussions and debates were also conducted inside the ghetto. Such facilities equipped the children like Dov with exposure to knowledge. But genocide, the final solution, implemented by Hitler, “rounded up Jews, took them to an isolated area, and force them to dig their own graves. They stripped them and forced them to kneel beside their graves and shot them in the head” (119). Jan Blonsky validates these historical incidents by narrating his own experience:

Nobody can reasonably claim that Poles as a nation took part in the genocide of the Jews... participation and shared responsibility are not the same thing... Our responsibility is for holding back, for insufficient effort to resist... It is precisely because resistance was so weak that we now honour those who did have the courage to take this historic risk... More significant is the fact that if only we had behaved more humanely in the past, had been wiser, more generous, then genocide would perhaps have been 'less imaginable', would probably have been considerably more difficult to carry out, and almost certainly would have met with much greater resistance than it did. To put it differently, it would not have met with the indifference and moral turpitude of the society in whose full view it took place. (47)

The Jewish population reduced considerably by 1941, as documented in *Exodus*, with the introduction of new fatal experiments to exterminate them. “Every morning the streets of the ghetto were strewn with new corpses. The sanitation teams walked through the streets with shovels and stacked the corpses onto pushcarts.

Infants, children, women, men: piled up and wheeled off to the crematoriums to be burned” (120). Dov Landau explains how the Jew learned the lessons of survival from these experiences. “Dov learned the tricks of staying alive in the ghetto. He moved about, listened, and acted with the cunning of a wily animal” (ibid). He was also associated with the Redeemers as the courier boy and proved to be proficient in his work with his non-Jewish attributes and his expertise in finding underground sewage routes and accomplishing the tasks. His skill in forging and with “his remarkable aptitude for copying and duplicating” with his sharp eyes and steady hands, “at the age of twelve he was soon the best forger among the Redeemer” (121). By 1942, the Germans constructed gas chambers in Treblinka with the Polish support for the ultimate and final mass extermination of the Jews. Uris thus participates in the genre of historiographic fiction by creating a complicated relationship between history and fiction, making it difficult to identify the intersections.

In the July of the same year, the Germans rounded up old and very young Jews to transport them to Treblinka for the “final solution” (*Exodus* 122) while the community was observing Tisha B’Ab, the annual commemoration of the destruction of their ancient temples in Jerusalem. The novel accuses the Poles of their indifference to the Jew’s suffering, “The main reason that no uprising could be staged was that there was no support for it in Poland outside the ghetto” (123). Dov’s sense of loss, despair and insecurity represent the experiences of the entire community. His encounter with the German hooligans and his killing one of them for self-defense, slaughter of his pregnant sister and mother by them etc., are portrayed graphically as examples of the Jew’s experiences. Simultaneously, the family’s positivity inspires him to withstand the trauma. His siblings urge him to live in order to pass on to the future generation the Jewish narrative. “One of the Landau family must live. We want

you to live for us all” (126). Dov is thus prompted to reclaim his cultural ‘space’ by upholding his identity which might help him to reunite with his loved ones “in the land of Israel” (127). The plight of those who remained in the Warsaw ghetto disturbed him so deeply that he went back to them to assist in their resistance plans. The Warsaw camp, notorious for killing about 5000 Jews, is also noted for the Warsaw Uprising, the Jewish resistance movement, from within the camp. Dov was close to death when the Gestapo found him, and they sent him to Auschwitz for resettlement.

Auschwitz which acted as the ‘master model’ camp for extermination does not find much mention in mainstream writings. But Uris gives all the gory details of the happenings within its formidable walls, thereby justifying the Warsaw uprising which is an offshoot of victimhood:

In addition to Jews to dispose of there were Russian, French and other prisoners of war, partisans, political enemies in occupied countries, religious fanatics...gypsies, criminals, Freemasons, Marxists, Bolsheviks and Germans who talked peace, liberalism, trade unionism, or defeatism... foreign agents, prostitutes, homosexuals, and many other undesirable elements. All these had to be eliminated to make Europe a fit place for Aryans to live. (*Exodus* 134)

Though Dov managed to escape from the camp by displaying his talent to forge signs, the others were either slaughtered in the gas chambers, made slaves, or sexually abused.

From Auschwitz, Dov was taken he was sent to work with the Labor Liberates who functioned as *Sonderkommandos* or workers whose job was to remove the corpses and clean the gas chambers after the gassing. Dov had to “enter the chamber and hose it down and get the room ready for the next batch of victims” (142). The

heart wrenching experiences of seeing the gory scenes transforms him into a rebel and loner.

The novel truthfully chronicles factual incidents like demolition of the gas chambers in order to hide their cruelties from others when they anticipated defeat in war. The hatred towards the Jews persisted in the minds of the Poles who were wrecked by the war. “The Jews brought war on us...the war was started so that Jews could make a profit...the Jews are the cause of all our troubles!” (*Exodus* 144). They sought the help of the British to check the Jewish flight to Palestine. Uris maintains that “the Jews were locked in a country that did not want them and locked out of the country that did want them” (145). After his release by the Russian army, the doctors were “astonished that he had been able to live through the years of privation and punishment without incurring permanent damage...The injury to his mind was something else...He became morose and slipped into melancholia and his mental state approached the thin borderline that separates the sane from the insane” (142-3).

*Exodus* traces the troublesome life-journey of the Jews in other parts of the world also apart from Europe. The hellish atmosphere of the Jewish Pale is revealed through the life story of Yakov and Jossi—the Rabinsky Brothers, the father and uncle respectively of Ari Ben Canaan, the protagonist. The Jews established their settlement in Western Russia in 1804, where they had enjoyed freedom under the Khazars. But the Czar rulers excluded them from the mainstream by pushing them to overcrowded settlements. Alienation in the host land where they had till then accepted, forced them to prefer their unique language Yiddish and Hebrew over Russian and live in their specific social system, adhering to the Biblical and Talmudic teachings. Grossberg brilliantly links language and identity, showing how the voiceless uses language as a means to self-discovery. “The instability of any dominant

identity - since it must always and already incorporate its negation - is the result of the very nature of language and signification. The subaltern represents an inherent ambiguity or instability at the centre of any formation of language (or identity) which constantly undermines language's power to define a unified stable identity” (90).

The Czar government found the Jews a better tool to deviate popular attention from their tyranny. They introduced methods of extermination that included various forms of murder, exile, and religious conversion. Robin Cohen rightly observes thus in *Global Diasporas* about the situation in the Jewish Pale: “Those who stayed in the Pale often sought to preserve community life and their rabbinical traditions. This turned out to be a poor option. The pogroms continued with increasing intensity under the tsars, while there was little respite under the Bolsheviks, who frequently denounced Jews as troublemakers or exploiters” (32).

*Exodus* categorizes different reactions to victimhood through the characters Jossi and Yakov. “Jossi was as mild as Yakov was wild...Yakov’s fertile brain in Jossi’s powerful body could well have created a superman” (*Exodus* 195). Their financial instability in the Jewish Pale and the widespread anti-Semitism by the latter half of Nineteenth century led to the imprisonment of most of the Jews which prevented them from any social or commercial contact with the Russians. They were inclined to follow their own ways of living in the ghetto by strict adherence to Holy Laws and religious and cultural observances and “Within the ghetto the Jews organized their own government under the over-all leadership of the rabbis” (196). The novel thus attests the Jewish victimhood in Russia from the Nineteenth Century till the Holocaust.

The inmates of the Pales devoted their time teaching and learning Talmud. Jossi and Yakov also learned “the great post-Talmudic scholars—Moses Maimonides

and Rashi” (197). The Anti-Semitic wave and the unrest which followed the assassination of Czar Alexander II in 1881 by the revolutionaries drastically changed the Jewish life in Russia. The young Jews were attracted towards the rebellious concept propagated by the Lovers of Zion that “auto-emancipation” is the only solution for the Jewish problem in Russia. Yakov represents those angry young Jews who associated with the Lovers of Zion against the will of his father Simon Rabinsky, a pious old Jew who believed in the power of suffering and endurance, “... being a Jew entails certain obligations” (204). Yakov symbolizes the enlightened Jew who evolves from victim to résistant and believes that “If we are created in the image of God... then the Messiah is in all of us and the Messiah inside me keeps telling me to make my way back to the Promised Land with the Lovers of Zion” (205).

The turmoil and chaos in Russia affected the Jews adversely. They were killed indiscriminately, and their synagogues burnt down. Yakov avenged the killing of his father Simon by the murdering Andrev, their local leader. Reaching Palestine, they decide to completely transform themselves by adopting Hebrew names. Jossi, who became Barak Ben Canaan maintained a compassionate relationship with the Arab neighbours while Yakov, later known as Akiva retained his hatred towards the others and joined the Maccabees, a violent Jewish group. The Rabinsky Brothers represent two sects of Jews who evolved from the same circumstances of victimization.

Throughout *Exodus*, the master-slave equation is maintained to distinguish the Jews and the others. This ideology is followed in the other novels also. Thus, it becomes evident that the pattern of Uris’ novels is deconstruction of the known versions of world history by incorporating Jewish experiences and their spiritual journey, thereby proving, as Stuart Hall states, in “Cultural Identity and Diasporas”, “Cultural identity... is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’. It belongs to the



future as much as to the past” (225). He suggests that cultural identity is the most valued and at the same time the least fixed one, the formation of which is decided by the passing of time. This is because, as Terry Eagleton remarks, “Culture is in some sense more primordial than politics, but also less pliable. Men and women are more likely to take to the streets over cultural and material issues rather than purely political ones— the cultural being what concerns one’s spiritual identity...” (61).

The characters in the novel resort to various strategies to reclaim the lost cultural identity by either participating in resistance movements or in efforts to establish a nation of their own. Fictional characters are placed in real situations, thus fusing fancy and fact, in order to reconstruct world history in such a way that the voice of the unsung warriors in a known battle are also acknowledged.

Ari Ben Canaan and Mossad Aliyah Bet plan to transport three hundred children from Cyprus to Palestine in a ship called Exodus, by violating all the immigrant rules put forth by the British. The novel employs Mark Parker, the American Journalist as the arbiter of the recreation of the historical event. Parker’s reports attract world attention and public criticisms against the British policies. Vienna, France and Italy offered their support to Mossad who was seeking means to take the children to Palestine through Czechoslovakia. Dov and Karen’s involvement in the mission suggest how they evolve from their status as victims to résistants. This checked the British intervention in the issue to prevent the ship from reaching Palestine. With the support of France, Holland, Denmark and Italy, the Jews proclaimed that, “We will settle for nothing more nor less than Palestine” (*Exodus* 154). The children started a hunger strike on the deck and on the eighty fifth day they threatened of voluntary suicide which made the British take favourable decision “to

let the Exodus sail for Palestine” (*Exodus* 188). This event, which is added to the factual incident gives an emotional flavour to the historical element.

The interrogations made by the author into the historicity of the Jewish cause are deliberate interventions made to state that the loss of identity is a very serious issue. Stuart Hall observes about the crisis of identity in “The Question of Cultural Identity” while quoting Kobena Mercer,

[The] loss of a stable ‘sense of self’ is sometimes called the dislocation or de-centering of the subject. This set of double displacements - de-centering individuals both from their place in the social and cultural world, and from themselves - constitutes a ‘crisis of identity’ for the individual. As the cultural critic, Kobena Mercer, observes, ‘identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty.’ (597)

The Jews are now able to rediscover their lost self, cultural identity, homeland, and liberation after the establishment of Israel. As Grossberg manifests, “identity is always constituted out of difference” (93) Their struggle to reach the end of the road was too tough and incredible. Their sufferings were endless and unheard of in history. The photographer-writer Jason Francisco rightly maintains thus in “Diasporic Investigations”, “If Jewish history speaks in the present tense—the tense in which texts speak—the Jewish present speaks in the future tense, the tense of possibility” (89).

*Mila 18*, widely known as a novel of resistance, exemplifies the trajectory of Jewish subjugation in Poland before and after the German occupation. Published in the year 1961, the novel progresses through narration and journal entries made by Alexander Brandel and Ervin Rosenblum. The novel opens with Brandel’s entry in the

journal that records the Nazi atrocities. The novel examines, from a Jewish perspective, the ordeals encountered by the Jews for centuries, asserting the noble stand of the Jews. Their staunch adherence to Torah and its commandments is depicted as the foundation of their life. In the history of Jewish Diaspora, the marginalization and victimization of the Jews in the host land had been thought of as a key factor in stimulating the need for resistance. *Mila 18* retells the saga of the most striking Jewish resistance called the Warsaw ghetto Uprising of 1943.

*Mila 18* emphasizes the notion that the past modifies and alters the present and decides the future of the Jews. The continuous diasporic experience, the Holocaust ordeals, and the persistent negligence from other communities determine the cultural coherence of the Jews and predispose the resurgence of their quest for cultural identity. Identity is often looked upon as an ideological construct determined by the socio-cultural situations of living. The Indian academician M.S. Nagarajan rightly observes thus, “Personal identity shapes, and is, in turn, shaped by the culture in which it exists. Cultural categories such as insanity, or madness are a matter of definition... All historical analysis is subjective. Historians only position themselves to interpret history” (178). The cultural identity of the Jews who lived in hostile countries had been shaped by the victimization they faced during the Diaspora and *Mila 18* elucidates the history of the victimhood of the Polish-Jews.

The cultural identity of the Jews was shaped by their being exiles in various host lands. Poland was one among those hostile nations which illtreated and marginalised the Jews. *Mila 18* probes into the traumatic experience of the Jews in Poland, and their efforts to overcome the resultant alienation. The novel demonstrates the emergence of the Jews from the status of victimhood to fighters, through an identification with their homeland. By borrowing Robin Cohen’s opinions on

Diaspora, Floya Anthias examines the specific traits of Diaspora communities thus, “Diasporas will continue to identify with the original homeland (or wider ethnic category if there is no territorial homeland). The homeland that Cohen refers to is metaphoric rather than territorial; the group need not be identified with a nation state but must constitute itself as a population category, usually a nation or ethnic group” (3). The ethnicity manifested by the Jews can be regarded as a trait of the Diaspora, yet their fight for the realization of liberation in the homeland is surged from their state of victimhood in the Diaspora.

*Mila 18* offers a kaleidoscopic view of the multiple facets in the character of the Jews, thus dismantling their stereotyping as uncouth savages responsible for the calamities of the world. Colin Holmes deliberates on the literary stereotyping of Jews in his seminal work, *Anti-Semitism in British Society, 1876-1939* thus:

We need to know far more about [the Jewish stereotypes] expressed outside of the heat of battle by those who do not figure as central characters in the history of anti-Semitism. By presenting particular images of Jews, whether literary or verbal, writers and artists hoped to achieve an identification with their various audiences and it is through such sources ... that we are able to obtain a glimpse of the more general perceptions of Jews... (114)

Apart from Jewish characters, certain non-Jews also find a place in the novel, presented with a clear agenda to support the Jewish cause. This novel brings to light the endurance and determination of the Jews to their noble cause by eliminating the negative implications imposed upon them by the anti-Semites. Several other non-Jewish figures are employed by Uris to assist the Jews in their efforts to survive.

Andrei Androfski, the strong-willed Jewish officer in the Polish Army is the protagonist and resembles Ari Ben Canaan of *Exodus*. An equally important character is Wolf Brandel, the teenager who resembles David in *Exodus*. These characters are realistically delineated by associating them with the politics of the times. Sharon D.

Downey and Richard A. Kallan make certain interesting remarks about Uris' stand points regarding the Jewish cause:

In presenting Jew as a fighter, for instance, Uris refutes one stereotype by substituting another. 'The lowest writers on my totem pole,' he notes, 'are those Jewish novelists who berate the Jewish people'; writers depicting 'caricatures of the Jewish people...the wily businessman, the brilliant doctor... the tortured son... the coward'; authors 'who spend their time damning their fathers, hating their mothers, wringing their hands and wondering why they were born.' These portraits, Uris believes, are erroneous: 'We Jews are not what we have been portrayed to be.' (200).

Uris makes seminal interpolations into history as in *Exodus* using his fictional characters in *Mila 18* also. Since the political milieu of the novel is the war time Poland, the Holocaust and the consequent hopelessness are its main concerns. Uris employs characters to delineate the horrible experiences of the Jews along with their perspectives about their diasporic status. Since it is not mandatory for all the Jews to resist hegemony, some characters in the novel try to appropriate themselves to the culture of the host land, while some others find it extremely difficult and painful. While Dr Paul Bronski, Andrei's brother-in-law, represents the sophisticated, assimilated modern Jew, Andrei Androfski represents the religious Jew, rooted in his culture. Hence the arguments between Anderi and Bronski denote the conflict of perspectives between various types of Jews. Bronski's words substantiate his desire to assimilate, "... Judaism means nothing to me and I want no part of it. And you go to your holy-roller Zionist meetings not believing what you hear, looking for false

salvation”” (*Mila* 30). Each character represents a different ideology and the novel explores the history of Poland from different perspectives.

As the novel is set in the period of Holocaust, the plot is all about victimization and the urge to resist it. Hence the characters are mostly résistants who try to break loose from the fetters of racist hegemony in order to attain selfhood. The unrest and crisis during the Second World War and the German invasion of Poland act as the catalysts in the master-slave relations. The novelist rewrites the history of Europe torn by the World War, rejecting the monologic discourses with the help of subtexts, mainly the voices of the muted Jews.

### **The incipient Fighters/Fighters in the making**

The protagonist Andrei Androfski is portrayed as an angry young man, growing into a potential fighter. His character is shaped by his past experiences and his service in the army as also his association with the Jewish organization called Bathyrans. *Mila 18* explores the history of Jews right from the time of the Second Temples through the exposition of Andrei’s past. The saga of the Polish-Jews’ journey through persecution is rendered by Andrei’s childhood experiences of listening to his father’s reflections about their past and the Rabbi Gewirtz’s Torah lessons:

...In the Crimea during the Byzantine era, the Khazars, a war-like people, adopted Judaism, but in the tenth century the Khazars were defeated and dispersed by the Russians much as the Jews were driven from the Holy Land. Jews suffered maltreatment during the years of their dispersion in all countries of their dispersion from massacres to expulsions. The fever of Jew baiting heightened to a new level during the Spanish Inquisition, when torture and bestiality were as common as daily prayer.

In the Dark Ages the Jews were blamed for the Black Plague and for witchcraft and for ritual murder...The massacres became so bloody that wave after wave of Jews fled...to the newly emerging kingdom of Poland. Here the Jews were welcomed and this was their real beginning, along with the beginning of Poland itself. Jews were needed, for there was no middle class between the landed gentry and the peasants. The Jews brought with them their arts, crafts, trades, professions and ability as merchants. (*Mila 57*)

The novel records the rise of the Roman Church in Poland and the subsequent oppression of the Jews which continued for centuries culminating in the construction of the world's first ghetto in Poland. They were delimited by cultural, social, political and economic impositions.

The novel illustrates the Jewish persecution and victimization in the name of their difference from the Poles in terms of their culture, language, and literature. These experiences made them contemplate their homeland and long for it. When the Cossacks of Ukraine started a revolution against the Polish feudal lords, the Jews were also massacred indiscriminately, from which "the Jews of Poland never recovered" (59). Their interest in reading their Holy Books led to the emergence of the cult of cabala: "The cabala, a study of mystic meanings of Holy Books, was taught by cabalistic rabbis who preached Zohar and the Book of Creation" (*Mila 59*). These cults helped them find meanings and solutions for their sufferings, but many false messiahs took birth during this time. Yet with the emergence of Hassidim, they plunged into a world of deep prayers which sometimes went to the extremes of offering relief to pains through frenzied prayers.

The American philosopher-author Howard Wettstein has attributed a holy purpose to the Jewish missions in his book *Diasporas and Exiles: Varieties of Jewish*

*Identity*: “Indeed, for much of Jewish history there has been a kind of marriage between adversity and theological ideas, specifically the dominant theodicy that sees suffering as punishment for waywardness from God. Jewish religious thinking has thus made sense of and given meaning to Jewish suffering” (12). The cultural identity of the Jews is treated with equal passion in *Mila 18* also. The strong willed résistants are portrayed as superheroes with mysterious powers.

Rabbi Solomon’s ideology of Zionism is illustrated thus, “His Zionism... was certainly the purest form, for it came from the books of the Bible which told him a “Messiah” would return to earth and lead the scattered children of Israel back to their “Promised Land”. This was not Zionism to him but rather fundamental Judaism” (*Mila* 141). This suggests that their beliefs are formulated either by religion or by culture. Uris suggests that the Jews endured the victimization by believing that sacrifice and suffering are their priorities. It is expressed in the comment made by Alexander Brandel, the learned historian in the novel thus, ““From the time of the First Temple we have been massacred because of scapegoatism, expedience for the ruling politicians, passion outbursts, ignorance. The Crusades, the Inquisition, the Worms massacre, the Cossack uprisings. Never before have we been faced with a cold –blooded organized, calculated and deliberate plot to destroy us (*Mila* 143).

The novel asserts that their lives are closely linked to the religious texts as they find reasons for everything in them. Brandel validates this by naming his son Moses, “*Moses is a common name... The first Moses was also born in an era of duress, and when Pharaoh ordered all Jewish male infants slain he was hidden in the bulrushes. With this sentimentality and much luck, Moses Brandel will come through the difficult days ahead*” (*Mila* 184). Such instances are provided by Uris to portray the cultural inclination of the Jews.



Poland has been marked in the annals of the war period history as a land of dispute over geographical and political advances. *Mila 18* situates its characters in their socio-political milieu and makes a psychological probe into their dilemmas, especially due to their being exploited for the purposes of the war. Colin Holmes significantly remarks about the Jewish subjugation and about anti-Semitism in Europe thus, “In its most extreme expression between 1876 and 1939 [anti-semitism] assumed the form of an ideological racist anti-semitism when a genetic based hostility was manifested towards all the Jews, who were regarded as a totally unassimilable element in society and as exercising a dangerous influence on their non-Jewish environment” (1-2). By the end of 1700, when Poland fought against the Russian Tsars and the King of Prussia, the Jews were called upon to fight for Poland which continued as a general practice until the Russian invasion of Poland. Afterwards, Poland was converted to a land of ghettos called the Jewish Pale of settlement. The 1800s witnessed mass murder of the Jews by the Tsar supported by the Russian Orthodox Church. The demand for a new spirit was inevitable among the Jews that gave birth to the Lovers of Zion. These historical incidents are recorded in *Mila 18*, thus making Uris’ version of history authentic.

When Theodor Herzl emerged as the head of Zionism, he planted the seeds of resistance on the Jews. This attracted the young Jews to Zionism, as shown by Andrei who imbibed the notion that victimization always leads to resistance. Joseph Massad explains that “Ever since Zionism embarked on its colonial-settler project in Palestine, Zionist history and Jewish history have become one. Zionism was not seen as a break with Jewish history but rather its legitimate continuation. The Diasporic condition had derailed Jewish history from its proper path, and Zionism was going to redirect it toward its intended telos of statehood” (*Mila 52*). Andrei’s father represents the old

generation Jews who oppose the use of violent means like Zionism to attain cultural freedom. This ideology is reflected in his advice to Andrei, ““You have not been to synagogue for six months. You are now twenty years of age and you have not found out yet that the price of being a Jew calls for patience and prayer and acceptance of your position” (62).

The Jews defied the Germans who had prohibited them from spiritual teachings by educating their children about the Books of Torah and Talmud in the secret underground synagogues. They preserve the menorah, the sacred candelabra, and the sacred Torah scrolls. When the German officer Stutze attacks Rabbi Solomon’s Synagogue, he discovers the Torah scrolls which included the five books of Moses—the heart of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. His comment makes its value clearer, “I understand old Jews often die for this trash” (195). Rabbi’s response makes it factual, “Kill me, but do not harm the Torah” (ibid.). The Jews are ready to sacrifice their lives to preserve their rituals and culture. Even while living in other countries, they preserve their customs as they refuse to shave off their beards or ear locks. They walk with heads held high despite the fact that their identity had only brought them calamities. Andrei’s aide Simon Eden suggests thus, ““We are a race of individuals like none other. We are savage about our right to seek truth as individuals. We are ridiculous sometimes at the numbers of answers we have to the same problem or how we can confuse a simple issue with conversation”” (279).

The novel also presents how the Poles led a serene life while the Jews suffered endlessly. This is shown through the characterization of Fryderyk Rak, Gabriela’s father. The new Poland, which was freed from hundred years of occupation and emerged as a happening place, is realistically portrayed in the novel. The depiction of Fryderyk’s involvement with the hydroelectric projects of Poland and the building of

a Polish sea port at Gdynia provides authenticity to the fictional rendering. Gabriela Rak's life in Poland after her inheritance of her dead father's wealth and acquiring academic and professional excellence represents how Poland, especially Warsaw became a paradise for a Pole while it remained a cauldron for the Jews.

This disparity becomes visible in the novel during the interaction between Andrei, the Jew and his girlfriend Gabriela, a Pole. To Gabriela's remarks that, "You must certainly know that a wink of your eye you could obtain the family fortunes of every eligible spinster in Warsaw", Andrei replies "I have no desire to be anything but what I am... I am Jew. I am not inclined to do the things necessary to reach a position I don't covet in the first place...in Poland it is the general consensus we use nice tender young Catholic girls like you for sacrificial offerings" (*Mila* 41-42). Andrei explains the plight of the Jews to Gabriela, "Miss Rak, between Jerusalem Boulevard and Stawki Street over three hundred thousand people live in a world you know nothing about. Your high and mighty writers call it the 'Black Continent.' It happens to be my world" (43). These observations by Andrei reveal the disappointment of the young Jews about their current status and the urge to resist subjugation.

Another significant character, Alexander Brandel keeps a record of the day-to-day events in his life, which becomes a pointer to the atrocities committed by the Germans towards the Jews. Uris is inspired by the details he collected from Emmanuel Ringelblum's *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* as well as the experiences shared by the ghetto survivors whom he met as part of his research before writing the novel. Thus, Brandel becomes a replica of Ringelblum and his entries authenticate portions of the narrative as a historical novel. Brandel's Zionist ideologies help him become an intellectual fighter who proposes different strategies to suit the priorities.

Each of his journal entries is a realistic record of the catastrophes.

*Mila 18* narrates through journal entries how the historic incidents after the World War I affected the Jews adversely. With the end of the war Germany was forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919, by the Weimar Republic. The treaty condemned Germany solely responsible for the War, and it also made them pay reparation for the war. It limited the German military to 100,000 men and destroyed their advanced armaments like tanks, air force etc. The emergence of democracy muted Hitler and the Nazis. Also, the economic hyperinflation due to the excessive printing of money in order to pay the war reparation led to the decline of Germany. Germany also lost its invaded territories in other countries including Denmark, Czechoslovakia and France. The newly independent state of Poland including Danzig and Prussia gave the heaviest blow to Germany. Overseas colonies and invaded lands were also divided among other countries like the United Kingdom. Brandel records the impending catastrophe in Poland thus:

*On the news we hear that Russia and Germany are about to announce a non-aggression treaty. It seems impossible that the two sworn enemies on the planet, pledged to destroy each other, have come to this. Hitler's tactics seem logical. He obviously wants to neutralize Russia for the time being to avoid the possibility of a two-front war (that is, if England and France honor their obligations to Poland... (Mila 5)*

*Mila 18* analyses the turning points in the world history with a Jewish perspective. History is rendered through the interactions between the fighter Jews like Andrei and Alexander Brandel and their Jewish and non-Jewish collaborators. The German set back is presented in the novel through the reaction of the people: “We

must save German citizens living under foreign tyranny! A German is always a German!’ ... ‘*Seig Heil!*’ ... ‘Danzig is German! Return the Polish Corridor! Return the 1914 borders! Halt the inhuman treatment of ethnic Germans!’ ... ‘*Seig Heil!*’” (*Mila* 6). The prospect of a second war is anticipated throughout the novel, and the position of Poland is presented to be crucial geographically as well as politically. “We Poles unfortunately got ourselves located between Russia and Germany. The traffic between the two has been busy”, says Dr Paul Bronski, Andrei’s assimilated brother-in-law, who was called upon to join the army.

