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Themes of the Second Aliyah
As Suggested in Four Hebrew Novels

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Ordination

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My parents, my brother, and a few good friends have always made themselves available to give me their constant love and support. To them I dedicate this work.

Digest

This thesis is not an historical survey of the Second Aliyah, yet it hopes to convey some of the dynamics of settlement and absorption during the period. Y. H. Brenner's Breakdown and Bereavement, A. A. Kabak's Between Sea and Desert, Asher Barash's Gardeners, and S. Y. Agnon's Yesterday or the Day Before are compared, and the Jewish pioneers that they depict are examined in order to derive an understanding of Palestine's various challenges to the immigrant.

In the Introduction historical data is provided in order to give the reader a sense of the Jewish condition in Europe at the turn of the century. An outline of the organizational leadership of Zionism and various statistics of immigration are included in order to help establish the Palestinian setting between 1905 and 1918. However, the novels themselves are relied upon to portray the struggles of the young chalutzim to settle in the Land.

Each of the authors describes the process of adjustment from the European experience to the contrasting Palestinian landscape. The difficulties of adjustment are traced through the characters of the novel, and, thereby, each author determines which types succeed, which surrender, and which are defeated in the process. By comparing the novels a number of shared themes emerge, themes through which the emotional tenor of the period is revealed.

A number of the characters endure a period in which they measure the practices and beliefs of their religious upbringing against the realities of the new environment. In Chapter I the Palestinian setting is viewed as a challenge to the traditions of European Judaism. While a few still come to the Land for religious reasons, the majority are drawn by the promises and adventure of political Zionism. The young immigrant often abandons his religious ideals or tries to reshape them into a form appropriate to the soil of Israel. Together with this phenomenon the various religious authority figures which emerge in Palestine are examined in order to determine the direction of Yishuv Judaism and its consonance with the chalutz mentality.

In Chapter II the major women of the novels are described in order to determine their role in the Zionist enterprise. Their exclusion becomes apparent in that they are often assigned the traditional role of the Jewish woman. Consequently, there are hardships which are peculiar to their settlement, and their response to the Land must be treated as a separate phenomenon.

Chapter III focuses upon those qualities or types of people which the authors perceive as those that will endure into the future. Although the novels often depict personal tragedy and the difficulties of settlement, certain characters emerge who, the authors feel, will be able to perpetuate themselves on the Land. These characters are referred to as "Caleb figures." They spy out the Palestine of the Second

Aliyah, they realize that the obstacles to settlement are great, yet by their hope they merit an inheritance in the Land.

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Introduction

A.

The history of the Second Aliyah is a history of Zionist Congresses, labor conflicts with the Arabs, and the acquisition, apportioning, and settlement of real estate. With the onset of a new wave of pogroms in Russia Zionist ideology shifted abruptly in favor of facilitating the problems of a sizeable migration rather than trying to determine some sort of political ideal. Ahad Haam's "This is not the Way" (1889) had signalled the ineffectiveness of the method of philanthropy to establish a vital stronghold in Palestine. He had warned that a selfless sacrifice for nationhood, rather than reliance upon continued funding from Baron Rothschild, was the only viable dynamic for establishing the Jew on his Land. Accordingly, some fifteen years later the organization of the movement shifted its emphasis from philanthropic infiltration to the practical training of young Jewish workers for the purpose of conquering and harnessing Jewish Land.

Shortly after the first wave of immigration agricultural experts from Europe were assigned to study the Palestinian landscape, and training centers were established to train Jewish farmers. By 1910 the first experimental settlements designed towards economic solvency and independence were begun. Men like Vitkin and Ruppin joined the ranks of important

Zionist figures like Herzl, Pinsker, and Ahad Haam as Zionist ideology became implemented by Zionist pragmatism.

Yosef Vitkin, a teacher and farmer in the Gallil, served as a catalyst for Labor Zionism and for pioneering courage. His challenge to the youth to forget about easy shortcuts and to commit oneself to the harder, slower course stimulated some 30,000 Jews to depart for Palestine between 1905 and 1914.[1] Dr. Arthur Ruppin, director of the first Palestinian office of the Jewish National Fund, fostered the establishment of the kevutzah system of settlement. Ultimately, during these years a Jewish identity budded forth not from an idea of destiny alone but out of the simple confrontation of the young Jewish immigrant with the struggles of settlement and absorption.

Theodor Herzl, the leader and prophet of the Zionist movement, had died in 1904 shortly before the first immigrants of the Second Aliyah were to signal the revitalization of his dream. Herzl had shaped the Zionist effort through six Zionist Congresses. Then, at the advent of the Kishinev pogroms of 1903 he had urged the acceptance of his Uganda Plan upon the Zionist leadership, but it was rejected. Severely disappointed by this opposition to his leadership Herzl soon lost his charismatic strength, fell ill and died in July, 1904.