The novel portrays, as recorded in history, the way World War II was declared. England and France tried to persuade the Germans to withdraw from Poland and they declared war Germany refused. The catastrophe of Poland was more apparent in Warsaw, where the Jews were resettled. “Now Warsaw was completely cut off from communication with the outside world except for one Radio Polskie station operating for the city on an emergency basis” (*Mila* 104). Uris describes the helplessness of Poland which could not compete with the German army, “...Poland asked the horse to fight the tank... Death spewed from skies” (93). As recorded in Brandel’s journals Poland was pathetically destroyed, which adversely affected the future of the Jews. His entry on “September 17, 1939” reads thus:

*The pie has been cut. Poland, the historic whipping boy, is again acting out its ancient historical role. Hitler has paid off in his deal with Stalin. The Soviet armies have jumped us from the rear, obviously moving to pre-set borders. The German invasion has awed the most advanced military thinkers...Somehow, Warsaw continues to hold out, but I wonder if Polish courage does not prove that the bloodless collapse of Austria and Czechoslovakia was the better way out? (102)*

With Hitler's decision to liquidate the ghettos, the world witnessed the transfer of millions of Jews to the extermination camps (sanitation centers) and their consequent death. In Poland the most crowded ghetto was the Warsaw ghetto and the German police force moved thousands of Jews to the camp at Treblinka which resulted in a decrease in a plunge in the Jewish population in Warsaw from 300,000 to nearly 55000.

Similar to Mark Parker's news reports in *Exodus*, the American Swiss News reporter Christopher de Monti in *Mila 18*, a friend of Andrei and Brandel, reports from Poland. "Warsaw was completely cut off from communication with the outside world except for the one Radio Polskie station operating for the city on an emergency basis" (104). However, the Jews in Warsaw take this period of crisis in their stride because their culture and religion teach them that suffering is a part of Jewish life. Chris rightly remarks accusingly, "The trouble with you Jews is that you make yourselves believe you have the priority on suffering" (106). Among the immigrants in Poland evacuated for security reasons, there were 20 American personnel, 15 persons from mixed neutral embassies, 12 civilians, and 80 German prisoners. Yet, the German promise of the release of 390 Polish people in return proved to be deceptive as the exchanged men were amputees.

Brandel's Journal entry dated 27 Sep. 1939 also records the German invasion of Warsaw. Poland was divided into three: [Western Poland- Germany annexed as per the pre-1918 borders; Eastern Poland- under Soviet Russia; and General Government Area under direct German rule] (*Mila* 119). Dr. Franz Koenig, who represents the Ethnic Germans living in Poland, known for his aversion towards the Jews and other enemies of Germany, is appointed as the special deputy to the new Kommissar of Warsaw, Rudolph Schreiker. This posed a serious threat to the existence of the Jews. Koenig's comment to Dr. Bronski is significant here, "Times have changed, Dr Bronski. Get used to it quickly" (122). The old Jewish council was dismissed, and a

new Jewish Civil Authority was formed with Koenig as the head along with other six important Jewish personnel from various fields. He also takes over Paul's house in Zolibrz suburb as that locale was exclusively allotted for German officials. Even such minute incidents are incorporated in the novel to provide a clear picture of the plight of the Jews under German rule. Koenig comments thus when Schreiker tried to punish the Jewish members in the council for their disrespect, "Let us not give them issues to unify them. After all now, we have selected them to do job for us—" (*Mila* 127). This fear of the authorities that the Jews will stick together comes true and later poses a threat to them.

Brandel ironically comments in one of his entries that "*Warsaw has blossomed with German uniforms of all colors*" (123). The novel provides information about how the introduction of new directives marred the cultural and religious freedom of the Jews. Rules were imposed to see to it that the Jews never got an opportunity to be successful in life. Even the converts to other religions as well as people with one Jewish parent or grandparent were to be considered as Jews and were supposed to follow the directives. Any kind of violation was treated with death sentence. Jewish Trade unions, professional societies and other such organizations were regarded as illegal. Germans deceived the Poles by asserting that, "Germany has come here to save Poland from Jewish war profiteers" (130), and "...the German program met with universal success. The Polish people, who could not strike at their noblemen who had now vanished, nor at the Russians who had betrayed them, nor at the Germans who had massacred them, were willing to accept the traditional Jewish scapegoat as the true cause of their latest disaster" (130).

The novel elaborates on the sudden surge in Jewish persecution by relocating the Polish Jews into labor camps because of the German disappointment in war. The Jewish fighters and resistance gangs took efforts to gather information about these camps. Another blow for the tormented Jews was the first raid that occurred in the Warsaw ghetto in the spring of 1941 when 100 Jews were taken away and executed by the Nazis. Deportation of the Jews excluded those who worked in factories and the close relatives of the members of the Civil Authority and the Orphans and Self-Help Society. The deported Jews were loaded into cattle cars; the sick was taken to the cemetery and executed. Rachel Schulkins argues thus in the article, "Burke, His Liberal Rivals and the Jewish Question" about the effects of 'the politics of exclusion' on the Jews:

However, the Jews presence in the land was subjected to a political interpretation which loaded the Jews' presence with clear political and social signifiers, which excluded them from the entire social fabric. Even though these markers were devoid of real meaning, they did provide a syntax that defined the Jew as the doubly other and thus socially undesirable. The word 'Jew' as a socio-political construct became a field of political meanings, dictated by the speaker and writer, which justified the politics of exclusion. (4)

This 'politics of exclusion' was adopted and implemented by the Nazis in various ways. They tried to convince the inmates of the ghettos that the camps were for their welfare. The intention of the authorities was, however, looked upon with suspicion by the inmates who had no other choice but to resist.

Another significant event taken from history is the accession of Horst Von Epp as the Nazi chief of propaganda and the press with the responsibility to conceal the



occurrences in Poland from the world attention. Chris makes use of his relationship with Von Epp to gain access to his home news agency with phone lines re-established and confirms his and Ervin Rosenblum's safe stay in Poland. History synchronizes with the fictional elements when Uris borrows from history. Poland was under the control of Hitler, Himmler, and the SD chief in Berlin, Reinhard Heydrich. Their plan to relocate the Jews to the ghettos by confiscating their property and wealth and ultimately making these Jews laborers or slaves in the German ventures, has a definite part to play in the course of action in *Mila 18*.

The continued arrival of Nazi officials who were nasty, aggressive and intensely committed to a belligerent 'solution' to the Jewish problem, takes the story forward. Officials like Alfred Funk and Sieghold Stutze's arrival in Warsaw aggravated the Jewish grievances. Funk released new orders and marked some areas under quarantine and orders that, "all Jews must move into the quarantine area within two weeks under punishment of death" (*Mila* 200). By 1940 Warsaw was crowded with Jews transported from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Germany by Hitler, and there was insufficient space, food and supplies for them. They were forced to work in the German-owned factories in the ghetto. The well-off Jews purchased 'Aryan Papers' and lived as non-Jews in Warsaw. Andrei, because of his blonde hair and Aryan features, manages to obtain false papers and freely travels out of Warsaw.

The ghetto clusters are graphically portrayed to assert the intensity of the suffering of the Jews and the cruelty of the Nazis, "The big ghetto is on the north. A smaller ghetto is on the south, and this holds the elite— members of the Civil Authority, Militia, wealthy, German, and Austrian deportees. A bridge covered with barbed wire crosses Chlodna Street, connecting the two ghettos. It has been named the Polish corridor" (*Mila* 216). Reinhard Corps had the charge of ghetto security. A

ghetto housed almost five hundred fifty thousand people in its congest space and hence the inmates were infected with epidemics and starvation. As the death rate increased rapidly, the corpses were abandoned on the sidewalks. Gradually, the diminishing aid and financial assistance into the Orphans and Self-Help society and the increasing death rate of people resulted in the closure of the ghetto in the south.

*Mila 18* disparages all the negative connotations associated with the term Jew through subversions and rereadings of history. Rachael Shulkins' deliberations that denounce the observations made by Edmond Burke in *Reflections* are relevant in this context:

Burke employs the appellation 'Jew' to manipulate buried anxieties and long-lasting traditions of hatred and mistrust. Though no doubt Burke's rhetoric reflects a personal prejudice against Jews, his deployment of the language of anti-Semitism is deliberate and structured to validate his political conservatism. Burke takes the popular stereotype of the Jew, with all its negative associations, for granted and simply links it with liberal thought, in the hope that the reader will associate progress with Jews and ultimately choose to repel the first as he does the latter... The word 'Jew' in *Reflections* does not refer to a real living human-being, but simply to a literary and cultural stereotype, which lacks any social or historical specificity. (8)

*Mila 18* makes an earnest attempt to deconstruct the familiar images of Jews popularised in writings even by Jewish authors. Uris creates vigorous, observant Jews who preserve their ethnic values and identity. Real names of places, persons etc., and incidents are borrowed from history, entries, notes etc., are used as tools, to authenticate his arguments regarding the injustices faced by Jews throughout history. These strategies strengthen the reliability of the narration. The novel records that on

September 16, 1942, the Nazis stopped the Jewish deportation called the Big Action. The Jewish population was six hundred thousand when they began the Big Action and it turned to less than fifty thousand at its conclusion.

The report prepared by Andrei about the plan of Germany regarding the Jewish deportation to camps in Treblinka, reveals the German brutality of taking the Jews to the dreadful gas chambers. The consequent release of poisonous gas, Cyclone B, killed thousands of people in minutes. “The German extermination facilities are capable of murdering a minimum of a hundred thousand persons a day in Poland” (*Mila* 352). The Jews who had to wait for their turn to be suffocated were assigned to clean the gas chambers after the process and the bones were preserved to be shipped to Germany for making fertilizers. Such inhuman acts were responsible for kindling the fire of resistance in the minds of the victims. Eben Barnard’s words on cultural resistance validate the need for cultural resistance thus:

Cultural resistance has been seen to be a slippery and flexible concept, easily characterised as rebellious deviance or emancipatory struggle depending on the observer’s ideology... Cultural Resistance is the inevitable, necessary reflection of a need. Wherever there is an imbalance of power there must be resistance. Where immediate redress is not an option, cultures of resistance grow to make the *idea* of change possible. (119-120)

The story of the Jewish cause reaffirms the stark reality that throughout history, liberation was attained only after a long and patient struggle. Those who resist hegemony have to face with equal stoicism, failures and successes. This dilemma is illustrated in the novel through the words of Brandel, ““They are going to destroy our entire culture. How can I preserve a few voices to show the world who we were and what we have given them? Who will be left?”” (*Mila* 362). The novel asserts that

where neither Brandel's journal entries nor Rabbi Solomon's prayers would save the Jews, the guns of Andrei would help them survive at least. It traces the gradual shift of the reaction of the Jews to the hegemonic system from endurance to armed resistance. Brandel's dejection over the inadequacy of his ideologies of enduring keeps him silent and reserved while Ervin Rosenblum takes up the responsibility of recording the journal entries. The remaining Jews in the ghetto who outlived the Big Action were hidden by the resistors in underground tunnels and sewer pipelines. The military resistance forces have divided themselves into four groups, each hiding in a separate section of the ghetto. They secretly stored food and other rations and distributed as per necessity. Their most urgent priority turns out to be sending Chris out of Poland, so that his reports might bring the world attention to the Jewish prospects.

The novel realistically explores the historical happenings, as when Finland, an ally of Germany, refused to turn over her Jewish community to the Nazis, it marked the beginning of the downfall of the Nazi Germany. Following this, Denmark, Rumania and Bulgaria decided the same. This historical occurrence is presented through the final meeting of Good Fellowship Club and their decision to bury all of its fifty journals, along with photos, poems, and essays under milk cans and metal boxes. As they fear something more vicious to happen, they keep only Chris and Rosenblum aware of their exact location. This is an exact replica of the situation faced by the Jews in the ghettos during the same period. As the Jews anticipated, the Nazis decided for the final solution, which meant complete extermination of the Jews in the ghettos. The Nazi justification of the vicious act is rendered through the comment made by Alfred Funk, the German officer in charge of the final solution thus: "... the obliteration of the Jews is our holy mission, just as the obliteration of other peoples has been a holy mission for other empires" (*Mila* 402). The German attack on Mila

19 and the subsequent Jewish resistance reflects the beginning of the Warsaw ghetto Uprising, which is recorded in the journal by Brandel as “*The beginning of return to a status of dignity we have not known for two thousand years*” (429).

*Mila 18* offers a kaleidoscopic view of the war time European history, including the voices of a forgotten or ignored race. Those voices are also woven into history and illuminated through a powerful narration which blurs boundaries between fact and fiction.

*QB VII*, a passionate court room drama, offers a fictionalized version of the Nazi atrocities in the Concentration camps that shocked the entire world. The novel questions the defiance of medical ethics by the doctor who served the camps in support of the Nazi rulers. The story unfolds through the journey made by Abraham Cady, a Jewish Lieutenant in search of material for his novel *The Holocaust*. Uris creates an imaginary camp called Jadwiga in order to delineate the dark and frightening atmosphere of the real concentration camps all over Europe. The novel also critiques the biased judgement which dismisses the case by letting free the doctor who ill-treated the inmates, for want of evidence.

Memory is used as a powerful tool to explicate the psychological trauma of the victims of Nazi sadism. Memory has been utilised in various fields including the holocaust studies which help to narrate more convincingly the past wrong doings and the psychic trauma of the sufferers. Memory plays a key role in contemporary constructions of identity in areas like Gender, race, and Diaspora. When memory becomes collective, it encompasses a whole race or culture and becomes cultural memory as in the case of the experiences of the colonial, the diasporic, or racial community. Uris uses memory in this novel to argue how the past influences the

present, as also how the present shapes our understanding of our past. Guy Beiner, the Israeli historian remarks how in the Irish history, Provincial Communists directly affected by the French invasion remembered historical events (10).

The memory of the Hungarian Jew, Eli Janos about his traumatic experiences and the involvement of Dr Kelno in castrating him and his fellowmen leads the story forward. His failure to identify the Doctor in the court turns the case in favour of the victimiser. However, this failure cannot negate the pain, shame and the bitter hatred of the community as his remembrance can be taken as a testimonial of the entire race. Consequently, the cultural memory becomes a solid factor in the formation of their identity, as John Storey explains in *Inventing Popular Culture*: “A large part of who we are seems to belong in the past, that is, our sense of self seems grounded in our “roots”. Our autobiographical narratives are primarily sustained by memory. Memory seems to be at the very core of identity; it connects who we are to who we once were” (81).

When more voices join that of Janos, the trial room dramatically gets converted to a platform which offers spaces for polyphonic articulations about the Nazi outrageousness. Uris maintains in this novel his stand that the Jews created Israel as part of their resistance which stemmed from their humiliation as that was the only way to assert their identity. The frequent upsurge in the debates about identity shows how severe its loss is felt in all walks of life, as remarked by Zygmunt Bauman in *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, “...a few decades ago ‘identity’ was nowhere near the centre of our thoughts, remaining but an object of philosophical meditation. Today, though, ‘identity’ is ‘the loudest talk in town’, the burning issue on everybody’s mind and tongue” (16).

Another Jewish character Peter Van Damm, whose testimony about castration of the young by over exposure to radiation, is another important clue to the role of Dr Kelno, the sadist in eliminating the race of the Jews from the earth. His memory also becomes a means to throw light on the inhuman acts of the Nazis:

...I was transferred to Barrack III, which held the raw materials for experiments. At first I was to look after six younger Dutch boys who had their testicles irradiated by prolonged exposure to X ray. It was part of an experiment to sterilize all the Jews... in the evening of November 10, 1943... fourteen of us were taken from Barrack III to Barrack V. Eight men and six women. I was the first to go...Adam Kelno removed both of my testicles... Tessler took care of the men afterwards. Without him I don't think I would have lived. (*QB* 195)

This individual memory also becomes part of the collective memory, showing how such untold miseries impacted the evolution of the Jewish identity. The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs reviews in *On Collective Memory* thus, "...the individual memory, in order to corroborate and make precise and even to cover the gaps in its remembrance, relies upon, relocates itself within, momentarily merges with, the collective memory" (50-51).

The medical register kept by Egon Sobotnik, the Czech prisoner, which is produced before the court becomes a valid evidence against the doctor who carried out the operations without anaesthesia. Dr Konstanty Lotaki the associate of Kelno gives testimony in support of Dr Kelno, though all the other witnesses go against Kelno's plea. The defendant presents victims and fellow doctors who were in the camps of Jadwiga before the court like Yolan Shoret and her twin sister Sima Halevy,

Moshe Bar Tov, Edgar Beets, Ida Peretz, Emma Peretz, Daniel Dubrowski, Helene Prinz, Basil Marwick and Pieter Van Damm (Menno Donker) who were all either castrated, sterilized or ovariectomized by Dr Kelno.

The post-surgical periods were also horrible without proper care. Also, they were kept under radiation by a semi-skilled person and the surgery was conducted in a hurry. Mostly the removed organ proved to be healthy. The surgeries were conducted on healthy persons based on court orders, as a punishment for smuggling, unregistered prostitution, underground works and mental illness. The medical records produced by Sobotnik proves Dr Kelno's involvement in more than three hundred and fifty surgeries a year.

The cross examination interestingly provides a clue also to the life experiences of Kelno, the perpetrator of the crimes. It is revealed that he too was a political prisoner in the Jadwiga Camps for his underground activities in collaboration with the Polish Nationalists. It was only later that he was identified as a doctor and had been given that privilege of castrating the Jews under strict supervision of SS Dr Colonel Adolph Voss and Dr Colonel Otto Flensburg. They had acquired permission from Himmler to do experiments in human guinea pigs including sexual sterilization by irradiating the testicles and abdomens for a long time. He was assisted by a Jewish doctor Boris Dimshits who was later sent to the gas chambers for being a Jew. Kelno and Dr Konstanty Lotaki were selected by Voss to assist him afterwards. "Voss states he must carry out his radiation program on a minimum of a thousand persons to get conclusive results" (273). According to Kelno they were operating the dead organs damaged due to irradiation during the Experiments done by Voss. The Defendant Jury condemns both the doctors as collaborators of the same crime. The testimonies of the



witnesses undermine the claims made by Kelno regarding the usage of anaesthesia prior to the surgery.

Apart from details about the surgeries, other kinds of tortures also prevailed in the camps, as revealed through the memories of the inmates. Their arms were tattooed with a number and a triangle to depict Jewishness. They were identified and recorded using these numbers. What had happened in Barrack V in the name of experiment was truly another mode of extermination. The living conditions in the camps were meagre, as “[they] were stacked up in layers of six. Some three to four hundred...with a single stove in the center, a sink, two toilets, and two showers.. ate from tin plates...” (*QB* 298).

Uris legitimises his narration about the operation using his knowledge about legal and medical terms. The verdict of the trial holds up the plaintiff’s claims even as Kelno is condemned for attempting fifteen thousand surgeries without anaesthesia, as the defendant fails to prove this, since evidence show that he had committed only three hundred and fifty surgeries with proper use of anaesthesia by experienced hands. Hence the court demands Abe Cady to pay one half of a penny as expense for his damages, which is actually a mockery of the Jewish cause. The novel asserts that denial of justice is usual in the case of the Jews but that does not deter them from fighting for their cause. They always have to fight against odds in order to establish their identity. This fight is usually against the authorities, and sometimes amongst themselves, even within the camps, where hierarchies were decided by the authorities to divide and rule.

Even within the camps there were “caste system” (*QB* 272). Professionals, prisoners in charge of fellow prisoners etc., received special treatment. Stuart Hall’s

remarks about the relationship between othering and identity formation is significant in this context:

Above all, and directly contrary to the form in which they are constantly invoked, identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the 'positive' meaning of any term—and thus its 'identity'—can be constructed. (*Questions 5-6*)

In such milieus of othering, the solidarity of the Jews who stick together in adversity contributes to their gradual evolution as individuals with an identity of their own. Various instances to prove this solidarity validate this stance. For example, there were prisoners or doctors saving the lives of fellow mates by exchanging the names of young Jews who were chosen for experiments with either dead or old Jews.

While quoting Halbwach's ideas on collective memory, John Storey comments that, "remembering is always situated in the present; memories do not take us into "the past", rather they bring "the past" into the present" (84). When the stories of torture unfold through the memories of the victims, the past is transported to the present and it touches the listeners in the courtroom who are deeply moved, though it is already known to them.

The bitterness and anger that made the Jews endure all the torture is evident in their recollection. They survived the ordeals to tell the world their story as testimonies and there by uphold their cause. The anger of Janos, Van Damm etc., towards Dr Kelno is the major reason for their survival. The novel depicts the notion that, "We must continue to protest our demise until we are allowed to live in peace" (*QB* 281).

A. L. Rogers II rightly observes thus, “Uris’s guiding aim throughout his career has been to dramatize the injustice of cultural prejudice” (507).

*The Haj* probes into the Jewish history by including the Arab version also which is a decisive factor in determining the political discourses about Israel-Palestine conflicts. The novel uses the theme of victimhood to illustrate the dichotomy between the victims (Jews and Arabs) and the oppressors (the British). It emphasizes the fact that without the Arabs, the history of the Jews is incomplete. The author’s sympathetic attitude towards the Arabs is an efficient narrative approach Uris uses to depict the inhabitants of Tabah (an Arabic village in the Ayalon Valley near Jerusalem) as victims of Ottoman Feudalism. “Drought, pestilence and disease added to a misery that had brought the entire Holy Land to the brink of collapse” (*Haj* 16). Tabah was also a feasting destination for the nomadic Wahhabis, who looted the pilgrims during the harvest time.

The history of Palestine is rendered by Uris as a saga of victimhood, as the people were deceived multiple times by various rulers. Uris explores the political prospects of the Europeans in Palestine, the victimhood of the Arabs and the Jews, and their non-conformity of identity in the homeland. The Arab protagonist Haj Ibrahim is presented as a victim of the British power politics and the Arab religious strategy. He remains compassionate towards the Jews, despite the prevalent animosity. The later realization of the molestation of his wives and daughter by the violent Arab terrorists leads to his suicide. Elia Zureik maintains thus in his review of *The Haj*, “The cause of the defeat and destruction of the Arabs is to be found in their psyche, culture and religion” (119).

The novel emphasizes the supremacy of the Jewish culture over that of the Arabs. Ibrahim's comment validates this point. "First the Crusaders, then the Turks, then the British, then the French... everyone telling us our ways are no good and we must change" (*Haj* 56). Gideon Asch, the Jewish prototype in the novel, also reflects this stand, "[Arabs] use Islam as an excuse for your failures, an excuse to quietly accept tyranny, an excuse for not using sweat and ingenuity to make out of this land...Islam cannot hide from the world any longer. With the Jews here, we can give you a window to a world you can't avoid" (*ibid*). As a historic novel *The Haj* gives space to the Arab version also, subverting the known monologic discourses about the Jewish case. Uris slightly deviates from his own one-sided historical perspectives making them more inclusive, sprinkling here and there some Arab voices too. However, he incorporates them in such a way that it authenticates the Jewish cause. For instance, Ibrahim's appreciates the Jewish nature thus, "So the Jews enter Tabah. Put up the white flags and do not fight. If someone remains in the village, the Jews will not force you out. That is their weakness. Even if the Jews...do capture Tabaha, they will respect your presence" (184).

The novel also asserts the inseparable nature of Jewish and Arab heritage through Gideon's words to Ibrahim, "The Jews belong here. We come from the same father. We are both sons of Abraham. There must be place in our father's house for us...There have always been Jews and Arabs in Palestine and there always will be" (56). Andrew M. Greeley in *Irish Love* opines, "History and historical fiction is necessarily not the same thing. The purpose of history is to narrate events as accurately as one can. The purpose of historical fiction is to enable a reader through the perspective of characters in the story to feel that she or he is present at the events. Such a goal obviously requires some modification of the events" (333). The historic

novels of Uris emphasize the need to look at history from multiple angles. His argument is that history cannot stand apart from geography and that it is not static. It must be continuously analysed and understood as multi-layered. His novels establish the evolution of Jews from victims to fighters through all the possible means of resistance. Robin Cohen attests the reasons for this evolution of Jewish diaspora in “Diasporas and the Nation-State: From Victims to Challengers” thus:

The history of the Jewish diaspora in the modern nation-state is thus one of endurance and achievement but also of anxiety and distrust...it is difficult for many Jews in the diaspora not to ‘keep their guard up’, not to feel the weight of their history and the clammy fear that brings the demons in the night to remind them of their murdered ancestors. The sense of unease or difference that members of the diaspora feel in their countries of settlement often results in a felt need for protective cover in the bosom of the community. (511-2)

Perpetual victimization caters to the need for resistance. Jewish resistance in any form was significant since they did not have any scope of proliferation and Uris’ fictional discourses substantiate their ability to unite and resist. Antonio Iturbe rightly observes thus in *The Librarian of Auschwitz* “In a place like Auschwitz, where everything is designed to make you cry, a smile is an act of defiance” (196).

## Chapter 3

### Survival Through Cultural Resistance

Widely propagated anti-Semitism along with the ill-treatment of the Jews at the hands of Nazis in all the German occupied Jewish host lands symbolized the world's hostility and antipathy towards the Jews. As Robin Cohen observes in *Global Diasporas*, "Those Jews who remained, either as landlords or small businesspeople, or as highly visible followers of religious sects, became the targets of furious hate campaigns by some militant black leaders in the 1980s" (40). The social exploitation, literary stereotyping, and political propagations contributed to the victimization of the Jews which climaxed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the Holocaust. The Israeli activist Alouph Hareven maintains that Jewish 'defencelessness' was a major reason for their victimization,

Defencelessness was imposed by the non-Jewish majority; it also became a part of the Jewish world outlook. Passivity in face of one's fate, acceptance of one's fate at the hands of others as God's will, a self-image of oneself as a holy sacrifice to God's name, "qiddush hashem," dying for the sanctification of God's name, all these became central values for a vast number of Jews... And so Jews were humiliated, persecuted, tortured, exiled, murdered—in practically every country of Europe... (150)

The Jewish passivity at the hands of oppressors was the consequence of their Diaspora status which assigned them a minority position in every society.

However, persistent victimization forced them to defend themselves and resist as part of survival strategy in crucial times. Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner theorize the nature of resistance by acknowledging the accepted definitions in "Conceptualizing Resistance". They maintain that "... scholars have

recognized resistance in a tremendous diversity of behaviors and settings. Perhaps the most commonly studied mode of resistance is material or physical, involving the resisters' use of their bodies or other material objects. "Resistance" is most readily thought to refer to social movements" (535). Jewish resistance also refers to their social and cultural movements towards liberation.

The Jewish route of existential quest is a highly complicated one of being culturally deep-rooted while simultaneously being impacted by the foreign cultures where they sought refuge in various stages of their exodus. The fact that they were denied both geographical abode and cultural freedom played a vital role in moulding their identity which thus became an amalgam of the inherited and acquired subjectivities. Jewish identity is one that has evolved gradually through their spiritual and physical sojourn, gathering experiences, mostly painful and demoralizing. Their story is therefore one of becoming, rather than of being, as John Storey remarks, while validating Stuart Hall's notions on identity formation.

Identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than 'being.' Although identities are clearly about 'who we think we are' and 'where we think we came from,' they are also about 'where we are going.' Identities are always a narrative of the self becoming...identities are increasingly less about 'roots' and more about 'routes'. (82)

Identity directly involves the past, present and future of the community in general and individual in particular. Even though the "roots" and "routes" (Hall, *Questions 4*) are significant in the production of identity, Hall insists on the prominence of "routes" or the ways through which identities are created and developed. To borrow Hall's idea of identity, while cultural identity becomes the sole way of expressing the methods of

“becoming” (ibid.), what becomes more prominent is the preservation of the same. Accordingly, the Jewish identity has acquired new meanings and connotations as it has grown or intensified in the course of time. It has gradually evolved through humiliation and the resultant resistance.