A little over a year later, after the failure of the

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[1] Howard M. Sachar, A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Own Time, New York, Knopf, 1976, p. 72.

Octobrist Revolution of 1905, the Second Aliyah began. With the renewal of pogroms to punish the Jews who had supported the socialist revolution the young Russian Jew modified his socialist dreams for the hope of national survival.

Up until this time there had been a decade of bitter tension between the Jewish socialists and the Zionists. The Bund, the Jewish Socialist Party, branded Zionism as bourgeois and escapist in its utopianism. In turn Zionism lamented the Bundist's historical naivete to think that socialism could be a greater motivating force in the Diaspora then anti-Semitism. A ferocious breach separated the Marxists from the Herzlians.

Men like Nachman Syrkin and Ber Borochov tried to reconcile socialism and Zionism. Both of them viewed Palestine as holding the potential to be a great experiment in a type of social justice free of class structure. However, the popularity of Marxist Zionism was short-lived, and the non-socialist Aaron David Gordon emerged as the most compelling idealogue of the time. His "religion of labor" emphasized national renaissance and rejuvenation as the eventual product of physical labor and the Jew's reunion with Nature.

Not only did Gordon's ideas and personal commitment give new impetus to the Zionist movement after Herzl's death, but he also appealed to the socialist's dream of an ideal agrarian society. His thought permeated the system of Zionist clubs in Eastern Europe and attracted even the most doctrinaire Jewish socialists. When the 1905 uprising failed, the young Jewish immigrant to Palestine was supported by "an unspoken

communion of purpose with Gordon.[2]

Socialism had a tremendous impact on the dynamics of the Second Aliyah and gave great energy to the communal experiments which were to mark its success. Under Ruppin's supervision Degania, Merchavia, and Gan Shmuel flourished as collectivist kevutzot, and by 1914 fourteen such farms were functioning. On the national level, the tensions between socialism and Zionism had been resolved.

However, on the level of the individual this dichotomy and many others often remained in a unsettling state of conflict. Generally, the chalutz had come from a cultured, urban background; now he confronted a harsh rural setting. He had been educated for a profession or intellectual pursuits; now his worth was measured in physical, often menial, labor. The twentieth century individual was emerging in Europe; in Palestine the chalutz was expected to sacrifice personal ambition for the sake of community and national perpetuity. The religion of his fathers and its European traditions seemed inappropriate and unnecessary on the Biblical soil; the 'religion of labor' now offered the means of redemption. Family was often left behind, and the generational continuity of European Judaism was disrupted.

The young immigrant, unable to resolve the contradictions between the demands of Palestine and his European upbringing, often returned to Europe or moved on to America. About 80%

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[2] Sachar, A History of Israel, p. 6.

of those who embarked on the Zionist adventure did not remain.[3] Nevertheless, by 1914 the Jewish population in Palestine had grown from 50,000 - 85,000, and the rural population had more than doubled.[4] Subsequently, in 1917 the demographic success of the Second Aliyah was climaxed by the signing of the Balfour Declaration. The arduous efforts of the chalutzim were finally recompensed by General Allenby's conquest of Jerusalem, the British displacement of Ottoman rule, and the official establishment of Palestine as a Jewish homeland.

B.

Histories of the period record the speeches and letters of important Zionist leaders, the establishment of various funds and organizations, crucial world events, and the mobilization of a mass of young chalutzim to Palestine. These chalutzim are the willing pawns of the Zionist dream. Demographic records trace their movement from Europe, the statistics of their immigration to Palestine, and their enlistment in the various urban and rural outposts of the Land of their Fathers. Recorded also are the various estimates as to how many of these products of the Jewish youth movements took a brief look at the middle-Eastern terrain and returned to the West. From these estimates one can only extrapolate

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[3] Sachar, A History of Israel, p. 73.

[4] Ibid., p. 87.

the sense of discouragement that these would-be chalutzim felt.

Logically, the personal struggle of the chalutzim who remained involved overcoming those same obstacles which discouraged others. Adaptation, adjustment, and adequate stability for settlement did not come as easily as a Zionist's dream of his homecoming might imply. Many felt abandoned in the process of establishing a new Jewish social structure, and a number of personal dichotomies (as elaborated in A.) never offered their promise of eventual synthesis.

History deals with such inner struggles and conflicts through the anecdotes of famous men. However, for the novelist these conflicts, traced through both the personal and interpersonal dynamic, are the substance and vehicle for compelling fiction. To a greater or lesser extent the author of the historical novel portrays his characters' inner composition carefully and honestly in order to lend depth and credibility to his plot. Moreover, in this way he tries to answer the most crucial question about his setting: What was it like to be alive and sensitive at that time and in that place?

Each of the four novels examined in this thesis are set in Palestine at some time during the period of the Second Aliyah (1905-1917). All four of the novelists -- Brenner, Kabak, Barash, and Agnon -- first came to Palestine during this period, and, therefore, each of their novels is inevitably an autobiographical account of the demands and hardships

of settlement. Moreover, though the novels were written over a period of some twenty-five years (Breakdown and Bereavement, 1920, Between Sea and Desert, 1933, Gardeners, 1944, Yesterday or the Day Before, 1946) each author maintains a commitment to historical accuracy and relies heavily upon setting to help delineate the anquish and achievements of the individual.

C.

9 Breakdown and Bereavement contains a number of tableaux that illuminate the atmosphere and tenor of the period immeasurably. Brenner powerfully describes the physical and spiritual decay of Jerusalem, the desiccated terrain of Jaffa, and the rugged fertility of the Gallil in an extremely intimate way. As he places his vulnerable characters in the midst of these settings, Palestine appears all the more intimidating and foreboding. Through his organic network of characters Brenner gives the reader his most lasting impressions of the undercurrents of the Second Aliyah.

The novel's protagonist, Yehezkel Hefetz, is defeated by the physical life in the Gallil and continues to flounder in a Jerusalem of hospitals, chamber-pots, squallor, and poverty. His cousins in Jerusalem, Esther and Miriam Hefetz, are also victims of the Land's rejection. In Jerusalem the two sisters are confined to the traditional role of the balabosta. Esther has found that the conquering of the Land is a male enterprise. Miriam dies a macabre death in a

tenement along Jaffa's hot, sandy shore. Reb Yosef, their father, remains an impotent religious figure in Jerusalem, and he has no heir to whom to transmit his great knowledge and wisdom. His brother, Reb Haim, loses his precious Torah to Jerusalem's powerful charlatan, Reb Goldmann. Haim also has no heir in that his son, Hanoch, dies of some unknown disease while guarding a grain mill near Tiberias. Yehezkel's friend, Menahem, is the only character in the novel to conquer rather than be vanquished by the Land's many barriers to settlement.

In his introduction to the novel Hillel Halkin writes:

> Breakdown and Bereavement offers us a last, lingering glimpse of Palestinian life in the twilight days of the Ottoman Empire, when the horse-drawn carriage still vied with the railway and the country slumbered in peace if not prosperity, undisturbed by warring nationalisms and the forces of modernity, though storm clouds were already thick on the horizon. (p.xiv)

Those ominous "storm clouds" are also forming beneath the surface of the Palestinian landscape and within the hearts of its inhabitants. They continuously warn the chalutz either to leave or to abandon his European melancholy, adjust to a new life, and laugh heartily at the time to come.

In Kabak's Between Sea and Desert the scope of the novel is much wider, giving the reader a clearer sense of Palestine in the international scheme of things. The country itself is but a small place of Jewish refuge situated between the powerful Christian and Moslem worlds. We can sense the dynamics of political Zionism still at work abroad; we are

more aware of the Ottoman presence in the Land; and the internal struggle between the European cultural background and the Palestinian reality is more explicit than in Breakdown and Bereavement and the other novels.

Miriam Weiss is a young woman whose European sensitivities -- her immersion in Russian culture and her commitment to socialism -- gradually adjust to the Palestinian terrain and the ideals of Zionism. Her friend, Ephrati, is a young Zionist who still bears the melancholy of the European past. Her mentor, Mr. Zifrin, is the most idealistic character in the novel and teaches school in Tel Aviv. His wife, Emma, is the most cynical character, and her bitterness tears at their marriage until it breaks. Carmeli is the young political idealogue who travels all over the world trying to lay the foundation for a Jewish homeland. His charisma attracts a number of female characters throughout the novel. Ayala, his sister, is an attractive, good-natured woman whose personality reflects the Jew's sense of joy. She is a close friend and model for Zinner, the artist and philosopher of the narrative. Through Zinner's sculpture, "Moriah and Golgatha," he tries to portray Israel's place in the grand scheme of things.

Other important characters in the novel include Raisa Rosen, Glueck, Yigal Zifrin, Tsiona, and Reb Yehiel. Raisa is the well-intentioned, pretty daughter of an established, upper-class family in Tel Aviv. Glueck is the clever, homely and skeptical spinster who becomes foster mother to Yigal Zifrin when his mother and father can no longer take

care of him. Yigal is a very crucial character in the novel. He is the product of the most cynical and most idealistic elements of Jewish Palestine. He is the boyfriend of Tsiona who represents a spiritual ideal in the novel, and through her he also has contact with her pious grandfather, Reb Yehiel. At the conclusion of the novel he remains on the settlement in the Gallil as the representative of the future generation and its budding strength.