The significance of identity increases as it attains a centrality of inquiry. Preservation of identity necessitates the prevention of distortions or hampering of the same by external agencies. Encroachments into specific cultures often have to face resistances as evident in different periods of history. For the Jews, the Diaspora has been a trying time to uphold their ethnic self and to embrace its essence which was necessary to convince themselves and others that theirs is a culture of solidarity and cohesion. Harley Erdman, the theatre writer, appropriately observes about the nature of Jewish ethnicity in *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity*, “If ethnicity is something that bleeds over boundaries, then much more so is that ethnicity known as Jewishness, the ambiguities and uncertainties of which have frequently characterized a culture through two thousand years of Diaspora” (7). The bitter experiences of encountering heinous and aggressive attacks in the course of their dispersal legitimises the Jewish resistance which became their only possible means for survival.

In the case of Diaspora communities, it is difficult at times to draw a boundary line between identities— theirs and their host country’s— and to find whether there remains any culture or identity to be preserved. Hall’s observation of the complex nature of identity validates the argument,

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production',



which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. (“Cultural Identity” 223)

For the Jews who were constantly on the move, this dilemma was their greatest challenge and hence they countered it with cultural resistance. The modes of resistance, however, would often differ depending upon the variances in the contexts. However, the aim of all kinds of resistance is, especially in the case of the Jews, is to preserve the specific cultural identity at any cost. The prominent Indian philosopher and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen opines about identities as, “A strong— and exclusive—sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from other groups. Within-group solidarity can help to feed between-group discord” (1-2). This distancing and detachment from other cultures can be identified as a major trait of the Diaspora Jews

In “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, Stuart Hall rightly remarks that, “cultural identity [is]... a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common” (223). This identity is the product of gradual evolution from “being”, to “becoming”, the difference between “what we really are” and “what we have become” (225). This relationship between ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ provides meaning to the process of cultural resistance. Hall relates this process to history and maintains that cultural identity has a past as well as future and it is constantly transforming. The Jewish case can be regarded as a historical paradigm as their past and present have constructed a unique cultural narrative which underscores the need to fight at any cost to occupy a land of their own where they will not be driven away.

The fictional discourses of Leon Uris explain various ways in which the Jewish resistance opens up possibilities for cultural liberation and possession of a

geographical space of their own. His narratives are also at the same time self reflexive stories of resistance as they manifest his own resistance to the accepted Jewish writings which are anti-Jew by nature. The history of Jewry is linked with a plethora of bitter experiences till their occupation of Israel. While most of the host communities were hostile towards the Jews, a few have shown compassion too. But in most of the countries the Jewish condition was deplorable where amalgamation or confederation was impossible. Non-co-operation was the only way of survival, but that was in vain as slaying was the major concern of their enemies. This was realised through resistance in different degrees, depending on the nature of both the hostile groups and the résistants. Uris portrays such critical junctures in the lives of the Jews from a subjective and emotional angle.

The Jew was often documented as a pathetic figure, too weak to act and react. Robin Cohen's words validate this notion: "Collectively, Jews were seen as helpless chaff in the wind... diasporic Jews were depicted as pathological half-persons – destined never to realize themselves or to attain completeness, tranquility or happiness so long as they were in exile" (23). They were also portrayed as representation of the community struggling between dual or multiple identities and their dilemmas of alienation and assimilation were given prominence in the writings of the time. The German historian Monika Richarz observes that "Jews were supposed to give up their national culture in order to become culturally German or French etc. Some supporters of assimilation assumed that the Jewish minority would eventually even accept Christianity and finally vanish by intermarriage" (79). Some others considered the Jew as a negative being.

Writers like Philip Roth attributed demonic, insane or uncouth traits to the Jewish characters. Philip Roth's novels on Jewish Assimilation as well as on religious

Jews were numbered as good literary pieces of that time. The prominent Jewish writer Nathaniel West preferred to hide his Jewish heritage to remain popular. Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald were noted for their anti-Semitic writings. Hemingway's *Sun Also Rises* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* take a prejudiced stand against the Jews.

Though Uris' novels were widely accepted as propaganda writings his popularity lies in his blending of history and fiction. Hence, his novels act as specimens of the gradual development of Jewish identity and the preservation of their culture, thereby becoming the voice of his people or the "narratives of the self becoming" (Hall, "Cultural Identity" 224). This chapter examines how the Jewish characters in the novels of Leon Uris address the issue of victimization and whether they are able to tackle the chaotic condition and move forward to achieve their ultimate goal. Uris believes that a Jew is one who can never put his cultural values at stake even in the most testing times. They might differ in the degrees of withstanding power, and many succumb to death or may unwillingly assimilate to the alien culture. Yet most of them uphold their culture and ethnicity even while appropriating to the cultural system of the host land. Downey and Kallan remark, "Fostering belief in a 'grayless' world of clear-cut heroes and villains whose lines of demarcation never blur, Uris' stereotypes imply that nothing needs to be complex or uncertain" (202). Unfortunately, some Jews merge with the foreign culture due to the pressure of their circumstances and abrogate their culture and tradition. These stereotypical characters also are delineated by the author simultaneously while portraying the resisting characters. The chapter makes a detailed investigation into these characters based on these features, categorizing them as stereotypes, passive résistants, active résistants and strategic résistants.

## Stereotypes

Walter Lippmann remarks about stereotyping in *Public Opinion*, “The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception” (61).

*Exodus*, an overtly pro-Jewish novel, has more dimensions to it than a propaganda story. It details the hard journey of the Jews through subjugation towards attaining cultural emancipation, using resistance as the ultimate step. The novel affirms the notion that the resistant Jews are always culture centred and determined; the negatively stereotyped Jews are cowards; and the Nazis, the British and other anti-Semites are treacherous, vicious, unscrupulous, and destructive.

The Jewish characters Ari, David Ben Ami and Dov Landau stand for the affirmation of their unique cultural identity through active and violent means of resistance, whereas the half-Jew Bruce Sutherland represents the assimilated Jews who hide their cultural identity to retain the social and professional status. William Safran significantly observes about the accultured communities in “Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return” thus, “Some diasporas persist—and their members do not go "home"—because there is no homeland to which to return; because, although a homeland may exist, it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially; or because it would be too inconvenient and disruptive, if not traumatic, to leave the diaspora” (91).

Bruce Sutherland, who served as a Brigadier in the British army, is depicted as concealing his maternal Jewish lineage by following the formal British accent and manners. He is posted as the supervising officer to maintain decorum in the detention

camps at Caraloas in Cyprus. Even though he represents the stereotyped Jews, he is strategically placed as emotionally torn between his British and Jewish sympathies. The horrific scenes he witnessed in the camps in Bergen-Belsen is an eye opener to him about the treachery of the British Government in offering Palestine to the Jews while sending them to detention camps, “We have broken one promise after another to those people in Palestine for thirty years” (*Exodus* 30). The memories of his mother’s psychological trauma after she denounced her cultural and racial roots due to her marriage with an English man also persistently haunt him, “I did a terrible thing Bruce. I denied my people. I denied them in life. I want to be with them now. Bruce...Bruce, promise that I shall be buried near my father and my mother...” (33) and his remorse for not fulfilling her wish torments him. Fed up with the diabolic stand of the authorities, he takes a brave decision of resigning from service in the British army to join the Jews on their journey to Israel as the unofficial advisor of Jewish militia there where he ultimately finds solace. “At long last Bruce Sutherland seemed to find a bit of peace and some respite from the years of torment since the death of his mother...Sutherland never tired of walking through the torturous lanes crowded with tiny synagogues and watching the people or filling himself with the folklore and legend of the rabbis and of the Cabala itself” (362-3). He finds his life meaningful after he chooses his Jewish identity and embraces Jewish culture and ethnicity by denouncing his British ancestry.

The final scene of *Exodus* set in Israel after the tragic demise of the young fighter Karen Clement validates this point. Bruce politely informs Ari that he is the rightful person to observe the rites of the Seder (the Jewish ceremonial dinner prayer before the Holy Passover) that: “If you would not be offended...I am the oldest male Jew present. May I tell the Seder?” (599). Sutherland thus becomes a character used

by Uris to claim that salvation is possible even for the stereotype Jew if he willingly sheds his 'otherness' or acclimatization and proudly accepts his Jewish identity.

Another Jewish character, Professor Johann Clement is portrayed as assimilated to the German culture by holding a high status in society. He was acculturated to the dominant culture completely that he could approach anti-Semitism as "a part of living—almost a scientific truth" (60). Because his grandparents had established their livelihood in Germany, he regarded his identification with Germany as congenital and "like most of the Jews in Germany, [he] continued to believe he was immune to the new menace" (ibid.). This belief fostered in him until Germany became a slaughterhouse of the Jews.

Clement's Jewish cultural inheritance revealed only when he was forced to denounce his Jewishness in order to stay in Germany. But the late realisation of his ethnicity and cultural fervour could only traumatize his family members who were dispersed as part of the German resettlement plans. He was able to save his daughter Karen by sending her safely to Denmark through Mossad Aliyah Bet but had to sacrifice the lives of others. He is also depicted at the end as shattered and lost in oblivion. Uris employs Johann Clement to authenticate that culture sacrilege would be ensued in catastrophe.

*Mila 18*, a saga of Jewish resistance, internalizes varied aspects of the same by juxtaposing the chances of assimilation and cultural obligation. The depiction of the resistance of the characters seen in the novel reveals the author's strategy in favouring the résistant over the stereotype. The Jewish characters in *Mila 18* are presented as the direct descendants of the early immigrants to Poland who hardly had chances to visit their homeland. The protagonist Andrei Androfski, Paul Bronski and Deborah belong

to the Polish-Jew community. The narrative strategy conforms to the success of the perseverant Jews and the disgrace of the assimilated ones. The advice of Israel Androfski to his son Andrei reflects the essence of Jewish cultural identity and resistance, ““Know from where you come. Before you know who you are and where you are going, you must know from where you come”” (*Mila* 58). Uris employs accultured and culture centred Jews in *Mila 18* and caricatures the Jewish stereotypes propagated by his contemporaries.

While Andrei Androfski represents the *résistants*, his brother-in-law Dr Paul Bronski, the Dean of the College of Medicine, represents the commonly stereotyped Jew for whom the foster land itself acts as the new home of comforts and exhilaration. Such people would easily get accultured and conveniently forget their original homeland. Bronski even goes to the extent of changing his original name for the sake of social status and a decent life in the host land. Bronski’s words to Andrei as part of a regular argument is evidence for that, ““Nothing about Parysowski Place appeals to me. Not its poverty or its smells or the weeping or wailing, waiting for the Messiah to come. The Jews are the ones who have caused their own troubles in Poland, and I want to live in my country as an equal, not as an enemy or stranger”” (*Mila* 30). Paul Bronski’s aversion of Jewish heritage and Deborah’s infidelity could be treated as Uris’ techniques of showing how a Jewish family deteriorates itself by not observing the values and moral codes of their culture.

But Uris suggests that even though such Jews apparently compromise their identity for the sake of their wellbeing, a pang of guilt would rule them over and make them envious to the culture-centred type. Bronski’s example can also be regarded as a case of situational identity—changing of identity according to the situation. Glimpses of Bronski’s thought process validates this: “...for a moment Paul was envious of that

reckless courage that was unable to give quarter... he would like to be Andrei Androfski in those moments... If only he could store that second of courage in a little box and open it again when he needed it” (*Mila* 139). Andrei’s arguments with Bronski substantiate their contradictory ideologies. Andrei criticizes him thus, ““You are a fool, Paul Bronski. Being a Jew is not a matter of choice. And one sweet day soon, I fear, it will crash down on you and destroy all your logic and smart talk. God, you’re in for a rude awakening, because you are a Jew, whether you want to be or choose to be—or not”” (30).

Bronski is associated with the Jewish Civil Authority, a committee for the Jews controlled by the German officials. His position in the committee itself establishes his German inclination. His disapproval of his wife’s involvement with the Orphans and Self-Help program and his son Stephen’s religious learning under the Rabbi Solomon validates his denouncement of the Jewish culture and practices. Deborah’s lamentations are significant, “She wanted to tell Paul that if he assumed his responsibility as a Jewish father he would give his son instruction and training as other Jewish fathers were doing since the outlawing of the cheder schools” (192).

Bronski is depicted as preoccupied with his social and professional position initially and the safety of himself and his family during the period of Nazi atrocities. His cultural anxiety is obvious when he argues with Andrei, “It is you who is a coward and not I, Andrei, because I have enough courage to say that Judaism means nothing to me and I want no part of it. And you go to your holy-roller Zionist meetings not believing what you hear, looking for false salvation” (30). His perturbation due to his favour of the Nazi directives and the burden of his hidden cultural consciousness makes him commit suicide. His cowardice to encounter the reality combats with Andrei’s brave stands of resistance.



The intention of Uris' novels in general is to create Jewish characters who are different and deeper than the known portrayals of Jews by other novelists. Hence, he attributes to them mystical or supernatural hues which makes them unique and their actions justifiable. Downey and Kallan rightly observe that, "Portraying the Jew as having mystical powers functions to eradicate negative Jewish stereotypes and imbue the quest for sovereignty with religious, metaphysical overtones" (201). The Jews were forced to indulge in resistance movements due to the pressure of the situation, as can be understood while exploring the history of the Jewish diaspora. Haideh Moghissi rightly opines thus in "Away from Home: Iranian Women, Displacement Cultural Resistance and Change":

The pain and the anger that racism causes encourages members of the diaspora family to take refuge in their own culture, to stick together and to suppress disharmony, no matter what form it takes. In this context, sustaining the native culture and identity manifests itself in maintaining beliefs and practices pertaining to men-women relationships within the family and to culturally acceptable masculine-feminine values and roles. (209)

Uris illustrates the evolution of the Jews from victims to résistants by an exploration of the trajectory of resistance through his characters. The résistants in his novels exhibit various kinds of resistance, depending on the need of the hour. Hollander and Einwohner list several modes of resistance in "Conceptualizing Resistance" thus:

[T]he scale of resistance is also variable: acts of resistance may be individual or collective, widespread or locally confined. Related to scale is the level of coordination among the resisters, that is, the extent to which they purposefully act together. While revolutions and other organized protest activities clearly require coordination, other acts of resistance (such as hairstyle choice or

workplace confrontation) can take place with little or no coordination among actors... (536)

His novels depict the way the Jews confronted the oppressors with varying degrees and schemes of resistance conforming to the need of the hour ranging from the Passive mode, Active mode to the Violent/strategic mode.

### **Passive Résistants**

Even though the Diaspora theorist Milton Gordon in his book, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, asserts that the Jews have assimilated to the foster culture, most of the Jews still evade assimilation or integration. The reason for their alienation still remains the ‘othering’ by the non-Jew communities. Only a very small minority tends to follow the culture of the host land rather, they were persuaded by the masses to remain as Jews by ‘othering’ them. For instance, *Exodus* depicts the Jewish life in Russia, “[The Jews] lived in that part of western Russia which included Bessarabia, the Ukraine, the Crimea, and parts of White Russia and which was known as the Jewish Pale of Settlement. The boundaries of the Pale was established in 1804 as the only place in Russia where Jews could reside...Establishment of the Jewish Pale was merely one event in a long history of discrimination” (*Exodus* 195).

The Jewish ways of passive resistance include the teaching of the Holy texts, religious trainings, and cultural reciprocals including music. For them such resistance was not only a necessity but a way of living, as this made them closer to their culture, the core of their religion. Professor Monika Richarz observes, “In the eighteenth century, Yiddish had still been spoken by Jews all over Europe in an eastern and a western version. That made connections possible between all of the European Jewish communities” (80).

*Exodus* depicts the way the Jews in various countries defended their culture and ethnicity. The story of Rabinsky Brothers—Jossi and Yakov—encompasses the history of Russian Jews and their initial mode of passive cultural resistance through learning the five books of Moses called the Pentateuch and chanting the regular prayers later grows to the active mode with the influence of the Jewish organization Lovers of Zion. The Jews in the Russian Jewish Pale settlement had organized their own government under the pious Rabbis and the Talmudic and Biblical societies. But perpetual victimization under the Czars in the latter half of Nineteenth Century necessitated the emergence of uncompromising young activists later. Their father Simon Rabinsky represents the pious Jews who were more intolerant to the new ideologies which deviate from the established religious and cultural codes. His dogmatic stand against his sons' association with the Lovers of Zion validates the point and Jossi's remark ascertains the nature of such Jews thus, “You are afraid of the new ideas” (204). Simon's confidence in the Holy Laws is depicted in the way he advises his sons that,

‘No one said it is easy to be a Jew. We were not born on this earth to live from its fruits. We were put here to guard the laws of God. This is our mission. This is our purpose...The Messiah will come and take us back when He is good and ready... and I do not believe it is for Yakov Rabinsky to question His wisdom. I do believe it is for Yakov Rabinsky to live by the laws of the Holy Torah’.

(ibid., 205)

With his faith in the religious teachings, Simon surpasses the new ideologies promulgated by the young Jews. He represents the venerable Jews who uphold their belief in the Holy doctrines thus,

‘The question is not whether Yakov Rabinsky recognizes the Messiah. The question is whether the Messiah will recognize Yakov Rabinsky. If Yakov Rabinsky begins to stray from His laws and listens to false prophets, then the Messiah will be quite certain that he is no longer a Jew. I suggest to Yakov Rabinsky that he continue to live as a Jew as his father and his people are doing.’ (ibid.)

Simon’s death demonstrates his cultural and religious obligation as a Jew to protect the Holy Text by relinquishing his life. “Simon Rabinsky staggered into his burning synagogue and fought his way gagging to the end of the room where the Holy Ark stood. He threw back the curtains with the Ten Commandments inscribed on them and pulled down the Sefer Torah, the Scroll of the Laws of God” (206). In spite of the pain inflicted upon him by the violent Jew-haters, he had covered the Holy book with his body and screamed, “Hear, O Israel... the Lord is our God... the Lord is one!” (207). The depiction of such a religious Jew manifests the point that the passive Jews were also resorted to resistance when it comes to the preservation of their Holy Books.

*Mila 18* incorporates a variety of resistance strategies adopted by the Jews in different situations. The Jewish dictum of endurance, in accordance with their religious and cultural etiquette made them tolerate humiliation and subjugation to a certain extent. The obligation to be culturally united and ethnically enlightened necessitated a proficiency in their holy texts, which became the initial mode of resistance. They have promulgated their ethnical identity in the early phases of the Diaspora.

The novel highlights the dichotomy between the behavioural patterns, resistance strategies and ethnic identification of the adherent Jews with that of their accultured fellow beings. The novel reconstructs history by asserting its plurality and

porosity. The American sociologist and novelist, Andrew. M. Greeley rightly observes thus, “History and historical fiction is necessarily not the same thing. The purpose of history is to narrate events as accurately as one can. The purpose of historical fiction is to enable a reader through the perspective of characters in the story to feel that she or he is present at the events. Such a goal obviously requires some modification of the events” (333).

Rabbi Solomon represents the pious, patient Jews who followed the passive ways of resistance which was rigidly religious and text oriented. Hollander and Einwohner assert that “‘cultural resistance’ in minority communities attempts to preserve the minority culture against assimilation to the host culture” (536). The steadfastness in retaining their roots like liturgical learning, observation of religious rites and rituals and the preservation of their language made the Jews of Poland different from the other communities of the host land, as is reflected in the novel, “The Poles used the very difference with which they had forced on the Jews to prove Jews were not like other people. The Jews had no identity as Poles. They spoke Yiddish, a language carried from Bohemia. They created their own culture and literature apart from the masses around them” (*Mila* 58-9).

The Rabbi’s belief depicted in the novel displays the affirmation of Jewish culture in the foster land, “His Zionism, he felt, was certainly the purest form, for it came from the books of the Bible which told him a “Messiah” would return to earth and lead the scattered children of Israel back to their “Promised Land.” This was not so much Zionism to him but rather fundamental Judaism” (141). The methods and strength of the Jewish resistance varied in accordance to the geographic and temporal changes, but the only rudimentary factor that governed its nature was the way they were being treated.

*Mila 18* indicates the Jewish commitment towards learning their religious and cultural texts, “Although religious study had been banned, this merely meant it would be carried on in secret places, as had been done by the Marranos during the Spanish Inquisition and a hundred times in a hundred places where it had been banned during Jewish history” (194). The historical accounts by Professor Monika Richarz validate the same, “During the anti-religious campaigns until 1939, the Jewish communities, the Talmud schools and most synagogues were dissolved. Even the secular use of Yiddish now became very difficult. Under these conditions, traditional Judaism and a positive Jewish identity could not survive. Jews were forced into complete assimilation” (86). When the Germans attack the synagogue Rabbi Solomon yells “Kill me, but do not harm Torah” (*Mila 195*) which proves his religiosity.

For the Rabbi the modern Zionism mingled with revisionist or revolutionary ideals is not the real Zionism. His argument with Brandel on the Jewish condition is significant that it displays the nature of the Jew who believes in patience and compassion. Rabbi maintains that, “...when in the history of the Jewish people has survival not been an issue? Sometimes the degree varies. What is happening today in Poland has happened many times in our history...have we outlived every tyrant in the past?” (143). The Rabbi symbolizes the Jews who opted to defend themselves by remaining religious:

We defend ourselves by living in the faith which has kept us alive all of the centuries. We defend ourselves by remaining good Jews. It will bring us through this hour as it has through all the rest of our crises. And the Messiah will come, as He has promised...Alexander, Why must all Zionists shout? The gates of heaven are barred to those who pick up weapons of death. That is

what will come ultimately to you if you form a band of rabble. Learn to suffer in humility and faith. That alone will be our salvation. (143-4)

Another pious Jew in the novel Rabbi Gewirtz also represents the passive résistants and ponders over their Diaspora status thus, “We are like a bird... We are a long way from home and cannot fly that far, so we circle and circle and circle. Now and again we light upon a branch of a tree to rest, but before we can build our nest we are driven away and must fly again—aimlessly in our circle...” (*Mila* 58). For such people home is an emotional concept rather than a fact. Alexander Brandel writes about the pious Jews who preserve ethnic identity in his journal, “They refuse to shave off their beards or ear-locks. They walk with their heads erect in great dignity despite the fact that their very appearance will bring them abuses. They are stubborn and honourable and of Rabbi Solomon’s breed, and we Zionists could learn a thing or two from them” (198).

Brandel’s wife Silvia represents the ideal Jew woman, who never complains about, but whole heartedly supports her husband’s preoccupation with Zionism. This in turn becomes the woman’s passive way of holding on to her roots. Israel Androfski also symbolizes the passive Jews who do not fight but endure and suffer all pangs by finding a solution only through prayers, “...the price of being a Jew calls for patience and prayer and acceptance of your position” (*Mila* 62).

Various methods were adopted by the Jews to preserve their culture in the midst of unrest in the later period in Poland. Professor Monika Richarz endorses it in her article “The History of the Jews in Europe during the 19th and Early 20th Centuries” thus: “Many Jewish schools in the Polish Republic taught in Yiddish. Polish Jews founded several political parties including an orthodox, a liberal and a workers’ party as well as several Zionist parties. Yiddish culture was flourishing,

especially in literature, in the Yiddish theatre and in the Jewish press” (85). The cult of cabala was one among them, which was the study of holy Books as a solace in times of struggle. The novel ridicules the rise of new tendencies like the self-incarnation of Sabbatai Zvi as the messiah who was later converted to Islam. Jacob Frank led Sabbatai’s followers after his death but his group “carried out sex orgies and debasements of the Holy Laws” (*Mila* 59). The emergence of Hassidim was another such trend, which took them to another realm of prayer which was wilder in nature. No matter what they practice, their final goal was to get emancipation. But it all points to the fact that the political instability in Poland forced the Jews to adopt various means to overcome their feeling of insecurity and rootlessness.

The novel posits the argument that those who resist passively against othering did not do justice to their cause as they allowed themselves to be perpetually humiliated as if to prove that their endurance was indomitable. Chris’ complaint of the Jewish enduring is significant, ““The trouble with you Jews is that you make yourselves believe you have the priority on suffering”” (*Mila* 106). Also, the Jews believed that, “These new forms of Zionism, therefore, were rebellions by weak men who could not suffer in silence and dignity, to pray and to accept as part of life the penalties imposed by God for being worthy of being chosen guardians of the Holy Law” (141).

The novel reveals the Jewish commitment towards rituals through the depiction of the bar mitzvah of Stephen in the midst of Nazi threat. Stephen’s words are contextually significant, “it’s a special privilege to have your bar mitzvah in bad times. Anyone can live like a Jew when things go well, but to take an oath to be a Jew today is really important. We know that God needs real Jews to protect His laws”



(*Mila* 321). While teachings and secret prayers by Rabbis remained as their passive way of resistance, uprisings were the active way advocated by the young Zionists.

*QB VII* is an affirmation of the detrimental effect of the German revulsion and the British deceptive interference on the Jews. The novel affirms the notions of cultural representation and resistance which lacks Uris' unique demarcation of the goodness of the Jews and the villainy of the oppressors. The novel is a statement of the victimization and the passive resistance of the Jews in the camps at Jadwiga West in Poland.

The novel neither celebrates the prospect of resistance nor denounces the Jewish stereotype. Rather, it delineates the ordeal of the victims for whom survival was arduous. The empathetical portrayal of the Jewish conditions in the barracks in the camps asserts the extent of German perversion. With meagre possibilities of evident resistance, the Jews defended themselves by not surrendering to death. The eminent British novelist D M Thomas significantly observes thus about the Holocaust in an interview:

The holocaust has changed life. Whether you were Jewish or not it added a new dimension to evil. The idea of mass anonymous death, the thought that so many people could be wiped out for no reason, in some ways threatened one's own sense of existence, one's own soul... Even now forty years afterwards, there is a disturbance in the atmosphere because of what happened in the war in places like Babi Yar and the concentration camps. (72)

The novel demonstrates that survival itself is the best form of resistance in desperate conditions of living.

The witness and a victim, Pieter Van Damm, a Jewish violinist acts as a prototype of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, with his resistance strategy to stay

alive and survive. His testimony demonstrates the sadistic nature of the Germans. The Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel reflects on the Jewish fate of suffering in an interview in *Art out of Agony* thus, “Only the Jewish people were designated for total murder. Only the Jew was guilty simply because he was a Jew, which means that for the first time in history ‘being’ became a crime. And that was true for only the Jew and the Jewish victim, and nobody else” (156-7). Despite the catastrophic experiences he had undergone in the camps, Van Damm’s successful career as a musician and his peaceful married life with two adopted children validate the strength of Jewish determination and cultural resistance. He represents the Jews who believe that it is their responsibility to expose their sufferings to the world, with his willingness to report his experiences before the court of law, despite its adverse effects on his personal and social prospects.

### **Active Résistants**

Uris’ fictional endeavours validate the need of active resistance as the Jewish conditions of living confronted with the worst catastrophic experience during the Holocaust. Zygmunt Bauman’s observations about identity and belonging in his book *Identity* are noteworthy:

Julian Tuwim, the great Polish poet of Jewish ancestry, was known to remark that hating the Polish anti-Semites more than anti-Semites of any other country was the strongest proof of his Polishness... One becomes aware that ‘belonging’ and ‘identity’ are not cut in rock, that they are not secured by a lifelong guarantee, that they are eminently negotiable and revocable; and that one’s own decisions, the step one takes, the way one acts— and the determination to stick by all that— are crucial efforts of both. In other words,

the thought of 'having an identity' will not occur to people as long as 'belonging' remains their fate, a condition with no alternative. (11)

Such an irresistible belonging along with irredeemably disastrous conditions of living led the Jews opt active, rather violent ways of resistance. Through his novels, Uris asserts the point that achieving a mission of having a land of one's own is not that easy by simply adhering to cultural norms. It often demands more serious steps like stiff resistance, secret operations etc., as demonstrated in the underground Jewish training camps set up.

The fictional narrative of *Exodus* incorporates the history of Jewish resistance in countries like Poland, Germany, Denmark, Russia, and Palestine presented through the experiences of characters and the resistance movements of Jewish organizations. *Exodus* advocates Zionism as the major impetus that prompted and revived the Jewish identity consciousness. It encompasses the entire range of uprisings and active resistance strategies of the secret immigration agencies like the Aliyah Bet, the Palmachs and the Maccabees by disclosing their secret training of the Jewish adolescents and youth. The illegal agency Mossad Aliyah Bet which oversaw transporting Jews to Palestine and Ari Ben Canaan as a member of that agency shows the schema of resistance that prevails throughout the novel.

*Exodus*, being a saga about the founding of Israel, is mostly about how this mission is achieved using active resistance strategies. The novel is a reconstruction of the historical Jewish resistance by transporting the Jewish Holocaust survivors from France to Palestine in 1947 in the immigrant ship named SS Exodus. Ari Ben Canaan's intelligent plan called the Operation Gideon to transport Jews from the detention camps at Caraloas to Palestine with the cooperation of the Palmachs, represent the most strategic move on the part of the Jews. The novel reconstructs the

Jewish transformation from mere victims into active résistants. It depicts their defensive measures like digging tunnels, finding secret sewage passages, forging papers and stealing British uniforms for escape.

The significant characters in the novel belong to different parts of the world and their experiences chronicle the history of Jewish resistance in those countries. They also represent varied activist groups and their activities and their association with other groups depict the entirety of Jewish resistance. The Holocaust catastrophe effected in their unification and realisation of ethnic uniqueness. John Storey explains thus the nature of identities in *Inventing Popular Culture*, “Our identities are not the expression of our ‘nature,’ they are a performance in culture...the performance of identity is the accumulation of what is outside (in culture) as if it were inside (in nature)” (91).

The Rabinsky Brothers—Yakov and Jossi—who initially were accommodative and peace loving, later adopted the partisan ways of resistance prove how modes of response to victimisation change when peaceful pleas go unheard. Their journey to Palestine, the adoption of Hebrew names—Akiva and Barak—and their indulgence in different Jewish organizations exhibit their efforts to preserve and protect their ethnicity. While Akiva, who associates with the impulsive activist group Maccabees, represents the aggressiveness of the Jews who hates the Arabs, Barak with his steadfastness represents the committed Jews who accommodate the Arabs as neighbours. The author’s interest here is to show how the resistance of the Jews were multipronged which evolved out of their desperate eagerness to find a solution to their dilemma. If Akiva’s aim was to guard his fellow beings from the enemies, which were by default the Arabs, Barak’s endeavour was to modernise their land by constructing cities like Tel Aviv and Shoshanna and revive Hebrew as the national language. Barak

significantly remarks that, “Yiddish is the language of exiles. Yiddish is the language of the ghetto. Hebrew is the language of all the Jews...If the desire for national identity was great enough a dead language could be brought back” (*Exodus* 242). His disapproval of Akiva’s involvement with the terrorist gangs is also significant, “He turned Jew against Jew. Now his Maccabees are turning the people of Abu Yesha against us. God may forgive him but I never will...” (341).

The protagonist of the novel, Ari, son of Barak Ben Canaan is presented as a super hero/an extra ordinary person, capable of deciphering the thought processes of others. Like Uris’ other Jewish champions, Ari possesses strong and bony physique with stubborn facial expression, unemotional and adamant in attitude and a great fighter for the cause of his people. Mark Parker remarks thus about him, “He had had the feeling that something was brewing on Cyprus from the moment he landed. Now it was confirmed by Ben Canaan’s appearance. He knew enough of the Palestinian to realize he was one of the top Mossad Aliyah Bet agents. He also knew that he was going to be approached for something, because Ari Ben Canaan had sought him out” (*Exodus* 48).

The novel includes all the seminal landmarks in the Jewish diaspora, highlighting their resistance movements during the Holocaust. In a marvellous blend of fact and fiction, Uris uses Ari Ben to show the efforts of the Palestinian Jewish paramilitary agency named Mossad Le Aliyah Bet, in executing the immigration of Diaspora Jews to the homeland. To quote John Storey, “our identities are made from a contradictory series of identifications, subject positions, and forms of representation which we have made, occupied, and been located in as we constitute and are constituted by performances that produce the narratives of our lives” (91).

David Ben Ami who associates with the Palmachs, symbolizes the young educated, radical and religious Jews who vigorously participate in all the resistance programmes. Uris realistically illustrates the efforts of the organizations like Mossad and Palmachs to by the British from different parts of the world to Palestine. His association with Ari in all the rescue missions and Operation Gideon proves his commitment.

Another young Jewish character, Dov Landau the Polish-Jew, symbolizes the nature of Jews from ghettos with his suspicious and aggressive character. His words to Ari to involve in Ari's mission reflects his attitude, "“You can beat me! I've been beaten by experts! You can kill me! I'm not afraid. Nothing you do can scare me after the Germans!”" (*Exodus* 110). He helps Ari in forging the official papers, only after making him promise to add his and his friend Karen's names in the list of children to be immigrated to Palestine.

*Exodus* talks at length about the preparations for the success of Operation Gideon which Ari devised to be a publicized endeavour unlike his early secret attempts of immigrating the Jews. Ari insists Mark Parker, the journalist to keep the British informed about the plan and to publish an article regarding Operation Gideon. When the chaos created by the circulation of the news invited world attention towards the three hundred children on Exodus, the British allow "“to let the Exodus sail for Palestine”" (188).

The novel also renders the Jewish resistance of the British and Arabs. It documents the Zionist pursuits with the declaration that "“THE AIM OF ZIONISM IS TO CREATE A HOMELAND FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN PALESTINE SECURED BY PUBLIC LAW”" (222) that stimulated the world Jewry to defend

themselves from the treacherous British authority. Uris' animosity for the British is demonstrated in the novel. A new Jewish army or Haganah called the Army of Self-Defence emerged when the British signed the White Paper that limited the Jewish immigration by denying the terms of the Balfour Declaration.

Uris also acknowledges the way Italy and Vienna facilitated for the Jewish immigration in times of utmost crisis. It is viewed as an outcome of the triumphant Jewish resistance and self-defence. This has been juxtaposed with the Polish attempts to check Jewish immigration to Palestine to display their animosity towards the Jews with their belief that, "The Jews brought this war on us... the war was started so that Jews could make a profit... the Jews are the cause of all troubles!" (*Exodus* 144). The impact of the German rule was such that it persisted even after their plummet from might. The Jews relocated in Poland were hapless as "[they] were locked in a country that did not want them and locked out of the country that did want them" (145).

The other significant changes in the world politics that accelerated the Jewish victory were the growing significance of the USA as the superpower and the favourable stand adopted by France towards the Jews which made the British approve the Jewish demand for a liberated state by discarding the Arabs. Uris' admiration of America is apparent in the novel as Downey and Kallan observe, "Uris' fictive depiction of Americans typifies his use of exemplars. Usually portrayed as heroes, American characters aid Israel in times of crisis and play a major role in the achieving and maintaining of her sovereignty. In *Exodus*, for example, American reporter Mark Parker is asked to help outwit the British" (199).

The attainment of Jewish liberation on May 14, 1948, after long sessions of discussions by the Jewish Yishuv and Zionists with World leaders is manifested as the consummation of Jewish resistance. Though the novel progresses through the actualization of the creation of Israel, the death of Karen at the hands of fedayeen—a group of anti-Jewish Arab guerrillas on the holy day of Passover suggests the need for incessant Jewish resistance. Ari's reflection validates the resumption of the uncertainty of Jewish lives thus, ““Why must we fight for the right to live, over and over, each time the sun rises?... Why don't they let us alone! Why don't they let us live!”” (*Exodus* 598). The novel discerns the prospect of perpetual defiance in Israel by indicating the persistent Arab-Jewish conflicts.

*Mila 18* owes its theme to the Nazi occupation of Warsaw in Poland and the atrocities faced by the Jews at their hands, the title is inspired by the Headquarters bunker which was the hiding place of Jewish Resistance members underneath the building of Mila 18 Street in Warsaw. Uris fictionalizes history by blending factual incidents with imagined characters and placing them in real situations in order to make his rendering convincing and credible. Uris traces the course of events that happened in the German occupied Poland when the Nazis planned for a systematic genocide.

The historical narrative of the courageous Jewish militants who fought a losing battle against the Nazis is one of resistance for preserving their cultural identity. Hence it becomes the apt context for Uris to articulate his political stand regarding the Jewish cause. The Jewish-American political scientist Raul Hilberg avers, “The Jews had no resistance organization, no blueprint for armed action, no plan even for psychological warfare” (1030). He further maintains that the European Jews were simply yielding to the slaughters by Germans and other dictators (as



endurance was Jewish); others are of the opinion that their Jewish predicament had been the result of their passivity and hence to be tolerated. The novel provides ample evidence to undermine such criticisms. Uris renders the notion that resistance served as a way of living for most of the Jews who defended their culture. The novel chronologically highlights the growth of the hitherto untold story of the Warsaw uprising. The complicated life story of the unsung heroes and the gory details of the horrors of the holocaust are addressed in all sincerity by the author, whose personal politics also cannot be ignored.

Poland had been a paradise for the Jews since the foundation of the Kingdom of Poland in 1025, until the Partition of Poland in 1795. Uris describes thus: “Here the Jews were welcomed, and this was their real beginning, along with the beginning of Poland itself. Jews were needed, for there was no middle class between the landed gentry and the peasants. The Jews brought with them their arts, crafts, trade, professions, and ability as merchants” (*Mila 57*). But the Polish sympathy towards the Jews altered with the introduction of the leftist tendencies, with the influence of the Russian anti-Semitism and with the German occupation of Poland.

In Poland, Holocaust and Nazi-sponsored Genocide fuelled strong resistance from the part of the Jews. Underground resistance movements sprouted from various Jewish ghettos of Europe. They planned to break out of the ghettos by organising revolts, all of which are portrayed in a breath-taking account in *Mila 18*. Practising Zionism, underground activities and the smuggling of provisions were the significant forms of active resistance as seen in the novel. Amartya Sen remarks thus about the Jewish problem in *Identity and Violence* by citing Jean Paul Sartre,

This may be a case of fairly reasonable, even benign, attribution, but quite often ascription goes with denigration, which is used to incite violence against

the vilified person. 'The Jew is a man,' Jean-Paul Sartre argued in *Portrait of the Anti-Semite*, 'whom other men look upon as a Jew; ... it is the anti-Semite who makes the Jew.' Charged attributions can incorporate two distinct but interrelated distortions: misdescription of people belonging to a targeted category, and an insistence that the misdescribed characteristics are the only relevant features of the targeted person's identity. (7)

The otherness or the binary position of the Jews along with anti-Semitism and Nazism contributed to the emergence of the strongest Jewish resistance. Stuart Hall maintains that "'Hidden histories' have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time..." ("Cultural Identity" 224). Though otherness can be identified in all the Diaspora cultures, it was unique in the case of the Jews as was visible during the holocaust. Hall further opines:

Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'. Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet, 'power/knowledge.' (ibid., 225-6)

This marginalization and power politics in the European world were instrumental in aggravating the Jewish predicament.

*Mila 18* depicts the various forms of active resistance through the characters like Alexander Brandel, Ervin Rosenblum, Ana Grinspan, Tolek Alterman and Susan Geller. While Ana Grinspan, the Secretary of Bathyrans, represents the half-Jews who embrace their Jewishness, Andrei denounces such Zionist women thus, "There are times when a woman must be a woman and to hell with Zionism. It is too much to hear it going to bed and waking up" (*Mila* 66). Tolek Alterman, who oversees

farmland training of the young Jews, is presented as only concerned with his team believing strongly in the principles of Zionism. Susan Geller, in charge of Bathyrans Orphanage is preoccupied with the safety of the inmates, and with the approaching war which would bring more orphans to take care of. Ervin Rosenblum represents those social Zionists who desire for the Jewish company and activities.

Alexander Brandel, the general secretary of Bathyrans intends to adopt the goodness of other groups and to be free from any bond with them. He represents the patient, enduring Jews who have dedicated their lives for the nation. “[he has] never raised his voice, never panicked, never seemed torn by those inner conflicts of other men” (*Mila* 70). Apart from being a Zionist, Brandel is a historian who records the happenings in Poland in his journal and acts as a channel between the past and future of the Jews.

The Holocaust demanded the most compelling and the most heroic resistance from the Jews. Those facts appear in the novel as such, giving it the dimension of a docu-fiction also. “All the new ideas—revisionist, socialist, communist, intellectualism—were merely expedient and radical ideas which took the place of the true basic faith” (*Mila* 141). They were forced to defy the impositions they encountered. The Israeli Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer maintains that in almost six ghettos— in Eastern Europe including Poland— Jewish underground organizations were operational during the Holocaust, which include Warsaw and Bialystok (34-48). The underground organizations set up in ghettos provided them with a narrow possibility of unification.

The history of Jewish resistance is documented in the novel thus:

Poland, partitioned, at constant war with Germany and Russia, ceased to exist as a state...Desperate for man power, the Poles allowed Berek Joselowicz, a

Jew of Vilna, and Joseph Aronwicz to organize a Jewish brigade, a radical departure from past principle. Five hundred of them took the field in the defence of Warsaw. Twenty of them survived...but as Russia gobbled Poland and the state disappeared from the face of earth, a huge land ghetto was formed called the Jewish Pale of Settlement. Beyond the Pale, no Jew could travel or live...Murder of the Jews was supported by the Tsar and overlooked by the Russian Orthodox Church. (*Mila 60*)

Upset by the continuing torture and brutal massacre, the young generation Jews resorted to harsh methods of resistance, which often turned violent and fatal. “And a new generation in the Pale emerged unsatisfied to continue Jewish existence as it had been through the black centuries. [They] could not find peace in the cabala or the wild prayer of the hassidim, nor would they follow false messiahs. To them old ideas had failed...young Jews formed self-defence committees to protect the ghetto against the pogroms” (61). The committees like Lovers of Zion were founded to ensure Jewish defence. They used Art and Literature for propaganda.

Apart from the emotional reconstructions of history, objective interpolations can also be identified in Uris’ accounts about the emergence of Zionism. The sections that explore the emergence of the new leader Theodor Herzl, his attempts to instil the Jewish minds with the thoughts of an urgent need for a Jewish State and the events led to the immediate popularity of Zionism among the Jews are authentic and original. Ana Grinspan, Tolek Alterman and Ervin Rosenblum are depicted as active Zionists standing for the cause of the realisation of their cultural emancipation. Alexander Brandel is referred in the text as “the philosopher of pure Zionism” (*Mila 69*).

The emergence of Zionism inspired the Jews all over Europe and the devotion and determination of these strong Zionists changed the course of action into violent

resistance that included underground activities which led to the birth of the confrontation called Jewish Fighting Organization. Though theorists like Judith Butler criticises the overindulgence of Zionism and the present stand they adopt in matters related to the Israel-Palestinian conflicts, Zionists' crucial role in the resistance schemes of the Jews cannot be left unacknowledged. Judith Butler avers in *Parting Ways* thus:

Even if we grant, as we must, the singular history of Jewish oppression, it does not follow that in every political scenario Jews will always be the victims, that their violence will always be regarded as justified self-defence. In fact, to grant the singularity of one history is implicitly to be committed to the singularity of all such histories, at which point one can begin to ask a different kind of question. The point is not to confirm that Zionism is like Nazism or is its unconscious repetition with Palestinians standing in for Jews. (29)

Union and confrontation were impossible in the isolated ghettos as the Nazis had appointed Jewish Councils to supervise the activities of the inmates. Some of the councils performed as the agents of the Germans by actively reporting against the underground activities; while some other councils were playing a blind game by allowing the Zionists to carry out their activities, and sometimes the members of such councils even participated with them without the knowledge of the authorities. Underground confrontations were successful to a certain extent in such ghettos. An extract from Ringelblum's diary suggests that the Jews were afraid of attacking the authorities, "...if even one single German is killed, its outcome may lead to the slaughter of a whole community or even of many communities" (1).

Brandel believes in Zionism that encompasses various forms of Zionisms. "There were many types of Zionism, each with its own variants. Alexander Brandel

said there was a different type of Zionism for every Jew” (*Mila* 69). The Labour Zionism found in Poland and Russia demanded self-sacrifice for their needs; the Revisionists or Activists—a group of angry men believed in “an eye for an eye” philosophy; the Bathyrans believed in Zionist purity, the philosophy of “the establishment of a Jewish homeland was a heroic necessity, as proved by two thousand years of persecution” (*ibid.*). All the newly founded organizations helped the desperate Jewish masses to embrace their cultural traits to realise their unique cultural identity.

The restrictions imposed by the Germans on the Zionist activities during the Holocaust prompted the activists to resort to underground ventures. All the directives given to the Jews were offensive and any violation was treated with death sentence. By various directives the Germans limited their geographical territory of settlement and restricted their freedom for association, education, trade, transportation, and social life. They were forbidden from observing, teaching, and practicing their religious beliefs and were restricted from their professional freedom. Any converted Jew or half Jew was regarded as a Jew and treated under the new rules. In short, each Jew was numbered and regarded as a large capital ‘J’ devoid of any identity. “Each day a new directive... within a few weeks of German entry into Warsaw there was a rash of unmolested window smashing, shop looting, and the beating up of bearded Jews” (*Mila* 129).

The deaths of the Jews resulted in an enormous increase in the number of orphans taken into the Bathyran Orphanage. As the freedom to travel was restricted it became impossible for them to move around and the rigid ration system made the situation more critical as the inmates of the Orphanage needed more provisions. These unexpected turns of events acted as the cause of adopting illegal ways of resistance

like forging false travel papers for those Jews who look non-Jewish as Ana Grinspan. More personnel assistance was needed for the orphanage which necessitated the young Jews who were assigned other works to return and assist. The involvement of Ervin Rosenblum with the Swiss News Agency helped them receive advance information about all the new measures taken up by the officials.

The newly imposed directives suspended the government pensions for the Jews and forbade them to travel out of Warsaw without permission. Means were taken to separate the Jews from others. Even the Jewish Civil Authority refused to lend an arm to their fellow Jews. There was very less possibility of aid from outside Jewish community. “Majority of the population wanted no part of the German-Jewish war. A minority were actively against the Jews” (*Mila* 146).

A federation of Jews of multiple views was found to be the only possible means of confrontation. “Now that the Jews, the half Jews, the converts, and the unadmitting Jews have been labelled, there is a tremendous need to unify all the loose ends” (*Mila* 137). The newly associated Jews included Brandel, Andrei, Simon Eden, Emmanuel Goldman—a member of the JCA and David Zemba—director of the American Relief Society. They procured the permission to establish an independent agency of the Jews led by Brandel. They also obtained American Relief fund for the welfare of the orphans and purchased land in the name of the Orphans and Self-Help Society, which was functioning legitimately for the Jewish welfare yet secretly functioning as the centre for Zionist activities. “[They] took the five-story building at Mila19 as [their] headquarters” (151).

The deplorable conditions of living engendered another type of Zionism deviating from the passive and active modes of resistance by advocating fierce, armed conflicts. The increased endorsement of the demand of an uprising from the Joint

Forces was ineffective as the Jews were incapable to think of a rebellion. Brandel's realization of the inanity of passive modes of resistance made him opt "Andreï's guns" (*Mila* 363). His pleading to the Passive resistant Rabbi Solomon is significant as it validates the need for active resistance:

From the time of the First Temple we have been massacred because of scapegoatism, expedience for the ruling politicians, passion outbursts, ignorance. The Crusades, the Inquisition, the Worms massacre, the Cossack uprisings. Never before have we been faced with cold-blooded, organized, calculated, and deliberate plot to destroy us... Like no other people in history, [Germans] are psychologically geared to destroy merely for destroying...It may also destroy us while it is destroying itself. Where does it say in the Talmud and Torah, Rabbi, that we are not supposed to defend ourselves? (143)

*The Haj* approaches the Jewish resistance in the homeland from the Arab perspective by rendering the treacherous politics played by the British over the Arabs and the Jews. The Jews were deceived by the British with offers of constructing the Jewish state in Israel numerous times which led them defend themselves under two Jewish partisan groups namely the Irgun and the Stern group. Despite their assisting the British in the II World War, the Jews were deceived by the British by restricting Jewish Immigration to Palestine in 1946. Another order was given to confiscate refugee boats caught on the open sea and to send them to the Island of Cyprus. These adversities aggravated the need for a strategic Jewish resistance. Also, thousands of Jews including the leaders of Yishuv, Haganah and the Jewish Agency were arrested and thrown into camps; the Irgun responded by destroying the British headquarters at Jerusalem. With this commotion the British were forced to call for truce with the Jewish Agency and the Jewish leaders were released from prisons and camps. These



states of affairs left the British with two options— either to control the Jewish revolt in Palestine with might or to opt a position of negotiation and they chose the latter. They called for a Partition plan between the Arabs and the Jews, and the issue was taken over by the United Nations. But the British continued to betray them by sending the Jewish refugee boat with five thousand Jews to the Nazi Germany. The novel profusely applies facts to authenticate the reproduction of history.

The partition plan—to divide Palestine into two separate Arab and Jewish states— approved by the UN on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1947 was welcomed by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs. The consequent voting in the UN resulted in the sanctioning of the Partition as majority supported the plan with which British withdrew from Palestine. Although the Jewish resistance turned successful with the approval of their demand, the disappointed Arab world called for ‘Jihad—the Holy war’ against the Jews. The continued strife for the same geographic territory between the Arabs and the Jews has been an unresolved issue. After Irgun hit an Arab village and killed more than two hundred and fifty Arabs including children and women, Gideon responds thus “All my life I have lived with massacres. Only this one is different. The Jews committed it. Does that clean the slate of a hundred Arab massacres? ...I can forgive the Arabs for murdering our children. I cannot forgive them for forcing us to murder theirs” (*Haj* 212).

Published as an Arab centred novel, *The Haj* overtly gives significance to the Arab experiences and events. The Arab resolution to oppose and conquer Israel indicates the need for permanent Jewish resistance. The novel renders the way history and geography are taught in Palestinian schools by distorting the map and incidents to bring about a generation of anti-Jews. The novel appropriately presents a piece of poetry composed by an Arab child thus:

*The Zionist is the assassin of the world,  
 Children and trees and birds die before his  
 bullets,  
 All the poor people cry,  
 For their homes have been destroyed,  
 And the world will pay. (Haj 455)*

This validates the notion that the Palestinian schools acted as agencies of anti-Semitism. They were also provided with rules against the Jews that they were the enemies of humanity and God, they were the symbol of evil, they did not constitute a legitimate nation, Islam is superior and finally the State of Israel must be destroyed (457). *The Haj* encompasses the details of Arab and Jewish resistance, but it depicts that the need for Arab resistance comes mainly from vengeance than survival.

### **Violent/Strategic Résistants**

The most disastrous period of the diaspora Jews was the Holocaust when Poland had been a cauldron for the Jews. The inadequacy of active resistance had resulted in the dire need for violent or strategic resistance from the part of the Polish-Jews. Uris' incorporates the unfortunate, yet heroic Jewish resistance called the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in *Mila 18*. The protagonist Andrei Androfski represents the violent résistants who cherish everything Jewish. Even though Poland had not been a bitter home for the Jews, Andrei seems so particular about observing the Jewish values as it was their only way of cultural preservation. For him, to pursue the mainstream culture of the foster country would never help the Jew to attain any of their goals or salvation. This realization becomes the first steppingstone of resistance.

His traditionalism and religiosity are apparent in his pronouncement that, “My father could find comfort for any problem in the words of the Torah...I have wanted to run to the synagogue and believe with my father’s belief” (*Mila* 72-3). The portrayal of the protagonist conforms to the Jewish chivalry and masculinity and capability of violent resistance. Andrei is unsurpassed in physique, vigour, intellect, determination and mysterious powers, while the novelist deliberately disregards the hooked nose of the Jew which was a common racial stereotype.

Andrei’s presence as a “Polish cavalry officer” and a wrestling champion of the Army who demands everybody’s attention and admiration irrespective of their gender, “[whose] leg muscles fairly rippling through his trousers” (*Mila* 17) affirms his physical and mental health. The Tarzan image Uris attaches to his protagonists is really evident through the introductory description itself when Andrei’s girlfriend Gabriela Rak asks about him when she meets him for the first time thus, “The Tarzan of the Ulanys?” (36). Andrei maintains about his valour to Gabriela as, “I am a Jew...To be sure, I’m one of those good Jew boys. I can throw a javelin farther and jump a horse higher than almost any man in Poland” (42). Uris asserts the efficacy of the character by delineating his vitality.

Andrei has inherited cultural perseverance from his parents who instructed him in religious lessons. His proficiency in Torah helps him discerns his unique ethnicity. His anger towards his sister Deborah and her husband Bronski for not observing Sabbath on Friday night with “candles or benediction” (29) for the dinner and for bringing their children up without letting them know of their Jewish heritage depicts the inner self of the Jew who believes in upholding his culture and tradition at any cost.

Andrei's faith in the power of religion can be seen in his reminiscence of his father's words, "In cheder you will learn to find comfort in the Torah and the Talmud and the Midrash. You go to school tomorrow to begin your swim in the sea of Talmud and gather the wisdoms which will give you the strength and understanding to live as a good and pious man all your life" (*Mila* 56-7). His restless nights and visions of his 'Momma and Poppa' and the imaginary conversation he has with them display his cultural responsibility. How the Jews value Torah and Talmud and how their lives are bound with their wisdom moulded by Talmudic learning can also be found in the novel.

The novel also proposes the way Andrei opted Zionism and activism over his father's philosophy of patience thus "I want to be a soldier—a soldier like Berek Joselowicz" (60). He was inspired by the vigour of the Jewish soldier Berek Joselowicz who organized a Jewish Brigade to support Poland's rebellion against Germany and Russia. The memories of his father's last words, "Andrei... return to a good Jewish life before it is too late" (63) and "Know from where you came" along with his mother's lullaby keep him closer to his cultural origin:

What is best Sehora?

My baby will learn Torah,

Seforim he will write for me,

and a pious Jew he'll always be. (*ibid.*)

Andrei represents the devoted Jews with his appreciation of the concept of home. His agony as a homeless wanderer is apparent when he comments to his friend Brandel, "Wanting to be a Pole in your own land is as futile as wanting to be a Jew in your own land. I am not allowed the luxury of either" (74). Avtar Brah remarks about Diaspora and homeland thus:

Where is home? On the one hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day ... all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations. (192)

The mythic home of Jewish imagination is the driving force behind the activists like Andrei who struggle for the realisation of the same. Andrei's association with the organization of the Jews named Bathyrans, that aims to re-establish Jewish state in Palestine validates the participation of the fictional character in the factual events.

The novel validates the emergence of violent Jewish resistance with the German invasion of Poland in 1939 which critically affected the destiny of the Polish Jews. Alexander Brandel records in his journal thus, "Poland has been divided into three parts. Germany annexed western Poland to the pre-1918 borders. Soviet Russia has grabbed eastern Poland. The third part has been designated as the General Government Area, which the Germans are going to administrate" (*Mila* 119). The novel presents the appointment of the new Jewish Civil Authority by dissolving the old Jewish Council in Poland as a significant achievement of the Jewish resistance. The new German occupied Poland imposed new rules on the Jews. The Jewish Civil Authority was given the responsibility of taking a census of the Polish Jews to issue a ration book. Any Jew without the book was also ordered to be murdered. When the Civil Authority was endowed with the responsibility of supplying women for the

German soldiers, the council members reacted contemptuously against Schreier, the German higher official in charge of the Jewish council.