A number of love relationships serve to demonstrate the compatibility and strength of various ideologies and emotional stances towards the new environment. Through the success or failure of such relationships the reader learns which human qualities have survival potential in the Land. The Land itself is often personified into a woman and the characters relate to it as some sort of lover. Alternately, the Land is an elderly lady, a prostitute, a welcoming mother figure, or a haughty woman who disdainfully spurns her lovers. Kabak's historical setting includes subtle coloring and detail as well as the depiction of major political events. By imparting a rich historical backdrop to the novel he gives increased credibility to an intimate personal drama.

In Barash's Gardeners the historical setting (the Second and Third Aliyah) is not nearly so integral to the characters and plot. Historical details are often given in fragments and seem merely to be a convenient backdrop for a family melodrama. 1) Circumstances in Europe caused a large migration of young people to Palestine. 2) Young Jews of many different backgrounds were brought together by an

apparent unity of purpose. 3) Sometimes that unity of purpose was not profound enough to hold a marriage together.

Manasseh and Ephraim Kliger are products of the Zionist clubs in Galicia. They came to Palestine with the ideal of working on the Land and eventually being able to bring over the rest of their family. On the boat from Europe they meet Mira Temkiss, the daughter of a middle-class Galician family who wants to experience the adventure of kibbutz. However, she quickly tires of communal life. She reestablishes contact with the Kliger brothers, marries Manasseh, and helps them establish a farming settlement near Tel Aviv. She bears a daughter, Ophra, and shortly thereafter she begins to feel the limitations of Palestinian life and the restrictions of being a mother and wife. Subsequently, she divorces Manasseh and runs off with a wealthy Australian.

The dialogues in the novel often seem stilted, none of the characters are very well-conceived, and there is an unsatisfying sprinkling of minor characters throughout the novel. Nevertheless, in a somewhat stereotypical way Gardeners underscores the major themes which appear in the other novels.

In Yesterday or the Day Before Agnon embellishes his story-line with frame after frame of interesting local color. He describes the clubs and meeting places in Jaffa, and we hear the conversations of a number of minor characters around their tables. He also leads us through all the many neighborhoods of Jerusalem and does not hesitate to interrupt with

short chapters about the city's history. Although he is writing thirty years in hindsight Agnon captures all the sights and smells of Second Aliyah Palestine.

The central character of the novel is Yitzhak Kummer who came to Palestine intending to plant, sow, and reap on the Land but instead becomes a housepainter in Jaffa and Jerusalem. In Jaffa he meets Sonia, the elusive social butterfly, and experiences his first romance. When he goes to Jerusalem he is drawn back into the religious world where he meets his wife-to-be, Shifra. She is the granddaughter of a couple that he met on the ship coming over (Reb Amram and his wife) and also the daughter of Reb Feysh. Reb Feysh and Reb Gronam Yekum Purkan are the two zealously orthodox religious authorities in Meah Shearim.

The other major character in the novel is the dog, Balak. Yitzhak whimsically paints the words, "mad dog," on Balak's back, and we follow this bewildered animal as he tries to evade all the frightened inhabitants of Jerusalem and understand their antagonism. Through his dog's-eye view and his pained reflections on his disgraced fate we learn most about the hardships of Jewish settlement in Palestine.

All of the novels discussed in this thesis yield a kind of dog's-eye view of Palestine as they give us a closer look at the physical surroundings and the social reality of the period. The novels can depict for us the streets of Jerusalem, the small businesses and businessmen of Jaffa, and the stark beauty of the rural setting. The novels' themes can outline the focal points of human struggle and accomplishment.

The following chapters isolate three of the themes common to all four novels. When appropriate for comparison with another episode of Palestinian immigration, Agnon's novel of the Hasidic Aliyah, In the Heart of the Seas, is also included. Chapter I examines the young immigrant's struggle with his religious roots and the religious authority figures of the time in order to illuminate the process by which traditional Judaism was transplanted into its Palestinian setting. In Chapter II the major female characters are compared in order to gain an understanding of the extent to which the woman felt herself to be a participant in the Zionist struggle. Chapter III tries to derive a sense of what each of the four authors considered to be those human qualities of the period which would have the ability, strength, and good fortune to perpetuate themselves into the future.

Chapter One

The Labors of Religion

In the Jewish world the areas of the religious and the secular have never been very distinct from one another. With the prospect of the rebuilding of Zion the two antithetical realms cross and overlap and continually become transformed one into the other in the mind of the Second Aliyah pioneer. A zealously secular socialism might be the most powerful ideology operative during this period of Jewish settlement; yet, because of the history and nature of the Land he has come to conquer, each immigrant to one degree or another measures his background and motivations in religious terms. The form of his European education, whether heavily religious or secular, will determine his new friends and associates, and the Land itself with its religious lore will evoke constant self-appraisal of his relative religious observance. If such a personal assessment does not emergy naturally, it will be instigated and challenged by any number of vociferous Zionist and religious idealogues.

In the first stages of immigration, when the European experience is measured against the Palestinian setting, the religious dimension serves as a personal measuring stick. There are still those at this time who come because the Land

promises them fertility and an advantageous burial plot.[5] By their arrival they affirm their commitment to the mitzvot of Jewish law, and from that point onward they will judge their actions as to whether they hasten or postpone the end of days. Like those of the Hasidic aliyot before them their ideal is to dwell in the Land and derive its spiritual benefits without rushing or hindering the cosmic process by doing so.

The vast majority, however, are young chalutzim who have left their traditional Jewish homes. Depending upon their family's location and economic class, they have been exposed, somewhat, to the secular, European culture, and particularly to the promises of socialism. As they arrive in Palestine they pursue the ideals of socialism with a religious passion. The tradition of their fathers is reinterpreted to be most effective as a "religion of labor" (See above, p. 3.) in its new setting. However, in addition to their desire to identify the religious with the secular in Judaism the chalutzim still bear the need, affection, or nostalgia for the Diaspora Judaism upon which they were nourished.

In the following chapter a number of young characters will be examined as to how they reassess or reapply their religious baggage, their beliefs and observance, to the Palestine of the Second Aliyah. The purpose therein is to

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[5] According to Jewish lore, if a person was buried outside of the Land of Israel he would have to grope his way to Jerusalem before being resurrected on the Day of Judgment.

describe the dynamics involved in the transvaluation of religious and secular values as portrayed in the four novels. Subsequently, the various religious authority figures which the novels portray will be isolated in order to outline the type of religious establishment which was emerging during the period, the example it served and the guidance (or lack of direction) it imposed upon a younger generation.

In the context of his discussion of Yesterday or the Day Before, Gershom Scholem appraises the religious atmosphere of the Second Aliyah:

> Hasidism and Jewish tradition . . . have now broken up. The magnificent impulse has been exhausted and a new ideal, the reconstruction of the Jewish people in its old Land, now arouses the enthusiasm of the young. No one knows what the place of religious tradition will be in the new order. Religion, too is manifestly in a state of crisis. Where it still lingers on -- and it certainly does in no small measure -- it keeps within closed boundaries and has little or no attraction for the outsider. [6]

Herein Professor Scholem expresses part of the confusing predicament which our protagonist finds himself in upon his arrival in Palestine.

Yitzhak Kummer comes with the Zionist ideal 'to build the Land and to be built up by it.' However, he still

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[6] Gershom Scholem, "Reflections on S.Y. Agnon," Commentary 44-6, December, 1967, p. 65.

carries with him the memories of his Hasidic forebear, Reb Yudel.[7] As he begins his journey, Yitzhak envies Yudel's faith that the Holy One Blessed be He was watching and protecting his ship as it forged its way through the tempests. As he recalls Yudel's piety Yitzhak is perturbed by a faint regret that ever since he left home he has begun to relax his own religious practices (p. 30). Nevertheless, like all good chalutzim of the period, he is intensely opposed to the concept of providing Zionist money to those pious sages for "studying Torah to no purpose, running from grave to grave, . . . and provoking arguments to the point of Jerusalem's derision and disgrace (p. 33)."

After a short period of difficulty, Yitzhak finds a means of supporting himself. As a housepainter he can remain independent of any of the welfare agencies and can take pride in his modest work to improve the Land. His natural ability for the profession comes from a religious source. In Galicia he had learned to work with his hands in conjunction with the Jewish holidays. As the oldest child in the family he would make "the dreidels for Chanukah, the noise-makers for Purim, and the booth for Succot (p. 67)." Such humble talents were transferred to the paintbrush with which Yitzhak would fulfill his Zionist obligation to restore the Land from its destruction.

Eventually (within this process of transvaluation) Yitzhak abandoned all religious observance, neither going to the

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[7] Reb Yudel is the hero of Agnon's epic novel, The Bridal Canopy, set in eighteenth century Europe.

synagogue, observing the Shabbat or the festivals. A number of rationalizations accompanied this secularization process. First of all, he considered that he would still observe the negative commandments. Later, he began feeling hypocritical for holding onto the fragments of religious practice from which his heart and intention were removed (p. 82). And yet at times he longed for the religion of his father's home.

Agnon describes a type of nostalgia cult in which the young men and women would congregate to share stories and songs from their own city in order to preserve the flavor of that which was already abandoned.

> Neither was Yitzhak alone in this. At this same period Jaffa was full of young men who taught and made explications, and when they would gather together and the spirit would move them they would sweeten their get-together with Hasidic stories and melodies, or with religious expositions (p.83).

There was a great deal of excitement in the sharing of varied backgrounds, but Agnon's final implication is that nostalgia is no substitute for continued observance. The chapter ends with a description of Yitzhak buying new clothes. The reader learns that he no longer wears the fringed undergarment prescribed in the Torah. Similarly, it is implied, the secularization process extended deeper than the superficial level and effected the basic fiber of the chalutz youth.