*Mila 18* also provides insights into the horrors of war by illustrating the deaths of young men including the Jews fighting for Poland. The Germans propagated that, “Germany has come here to save Poland from Jewish war profiteers...the German program met with universal success. The Polish people...were willing to accept the traditional Jewish scapegoat as the true cause of their latest disaster” (130). There are scenes like the exchange of war prisoners of Poland and Germany, where the Polish were being cheated by the Germans by sending handicapped Poles back.

Vigorous Jews like Andrei emerge due to the need of circumstances. The detrimental position of the Jews in the Polish city of Warsaw after the World War I makes him adopt fierce methods of war fare. The adverse circumstances lead Andrei to resort to armed conflicts advocated by the angry-young radical Zionists deviating from the traditional Zionists like Brandel. As part of his resistance, Andrei plans to take fifty best men with him and leave Warsaw to get arms from Russian borders and initiate an attack of his own style towards the Germans. The novel rightly maintains that, “As anti-Jewish riots spread over Europe at the end of the century, the urgency of Zionism heightened” (*Mila* 61).

The Nazis brought hundreds of Jews to Poland from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Germany to be kept in the dilapidated ghetto in Warsaw. The new regulations put forward by SS Brigadier Alfred Funk endowed the Civil Authority to send all the Jews to the quarantine area, which could be a ghetto in disguise, to register the Jewish belongings and to collect a fine of three hundred thousand zlotys from them. It could be regarded as the beginning of the modern ghetto life of the Jews. Brandel enters in his journal thus, “The wall goes higher. Two feet, three, four. It follows a weird,

unexplainable course. From the slums of Stawki Street and Parysowsky Place, which is crammed with refugees, it follows south along the Jewish cemetery and stops at the fashionable Sienna Street, running there to Wielka Street, north again” (*Mila* 216).

The Jews were forced to undertake slave labour in German warehouses and factories. There were different classes of Jews, as the German as well as Austrian Jews remained wealthier and lived in rented flats than the Polish Jews who were sent to Ghettos.

The novel conforms to history by retaining the names of “Hitler, Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, Globocnik, and in Warsaw, Stutze” (*Mila* 196), who were the German command over Warsaw. The activities of the Reinhard Corps included looting of the Jewish settlements and emptying their food supplies which led them strive for food and medicine. The occupants of ghettos were gradually killed by the Reinhard Corps, by making them dig their own graves before death. The justification provided was the “fear of epidemic” and “criminal activities” (246).

*Mila 18* evokes the horrific and immitigable state of the Jews and the heinous and despicable policies of the Nazis. The new strategy of murder and increased death rates due to typhus and starvation necessitated fierce Jewish resistance. The Jewish scholar Rachel Schulkins remarks in “Burke, His Liberal Rivals and the Jewish Question” thus,

...the word ‘Jew’ was stripped of any actual meaning and was rather used as a concept or social idiom. The word ‘Jew’ as a socio-political construct became a field of political meanings, dictated by the speaker and writer, which justified the politics of exclusion. In the liberal writings examined, the politics of exclusion are specifically applied to the Jews alone. (4)

The German order of deportation of all the Jews of Warsaw excluding the Jews who were directly employed by German authorities, members of the Jewish Civil Authority and Orphans and Self-Help Society, the Jewish Militia and their families, to the East had accelerated the course of violent resistance. “When six thousand people had been gathered, they were loaded on the trains. At three o’clock promptly each afternoon the rain pulled out for an ‘unknown eastern destination’” (*Mila* 329). Such circumstances diminished the stature of the Jews from humans to mere commodities which necessitated vehement actions to survive.

The novel offers a new way of perceiving Hitler’s order to build extermination centres in Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek, Chelmno, Treblinka, and Auschwitz in Poland from the Jewish perspective. The deportees included only those who were fit; the crippled, aged and unfit were shot at once by the SS firing squads. The American professor and Holocaust theorist Alvin Rosenfeld has explicitly examined thus, “...Hitler showed –not just in the pages of *Mein Kampf* but in the streets of Europe – how, following a programmatic vilification of the Jews, it was possible to proceed from ‘literary’ Jew-hatred to literal murder of whole communities” (*Mila* 44). Uris discloses the German cruelties towards the Jews in the ghettos of Poland through the witness report prepared by Andrei after visiting the camps in disguise.

The prevalent crisis and the death tolls of the ghettoed Jews in Poland necessitated Jewish uprisings and raids. There was active propaganda in the underground for uprisings. The decision of the final liquidation of ghettos instilled severe resistance. Ringelblum’s diary reads thus, “It was understood that it would be the struggle between the gnat and the elephant, but national pride commanded that Jews offer resistance and not let themselves be led helpless to the slaughter” (2). Apart from the uprisings and raids they had also executed armed attacks especially by



labour Jews working in gas chambers at Sobibór, Treblinka, and Auschwitz and were curbed by mass murder of the revolutionaries.

The novel emphasizes the way the young Jews were inspired by the Zionist tenets through depicting the violent Zionist activist Wolf Brandel, the son of Alexander Brandel. Wolf is initially presented as a sixteen-year-old boy infatuated to Rachael Bronski, Andrei's niece. But when his father decides to send him to the farm in Wework to associate with the workers who produce food for the ghettos, the Zionist lessons provided by Tolek Alterman in the farms inspire him to be a part of the mighty war undertaken by Andrei. He joins Andrei's underground unit as a runner or carrier to collect the packages from the other Zionist underground groups. Andrei's impression of Wolf defines him as a real Zionist fighter, "Wolf Brandel had mastered his studies as a brilliant scholar. Ideals. Wonderful. So many people without them, these days. Taking the hard road to satisfy an inner desire to do right. A good soldier in any army" (*Mila* 242).

Wolf's determination and intelligence help him save his life with clever answers when interrogated by the German official Gunther Sauer, the Chief of Gestapo House. Sauer fails to crack Wolf's carefully worked out tale of his identity as Hershel Edelman, the son of a manufacturer of chessmen. When he was asked to play chess with Sauer, he wins nine moves to prove the credibility of his story. He cleverly feigns his failure to recognize Wanda, the Jewish woman whom he had to meet for collecting the packages. He could convince the clever German chief with his smartness and with the collective efforts made by Rabbi Solomon, Max Kleperman and Andrei they release Wolf Brandel. Apart from suggesting his highly intelligent interventions, the novel depicts his physical might also, "Tall, strong. Smart—smart as a whip" (242). Andrei teaches Wolf the basic rules to follow as a fighter, "Two

lessons. First, live with access to the top floor. In danger, we go to the roof tops. Second, this work is neither romantic nor exciting. It is dull and exacting” (243).

Simon Eden is presented as the “iron-handed ruler of the Joint Federation of Labour Zionists...able to form and control ten different middle to left-wing factions” (*Mila* 146). As an ardent Zionist he represents the qualities of both active and violent résistants. He is also depicted as a strong Jew “who could rise to fierceness” served in the Army like Andrei (*ibid*). He is also a “deliberate thinker” and whom Andrei respects “more than any man in Warsaw except Alex” (*ibid.*). He initially joins hands with conventional Zionists like Alexander Brandel and Emmanuel Goldman to organize secret meetings for resisting the Germans. But when Andrei reminds him of the need for severe resistance, he joins Andrei’s war. Andrei persuades thus, ““You were an officer in the army, Simon. We’ve been friends since I can remember. Out of everyone in this whole business, you and I think the most alike. When all this started I wanted to cross the border and get arms. Alex talked me out of it. I’ve gone with everything, but...after this last trip...Simon, we’ve got to start hitting back”” (207).

When Simon Eden and the Labor Zionists agreed to work with Andrei and the Bathyrans other groups like the Communists, and other “religious fringe groups” join them to form the Joint Forces, with Simon as the commander and Andrei as his deputy. Wolf Brandel also assists with them “to organize a fighting unit” (356).

While preparing for armed resistance, secret groups in the ghettos faced extremely difficult problems, such as smuggling arms into the ghetto, training the fighters under ghetto conditions, and establishing a method for putting the fighters on battle alert in case of a surprise action by the Germans. No less difficult was the task of gaining the ghetto residents’ support for the fighting underground. (“Resistance During Holocaust” 2)

Together they construct underground city beneath the ghetto of Warsaw with rooms, sub-floors, closets, trap doors and secret entrances by keeping warning alarms in the attics to receive signals to reach to the roof top for sharing information in *Mila 19* and *Leszno 92*. When the Germans kill the Jewish activist Max Kleperman for his financial assistance to the Jews, the Joint Forces resort to violent means of attack. Only less than fifty thousand Jews remained when the extermination process called the Big Action ended on September 16, 1942.

While Hitler's announcement of a final solution resulted in liquidating the ghettos by Alfred Funk and Sieghold Stutze, Andrei, Chris, Simon and Wolf hide next to the closed chimney to wait to react. The novel explicitly suggests the excogitations of the four men on the same incident:

All Chris could see was his father's chapel. Andrei had no thoughts but of that moment when the hammer would burst through and reveal him. He could fire the gun into their rotten faces. Simon Eden was calm. It did not matter much anymore, Simon thought. His parents his sister, and brother were gone... This was the end. Simon's only marriage was to Zionism... Wolf played a chess game in his mind. (*Mila* 414-5)

Uris recounts the beginning of the ever-greatest Jewish uprising—Warsaw ghetto Uprising— against the German enemies through the reactions of Simon and Andrei who fired against the Corps men.

The largest and most famous single revolt by Jews took place in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April and May of 1943, led by the *Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa* (Jewish Fighting Organization; Z.O.B) ...The hand-to-hand combat lasted for several days. The Germans were not able to destroy the Jewish fighters, many of whom managed to get away and retreat over the roofs after

clashing with the Germans; nor could the Germans find the non-combatant Jews hiding in the bunkers. (“Resistance During Holocaust” 2)

Continuous and unexpected firing made the Germans scatter and run away in exasperation though firing back aimlessly yet eleven of them were killed. On the Jewish side the death of Ervin Rosenblum was counted. The novel brings a specimen of the real privations underwent by the Jews with a meticulous account of the Jewish sufferings.

Andrei and Simon’s plan of attack by appointing scouts for observation, collecting as many weapons and German uniforms as possible from the corpses and arranging for more organized attacks display the pattern of their systematic resistance. Uris provides an entire section to explain the upbeats of the Joint Forces. Brandel’s suspicion of the possibility of a larger bunker under Mila 18 which he believed to have occupied by a smuggler, Moritz Katz leads Andrei to find the way through the sewage to the well-maintained bunker. Andrei successfully obtains the permission of Moritz to occupy the bunker and his co-operation in the Jewish activities.

Ringenblum’s diary about Warsaw uprising records, “It was understood that it would be the struggle between the gnat and the elephant, but national pride commanded that Jews offer resistance and not let themselves be led helpless to the slaughter” (2). The Joint Forces confiscate the prison run by the Jewish Militia in collaboration with the Nazis, release the prisoners and execute the guard. They loot and disband the Civil Authority by sticking notices on the walls which read, “ATTENTION, AS OF TODAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1943, THE JEWISH CIVIL AUTHORITY IS DISBANDED. THIS GHETTO IS UNDER THE SOLE AND ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF JOINT JEWISH FORCES. ORDERS ARE TO BE OBEYED WITHOUT RESERVATION” (*Mila 449*).

The novel portrays the accuracy of the Joint Forces' work structure in order to confirm their intellectual competencies. It is presented as working in three sections—the first, watching over the rooftops and patrolling; the second, constructing underground bunkers; and a third doing training. Their use of telephone as well as their exchange of messages through code languages could be looked upon as intelligent cues of their proficiency in maintaining secrecy. The German proposal that allowed the leaders of Joint Forces along with other two thousand Jews to escape to Switzerland, by leaving the rest of them in relocation camps was rejected by them.

The prospect of German failure is anticipated in the final meeting between Chris and Horst Van Epp. Horst's fear of the possibility of hidden Jewish records of events as diaries or short notes in the ghettos increases the significance of Uris' method of resistance through writing. He expresses: "I have a crawling suspicion that inside that ghetto wall are ten thousand diaries buried beneath the ground. And that is what is going to crush us" (*Mila* 388). Even though Horst knew that it was Chris who published Andrei's reports on the German cruelties in the Polish death camps, he helps Chris with false papers to stay in Poland.

As Horst feared the Jews had buried their fifty journals underground. Horst further expresses the dare and might of Jews thus:

"I doubt if any warriors in the world were as furious in battle as the ancient Hebrews, nor did any people in man's history fight harder for freedom. Not once, but many times, they made Rome totter. And since their dispersion, because they have not had the opportunity to fight under a Jewish flag, we have been able to isolate them into individual units and riddle them with inferiority complexes." (*Mila* 423)

Alfred Funk's plans of maintaining every manhole leading out of the ghetto under strict watch and using poison gas candles in sewers and bunkers could be viewed as strategies to control the unrestrained willpower of the violent Jews. His appointment of military men in four sections in charge of several significant points and his division of them as SS Units, Wehrmacht Units, Local Units and Foreign Radical Guards show his resentment in their ongoing setbacks at the hands of the young Jews. The episode of Jewish firing towards the Reinhard Corps in Mila Street ensues a huge massacre of the Reinhard Corps. The picture of the Jews throwing fire bottles, grenades, and rifle shots towards the German tanks demonstrates the historical event by celebrating the Jewish determination. Brandel's radio report validates this point:

'Fellow Poles. Today, April 19, 1943, we have struck a blow for freedom as the first to rebel against Nazi tyranny. By ejecting the Nazi butchers from the ghetto, the Joint Jewish Forces tonight hold the only piece of sovereign Polish territory. In the past we have begged you to join us, and we beg you again. The Germans are murdering Polish citizens at a staggering rate in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. They intend to reduce Poland to a slave-labor pool by murdering more than half its citizens. No matter what our differences have been, the struggle for survival is mutual. Join us. Help us destroy the tyrant!' (*Mila* 502)

Uris portrays the Jewish scheme of attacking the enemies by creating a chaos among them to make them fire at their own men. This scheme of victory continued till the ninth day and on the tenth day they faced a set back at the German hands when the infuriated Germans employed airplane bombs to destroy the entire ghetto. "The Germans decided to burn the ghetto systematically, house by house. This action forced the fighters to take to the bunkers themselves and to resort to partisan tactics

by staging sporadic raids. The flames and the heat turned life in the bunkers into hell; the very air was afire, the goods that had been stored spoiled, and the water was no longer fit to drink” (“Resistance During Holocaust” 2-3). Tim Say pronounces the effects of Warsaw ghetto uprising on Poland by pointing out the ideas from the article “Extract from a Report by the "Delegatura" To London on the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt” thus, “Additionally, the uprising in Warsaw had an important psychological effect on Poland as a whole. It awakened feelings of sympathy for Jews amongst the Gentiles in addition to demonstrating that the Germans, and especially the SS, were not all powerful” (qtd. in Say 84).

The Tenth night was also followed by firing towards the remnants of the buildings. This was followed for next few days as the Jewish corpses were left unrecognizable and other Jews were choked to death only to continue the burning till the seventeenth day.

Jews have rebelled in the Warsaw ghetto! Jews have been holding against onslaught after onslaught for over a week! Tales of fanatical Jewish courage dribbled out. The myth of Jewish cowardice was burst. Berlin was shocked. Jews fighting, routing the Elite Corps! It was catastrophic, a humiliation as bad a propaganda defeat as Stalingrand was a military defeat. (*Mila* 516)

Uris reveals the solemnity of the Warsaw incident by prompting a detailed narration of the occurrences through the involvement of his characters in the chief positions.

The inmates of the Mila 18 are rendered as nearly dead by holding their breath for six hours of German inspection of the place. Nearly four hundred residents remained in Mila 18 when the Germans found three entrances to the bunker. While most residents surrendered, Simon—Uris’ fighter Jew, takes his men, Deborah, and the children through a fake brick opening into the sewer and across to the old bunker

at Mila 19 but succumbs by the sudden release of poisonous gas in to the bunker. Uris spares Tolek Alterman, Wolf Brandel, Rachael, Ana Grinspan and some twenty-three other civilians for an escape along with Chris through sewers with the aid of Gabriela. Andrei opts a suicide mission of attacking German troops with the remaining forces.

Gradually, the Jews' ability to resist or hide declined. On May 8th, the headquarters of the Z.O.B. at 18 Mila Street fell, and with it the commander of the uprising, Mordechai Anielewicz, and a large group of fighters and officers ... On May 16, German General Jurgen Stroop announced that the fighting was over. He blew up the Great Synagogue on Tlomacka Street (which was outside the ghetto and the scene of the fighting) as a symbol of victory and to declare to the world: 'The Jewish quarter of Warsaw no longer exists.' ("Resistance During Holocaust" 3)

The intention of the novel is to illustrate the earnestness of the Jews to preserve towards keeping the annals of their fractured history safe and untouched by the enemies. Even though they were aware that only a few among them would remain after the uprisings, they wanted the survived ones to uphold the legacy of their fellow Jews who sacrificed their lives for the cause as advised by Andrei to Stephen, "It is the job of your mother and your sister and me to die for the honor of our family. It is your job to live for our honor... it is you who has the more difficult mission. You must go from this battle to fight your way to Palestine, and you will have to fight again for your freedom" (*Mila* 482).

Uris' interpolations into the resistance strategies of the Jews are so accurate that his characters talk and act realistically and emphatically. All these characters represent various resistance strategies by denouncing the negatively stereotyped Jews, which have collectively resulted in the realisation of cultural identity in the liberated



state in Israel. The inquiry into the author's schemes of distinguishing the patterns of Cultural resistance and the realisation of a cultural state, identifies his commitment to subvert the negative stereotyping of the Jews through the reconstruction of history. For Uris, the Jews valued their culture more than their lives and needed to inform the world about their past. The words of the German official Horst Van Epp rightly suggest the same: "inside the ghetto wall are ten thousand diaries buried beneath the ground. And that is what is going to crush us. Not the allied armies, not a few tokens of retribution, but the voices of the dead, unearthed" (*Mila* 388).

While resisting cultural encroachments, Uris intends to refurbish his culture by glorifying the past through his fictional discourses which act as annals of the Jewish persecution. This happens so naturally in his novels that his unification and identification with his culture and identity by celebrating the past and defending its greatness seem unique and effortless. His writing is his way of resistance, and his novels are the best testimonials of his own cultural identity. All the selected novels can be identified as the accounts of Jewish evolution from victimization to the realisation of cultural identity in the homeland through retaining their ethnic self and resisting the oppressors to survive in the midst of catastrophe.

Safran identifies different types of Jews namely the religious and secular type of Eastern Europe and the American Settler Jews:

There are Jews—including religiously observant ones—who argue that with the establishment of Israel the Diaspora in the purely theological sense has been brought to an end, although the physical (and voluntary) dispersion of Jews may be continuing ... There are others, however, who believe that, in a sociopsychological sense, the diaspora has not ended, because the state of Israel is itself in a 'diaspora' condition globally to the extent that it is treated as

a pariah state by international organizations and regarded as not even "belonging" to the region in which it is located. This may be a questionable metaphorical use of the term; it does, however, serve to fortify the sympathies of the physical diaspora for the homeland community. ("Diasporas" 91)

The idea of resistance is used differently by authors in various discourses including the fictional. For Leon Uris, resistance articulates his rejection of the clichéd stereotyping of the Jews even by Jewish writers. He also uses it to critique the known historical narratives which deny the Jews the centre space and situate them in certain fixed slots. The Jews in his historical novels are résistants in one way or the other, who struggle to uphold their cultural identity even amid victimization and the resultant alienation. They have no other choice if they aspire to achieve their aim of self-discovery and liberation. The mode or degree of resistance may vary but they all indulge in "active effort to oppose, fight... control" (Profitt, qtd. in Hollander et al. 25). They are guided by their past, their unique experiences and their determination. Their resistance might be verbal or physical, individual or collective, spiritual or communal but always subversive and abrogative. The manner of resistance may vary but they all are meant to lead to the ultimate goal of liberation.

## Chapter 4

### **Liberation: The Prospect of Identity in the Homeland.**

“Identity... bridges the gap between the “inside” and the “outside”— between the personal and the public worlds” (Hall, “The Question” 597).

Identity and culture share a reciprocal relationship. Culture forms the basis of the individual’s identity and identity in turn connects the individual with culture. “The fact that we project ‘ourselves’ into these cultural identities, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them ‘part of us,’ helps to align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world”, says Stuart Hall (ibid). In short, culture induces identity and identity fosters culture. Accordingly, culture acts as a strong foundation for the formation of identity of a community. Hall explains further that “Identity thus stitches (or, to use a current medical metaphor, ‘sutures’) the subject into the structure. It stabilizes both subjects and the cultural worlds they inhabit, making both reciprocally more unified and predictable” (ibid).

New imaginings of identity in the diasporic communities of multicultural countries are being deliberated through academic, literary, artistic and other scholarly discourses across the world. For instance, the issues of identity of the Chinese community scattered as various diasporas are being discussed in *Culture, Identity Commodity* by Kam Louie and Tseen Khoo. Sunil Bhatia, in his *American Karma: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Indian Diaspora* delineates the dilemma of the Indian community which struggles to locate its identity in the US.

Jewish identity is unique in the sense that it is very much connected to the Jewish ancestry. Unlike other religious, social or political sects which intend to incorporate the differing also into their fold, Jewish identity is more cultural. The

Jewish diaspora which began as early as the first century BC with the Roman invasion of ancient Israel is closely linked to history, culture and land. Hence their subjective position is truly aligned with the places they occupied from the beginning of their quest to its culmination. The continual denial of homeland and exclusion fostered in them the dream of liberation, both geographical and cultural as they were a community which strongly refused to relinquish their collective identity founded on their culture, beliefs and customs. They strove to own a space for their cultural continuity. Their unhappy diasporic existence, constant victimization and continuous feeling of insecurity made them a resisting community, who fought to preserve their uniqueness and to persevere to fulfil their dream.

Jewish life in the Diaspora can be placed under the category of ‘victim diaspora’, a classification envisaged by Robin Cohen in *Global Diasporas*, which justifies their consequent manifestation of resistance and the demand for liberation. Cohen further examines the Jewish trajectory from diaspora to the Nation-state physically, which alters their identity from that of “victims” to “challengers” (507,520). The American educator Keith Michael Opdahl’s opinion on the victimhood of Jews in the novels of Saul Bellow enhances the concept. “[E]ach man victimizes the other because he is a victim of himself: Jew and Gentle, victim and bigot, both men suffer from the self-persecution of imaginary fears” (56). Writing on the African diaspora, Patterson and Kelly observe that “the presumption that black people worldwide share a common culture was not...the result of poor scholarship. It responded to a political imperative—one that led to the formation of political and cultural movements premised on international solidarity” (19). They quote Hall's remark that unitary images of diaspora offered “a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation” (224).

Jewish identity and their pursuit of finding a homeland to attain liberation is examined by Jewish writers differently. Philip Roth, in spite of being a Jewish writer, satirizes the Jewish dilemma in accommodating to the alien American host land, in works like *Goodbye Columbus and Five Short Stories* (1959), *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969). Roth's disillusionment about being a Jew and the attempts of escaping Jewish identity are evident in the following remark from *Portnoy's Complaint*:

I can lie about my name, I can lie about my school, but how am I going to lie about this...nose?...Because suddenly it has taken off, the middle of my face!...the middle of my face has begun to reach out towards God. Porte-Noir and Parsons my ass, kid, you have got J-E-W written right across the middle of your face...and my nose and my name will have become as nothing. (142,51)

Saul Bellow disliked being categorised as a Jewish writer, though his works evidently contained Jewish elements. Bellow's notion of the Jewish prospects of identity in the Diaspora can be explicated using an excerpt from his novel *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953). "All I want is something of my own... I want a place of my own. If it was on Greenland's icy mountains, I'd take and go to Greenland and I'd never loan myself again to any other guy's scheme" (526). Leon Uris, on the other hand, overtly expresses through his works, his inclination towards the Jewish perspective about their diasporic state and supports their occupation of Israel, often facing criticism for his biased stand against the Arabs.

An exploration of Uris' depiction of Jewish liberation and the formation of a nation envisions his novels as a unique way of celebrating the cultural identity of Jews. Liberation for the Jews is significant as that alone provides them with the opportunity to better their prospects in life while upholding their unique cultural identity. True liberation includes various aspects like social, cultural, political,

national, physical and psychological. The acclaimed feminist philosopher and cultural theorist, Ofelia Schutte enlists various aspects of liberation in her book *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*. She elucidates social liberation as the exclusion of “individuals from structures of social oppression” which extends up to the “cultural, political and economic aspects” (10), but at the same time she disapproves the possibility of “a revolution” to assure “national liberation” (11). The endeavours of the Jews to work towards freedom adhere to this concept propounded by Schutte as they reacted against all the aspects of liberation. Throughout their struggle against continuous dislocation, they are known to have stuck together, upholding their cultural tenacity. The Jews craved for an independent space which initially recurred in their dreams as an imagined homeland, where they could fearlessly preserve their identity and cultural specificities, from where they need not be exiled and dispersed. They expected this homeland to provide their freedom from all facts of oppression and thereby enable them to conserve their cultural identity.

This chapter examines the geographical, psychological, political and cultural aspects of liberation during and after the creation of Israel, though these aspects often diffuse through one another. Leon Uris’ *Exodus* and *The Haj* depict the Jewish attempts towards attaining liberation and their life in the post-liberation period in Israel. The study analyses Uris’ cultural politics in portraying the lives of the Jews and the Arabs through his novels. It also considers Uris’ proclamation of the Jewish liberty as an assertion of his own liberation from the appropriating clan of Jewish-American novelists. Uris contributes to the genre of Jewish literature by creating his own trajectory through the vistas of Jewish history.

*Exodus* and *The Haj* are built on various interpolations of fiction into history regarding the Jew's identity quest and its realisation in liberation. History is mapped by the author so powerfully and authentically that its deliberate subversions or even distortions in order to support the Jewish cause often go unnoticed. The thematic formula of the author in these two novels is to relocate the political and social history of the Jewish diaspora in select countries that contributed to the formation of the State of Israel. He illustrates this point by tracing the lives of Jews during the Diaspora in various parts of the world and after their final immigration to the State of Israel. The initial acceptance and the later marginalization of the Jews in the host lands are depicted in the novels as being caused by the paradigmatic shifts in the political strategies of the respective countries. If Uris' *Exodus* examines the trajectories of history in Russia, France, Germany etc., and more importantly the Nazi atrocities towards the Jews, which leads to the founding of the state of Israel, *The Haj* focuses on the complicated relationships between the Jews and Arabs destined to live together in Palestine.

### **Geopolitical Aspects**

The Jewish diaspora all along their dispersal, succeeded in surviving onslaughts due to their deep-rooted longing for a homeland. Their ideologies were built on the hope of reclaiming their lost land which would politically and psychologically liberate them. Uris attempts to fictionalize these historical events in his works, mainly *Exodus* and *The Haj*.

*Exodus* examines the historical incidents connected to the Jewish search for liberation and posits arguments to prove that the political games were responsible for the Jewish resistance in Russia. The Jews had enjoyed equal rights in Russia until 1804 where they were accepted by the Khazars and hence had maintained a warm

relation with the Moslems. But their privileges became nominal as the Northern Russians ascended to power leading to the emergence of Czar reign that suppressed the Jews. This resulted in a series of Anti-Jewish pogroms and the establishment of the Jewish Pale—an overcrowded settlement reserved for the Jews, in 1804.

It was purely political interests which later drove the host countries to alienate them as the ‘other’ and shoo them away as parasites and bad omens. Safran points out that, “Sometimes the host country finds it useful to emphasize and strengthen diaspora sentiments... in Germany in the 1930s, when (for purposes of scapegoating) the Nazis denaturalized Jewish citizens, thereby transforming most of them into Zionists...”

(92). The novel also highlights the alienation and the resultant resistance strategies of different generations of Jews necessitated by the hatred of the administration towards them. The young generation which believed in the need for more stringent methods to raise their voice founded a movement called the Lovers of Zion, a more powerful weapon than the passive prayers and liturgical learning of the elders of the community.