On a whim Yitzhak decides to go to Jerusalem, and a slow process of teshuvah ensues. He finds a suitable place to live, reestablishes his profession, and makes friends with the painter Blaukopf and his wife. The Jerusalem Shabbat

begins to appeal to him, and one Friday afternoon he decides to save a little time and money by not shaving. Blaukopf dies that same afternoon, and Yitzhak's decision not to shave becomes his first religious act of mourning. Like so many of Yitzhak's acts the unintentional and whimsical gain unforeseen intent from the external forces of an undefined causality (e.g., the painting of "mad dog" on Balak's back). Yitzhak's beard, the outward symbol of religious zeal, continues to grow as he meets Shifra, helps her and her mother, and regularly fulfills the mitzvah of visiting the sick for the unwitting Reb Feysh.

However, Yitzhak's religious intent does not begin to emerge until he becomes reacquainted with Reb Alter, the mohel of his Galician community. By showing Yitzhak his name in the ledgers of the circumcisions that he has performed, Reb Alter reminds him of his religious entry into the covenant. By reminding him of his mother's Yahrzeit he calls upon Yitzhak to perform the conscious religious duty of saying the mourner's Kaddish (p. 345). However, before Yitzhak can reassume the religious life he must take another look at what he might be missing in the secular world of Jaffa, Sonia, and the Zionist clubs.

Yitzhak returns to Jaffa in order to loosen all ties with Sonia, and on one of his last nights there he recites the Shma, falls asleep, and, when he awakes, imagines that he hears Reb Yudel studying Talmud. But since he realizes that Reb Yudel is no longer of this world, he imagines that

it is none other than he himself that is studying (p.458). Yitzhak's identification of himself with his Hasidic ancestor implies the completion of his religious return.

Yitzhak goes back to Jerusalem, arranges to marry Shifra, and then he sits down to write his father of his accomplishments, filling his letter with the traditional phrases of religious rapture. He thinks to himself, "After all the worry father will see that my aliyah was ordained in heaven in that the way of a man is to go after one's mate (p.534)."[8] This cliche of religious aliyah doctrine replaces that which he came with -- the equally sententious Zionist intent "to build the Land and to be built up by it" (p. 7). Though not making much progress, Yitzhak has shed one world view, embraced Zionist ideology, and then again shed that in favor of a nostalgic return to the world of Reb Yudel. Through Yitzhak and his mental and physical movement between Jerusalem and Jaffa we can witness the tension and constant displacement (transvaluation) of the religious and the secular.

By virtue of the fact that Barash's characters are not so complex or organic, and perhaps by virtue of the fact that his protagonists find their niche on the soil, the tension between secular and religious is not so great in Gardeners. The Kliger brothers fulfill the Zionist dream of working the

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[8] It was believed that the Land itself could serve as a matchmaker for pious men and women.

land and are never confronted with the world of Jerusalem. Their only contact with the religious world is purely functional as it becomes a necessary dimension at the critical times of marriage, birth, divorce, and death. Manasseh and Mira need a rabbi to marry them, the prospects of a circumcision ceremony are considered when Mira is about to give birth, the rabbi must arrange the divorce proceedings, and the brothers need to find a synagogue in order to mourn properly at the death of their father. Through these episodes Barash portrays the distance that the secular Zionist has placed between himself and his religious roots.

Manasseh and Mira's marriage is approached very routinely and without any sense of sanctity. The major concern before the couple enters the chupah is the question of when Mira should lower her veil. They wait in line behind another wedding party as the rabbi runs through the Seven Blessings. Not only do the religious procedures seem unemotional and cold without the joy of parents and grandparents, but they are perceived by the Kliger party as some sort of intrusion from the past and a remnant of the Diaspora mentality.

Mira, the most complex character in the novel, expresses this sense of intrusion most dramatically after the birth of her daughter Ophra. Shortly after giving birth she says, to the dismay of Manasseh and Ephraim, how relieved she is that it was not a son. Now, she thinks, the barbaric ceremony of circumcision will not be required (p. 104). Again, after her husband's father dies and the brothers awkwardly observe

the thirty days of mourning, she cynically questions the purpose of Jewish ritual and reduces it all to ridiculous superstition.

> Mira said to them time and time again that this form of mourning was nonsense in her eyes. What kind of satisfaction can the dead have from such wisps of hair that they grew on their cheeks (p. 107)?

The brothers do not respond to her, but Ephraim feels sure that it was a good idea after all that they decided to bring their tefillin (p.187).

In Kabak's Between Sea and Desert the characters' mental processes are shown as much more involved. As they reinterpret the religion of their fathers in the context of a new Land they also express a complex of theological and sociological concerns about its future.

The young, melancholic Ephrati bemoans the trend of atheism in Palestine. He extols the faith of the fathers in an angry and punishing God and descries the absence of such a sense of a personal relationship with God in the present generation. "We have removed the will of God right out of our path and have made ourselves weak and miserable (p.152)." He sees those around him either in conflict with their religious heritage or denying it completely and concludes that "it is better to flee from Him than not to believe at all (p.154)."

Other attitudes that are expressed are more choleric than melancholic. Mekler, the young socialist, regards religious faith as having "its beginning in self-deceit and

its end in fraud, hypocrisy and charlatanism (p.333). young realist, Glueck, implies that all religious and Zionist fantasies about the Land are like dybbuks which need to be exorcised before settlement can be accomplished. (p.361).

In contrast, Zinner views his role as an artist as one who seeks to extract the religious from the secular. Indeed, he feels that it is everyone's personal duty to dig into the hidden recesses of his heart and to bring his quivering religious faith to light. He considers the stubbornness of maintaining a purely secular stance as a form of heresy. It is ironic that, though Zinner embraces religion, Reb Yehiel, Kabak's symbol of religious authority, considers Zinner's artistry to be no better than idolatry. Hence, the full gamut of stances towards religion is described and placed in conflict as Kabak depicts a spiritual atmosphere which is in a difficult period of transition.

The generation of immigrants in their twenties and thirties is generally highly cerebral and introspective. They seem to yearn for but cannot justify any more than their secular existence. Late in the novel a group of them are all taking a walk in Jerusalem and decide to visit Reb Shabtai, an immigrant of the First Aliyah. Reb Shabtai plays the violin and, at the group's insistence, he plays none other than the Kol Nidre (p.551). The group is spell-bound. Miriam's eyes fill with tears and the others are silenced by this mournful reminder of their rich and beautiful tradition. Through this scene Kabak implies that there is a spiritual longing for traditional Judaism, a longing which resembles

but goes way beyond nostalgia.

Outside Reb Shabtai's apartment the younger Yigal and Tziona stand affixed near the grave of Shabtai's wife. Yigal tries to express his religious sensations of the moment but is unable to do so (p.557). Nevertheless, the reader can sense that there is a more private, internal religious sensitivity which is developing in the hearts of the young chalutzim.[9]

In Breakdown and Bereavement the novel's protagonist, Yehezkel Hefetz, flounders perpetually in his private spiritual yearnings. There are not even any remnants of traditional observance, remnants which could at least serve as guideposts to Yehezkel as he wanders through the unchartered desert of his miserable soul. Yehezkel's uncle, Reb Yosef, is a learned man, yet Yehezkel cannot communicate with him. He is well-versed in Bible, yet this connector to historical Judaism only seems to inspire images of degradation like those of Ezekiel and Onan.

On the kevutzah Yehezkel fails at the 'religion of labor.' Subsequently, he is institutionalized into one of Jebusalem's hospitals where his mind wanders from his own contemptible position and through the chapters of the Bible:

> Wasn't I created in God's image too? Er and Onan abused God's image--it's all in the Bible, the Chumishl isn't ashamed to say so--the bastards stewed in their own juice. Bastards, not bastards .... it's just that it says: 'And the sons of Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord.' And myself? Good, evil, it's

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[9] discussed further in Chapter III.

> not that I deny it, it's just that I don't understand, don't know...I don't deny that I'm ill, that I need to be in a hospital.... And it came to pass on that day' -- that the whole world was put in a hospital (p.116).

Yehezkel Hefetz, much like the tortured Dostoievskian hero, sees himself in a world which does not make sense and where life continues absurdly in the darkness. Rarely are there moments of clarity when a bit of truth filters through the mire, and these moments are not worth the years of (to use Yehezkel's own metaphor) stewing like a tomato (p.119). And yet he interprets his predicament through the perspective of Biblical literature:

> I'm not what you think...not even Onan...Kenan not Onan.. because Kenan begat Mehalalel and Mehalalel begat Jered and Jered begat Enoch and Enoch Ezekiel... dost mean Ezekiel the Priest, son of Buzi? Why, nothing of the kind, nothing of the kind! Just plain Yehezkel. (p.119-20)

Esther and Miriam, the daughters of Reb Yosef, reflect a younger generation's repugnance to the religion of their fathers. Though Yosef contains the wisest elements of both religious and secular knowledge, Esther can only view him as an ailing and pain-ridden patient. The younger Miriam is unable to endure her father's presence and dreams of travelling as far away as possible. She studies Torah only to be flattered by Schneirson, her young tutor, who uses watered-down sources and trite homilies to transmit its teachings.