*Exodus* unfolds the Russian history through the perspectives of two Jews, namely the Rabinsky brothers—Jossi and Yakov, Ari’s father and uncle respectively. Their adoption of new Hebrew names—Barak and Akiva and their insistence to abandon Yiddish and talk in Hebrew display the determined beginning of fierce resistance. Jossi (Barak) inspires the younger generation thus, “If we are to think like a nation, we had better speak like a nation” and “Yiddish is the language of exiles. Yiddish is the language of the ghetto. Hebrew is the language of all the Jews” (*Exodus* 242). However, he is envious towards his younger brother Yakov for his involvement with the Lovers of Zion, which helped him to get closer to the people from Palestine. Simon, their father, on the other hand, represents the older generation



Jews who preferred to desist violence and wants the youngsters to abstain from it. This group believed in maintaining their culture and tradition and adhered to the spiritual lessons taught to them by the enlightened rabbis.

Also, the Talmudic and Biblical societies helped them observe their rituals. Their daily prayers included these lines from the Bible, *“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth...”* (198). Whatever may be their strategies, the Jews in their Pale lived with and breathed the love for Jerusalem.

The Russian political milieu was not favourable for the Jews as the Czars found them the means to deviate public attention from their tyranny. By 1880, Czar Alexander had devised various policies to escalate anti-Jewish activities. But when he was assassinated in 1881, the Czars accused a Jewish girl of the bomb blast, and this exacerbated the conditions of the Jewish life in Russia. *Exodus* depicts this crucial period by portraying the frenzied Russian mob’s cry to “Kill the Jews!” (205). They attacked the Jews and destroyed the seminaries. Even though Jossi and Yakov managed to escape from the young Russians with their physical strength, their father Simon was killed by them in his attempt to protect the Holy Torah from the burning synagogue. These violent incidents incurred the wrath of the rulers who took stringent methods to curb them. Uris records all these historic episodes in *Exodus*. “One third would go through government-sponsored pogroms, starvation, and other forms of murder. One third would go through expulsion and exile. One third would be converted” (204). Yakov, who murdered Andreev who hated the Jews was exiled along with his brother Jossi, causing their consequent journey to Palestine.

The dark age in the history of Jewish diaspora in France began only in the 1890s as in Russia because here too they were treated in an amiable manner in the

beginning during the reign of Napoleon. The gradual change in their attitude towards the Jews is graphically portrayed by Uris in *Exodus*. “France was the first country in Europe to grant Jews the full rights of citizenship without qualification” (219). Uris’ approval of Napoleon, who addressed Judaism as a religion is evident through his depiction of instances of Jewish assimilation to the French life and manners during his time. “The Jewish community produced a host of brilliant doctors, lawyers, scientists, poets, writers, musicians, and statesmen who seemed to justify the Napoleonic concept of assimilation” (219). The novel depicts the bitterness of the French towards the Jews which evolved gradually and reached its peak with the trial of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain in the Russian army, found guilty of treason for passing on crucial secrets to Germany. “Goaded on by Edouard Drumont, the arch Jew hater mobs of Frenchmen ran through the streets of Paris screaming the age-old cry “Death to the Jews”” (220).

The novel presents these events as the conspicuous reasons for the emergence and popularity of Zionism which called for the return of all the Jews to their homeland. When the novelist Emile Zola stood for Dreyfus, the Jewish writer Theodor Herzl devised the ultimate solution that, “... only if the Jews established themselves again as a nation would all the Jews of all lands finally exist as free men” (221). Herzl drafted these scattered thoughts in the paper titled ‘The Jewish State’. His thoughts addressed the prospect of a Jewish state in Palestine and influenced and inspired the young minds. This resulted in the gathering of eminent Jewish leaders in Basel, Switzerland in 1897 and it became a remarkable event in history as they called for the return of all the Jews to their homeland.

Zionism declared thus, “THE AIM OF ZIONISM IS TO CREATE A  
HOMELAND FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN PALESTINE SECURED BY

PUBLIC LAW” (*Exodus* 222). Zionism hastened the demand for a homeland by rejecting any possibility of assimilation. It instilled new hopes and dreams of homeland in the minds of the Jews. Eminent Marxist historian Marcel Liebman, exemplifies the significance of Zionism in the governance of the State of Israel in “Israel, Palestine and Zionism” thus, “...the relationship between the Jewish state of today and the ideas of its "prophet", Theodore Herzl, is clearer and more direct—infinitely so, indeed—than the link between the founder of Marxism and the regimes which speak in his name, whether in the Soviet Union, in China or in Cuba. (91)

Uris’ approval of Zionism is apparent in *Exodus*, when he writes, “But the Jewish state idea caught on and spread through a hundred lands. Herzl’s idea was neither novel nor unique, but his dynamic drive would not let it die” (221). But *The Case Against Academic Boycotts of Israel* edited by Cary Nelson, Rachel S. Harris and Kenneth W. Stein. records, “Some traditionalists considered Zionism a threatening secular movement seeking to supplant God’s role in bringing about the redemption of the Jews. Some assimilated Jews felt Jewish nationalism would threaten their status in the countries in which they lived” (393). Even though Jews approached it differently, Zionism played a vital role in the liberation of the Jews. Zionism evolved as an active movement that kept the Jews adhered to their unique identity.

*Exodus* marks the gradual evolution of Zionism in other countries with the efforts of Herzl, “He depleted his personal finances, neglected his family, and impaired his health. Zionism had become a great obsession with him” (222). The novel also acknowledges his efforts to get approval for his plans from the heads of other states. The two proposals made by the British—firstly, “a part of Sinai Peninsula

for Jewish immigration” and secondly “the African territory of Uganda to the Zionists for Jewish colonization” (223)—were declined by the Zionists. Despite severe criticisms, Zionism represented the active Jewish spirit and their inner desires to reclaim the Promised Land. “The history of the state of Israel since its creation is a continuation of the history of Zionism. It corresponds to the same logic and reveals the same inspiration” (Liebman 92).

Anti-Semitism accelerated the reach of Zionism among the Jews. Safran endorses this in “The Jewish diaspora and Israel: Problems of a relationship since the Gaza wars”, “It is only since the second half of the nineteenth century that the homeland has been viewed from the perspective of what came to be labelled Zionism – as a reality, ideology, and destination of physical return. This has been especially true since the establishment of Israel in 1948”. (202). *Exodus* celebrates the success of the Zionist mission of Jewish immigration as “the First Aliyah of the Jewish exodus!” (223). The novel also features the prospects of the rise of Arab nationalism and the extension of British rule thus, “Chaos in the Middle east. Zionism! Arab nationalism! The Ottoman’s decline and the British ascent!” (224).

The entry of the Jews into their Promised Land is a much-deliberated issue since the inception of the state in 1948. Geopolitical conflicts regarding its occupation have been topics of discourses since then. Frantz Fanon’s observation in the essay “On National Culture”, included in *The Wretched of the Earth* is significant:

A national culture is not a folklore, not an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people's true nature. It is not made up of the inert dregs of gratuitous actions, that is to say actions which are less and less attached to the ever-present reality of the people. A national culture is the whole body of

efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify, and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. (233)

National culture and identity procure significance in situations where the liberty of the people is denied. It is obvious that people would demand for a national status in such circumstances as in the case of the Jews. Jewish dream of a homeland was sustained with mythical tales of the Promised Land. The significance the Jews assign to their homeland despite the unpleasant state of affairs is evident when Ari Ben Canaan comments about Palestine to David Ben Ami, “‘Things at home? The same as always. Bombings, shootings. Exactly as it has been every day since we were children. It never changes... Home is home’” (*Exodus* 24). The depiction of the hard life in Israel further validates this statement “... life was brutally hard. Israel was a poor and unfertile country, and every single advance was made with sweat” (572). Langston Hughes’ short poem “Promised Land” validates the significance of homeland in the immigrant life thus:

The Promised Land  
 Is always just ahead.  
 You will not reach it  
 Ere you're dead.  
 But your children's children  
 By their children will be led  
 To a spot from which the Land--  
 Still lies ahead. (592)

*Exodus* portrays the prolonged Arab-Jewish disputes over Palestine which has a long history. Uris uses the Bible to endorse this point, “...*for the land is mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land*” (189). The novel depicts the British as treacherous

manipulators with colonial intentions over Palestine. Their interference and the World Wars are looked upon as the major impediments for Jewish occupation of Israel. The Jewish efforts to establish a state of their own in the British Mandate of Palestine is graphically presented in the novel.

The relentless Zionist attempts to lead the migration of the Jews to Israel along with the rise of Arab Nationalism decided the course of world politics. The pro-Jewish sentiments of the British helped them gain Jewish assistance in war. The Balfour Declaration stated that “His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this subject” (*Exodus* 247). The novel depicts the British schemes of maintaining a parallel alliance with the Jews and the Arabs and their agreement with France to divide the Middle East between the two. Despite the French intentions over Palestine, the British managed to occupy the country with the support of Faisal, the Arab leader. In return Faisal was crowned as the ruler of the newly founded state—Iraq.

While Haj Amin el Husseini, the Arab leader and the Mufti of Jerusalem urged for an Arab state, the Jewish organization called the Hagannah or the Army of Self-Defence constantly demanded for a Jewish nation in Palestine. The novel depicts the ambiguous attitude of the British through the character, Major P. P Malcom, who was appointed as the British Intelligence officer in Jerusalem. “When Malcom arrived in Palestine he was pro-Arab because it was fashionable for the British officers to be pro-Arab. These sympathies did not last long. Within a short period of time P. P. Malcom had turned into a fanatic Zionist...He was certain it was in God’s scheme for

the Jews to rise again as a nation” (*Exodus* 282). Even after winning the war with Jewish support, the British favoured the Arabs and helped Haj Amin el Housseini to escape to Egypt.

Just as in World War I the British glorified the Arab revolt—so they tried to hide the efforts of the Yishuv in World War II...But the British Government did not want the Jews to use this as a bargaining point for their homeland aspirations later on...Despite the Yishuv’s magnificent record the British did not revoke the White Paper. Despite the Arab treachery and the fact that they did not raise a finger for victory they did not revoke it. (302-3).

The subsequent unrest in Palestine fuelled by the Maccabees and the Yishuv to get their demand for a nation granted was favourably treated by the United States which became the new world power post-World War II. The novelist justifies transformation of the Jews from victims to fighters by citing the Bible “...*thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning*” (309).

The historical events which led to the creation of the State of Israel are documented in the novel by providing factual details. A proposal for the partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel was suggested by the United Nations and the US, Britain, France and the Soviet Union supported the Partition Plan. The subsequent violent Arab-Jewish conflict led to the initial set back of the Jews, only to succeed later with a more organized resistance, which the novel attests as “their first victory of the War of Liberation” (489). The novel also acknowledges the efforts made by the Yishuv to establish the State of Israel.

Between November 1947 and May 1948, the Yishuv had staged a spectacular show by successfully fighting against overwhelming odds with little more than

nothing...On the night of May 13, 1948, the British High Commissioner for Palestine quietly left embattled Jerusalem. The Union Jack, a symbol here for the misuse of power, came down from the staff—forever. (516-7)

It records the celestial moment of the attainment of liberation and the formation of a Jewish state in Israel through the radio announcement on May 14, 1948.

‘The Land of Israel...was the birth place of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious, and national identity was formed. Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world...Exiled from the Land of Israel, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom...revived their language, built cities and villages, and established an ever growing community...the right of the Jewish people to establish their independent state is unassailable...We hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish state in Palestine, to be called the State of Israel...The state of Israel will be open to immigration to Jews from all the countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants...’(519)

The novel celebrates the proclamation of Jewish liberation and the creation of the State of Israel from the Jewish perspective by explicating the responses of the fighters and the survivors. It bemoans the subsequent chaos and the prospect of the perpetual Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well.

*The Haj* is a multi-layered, seemingly polyphonic fictional work, which has gathered both applause and criticism alike. It encompasses the history of the Jewish-Arab relationship in Palestine and the essence of Jewish culture from the Arab



perspective. The title indicates the pilgrimage undertaken by the Muslims to their Holy land Mecca in Saudi Arabia as part of the fulfillment of their religious duties and refers to the Arab protagonist, Haj Ibrahim, the Muktar of the village Tabah in Palestine. His son Ishmael, the thirteen-year-old boy is the narrator of the novel. Set in 1944-1956, *The Haj* traverses from the times of the ultimate Jewish resistance to the period after their liberation and creation of the State of Israel. This novel chronicles the trajectory of Jewish resistance by incorporating the factual events that led them attain liberation. It explores the social and political conditions prevalent in the British Mandate of Palestine from the Arab perspective which encompasses the lives of the Jews in Palestine before and after attaining liberation. Though the novel retells the history of Jewish liberation, it gives voice to the Arabs, thereby reaffirming the multifaceted nature of history. As the British historian Alan Munslow observes, “history cannot exist for the reader until the historian writes it in its obligatory form: narrative” (3).

Though the protagonist is an Arab, the novelist’s intention is to throw light on the evolution of the Jews from victimhood to liberation by braving the enmity of the Arabs in their homeland. The protagonist Haj Ibrahim represents the hapless Arabs who are aware of the selfish character of their own people. The history of Palestine is narrated by his young son Ishmael, who secretly admires the Jews.

Gideon Asch, the Jewish leader in charge of the Jewish Shemesh Kibbutz near Ibrahim’s village Tabah, represents Uris’ fictional Jewish prototype. The prospect of perpetual Jewish resistance in the State of Israel is manifested through the words of Captain Wingate to Gideon Asch:

‘I am a dedicated Zionist. I believe this is Jewish land. I also believe that the ways of using these valleys and hills for defence have all been writ in the Bible. If there is ever to be a Jewish nation in Palestine, I feel destined to be a part of making it... The Jews, we Zionists...will never be able settle more than a few million people here... such a state will always be surrounded by tens of millions of hostile and unforgiving Arabs...if you are to survive, you must establish the principle of retaliation.’ (*Haj* 70)

By showcasing Palestine as a twice-promised land to the Jews by Balfour Declaration, and to the Arabs as part of the Greater Arab Nations, the novel manifests the incessant political tensions between Israel and Palestine.

*The Haj* depicts the Jews and the Arabs as binaries representing goodness and evil. Though the Jews fall prey to the European might, they are portrayed as intellectually, culturally, socially, and economically superior to the Arabs. The encounter between Palestinian Arab Muslims and Israeli Jews is realistically depicted in the novel. The gradual migration of the Jews to Palestine offers possibilities of rebuilding the Jewish state which is done by forming townships in Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias and Safed. The novel defines Palestine as a “no-man’s-land, hemorrhaging to death” (21) at the time of the second wave Jewish immigration from Europe. In order to escape from the dreadful Russian and Polish pogroms, several Jews returned to Palestine that “only through personal sacrifice and Jewish labor could Palestine be redeemed” (22).

*The Haj* depicts the period during the World Wars as hard for the Jews to do away with the treacherous schemes of the Europeans. It renders the Jewish attempt to establish a homeland in the Turkish held Palestine with international support. The

political advancements attempted by Britain and France in the Middle East during the World War I period was checked by the Turks. But the British established their rule over Palestine with the support of the Arabs. On 9<sup>th</sup> May 1916, the British and the French called for a truce and signed the Skyes-Picot treaty. By the Fall of 1917, the British conquered Jerusalem by defeating the Turks. Also, they founded a new state named Trans-Jordan on the Eastern side of the river Jordan. The Palestinian Arab Muslims united under the leadership of Haj Amin Al Hussein to fight against the Jews. The Jews resisted this by establishing a new group called Haganah—"a semi-legal, semi-underground army" (29).

The Jews offered their assistance to the British in war expecting their support in return for the prospect of a Jewish State. Ishmael points at the treachery underlying their attitude towards the Jews, "In order to lock Jewry into the Allied cause, the British foreign secretary issued the Balfour declaration, favoring the establishment of the homeland in Palestine. The Balfour Declaration was later canonized into international law and recognized by the entire world, saved the Arabs" (24).

Haj Amin al Hussein's attempts for unifying the Arabs against the Jews, by spreading the infamous lie that the Jews would destroy the Holy Dome of the Rock and the Mosque to rebuild Jewish temple, were successful. Subsequent attacks on the Jewish synagogues resulted in the massacre of the Jews by the infuriated Arabs. They even associated with Germany to overthrow the Jews. The British curbed the Arab revolt and forced Hussein to go into exile. A new partition plan was formulated, which offered a portion of the land from Tel Aviv to Haifa for the Jews. Even though the British repudiation of the immigration rights trapped several Jews in Europe, the Jewish legion continued in the hope of an escape from the Germans and the Arabs supported the Germans.

The 1940's is presented in the novel as a series of German victories. Germany seized Austria, Spain, and Czechoslovakia and had an alliance with Fascist Italy to fight against Western civilization. "With the successful occupation of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Iran, the Allies had secured their eastern flank in the Middle East. On the Western Desert a ferocious battle of attrition raged back and forth between the British and Rommel's Afrika Corps" (*Haj* 87-8). More than thirty-five thousand Jews participated in the Second World War for the British against the Nazis. "From the moment the great Second World War ended, things went very badly in Palestine... The news over the radio and in the Arab newspapers became violently anti-Jewish" (143).

The novel portrays the change in British attitude towards the Jews from the Arab perspective "...the British had too much invested in the region, in the Canal, in creating Trans-Jordan, and mainly in the oil fields of the Arabian Peninsula. Because these were in Arab lands, the British had to yield to Arab pressure, and their investment, particularly in the oil, was more important to them than any Jews" (*Haj* 147). The Partition Plan of November 1947 is also rendered from the Arab point of view that "The Arabs rejected the plan before it came to a vote. The Jewish Agency, realizing it could gain no more, agreed to accept the plan" (152). After the voting in the UN, the plan stood with a ratio of 32:13 as most of the countries supported partition. The novel elucidates the Arab resistance led by Generalissimo Kaukji, the Field Marshal of Arab Army of Liberation.

...the Jihad and Kaukji's Irregulars entered [Jaffa] and deployed mainly in the Manshiya...the closest district to Tel Aviv...they shattered the truce with the Jews by shooting at Tel Aviv around the clock... The Haganah responded with an operation that cleared the environs of Jaffa of Arab villages and sealed the city in... a unit of six hundred Jewish Irgun troops were positioned opposite

[them]...A few days later, Jaffa fell to the Haganah and Irgun. Of the Arab population of seventy thousand, only three thousand remained when the final assault was made. (228-9,245).

The proclamation of Jewish liberation and the creation of the State of Israel is presented from the Arab perspective as well, “On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion read the declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. Within hours, the entire Arab world attacked” (245). A later comment made by Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel is also incorporated in the novel to validate the Jewish cause and substantiate their prominence in the world politics:

‘It may take a long, long time, but Israel has a special mission, unique in the world. We represent the interests of the Western democracies...yes, even the British, who threaten us with arms, and the Americans, who threaten us with economic blackmail. Eventually, they will become disgusted with the Arabs and come to realize that without Israel their own existence is in danger.’ (*Haj* 322)

Throughout their struggle against continuous dislocation, the Jews have stuck together, upholding their cultural tenacity. The Jews craved for an independent space which initially recurred in their dreams as an imagined homeland, where they could fearlessly preserve their identity and cultural specificities, from where they need not be exiled and dispersed.

Apart from documenting Jewish liberation as the result of their interminable struggle and resistance, *Exodus* and *The Haj* also depict their life in Israel after occupying it. The assertion of the Jew’s liberty becomes the author’s trope of standing unique among the Jewish American writers. Liberation and the

creation of a Jewish state in Palestine granted the Jews with the opportunities of the realization of the home and the gratification of the feeling of belonging.

To quote Safran:

As in the case of Jews since the reestablishment of Israel, there is a controversy about whether there is indeed a place to return to—and whether, therefore, the diaspora can be ended... Diaspora sentiments may be manipulated by the government of the host country in order to influence the behavior of the homeland. United States government officials attempted on several occasions (especially during the presidency of Jimmy Carter) to have American Jews exert pressure on Israel...The homeland myth plays a role in the political behavior of diasporas and is reflected both in voting and in interdiaspora relations. (“Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return 84, 93, 94)

“The word *aliyah* means to arise, go up, as and when a Jew goes to Palestine it is always referred to as an *aliyah*...always going higher than he was” (*Exodus* 53).

*Exodus* demonstrates the way the Rabinsky brothers experienced the homeland before the attainment of liberation. Palestine has always been a dreamland for the Jews, but the land experienced by the Rabinsky brothers was at odds. They could see only the remnants of the ancient Temple of Solomon on their way from Rosh Pinna to Jerusalem, which instilled them with deep anguish. Although the remnants of the Temple were kept sacred, the Mosque of Omar also stood there. The Rabinsky Brothers represent the Jews of the First Aliyah, who cultivated their land despite the distrust of the natives. The Diaspora Jews were “outsiders” or “stateless wanderers” (218) for the natives. “At least in the ghetto we were among Jews. We had books to read, music to hear, and people to speak to...Here there is nothing” (215).

The complex and flexible positioning of ethnic diasporas between host countries and homelands thus constitutes a prototype for various sets of coordinates that social units and individuals use for defining, centering, and (if necessary) "delocalizing" their activities and identities, and that social scientists may use in analyzing the relationship between "insiders" and "outsiders" and between state and society. (Safran 95)

The Rabinsky brothers represent the first-generation immigrants with their involvement with active Zionists and the Maccabees as well. They establish the first Jewish city named Tel Aviv (Hill of Spring) in 1909. The purchase of lands for Jewish settlements provided them with opportunities for the creation of a separate homeland. The first experimental Kibbutz in Palestine named Shoshanna acted as an answer to the Zionist questions of identity. "Everyone... had a violent hatred for the things which has made him a ghetto Jew" (*Exodus* 239). The presence of oil and potash in soil with the proximity of the Negev Desert, the iron mountain, and the Dead Sea constituted the arid nature of the land. It was difficult for the Jews to rebuild their lost homeland. The novel depicts the difference between the condition of the Jews before and after the attainment of liberation. For instance, the inscription on the tombstone of Akiva represents the condition of the Jews before liberation, "IT IS GOOD TO DIE FOR ONE'S COUNTRY" (580). Barak's words substantiate the latter, "...it is good to have a country to die for" (580). Dan Wakefield remarks about *Exodus* thus, "the real achievement of *Exodus* lies not so much in its virtues as a novel, as in its skilful rendering of the furiously complex history of modern Israel in a palatable, popular form that is usually faithful to the spirit of the complicated realities" (319).

*Exodus* also marks the post-liberation life in Palestine and depict the prospect of political liberation in the homeland. The Partition Plan of 1947, proposed by the

United Nations has recommended for the formation of two separate Arab and Jewish states and a Special International Regime for Jerusalem. When the Jews accepted the proposal and created the State of Israel, the Arabs repudiated the same by arguing against the partition of the land. The Arab League attacked the newly established State of Israel in 1948. The consequent Civil War and bloodshed led to the division of Jerusalem into West Jerusalem—held by Israel, and East Jerusalem—the present state of Jordan that includes the Old City and the holy places.

The novel also illustrates the Jewish attempts to obtain the cities from the Palestinians one by one. The episodes after the proclamation of Liberation have subtitles with the names of major cities and landmarks like, “NEGEV DESERT” (520), “JERUSALEM” (522), “JERUSALEM CORRIDOR” (523), “HULEH VALLEY—SEA OF GALILEE” (524), “SHARON, TEL AVIV, THE TRIANGLE” and “WESTERN GALILEE” (526). While supporting the Jews for these acquisitions, Uris blames the Arabs, “The Arabs revealed that they had a “master plan” for throwing the Jews into the sea. If a master plan existed there was no master commander, for each Arab country had its own idea of who should rule Palestine afterward” (520). Uris is not concerned about the plight of the Arabs who are evacuated but is preoccupied with the prospect of Jewish prosperity. The novel also applauds the Jews for preserving the Old City of Jerusalem unharmed. At the same time it denounces the Arabs for their violation of the promise by attacking the sacred city. “The Jews had no illusions left after their years of dealing with the Arabs, but this attack on the most sacred shrine of mankind was a nadir” (522).

*Exodus* depicts the way the young Jews are given compulsory training to handle weapons under Nahal, the “militarized intensification of settlements in strategic places” (582). The novel also documents that, “After basic training they were



sent out to the borders to build combined farming and defensive settlements. To build a wall of flesh on the Israeli borders was a partial answer to *fedayeen* terror. The settlements of these youngsters in their late teens were only yards from the frontier; they lived in the jaws of the enemy” (582-3). Uris further adds that the Gaza Strip was the toughest border to administer as “Gaza was the principal base and training ground of the Egyptian sponsored *fedayeen*’s” (583). However, the country now becomes a safe place to live. “Israel became the most efficiently organized and largest in proportion to population—standing militia in the world” (*Exodus* 582).

*The Haj* draws attention to the persistent border disputes between Israel and Palestine. The novel portrays how the peace-loving Arabs prefer to go back to Israel and live in harmony with the Jews. Uris presents the polarities of perspectives represented by the moderate and the radical Arabs. When the moderates like Ibrahim believe in mingling with the Jews, the other Arabs show their hatred towards them. The isolated desert life in exile and the hardships in the refugee camps urge Ibrahim to seek the help of the Jewish companion Gideon to redeem his old village in the newly formed Israel. Ibrahim explains his plans to escape exile, “Let us see if there is some way I can deal with the Jews and return to Tabah. Or else we will be left to die in this horrible place” (331). But the majority of the radical Arab world believes the Arab ministers in Conferences for land negotiation, “Palestine is an Arab problem that can only be settled by the Greater Arab Nation” (410). The novel also criticises the passivity and complacency of the Arabs thus, “The main argument was that if [Arabs] did something for ourselves the Jews and the world outside would mistake it as believing that we accepted the exile. So long as we did nothing, we could continue to weep to the world and the Arab leaders could continue to harangue the Jewish state” (330).

Along with the like-minded moderates, Charles Maan and Sheik Ahmed Taji, Haj Ibrahim attempts to get sanction from the Arab leaders for a negotiation with the new State of Israel for the return of Palestinians to their homes. But the difficulty they encounter in getting the permission from their own leaders make them realize the political game involved in the matter. Charles Maan comments to Ibrahim, “Your Arab brothers have imprisoned you for life. Those camps will be turned into madhouses. (421). The conference they arrange in Bethlehem for the same concern helps them pass a resolution to represent the plight of the Palestinian refugees at the proposed International commission in Zurich. But their attempts are overthrown by the Arab Legion by arresting some of the moderate youths which include Ibrahim’s son Jamil. Despite the threats from the Arab Legion, Ibrahim, Mann and Sheik Taji take efforts to convince the Palestinian crisis in the Zurich commission. In spite of their attempts, the Arabs of the Legion question their credibility. Ibrahim is forced to sacrifice the life of his son Jamil for the sake of his moderate pragmatism and compassion for his people.

*The Haj* reflects the ultimate destruction of the self-righteous Arab, Haj Ibrahim, who kills his own daughter Nada for her willing prostitution, which he regards as defamation of his honour. The novel demonstrates the breakdown of the devout Arab, with the dissolution of his culture, tradition, and values along with his displaced disposition. He commits suicide unable to withstand the shame of knowing that some Arabs had molested the women in his family.

In *The Haj*, Uris portrays Palestine as a land devoid any life, exploited by the Turks and Arabs, desperately waiting for the return of her people, the Jews. He claims that “Palestine had been devalued to bastardy and orphan hood. It had no status except dim echoes of its past. And Jerusalem was reduced to sackcloth and ashes”

(16). The image of a land with all its plenty remains only in their memories and the land that awaited them was a useless one. This shock added to the rigidity of their nature, as their responsibility of fulfilling their dreams haunted them. This perpetuated their identity crisis as their quest had to continue. Yedidia Z. Ster exemplifies the ambivalent nature of Jewish identity as, “Many Jews in Israel live a life of cultural duality. They have two cultural foundations: Western-liberal culture and traditional Jewish culture” (4).

### **Psychological Aspect**

The saga of the Jews is one of a spiritual journey as much as it is a fight for a land of their own. Their spiritual conflict is coloured by their experiences in different host lands where they were never welcomed in any point of time. Hence their identity formation is linked with the various aspects of liberation like the political, cultural and so forth.

*Exodus* and *The Haj* make deep insights into the psychological workings of the characters’ mind. The idea of liberation, for Uris, is a combination of the psychological and geographical, as both are reciprocal. Jews in their Diaspora state were variously impacted by the cultural and ethnic specificities of the homelands they occupied. Hence their identity is a very complex one, containing elements and impressions of those communities, in spite of their experiences of alienation. This complex identity deepens the psychological trauma of the Jews and makes their journey all the more hazardous and uncertain. Judith Butler explains this state of mind thus:

[I]t also implies a more diasporic origin for Judaism, which suggests that a fundamental status is accorded the condition by which the Jew cannot be

defined without a relation to the non-Jew. It is not only that, in diaspora, Jews must and do live with non-Jews, and must reflect on how precisely to conduct a life in the midst of religious and cultural heterogeneity, but also that the Jew can never be fully separated from the question of how to live among those who are not Jewish. (28)

This state of hybridity burdens and disheartens at least a few of them as Hillel Halkin observes in *If Israel Ceased to Exist*, “It is possible to think of Israel as the psychiatrist’s couch on which the Jewish people has lain down after centuries of Diaspora life” (34). Uris fictionalises this disillusionment also, like in *Mila 18* through the character of Paul Bronski, thus answering to the criticism that all his Jewish characters are spiritual and ‘purely’ Jewish.

Jewish writings or those about Jews usually portray them as assimilating themselves to their host lands. David Sax rightly observes in “Rise of the New Yiddishists” that, “[Philip Roth’s] questioning of tradition and identity was a necessary step for the evolution of the American Jewish community and its literary tradition. But [they] aren’t relevant for my generation of American Jews anymore. We’re more interested in... figuring out how to re-invent Jewish culture” (3). Uris can be seen as an exception because, though some of his characters are found assimilating, his focus is on those who adhere to their specific culture and heritage.

The protagonist of *Exodus*, Ari Ben Canaan is presented as a hard-core Jew, who stakes his own life to rescue his fellow Jews from captivity to freedom is the symbol of determination and steadfastness. He symbolizes all who favour the Jewish diasporic community who withstood all trials in life to reach their imaginary homeland.

David Ben Ami, the scholar and friend of Ari, is also his aide in risking his own life in fighting for the Jewish cause. Being religious, he justifies the significance of the name of their mission of rescuing children—Operation Gideon thus, “Do you remember your Bible, Judges? Gideon had to select a group of soldiers to go against the Midianites. He picked three hundred. We have also picked three hundred to go against the British. I guess I may be stretching a point for the parallel and Ari does accuse me of being too sentimental” (55). Uris depicts the plausibility of a divine purpose behind the Jewish endeavours through such reflections.

Karen Hansen in *Exodus* represents the Jews who are not ashamed of their Jewry. Her belief in the divine law of God reinforces this:

God didn't pick us because we were weak or would run from danger. We've taken murder and sorrow and humiliation for six thousand years and we have kept faith. We have out lived everyone who has tried to destroy us...this little land was chosen for us because it is the cross roads of the world, on the edge of man's wilderness. This is where God wants his people to be... (589)

Judith Butler, in *Parting Ways*, remarks on the Jewish identity crisis thus, “It is not only that, in diaspora, Jews must and do live with non-Jews, and must reflect on how precisely to conduct a life in the midst of religious and cultural heterogeneity, but also that the Jew can never be fully separated from the question of how to live among those who are not Jewish” (27). This coexistence with the host culture had resulted in the Jewish identity crisis which the novel portrays through the characters of Karen and Dov Landau. Karen is presented as a victim of the German dislocation of the Jews. When Karen Clement becomes Karen Hansen (Clement) due to the displacement of Danish Jews, her identity crisis, double parentage, and dual nationality affects her psychological development. Dov Landau's troubled childhood

due to his family's active involvement with Zionism largely contributes to his stringent behaviour.

Brigadier Bruce Sutherland, the half-Jew who serves in the British army, is a significant paradigm of multiple identity concerns. He is depicted as a sincere officer in charge of the Jews detained in Cyprus, who is afraid of disclosing his Jewish identity. Uris portrays his psychological agony because of the last confession made by his Jewish mother about the sin of denying her people in her lifetime for the sake of family. His penitence for breaking his promise to bury his mother with her Jewish relations, torments him throughout. He is shown as living a dual life that of a British man in the public and a repenting Jew in solitude haunted by his mother's words. He represents the Jews with identity crisis and remorse who finally decide to embrace Jewish culture for the peace of mind. Stuart Hall aptly observes thus in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", "Cultural identity... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past" (225). According to him "cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture" (226). Sutherland, in *Exodus* "assumes different identities, at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent self. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continuously being shifted about" (Hall, "The Question" 277).

The myth of a unified identity that depends on its rigid cultural roots and traits, acts as the foundation of the Jewish identity crisis as well as the persistent quest for a complete, unified identity. Their collective belief that such an unabated identity firmly rooted on culture and religion made them submit themselves to the entire Holocaust mishaps. As Hall points out, "If we feel we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or 'narrative of the

self' about ourselves... unified, completed, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy" (277).

Uris' novels depict the psychological development of the characters, irrespective of their ethnic or cultural origin including the Jews, non-Jews, half-Jews and the unsympathetic others. Uris' characters range from those who regard their identity as a burden to those who uphold their origin as a matter of pride. His presentation of the religious and cultural observances of the Jews can be treated as his way of preserving cultural identity. He foregrounds his community's history in a distinct light through the characters unlike his contemporaries. Uris employs his writings as a way of cultural acquisition and promotion by depicting the trajectory of Jewish victory and world appraisal. It is to be noted that Uris' accounts of the Jewish affairs are first handed, skimmed from his own life along with the experiences he gained through research. Uris adds religious allusions to distinguish between pious and non-religious Jews. His religiosity is based on the Judaic idea of regarding the world as a place of worship. Hence, he favours the Jews who observe the religious practices.

*Exodus* also depicts the sympathetic attitude of the non-Jews towards the Jews, through the characters Mark Parker, Kitty Fremont, and Mandria. Kitty's initial prejudice against the Jews portrays the general notion about the Jews. Her later indulgence with the entire operation planned by Ari and her assimilation to the Jewish culture and way of life along with the ultimate fear she breeds about the safety of Israel depict Uris' intended response from each non-Jew after perceiving the Jewish dilemma. Kitty's fear is rendered thus, "The Arab sat at Israel's borders, licking their wounds and waiting for that day they would pounce on the little nation and destroy her in their much-advertised 'second round'" (581).

Uris' portrayal of the Jews in the ghetto also serves as a psychological paradigm. The novel presents the ghetto as divided based on nationality and ethnicity. Separate compounds were provided for the Polish, the French, the Czech, and the Orthodox Jews, most of which "however, were merely survivals of the war, with no identity other than that they were Jews who wanted to go to Palestine. They all had a similarity in their uniform misery" (*Exodus* 36). Hence the desire for liberation and a homeland is presented as the uniform characteristic of the Jews in the ghettos.

The novel tries to transcend the prevalent Christian notion of the element of sin assigned as the reason for the Jewish Diaspora. Safran opines that:

Thus the persistence of the Jewish diaspora was for generations a convenient and even necessary element of Christian theology: the "wandering Jew" provided daily proof of the superiority of the Christian faith, on which Western societies were based. This was the obverse of the Jews' own post hoc theological rationalization for their diaspora condition: the belief (reaffirmed by the devout in their daily prayers) that they had been exiled from their land as a collective punishment for their sins (which, in the eyes of the Jews, did not include deicide). (92)

The inclusion of religious interpretations emphasises the idea that the Jews are led in their actions by a Divine scheme as if they have no choice over them. For instance, David remarks, "Our very existence is a miracle. We outlived the Romans and the Greeks and even Hitler. We have outlived every oppressor and we will outlive the British Empire. That is a miracle Ari" (*Exodus* 25). This tenacity to stick to connect every action or thought to their religion can be seen throughout the novel. In another context, Simon Rabinsky refers to "being a Jew entails certain obligations", and "[we] were put here to guard the laws of God. This is our mission. This is our purpose"



(204-05). The eagerness of the Jews to bind their character, their experience etc. with the various elements and layers of the religious scriptures show their difficulty in locating their identity in the labyrinths of history and the psychological trauma related to it. The title of the novel and the epigraphs of each section are therefore in one way or other, linked with the *The Holy Bible*. For example, the fifth book of *Exodus*, begins thus “...*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles—Isaiah*” (*Exodus* 555). Since the Jews in the novel always appear as adhering to religious principles, they represent the most pious community whose purpose in life is to guard the law of God.

Uris’ novels suggest that Israel is the only country that will accept the uniqueness of Jewish identity. It is where they could attain psychological emancipation. Avtar Brah comments on Diaspora thus, “Paradoxically, diaspora journeys are essentially about settling down, about putting roots ‘elsewhere’” (182). This rooting process is strenuous as it precedes a displacement that severed any palpable trace of origin and identity. Thereupon, belonging resides in distant dreams, identity stands negated, and liberty remains elusive.

Robin Cohen expresses his views on the concept of Diaspora and homeland by adopting the opinions of William Safran thus:

The Jewish experience continued to influence Safran’s view of the vital importance of homeland in defining one of the essential characteristics of diaspora. For him, members of a diaspora retained a collective memory of ‘their original homeland’; they idealized their ‘ancestral home’, were committed to the restoration of ‘the original homeland’ and continued in various ways to ‘relate to that homeland’. (4)

The culture of the host land affects the formation of the diasporic identity. According to the Indian literature educator Jasbir Jain, “Two systems of knowledge and two sets of cultural influences construct identity and the socio-economic reality of both the societies confronts the self” (64). Jewish identity was such a one, created by an in-between situation among the cultures of the host land and homeland. Naturally, among such diasporic Jews, some of the Jews who could assimilate, stuck to the host culture even during the Holocaust. Even when the creation of a homeland became the main concern of the Jews, chances of their assimilation and acculturation with other cultures and ethnicities also were seen in plenty. The myth of homeland stands unique and distinct in comparison with the real homeland. *Exodus* depicts the difference between the two as perceived by the Diaspora Jews thus, “Their Promised Land was not a land flowing with milk and honey, but a land of festering stagnated swamps and eroded hills and rock-filled fields and unfertile earth caused by a thousand years of Arab and Turkish neglect” (216). The Jews in Palestine form a group called the Bilus or pioneers for the agricultural development of the land. One of them laments, “At least in the ghetto we were among Jews. We had books to read, music to hear, and people to speak to... Here there is nothing” (215).

Homeland is a very complex phenomenon for the Jews where identity itself is very complicated. Safran explains well this complexity through wry humour, “A cartoon appeared in *Le Monde* several years ago, showing an old man who says: “I have never lost hope of returning to my homeland someday. However, I no longer remember where I came from”” (91). The actualization of the homeland, which is different from the imaginary land, disappoints them. The hardship in Israel is rendered by Uris as “No one in Israel worked for comfort in his own lifetime: it was all for tomorrow, for the children, for the new immigrants coming in” (572). The

African American revolutionary and American minister, Malcom X, opines about the Jews in an interview with Alex Haley when asked about German Nazism and fascism thus, “The Jew never went sitting-in and crawling-in and sliding-in and freedom-riding, like he teaches and helps Negroes to do. The Jews stood up, and stood together, and they used their ultimate power, the economic weapon” (31). Uris favours these types of Jews who stand together for their collective demands.

A parallel reading of Uris’ novels indicates the notion that the diasporic life has intensified the Jewish desire for liberation irrespective of their land of refuge. The initial phases of Diaspora cannot really be associated with a yearning for liberation, as the Jews were not confiscated in any places of their initial refuge. Their settling down in completely alien surroundings had given them problems of acclimatization, yet their liberty was not denied. Hence, the early Diaspora Jews had never confronted with a situation without liberty. As their lives in alienated surroundings had given them problems of acclimatization, they cherished their desire to retain Jerusalem. This dream had got cultural and religious significance too. But the dream for a politically liberated state emanated only later when they encountered hardships and slaughters in the name of political achievement. The yearning for return was intense as they collectively wished to reunite for the building up of a Jewish state in Palestine. Uris portrays the dissimilarity between the old and the new generation Diaspora Jews through his illustration of different characters.

The general assumptions regarding the Jews designated their position in the Diaspora as the rival. Literature, arts, and other forms of entertainment stereotyped the Jews as brutal, miserly, wicked, treacherous, and aggressive antagonists. Rachel Schulkins examines the literary status of the Jews while analysing Edmund Burke’s *Reflections* thus:

The image of the blood-thirsty, deracinated, deceitful Jew was a well-established and popular stereotype in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Jews in England were perceived as a social and political threat, a cancerous presence eating up the nation, due to their social position as a separatist faction and their increasing visibility in economic circles. Unsurprisingly, many writers and thinkers around this time addressed the Jewish threat by associating the children of Abraham with social and moral degeneracy, with the new capitalist order and with the nation's economic hardships. (1)

This paradigm was prevalent in almost all the countries where the Jews took shelter. While some Jews tried to assimilate with the foster cultures some others converted to Roman Catholicism or the other forms of Christianity. Yet the religiously committed Jews found it difficult to stay away from their rituals and practices. Such Jews maintained a culturally oriented Jewish life in the secular and non-Jewish circumstances.

An excerpt from Michael Gold's *Jews Without Money* (1930) manifests the nature of Jews by leaving behind the hostile land of refuge to embrace a new land of comfort thus, "The Jews had fled from the European pogroms; with prayer, thanksgiving and solemn faith from a new Egypt into a new Promised Land" (14). Saul Bellow states about his own writings in a conversation with Chirantan Kulshrestha that "I have never consciously written as a Jew...never attempted to make myself Jewish...never thought of writing for Jews exclusively... I think of myself as a person of Jewish origin—American and Jewish..." (Kulshrestha 13). Rachel Schulkins examines the literary status of the Jews while analysing Edmund Burke's *Reflections* thus:

The word “Jew” in *Reflections* does not refer to a real living human-being, but simply to a literary and cultural stereotype, which lacks any social or historical specificity. By looking at the function of the Jew in the writings of Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, Thomas Paine and William Godwin, this article suggests that for these liberals, as for Burke, the Jew was simply the ultimate inassimilable other and thus lied outside their call for equality. (8-9)

Robin Cohen, in *Global Diasporas*, maintains the idea that the Jews who assimilated to the host culture, ignored the Zionist principles. Some of them even participated in political struggles for their host land. This made their lives more meaningful according to them, than asserting their Jewish identity. He observes thus:

The assimilationist position is especially damaging to the Zionist view of the diaspora because people are simply voting with their feet – and these are pointed towards the affluent suburbs in affluent countries, rather than in the direction of Jerusalem ...there have always been Jews who have been keen to escape the confines of their ethnicity and their religion. However, many of them consciously identified with a political struggle in their countries of settlement, which they saw as more salient to their lives than the assertion of their Jewish identity. (110)

The authenticity of Uris’ works is evident from his inclusion of historical sequences, places, well-known personalities and events. Uris’ own statement in *The Haj* authenticates this, “*Many of the events in The Haj are a matter of history and public record. Many of the scenes were created around historical incidents and used as a backdrop for the purpose of fiction*” (*Haj ii*). This interspersing of fact and fiction gives a different version about the basic nature of the Jews who are generally

considered as shrewd and selfish. In *The Haj*, the focus is on showing how the wrong assumptions about the Jews have misled the Arabs and paved way for the Jew –Arab conflict. Gideon Asch, the Jew, and the Arab characters are shown to share the land peacefully for a long time until the seeds of hatred are sown into the minds of the Arabs.

*The Haj* probes into the complex nature of the relationship between the two communities—Arabs and the Jews—that destined to fight for the same land. It depicts how the Jews who establish a settlement near the Arab village teach them the civilized way of living. Uris displays the differences between the cultures and manners of the Arabs and the Jews who live in proximity. The novel presents the intense Arab aversion of the Jews. It attributes hatred as the major trait of the Arabs and authenticates this through depicting their religious and cultural practices that advocate anti-Jewish ideologies. They have even induced anti-Jewish attitude in school children. “[Their] history and geography lessons had no maps showing Israel. In the math class younger grades were taught addition and subtraction: “If you had ten dead Zionists and killed six more, how many dead Zionists would you have altogether?”” (*Haj* 455). Their teachings included the slander of the Jews, the Bible, and the State of Israel. “The Jews are the enemies of God and humanity...Their Bible is filled with scandals and debauchery... Jews are scum and do not constitute a legitimate nation...The State of Israel must be destroyed...Islam is superior...” (457).

The Arabs are depicted as insensitive and vengeful people, eager to establish their supremacy over other. “The only way to rise was to destroy the man above and dominate the man below” (*Haj* 17). Ibrahim seethingly remarks, “For years, decades, we may seem to be at peace with you, but always in the back of our minds we keep the hope of vengeance. No dispute is ever really settled in our world. The Jews give

us a special reason to continue warring” (55). Such statements are placed against the Jews’ longing to return to Jerusalem which keeps them positive in alien host lands. “[The Jews] looked, as they always had, to a return to Palestine. This longing had never let their daily prayer and was reemphasizes in the year Yom Kippur greeting, “Next year in Jerusalem” (21). The Jewish attributes like love and mercy are rendered through the Arab experiences and opinions. The novel recounts the goodness in Jews and the cruelty in Arabs through Gideon’s words “...peace is a value to [the Jews]. Love is a value to us... What kind of perverse society, religion, culture... what kind of human being...is it that can generate such volcanic hatred... [Arab] knows only hatred, that breeds only hatred, that exists for hatred?” (424).

In the novel, the Arabs in Tabah attain gradual psychological enlightenment because of the presence of the Jewish settlement in the neighbourhood. Uris also suggests the nature of the brave Jews thus, “The Jews will be brave because bravery often comes from the lack of choice” (175). The aggressive Arab nature is portrayed through the observation made by the Englishman Orde Wingate as,

[E]very last Arab is a total prisoner of his society... The Arabs will never love [the Jews] for what good you’ve brought them. They don’t know how to really love... And they have a deep, deep, deep resentment because you have jolted them from their delusions of grandeur and shown them for what they are—a decadent, savage people controlled by a religion that has stripped them of all human ambition. (74)

*The Haj* incorporates incidents in which the identity of the Diaspora Jew is suspected by the Arabs. The characters unfold the psychological making of Jewish consciousness in their homeland. Ibrahim’s doubt about the Jews echoes the collective

mind of the native Palestinians, “Look at the color of your eyes, Gideon. You are a stranger from a strange place” (*Haj* 56). Gideon’s words can be regarded as the response of every immigrant Jew, “We got our blue eyes wandering in a hostile world, and some of us need to come home” (56). The plight of the Jews who reached in Palestine before the formation of Israel is displayed through Gideon’s words when Ibrahim asks him to take his people and evacuate, “We have no place to evacuate to... Being a Jew has always meant that we are a people who dwell alone” (205). This sense of alienation is a part of their psychological making.

Uris’ accounts render the difficulty experienced by the immigrant Jews in Palestine. They found it difficult to embrace their identity in homeland as they were different from the natives in terms of language, appearance, complexion, and manners. Safran further remarks that,

The "return" of most diasporas (much like the Second Coming or the next world) can thus be seen as a largely eschatological concept: it is used to make life more tolerable by holding out a utopia—or eutopia—that stands in contrast to the perceived dystopia in which actual life is lived... The problem of diaspora/host country/homeland relationships—and, indeed, the very definition of diaspora—goes beyond the purely ethnic, genetic, and emotional.

(93)

This convulsive situation postulates an impossible moment that their life of imagination turns out to be a hopeless search for identity in homeland. It is apt to borrow John Storey from ““Roots” and “Routes” of Cultural Identities”, “...the “roots” of our identities are both present and absent, existing both inside our heads and outside in culture” (86). The case of the Diaspora Jews seems to be uncertain



without a permanent identity, and with a constant search for identity. Storey further remarks that, “our identities may seem grounded in the past, but they are also about becoming who we want to be or being who we think, we should be in particular contexts. That is, our identities are also in our ‘routes’” (ibid).

The idea of identity and belonging posits a major question, as the Jews could not find their identity or belonging even in their homeland. Stuart Hall surmises that, “The fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy, instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with - at least temporarily” (598). Identity itself becomes problematic in the case of people with fragile or fragmented cultural consciousness. According to Hall, Post-Modern identity is similar, “...the post-modern subject, conceptualized as having no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Identity becomes a "moveable feast": formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us” (ibid).

Safran articulates the unwillingness displayed by native Jews to accommodate the Diaspora community thus:

While the homelands are grateful for [the] support, they view the diaspora with a certain disdain for having been enticed by the fleshpots of capitalism and for retaining a vulgarized ethnic culture. This is among the reasons why homelands do not necessarily want to welcome their diasporas back from abroad. Returnees, particularly from host countries that are more advanced than the homeland, might unsettle its political, social, and economic equilibrium... (92-93)

The persistent identity crisis along with the permanency of Arab-Israeli conflicts are demonstrated as the prolonged state of hardships for the Diaspora Jews. Uris points out the Arab principles as, “No peace with the Jews. No negotiations with the Jews. No recognition of the Jews. No return of the refugees to the Zionist entity. No resettlement of the refugees in Arab lands” (*Haj* 405). The novel also suggests that the Arabs regarded the word Israel as forbidden. Jewish faith in the Word of God is also evidently portrayed through Gideon Asch, who recounts that, “I believe this is Jewish land. I also believe that the ways of using these valleys and hills and deserts for defense have all been writ in the Bible. If there is ever to be a Jewish nation in Palestine, I feel destined to be a part of making it” (70).

Uris’ stand in favour of the Jews is remarkable and often criticised. Uris manifests that the Jewish desire for homeland was so deep that they were easily deceived by others by offering them a homeland. Yet, a small number of Jews had assimilated with the host culture by acknowledging the social realities. But *The Haj* delineates the observant Jews who fight for the realisation of their collective mission. Uris’ stand is as always different and unique. Hence his fictional attempts to showcase the idea of cultural liberation, acquisition of a geographical space to make that liberation meaningful or possible and the war with Palestine to uphold their identity etc. are a natural and justifiable culmination of the Jewish quest.

### **Cultural Aspects**

Uris connects the Jewish proclamation of liberation with their attainment of cultural liberation. *Exodus* and *The Haj* justify this argument by celebrating the way the Jews preserve their culture and tradition in their homeland. They also delineate the cultural specificities of the Arab community. He deliberately takes side with the Jews and favours their cultural integrity while detailing the Jew-Arab conflict

The attainment of liberation and the immigration of the Jews from all over the world to Israel resulted in the renunciation of the rights of non-Jews. The Palestinian diaspora began with the end of the Jewish diaspora and the consequent redemption of homeland. In "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" Safran makes significant remarks regarding this culture shift.

Half the Palestinians (i.e., those who live outside of the kingdom of Jordan) do not live in a sovereign state with a Palestinian majority, and many Palestinians do not live in an Arab state at all; however, the absence of political sovereignty (or self-determination) does not constitute ipso facto a diaspora condition; in fact, before the establishment of Israel, Palestinians in Transjordan and in what (since 1949) has been called the "West Bank" did not regard themselves as living in a diaspora (see Al-Shuaibi). Moreover, there is a great deal of disagreement about the exact territorial dimensions of the Palestinian homeland. Regardless of these uncertainties, both the physical fact of a growing Palestinian diaspora and a collective diaspora consciousness cannot be denied; and while that consciousness may be diluted in the case of relatively prosperous Palestinians who have settled in Western countries, it is strongly perpetuated among the children of refugees and expellees. (88)

*Exodus* throws light on these delicate issues by using Jewish characters and for the first time, Arab characters also who are initially in good terms but later drift apart due to external interventions. These incidents are essayed through the encounters between Rabinsky brothers (Jossi-Yakov) who escaped to Palestine and the friendly Arab ruler of a village there, named Kammal. Yakov's contempt for the Arabs and the Turks combats with Jossi's appreciation of the relative freedom he enjoys in the homeland. They symbolize two different types of Jews. Jossi's intimate association

with Kammal, the efficient and educated Muktar of Abu Yesha, provides him opportunities to get acquainted the Arab culture. “Jossi Rabinsky became fascinated by the many-sided Arab character...Greed and lust, hatred and cunning, shrewdness and violence, friendliness and warmth were all part of that fantastic brew that made an Arab character such an enormous mystery to an outsider” (*Exodus* 228-9). Kammal, the Arab with a social conscience, is shown as a foil to the uncouth Arabs, as he opposes their social evils, like polygamy. “Kammal was puzzled by the strange coming of the Jews to Palestine. Because he wanted to learn its meaning, he intentionally cultivated the friendship of Jossi... Despite Kammal’s enlightenment he was heart and soul an Arab” (227).

Kammal throws light on Arab history, beginning with the advent of Islam in the seventh century, among the semicivilized Bedouin tribes. Inspired by the teachings of Mohammed, they abandoned their wild ways of life and started to preach his divine gospel. “The heart and soul of Islam were the Arabs, who were bound together by a common language and common religion of submission to God’s will” (227). He also illustrates the warm relationship that existed between the Arabs and the Jews in those days, “During the meteoric rise of Islam, Jews held the highest positions of esteem in the Arab-speaking world” (227). This bond was destroyed by the Crusades’ Holy Wars waged between them in the name of the same God. Kammal also blames the Mongols and the Ottomans who contributed to the later Arab fanaticism. The novel does not hesitate to praise the tolerant Arabs. Jossi who reads the Koran accepts that, “Abraham was the father of the Arabs as well as of the Jews. From Ishmael, the cast-out son of Hagar, came the seed of the Arabs” (229). However, the Arabs in the newly found Israel live at the mercy of the Jews, as revealed in the words of Ben Gurion, ‘the spiritual father’ of Israel:

Never...will we adopt any policy to drive the Arabs from Palestine. In those places that spell strategic life and death for us, such as Ramle-Lydd, as Latrun, as West Jerusalem, we will fight them with everything else we have. If the Arabs choose to run, I will not beg them to return. If they leave Palestine, I will not beg them to return...But when a man leaves his home during a war which he started, he cannot expect us to be responsible for his future. (192)

*Exodus* acknowledges the Jewish ecstasy and pride in the actualization of their dream. “Young Israel stood out as a lighthouse for all mankind, proving what could be done with will power and love. No one in Israel worked for comfort in his own lifetime: it was all for tomorrow, for the children, for the new immigrants coming in” (572). He fuses his love for the land and culture with those of his people.

The Belgian historian Marcel Liebman criticises the Israeli stand towards the non-Jews born in Palestine in “Israel, Palestine And Zionism”,

The ‘Law of Return’, which enables any Jew to become a citizen of Israel automatically, whenever he chooses... It assumes its full significance only when account is taken of the enormous administrative difficulties and exaggerated conditions which are placed in the way of the recognition as citizens of Israel of non-Jews born in Palestine who have left the country at some time. In the same way, the refusal to allow the uprooted Palestinians to return to their country cannot be fully appreciated unless we compare this ostracism with the constant appeal that is being made for Jewish immigration. (98)

The idea of liberation from the perspective of the Palestine after the formation of Israel has been inviting attention from various corners of the world.

Judith Butler's opinion in *Parting Ways* is relevant in this context. "Even if we grant, as we must, the singular history of Jewish oppression, it does not follow that in every political scenario Jews will always be the victims, that their violence will always be regarded as justified self-defence" (29). Safran too adheres to his point of view:

For some diaspora Jews, Israel has been too secular and has abandoned its role as the custodian of Judaism; for others, it has become too Orthodox and intolerant of religious pluralism. For still others, the decline of kibbutzim has signalled an abandonment of Israel's commitment to equality. Furthermore, many diaspora Jews are embarrassed about Israel's continuing occupation of the areas captured during the Six-Day War of 1967 and the unequal treatment of its own Arab citizens. Finally, there have been differences in policy priorities: while the diaspora has been concerned about anti-Semitism in its various host lands, Israel has been fighting for its national security and its very existence. (203)

However, Uris' attempts to celebrate the Israeli freedom nullify the excruciating Arab situation. Through his novels, Uris gives emphasis to the casualties caused by the Arabs in Israel than the causes that led to them. The destruction of Abu Yesha, the last remaining Arab settlement in the liberated Israel is narrated through the experiences of Ari Ben Canaan. "Ari stood alone on the mountainside as David led the men down to the saddle in the hill where Abu Yesha nestled. He was pale as he heard the first sounds of gunfire" (*Exodus* 536). Ari is the good soul who is deeply moved by this sight while those who burn Old Jerusalem are villains.

*Exodus* also denounces the Arabs for the Palestine Arab refugee problem by presenting an extract written by Barak Ben Canaan. It reads thus:

*[Palestine Arab refugee problem] has become the most potent political weapon in the Arab arsenal...to keep the refugee camps as working models to demonstrate to the world Jewish cruelty...The Arabs would have the world believe that the Palestine Arab refugee is unique... After the November 1947 partition vote the Yishuv of Palestine begged the Palestine Arabs to remain calm, friendly, and to respect the unassailably legal rights of the Jewish people. Despite wanton aggression the State of Israel, in its Declaration of Independence, held out its hand in friendship to its Arab neighbors, even at the moment her borders were being violated...The avowed intention of murdering the Jewish people and completely destroying the State of Israel was the Arab answer to law and friendship...Strangely most of the Palestine Arabs fled even before the invasion...The fact is, the Palestine fellaheen were victimized by men who used them as a tool, deserted them, and are victimizing them again... (552-4)*

Uris clearly expresses his opinion on the Arab Diaspora in *Exodus*. The novel suggests, “*If the Arabs of Palestine loved their land, they could not have been forced from it—much less run from it without real cause. A man who loves his land, as the Arabs profess, will stand and die for it*” (554).

When the Jews regard Palestinian Israeli conflict as their War of Independence, the Palestinians consider the same as al-Nakha, or The Catastrophe. A reversal of fate has occurred in the case of the Palestinians— the past resistance state of the Jews has changed to the present conquering state and the Palestinians stand in the resistance state. Safran observes:

Hundreds of thousands of Arab residents of what became the state of Israel were expelled, encouraged to flee, or impelled by conditions of hostility to

leave. They have memories of their homeland; their descendants cultivate a collective myth about it; and their ethnic communal consciousness is increasingly defined by—and their political mobilization has centered around—the desire to return to that homeland. (87)

*Exodus* illustrates the Jewish preparation to resist any possible Arab attack. Israel, with all of her other burdens, had to adopt an axiom of reality: “When Hitler said he was going to exterminate the Jews, the world did not believe him. When the Arabs say it, [Israelites] believe them’... At last Israel had no choice but reprisal... Unfortunately, reprisal seemed to be the only language that the Arabs understood” (*Exodus* 582).

This is the scheme of operation adopted by both the communities for the same land. As culture and religion determine the fate of their conflicts, the cultural locus of both the communities—Jerusalem—becomes another significant concern.

The creation of a state of their own in the Promised Land initialises the holy mission of the Jews. Their dream of reconstructing of the Temple of Solomon and their attempts to redeem their holy shrine prove to be the latter part of that mission. Uris depicts this as a sacrosanct mission that forms the basis of Jewish aspiration.

Jerusalem is vital to the Jews and the Arabs as the city has cultural and religious significance. *Yerushalayim* is the Hebrew term for the city and the Arabs name it as al-Quds. The name Jerusalem means the city of peace and it is secured with fortress built on Mount Zion. It is known as the oldest city in the world that carries an abundant heritage as it has been conquered and destroyed several times. Teddy Kollek, the former Mayor of Jerusalem describes the significance of Jerusalem on the Jewish lives and culture:

For three thousand years, Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish hope and longing. No other city has played such a dominant role in the history, culture,



religion and consciousness of a people as has Jerusalem in the life of Jewry and Judaism. Throughout centuries of exile, Jerusalem remained alive in the hearts of Jews everywhere as the focal point of Jewish history, the symbol of ancient glory, spiritual fulfillment and modern renewal. This heart and soul of the Jewish people engenders the thought that if you want one simple word to symbolize all of Jewish history, that word would be 'Jerusalem.' (19-20)

Ben Zion's words to David Ben Ami at the moment of the surrender of the Old city to the Arabs is significant, "Without Jerusalem there is no Jewish nation" (542-3). This holy mission has been hard to accomplish as the place happens to be the centre of worship for both the Jews and the Arabs. It is where the ancient dismantled Jewish Temple and the Arabs' Mosque of Omar are situated. As the Holy Temple at Jerusalem has religious and cultural significance in the Jewish attainment of identity, their cultural liberation is only partially attained.

Uris asserts through his novels that the Jews have played an important role in bringing peace to the Arabs. Barak Ben Canaan writes about this in his extract thus, "Israel today stands as the greatest single instrument for bringing the Arab people out of the Dark Ages. Only when the Arab people get leadership willing to grasp the hand extended in friendship will they begin to solve the problems which have kept them in moral and physical destitution" (554). In another instance, Karen explains to Kitty,

God didn't pick us because we were weak or would run from danger. We've taken murder and sorrow and humiliation for six thousand years and we have kept faith. We have outlived everyone who has tried to destroy us...this little land was chosen for us because it is the crossroads of the world, on the edge of man's wilderness. This is where God wants His people to be...on the frontiers

to stand and guard His laws which are the cornerstones of man's moral existence. Israel is the bridge between darkness and light. (589)

*Exodus* is as an evidence of the author's cultural resistance and a signature of his Jewish identity. Uris epitomizes the Jewish struggles, exemplifies his own identity and celebrates its overwhelming freedom with the creation of Israel.

*The Haj* follows a strategy of extolling the Jewish cultural supremacy from an Arab perspective, while underestimating their cultural identity. It evidently presupposes Uris as a Jew and his cultural, religious, social and psychological identity is revealed throughout. The narrator recalls, "[B]efore I was nine I had learned the basic canon of Arab life. It was me against my brother; me and my brother against our father; my family against my cousins and the clan; the clan against, the tribe; and the tribe against the world. And all of us against the infidel" (14). Nobility and magnanimity are always assigned to the Jews, whereas revulsion and malignity are attributed to the Arabs. Haj Ibrahim, the protagonist opines, "[Jews] always do everything legally" (19) and that, "They came out of the ghettos in organized groups, intensely bound to the ideal that only through personal sacrifice and Jewish labor could Palestine be redeemed" (22). Uris makes his stand clear regarding his opinion about the liberation of the Jews and in this endeavour he does not pay heed to any criticism about his biased ideology.

Edward Said alleges that, "Israel is the only state in the world that has received U.S. military and economic aid... Every U.S. political figure... has had to declare himself of herself an unconditional supporter of Israel" (35). He further adds that, "The United States is very much in the Israeli camp... the United States has presented the Israeli point of view in the discussions and remains a partisan of Israel" (36). Retaining their identity even in a secular atmosphere remains the driving force

centre of the Jewish community, according to the author. Hence, he idealises them as perfect individuals. In *The Haj*, Gideon Asch, the ‘ideal Jew’ makes Ibrahim exclaim, “Damned, but he liked Gideon Asch! If only his son, Kamal, turned out like Gideon... why... why... the two of them could conquer all of Palestine” (51).

The prospect of Jewish liberation and the creation of the State of Israel are presented as the accomplishment of a noble mission, which sustained the Jews in exile for more than two thousand years. The consequent expulsion of the Arabs from Israel and the occupation of Palestine and the military supremacy over the neighbouring states are also portrayed as part of their noble mission of guarding their culture and land from further encroachments and the future proposal of the building of the Holy Temples in Jerusalem. Judith Butler’s opinion on the prospect of a Jewish State is apt to reveal the unaddressed parts of history in Uris’ novels.

Although it is so often taught that Israel became a historical and ethical necessity for the Jews during and after the Nazi genocide, Arendt and others thought that the lesson we must learn from that genocide is that nation-states should never be able to found themselves through the dispossession of whole populations who fail to fit the purified idea of the nation. And for refugees who never again wished to see the dispossession of populations in the name of national or religious purity, Zionism and its forms of state violence were not the legitimate answer to the pressing needs of Jewish refugees...and the founding of the State of Israel...a founding that was simultaneous with the Naqba, the catastrophic destruction of home, land, and belonging for the Palestinian peoples. (24-25)

*The Haj* also proves Uris’ religiosity and commitment towards the Jewish culture over the Arab refugee plight. Even though *The Haj* gives voice to the voiceless

Arabs who suffer in the refugee camps, their plight is treated as the price they have to pay for their hatred towards the Jews. This realization is reflected in Ibrahim's words to his son, "Ishmael...we are betrayed. We are prisoners in our own land. Deliberately created prisoners... Our hatred for the Jews will blind us to any attempt to become decent human beings again" (331). Ishmael too feels the same:

The lack of desire to do anything about our plight made Aqbat Jabar a camp of the living dead. My father had led, my father had fought, my father had pride. By Allah's holy name, most of us were simply dogs... From morning to night, there was little spoken of except the injustices of the exile and a foggy notion of the return...Little help came to us from outside and what did come rarely originated in Arab countries...We were Palestinians in Palestine, but our own people didn't lift a finger on our behalf. Instead, they treated us like lepers.

(330)

*The Haj* showcases the bond between the Arabs and the Jews using the characters Ibrahim and Gideon who represent both communities respectively. To Ibrahim's comment that "It is the Arabs who are forcing me out" (210), Gideon gives a significant reply "One of these days, you'll learn that the Jews of Palestine have a better future planned for you than your blessed Arab brothers over the border" (ibid).

Ishmael gives a clear picture of the plight of the Arabs in the refugee camps, "At last a convoy filled with supplies arrived from Damascus... We managed to get sleeping mats and two six-man army tents and discovered that none of the cargo came from an Arab country but were gifts from the world through the International Red Cross" (328). Ishmael's rendering further underscores the issue renders:

Most of the displaced were people who had fled together in a body—an entire village or tribe or clan...Haj Ibrahim slept in one tent with Hagar and Ramiza.

The other six-man tent was divided into three parts by cloth curtains... When all the mats were laid down at night, there was no room to walk, except over the top of one another. (328)

The novel critiques the destructive element in the Arab culture, and asserts the need for them to be tolerant and peace loving. The archaeology professor Dr Mudhil convinces Ishmael:

We do not have leave to love one another and we have long ago lost the ability... Hate is our overpowering legacy and we have regenerated ourselves by hatred... The return of the Jews has unleashed that hatred, exploding wildly, aimlessly, into a massive force of self-destruction. In ten, twenty, thirty years the world of Islam will begin to consume itself in madness. We cannot live with ourselves...or accommodate the outside world... We cannot stop ourselves. And if we are not stopped we will march, with the rest of the world, to the Day of the Burning. What we are now witnessing, Ishmael, now, is the beginning of Armageddon. (523)

The novel uses two contradictory characteristics by using the word Armageddon to describe the Arabs and the phrase children of God to define the Jews. The Arabs realise the limitations of their culture and agree that the Jewish culture is sacred. Charles Mann tells Ibrahim, "Ibrahim, you know and I know that the Jews are easier to deal with and eminently more fair but if you are waiting for them to disappear from the region because we insult them or try to humiliate them, then you are mistaken. The trees will grow tall in Israel, but they will never grow in Aqbat Jabar" (*Haj* 421) Ibrahim shares similar notions with Gideon, "Surely sympathy for my people would emerge from the press...Who cares? Well, may be the Jews care. You know what we say. The Jews are liberal. Take advantage of them" (423).

Judith Butler raises several prominent questions about the nature of the State of Israel. By referring to Hannah Arendt, Butler interrogates the integrity of the term the “Jewish state” and expresses her skeptical perspectives regarding the same:

We could argue that “Jewish” does not mean adhering to religious Judaism...If Jewish is considered to be already a secular term, then Israel is not a religious state but has to defend itself against religious extremists. Is it ever fully possible to extricate Jewishness from its religious background, or is its secular form one result or effect of a certain religious history? Or is it endemic to the religious—the *Jewish*, in this case—to be constantly departing from its religious history? (15)

Liberation acts as a cultural artifact in the lives of the Jews as it has been their primary mission since their initial immigration. Uris focuses on the prospect of liberation, which has a considerable impact on the making of Jewish identity. The study examines Jewish liberation because of the collective resistance through various modes. A thorough investigation of the various aspects of liberation detects the fundamental conflict in the minds of the Jews.

Uris’ strategy to present the Jews within an imaginary boundary permits him to highlight the Jews as an exceptional community destined to lead an alienated life even in their homeland. This could be regarded as a conscious attempt from his part to forge a multi-lateral environment in which the immigrant Jews should survive. This prolonged and deferred attainment of cultural identity places the Jews in a very delicate situation as mentioned in *Exodus*. “*he who guards Israel shall neither rest nor sleep*” (388). While resisting the negative stereotyping of the Jews, Uris stereotypes the Arabs as a community capable of evil and treachery. Uris’ prospects of drawing a new historical framework ultimately distorts Arab history. He subverts

history to include an empathetic version of the cultural history of the Jews, depending on his own racial memory.

John Storey remarks thus about memory, “What we remember does not stay the same; memories are forgotten, revised, reorganized, updated as they undergo rehearsal, interpretation, and retelling...” and he further adds, “To study memory, therefore, is not to study the past, but the past as it exists in the present” (84). Memory plays a vital role in retaining one’s painful experiences and in moulding the present. Uris uses memory as a tool to delineate the Jewish search for selfhood, often coloring it with his imagination. Therefore, his portrayal of the attainment of liberation is romantic, glamorous and unique. He provides an alternate history of Europe which has always sidelined the Jews and behaved in the most unjust manner to them. Though his subversion is questioned for its double standards, Uris retorts through his fiction that history has always had a step motherly attitude towards the Jews. The Jewish element in the character of the author resonates throughout his fiction thus making it autofictional in nature.

The Jewish-American journalist, Midge Decter propounds:

Mr Uris, however, has done a great deal more than merely wax rich and famous—possibilities, after all, open to any American whose commodity finds its proper market. He has become the master chronicler and ambassador of Jewish aspiration not only to the Gentiles but to the Jews themselves. His commodity has, in fact, found a market far out of proportion, numerically and sociologically, to its special quality. (117-118)

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

Culture has always been subject to radical and inevitable changes. People with multiple cultural and ethnic backgrounds always encounter identity issues. Those who live in the diaspora tend to associate themselves either with the host culture or with their own culture. There can also be conceivable multi-cultural identifications. Changing cultural codes, ethical values, conventions, practices, rituals, and socio-political influences mark the difference in the making of one's identity, as identity largely depends on circumstantial developments. A brief association with an alien culture is capable of leaving its traces on the individual. Hence, the impact of long-term Diaspora on the Jewish community is inevitably prodigious. Theirs cannot be read as a simple Jewish identity because they had been in a constant effort to integrate into a larger society while retaining their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. Their journey was all along bitter because they were negated not only by history but also in all discourses related to it. Very few works, including literature, denied a fair treatment to the Jewish community, and hence those which supported the Jews who chased their dreams were all the more rare. This inspired the making of the thesis titled "Routes, Resistance and Survival: Production of Cultural Identity in Leon Uris' Select Novels" as Leon Uris stands tall and unique among the Jewish writers by loyally standing by the Jews, supporting their resistance and liberation. The rigidity and steadfastness in the character of the Jews also aggravated the difficulty in their assimilation with the host lands, and hence alienated them from the others. Though this rigidity and self-centeredness stemmed from their continuous subjugation, its repercussions after their liberation are far reaching. Uris' reactions to the Israel Palestine conflicts also are significant. These factors also had to be taken into consideration while analysing his writings.



In the context of the political conflicts between the Jews and the Arabs continuing and nations taking sides with either of them, questions arise whether the Jews have erased the distance between the ‘imaginary’ and the ‘real’ homeland. According to Stuart Hall, “National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about ‘the nation’ with which we can identify, these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it” (*The Question* 613). For the Jews occupying Israel is not about establishing a new nation, but reclaiming their long lost homeland which is etched in their racial and cultural memory. As Safran notes in “The Jewish Diaspora and Israel: Problems of a Relationship Since the Gaza Wars, “The diaspora is linked to Israel by religion, history, and ethnic kinship ties, and it regards that country, which contains half of the world’s Jewish population, as a fount of living and dynamic Jewish culture” (1). Four novels written by Uris, namely, *Exodus*, *Mila 18*, *QB VII*, and *The Haj* were chosen as specimen novels to investigate into these issues using the theories of diaspora, mainly those of Stuart Hall, William Safran and Robert Cohen to examine these aspects.

The cultural evolution of the Jews right from the Diaspora to the post-liberation period has been intrinsically heterogeneous. Since their early dispersion to various parts of the world, the Jews have undergone victimization. Robin Cohen’s categorisation of the Jews as ‘victim diaspora’ reasserts the intensive victimization of the Jews in the Diaspora. He documents thus “The destruction of Jerusalem and razing of the walls of its Temple in 586 BC created the central folk memory of the negative, victim diaspora tradition, emphasizing in particular the experience of enslavement, exile and displacement” (“From Victims” 508). With the spread of anti-Semitism, their cultural endurance and perseverance assumed the form of resistance—

passive, active, violent, and strategic. Their unique cultural tenacity enabled them to resist the oppressors like the Nazis and the other Europeans and to survive the Holocaust period.

Leon Uris who is included in the literary tradition as only a popular novelist, makes serious interventions in the genre of historical fiction. He uses his writings to articulate the demand that the version of the Jews also ought to be heard while documenting history. The thesis examines how Uris presents the trajectory of the Jews through the annals of history. For this purpose, the thesis also makes a journey through the various stages of the Jew's quest from victimhood, through resistance, to liberation. The chapter divisions were made accordingly. The reality of victimhood forces them to focus on a dream which they fulfilled using resistance. The dream of cultural, ethnic, and spiritual liberation is entwined in the geopolitical liberation, which is the reclamation of their homeland.

The idea of homeland grew in the minds of the Jews from the day their dispersion started. It was fed and nurtured by each humiliation they had to receive while being driven from one nation to the other for no reason of theirs. Their preoccupation with the idea of liberation reached its zenith during the time of the Holocaust where they were made prey for political whims and tortured in ways hitherto unheard of. Hence even after liberation they never trusted others and defended their land vehemently, resisting any effort to share it by the Palestinians. The dream of attaining liberation of any kind is fulfilled only if peace is established thereafter. In that context, the attainment of cultural liberation is possible only when the problem areas like Gaza, Jerusalem and West Bank become peaceful and happy places to reside. The seminal principles of Judaism include justice, charity, and kindness to others. The crux of the thesis is this argument. It critiques the author's

justifications also in glorifying the character and actions of the Jews even if they indulge in violence.

Uris achieves his purpose of bringing to light the Jew's plight by probing history to excavating the stories of their victimization lying buried in its debris. He subverts world history with a reconstructionist intention, thereby succeeding in revealing instances of cruelty, treachery, and exploitation which the Jews encountered in various spatio-temporal contexts. The novels chosen for study use characters both from history as well as the author's imagination to portray real incidents to show how the Jewish cause is an unparalleled saga of pain, dislocation, and alienation. Uris uses techniques of New Historicism to show how, while writing about history, the author's historicity also makes interventions thereby making a text fluid.

The Jew who never dowsed the fire of resistance that burned within them, continued the spirit of challenging even after reaching Israel. This created an impression that the Jews were an unhappy community who spread their feelings of hatred and distrust to the others around them. Robin Cohen observes that "Collectively, Jews were seen as helpless chaff in the wind. At an individual level, Diasporic Jews were depicted as pathological half-persons – destined never to realize themselves or to attain completeness, tranquillity or happiness so long as they were in exile" (23).

Uris challenges this assumption in novels like *Exodus* and *The Haj*, arguing that the good-natured Arabs realise the merits of the Jews who help them in crisis. Kammal in *Exodus* and Ibrahim in *The Haj* validate this concept. For instance, Kammal explains to Barak, "the Jews are the only salvation for the Arab people. The Jews are the only ones in a thousand years who have brought light to this part of the world" (*Exodus* 258). He reiterates throughout his works that cultural identity has

been at the core of Jewish consciousness and that Identity, Monotheism, and love of God form the basis of Judaism. His works interrogate the notions about the Jews as problem makers, by establishing that a true Jew who believes in these principles, can never make other's lives miserable, until provoked. As Hillel Halkin remarks, "In the 1930's the Jews were a people that had lost a first temple and a second one; yet as frightful as their next set of losses was to be, they did not have a third temple to risk...The Jews are a conundrum. When all is said and done...there is something inexplicable about the monumental place assigned to them, by themselves and by others, over the centuries" (35).

The thesis traces the important historical landmarks which were the darkest periods in the Jewish history by using techniques like documenting, cultural and racial memory, apart from intertextuality. His writings are centred on the Jewish collective memory which formulated their national and cultural identity. Antonio Iturbe aptly remarks in *The Librarian of Auschwitz*, "Books are extremely dangerous; they make people think" (4). Pierre Nora in "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire" advocates that, "History... is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past" (8). Her observation of the Jews is also contextually valid, "We can think, for an example, of the Jews of the diaspora, bound in daily devotion to the rituals of tradition, who as 'peoples of memory' found little use for historians until their forced exposure to the modern world" (ibid).

The novels incorporate all the aspects related to the life of the Jews including their rites, rituals scriptures lifestyle, and behaviour patterns. The study focuses on these aspects as well to prove the genuineness, honesty and scholarship of the author

in them. An analysis of the author's adherence to the Jewish characters and loyalty to the Jewish cause also came under the purview as the research progressed. Uris' novels as auto fiction can be an interesting area in itself but since the focus of the thesis was to investigate the idea of cultural identity, this aspect is not dealt with in detail.

The attempt of the thesis also is to examine the attempt of the author to resist and challenge the other writings which at the same time stereotype the Jews as war mongers and Uris as a mere propaganda writer. Analyses of his works show his studious research of history, his skill in documenting incidents authentically and retaining the readability of his novels by brilliantly merging fact and fiction while boldly asserting his identity as a Jew. These are the elements which make his novels popular and bestsellers.

The thesis, however, acknowledges that the happenings in and around the state of Israel also have to be considered seriously while investigating the idea of cultural liberation in the works of Leon Uris as they are centred on the Jewish cause. Uris' fundamental concern as a writer is to construct a class of Jews with noble qualities. He raises poignant questions about the political silence of the western countries regarding the Jewish cause. These stances of the author also are examined in the thesis.

The geographical, cultural, and political conflicts between the Jews and the Arabs have been prolonged and unresolved since the creation of the State of Israel. In "The Jewish Diaspora and Israel: Problems of a Relationship Since the Gaza Wars" Safran points out that, "The image of Israel has deteriorated considerably since the Gaza wars of 2008, 2012, and 2014, especially in Europe. Israel's actions...are equated with the Holocaust; Gaza is compared to a Nazi concentration camp, and its inhabitants are seen as facing genocide" (3) The present State of Israel is surrounded

by agitated Arab countries like Palestine, Syria and Lebanon and the unresolved border disputes make the Jews a common enemy to them. Edward Said makes interesting observation about this in *Culture and Resistance* thus:

A society made up principally of Arabs in Palestine was uprooted and destroyed. An Arab population of 800,000 people was driven out by design... By the end of the conflict in 1948, Palestinians were a minority in their own country. Two-thirds of them had become refugees, whose descendants today number about seven and a half million people scattered throughout the Arab world, Europe, Australia, and North America. (31-32)

The Jews declare, “We bear no responsibility for what happened to the Palestinians. They left because their leaders told them to” (32).

Recurrent conflicts between the Arab nations and Israel for geographical territories is a common news in recent times. However, Israel resolved the border disputes with Arab countries like Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994) by making peace treaties with them. As a result of the attempts made by Donald Trump, the former US President, the UAE, and Bahrain established diplomatic relations with Israel on September 15, 2020. Sudan also normalized its relationship with Israel and signed the formal agreement on October 23, 2020. Also, the US maintains strong relations with Israel. But at the same time, Israel’s plans to extend the territorial control over West Bank has been objected to by the government of the UK.

The novelist plays a significant role through his works, in contributing to the deliberations regarding the conflicts going on in the Israeli border. Moreover, he provides a new Jewish stereotype— the good-natured, mystical, Tarzan figure— for the future generations to emulate. Louis Harap, while tracing the history of the Jews comments thus:

The fact that Jews are not depicted as human beings but as stereotypes can be ascribed either to lack of skill on the part of the writer, who avails himself of a handy convention, to the deliberate indulgence of a writer's anti-Semitic feelings, or simply to a writer's lack of familiarity with the Jewish people. In any case, the stereotype implies an anti-Semitic attitude because in its origins, and most of its uses, it was generated by hostility towards Jews. (13)

While celebrating the geopolitical liberation of the Jews, Uris' novels anticipate their cultural emancipation.

The thesis finds that the novels have not probed into the culture and history of the Palestinians. The study identifies Uris' failure to consider the Arab version of the story. Instead, he tends to blame them for the persistent conflicts between Israel and Palestine. It also considers the elements of Arab culture provided by Uris to exemplify his cultural preferences. Jews for Uris prove to be a distinctive community displaying masculine valour which is contradictory to the usual portrayal as evasive and ambivalent. His Jews are enigmatic superheroes like Tarzan and his Arabs are barbaric villains. His intent to deconstruct the age-old history of the Jews by providing a better version could be surmised as a replication of his blatant Semitic affinity and anti-Arabism. However, the author's merit lies in his sincere efforts to reveal the positive aspects of the Jew's identity, their steadfastness in their search for their self and their cultural richness, hitherto unexplored or ignored by the mainstream writers including the Jewish. The thesis analyses the author's attempts to trace the Jewish struggle to evolve from subjugation to liberation, and how he achieves this by cleverly making deliberate interpolations into known history.

The thesis which focused on the cultural liberation of the Jews in the novels of Leon Uris was unable to investigate many other interesting areas in them. Themes

like masculinity, military and war elements are other areas which have been identified but could not be included in the premise of this research. Similarly, recent works like *To the end of the Land* (David Grossman, 2010), *The People Forever are not Afraid* (Shani Boianju, 2012), *The Hilltop* (Assaf Gavron, 2014), etc. which also discuss the Jewish cause and may be used for comparative analysis with Uris' fiction. Other significant works by Jewish writers like S.Y. Yizhar (*Khirbet Khizeh*, 1949), S.Y. Agnon (*Twenty-One Stories*, 1970), and Amoz Oz (*A Tale of Love and Darkness*, 2002) document the birth of Israel and the religious rituals and allusions of the Jews. Savyon Liebrecht's *Apples from the Desert* (1986) and Haim Sabato's *From the Four Winds* (2010) focus on the trauma of the Holocaust survivors and the immigrants in Israel. Women writers like Judy Blume (*Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, 1970) Anita Diamant (*The Red Tent* (1997), *The Boston Girl* (2014)), Jami Attenberg (*The Middlesteins* (2004), *All Grown Up* (2017)), Myla Goldberg (*Bee Season*, 2000), Nicole Krauss (*Forest Dark*, 2010), etc. also fictionalise the aspects of Jewish cultural life and identity from the female perspective. These works offer a variety of possibilities for examining Jewish culture and identity from newer perspectives.

Leon Uris' novels prove that even bestsellers can be intellectual interpreters of history by offering fresh perspectives and still be close to the heart of the reader for their readability.



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