Menahem, Yehezkel's good-natured friend, seems to be the only one of his generation who has come to comfortable terms with his dismissal of religion and the observant life. He goes to rent a room from the beadle of a synagogue, but

when he realizes that the room is only available to a prospective husband for his daughter, he informs the beadle of his own flagrant desecrations of the Sabbath. The pious father then let out a groan of horror at the unabashed gall of the young man. Meanwhile, Menahem, recalling the scene to Yehezkel, roars with an enthusiastic burst of laughter (p.295). His satisfied roar implies that the world of the chalutz and that of the religious traditions of the past might never be resolved, but, then again, they are of different times and different places.

During this period (as in every period of Israel's history) there are still those who are going on aliyah for religious reasons. They come to be buried on the Land, and they come relying on the Land's mystical ability to provide fertility and to revitalize the spirit. Among those who come are rabbis and religious teachers who try to reestablish themselves as teachers, private tutors, religious spokesmen, religious functionaries, and legislators of Jewish law on the holy soil. The transition from European culture to Palestine is an especially difficult one for them to make. The attitudes towards religious practice are extremely voluble in the Old-Newland, and religion itself often finds itself very much on the periphery. The defined roles and functions that the teacher and rabbi had in the European community are now absent to a great extent -- even in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Each of the authors includes in his novel at least one portrait of the religious authority figure struggling in his new setting; each figure gives us some indication of the kind of religious establishment that is working towards the preservation of the traditions and laws of the chosen nation. The portraits range from that of the sad and impotent rabbi to that of the vociferous religious zealot. The rabbi feels out of place in the Land where he had hoped to feel most at home. The religious zealot braces himself against the Zionist idolaters and vows that he will not witness the desecration of Jerusalem's soil by their hands. For Barash and Kabak the position of the religious figure in Palestine is just a minor theme in the novel; for Agnon and Brenner it is a major focal point for describing the texture of the Second Aliyah.

The only reference to a religious figure in Gardeners is brief, but revealing. When Manasseh and Mira get married they need a rabbi, and so they hire one nearby. As mentioned earlier they must wait in line as one couple after another enters the canopy erected on the rabbi's porch and receives the blessings. The ceremony is approached routinely by the couples in that the marriage is only gone through in order to please the public eye. Moreover, the marriages are performed routinely though not without rabbinic discomfort. The rabbi tries to act joyful, but his eyes reveal his inner sadness at such an unfortunate phenomenon: "In Israel a rabbi must also transgress for a morsel of bread, especially in this

new land where there is no sanctity held towards tradition. The rabbi performed his deed like one possessed by a demon (p.73)." The narrator scorns the couples for their expediency in religious matters and then pities the rabbi for his collusion.

The portrait of Reb Yehiel in Between Sea and Desert is better developed and not so thoroughly negative. Reb Yehiel represents the older generation of the Hasidic Aliyah, an enlightened man, yet strict in his observance of the Law. Though courteous to his next-door neighbor he regards Zinner's work as a sculptor as both a transgression of the second commandment and as an imitation of the well-mannered ways of the gentiles (p.540). Regarding Jerusalem he is still a purist, resisting the advent of technology into the Holy City (p.320).

Nevertheless, in relation to his grandson Chaim, Yehiel adheres to the philosophy of A. D. Gordon, that the working of the Land is tantamount to the fulfilling of one's religious obligations. One generation is faithful by virture of its adherence to Torah, another by virtue of its birth on the Land. However, Kabak's delicate descriptions of both grandfather and grandson imply the weak stature of such a religious philosophy. The bright young Chaim cleverly appeases his grandfather by lying about his attendance of the afternoon prayers (p.432). Meanwhile, the last picture that is given of Reb Yehiel is that of a tall, gaunt man in a poorly lit room, reciting his prayers alone in one of the corners of his

apartment (p.428). He is deceived, ineffectual, and quite alone in his piety.

Agnon is much more caustic as he parodies the two religious figures in Yesterday or the Day Before who have taken upon themselves the yoke of authority in Jerusalem's Meah Shearim. Jerusalem itself is portrayed as being hot, dusty, and disease-ridden. It is likened to a dark cave which is covered in spider webs which no one has bothered to tear away (p.224). Its inhabitants are emotionally static and spiritually depressed, and they are entertained by the zealous tirades of Reb Feysh and Reb Gronam Yekum Purkan.

Our first impressions of Reb Feysh come through Yitzhak's eyes. From the outset of the novel we learn that he is antagonistic to anyone who lives on the Chalukah.[10] Later, when Yitzhak is in Feysh's home we share his anticipation of Feysh's haughty disapproval of his shaven appearance (p.271). And when Yitzhak visits the home for the third time, we are warned not to be surprised at Feysh's resistance to fulfilling the mitzvah of welcoming guests (p.295). He is irrationally strict and ascetic, and, as we learn from accounts of his European background as a ritual slaughterer, "All of his claims of uncleanliness were nothing but a personal vengeance (p.517)."

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[10] The system of monetary support for pious scholars in Palestine. Agnon himself was opposed to this system.

Yitzhak leaves Reb Feysh's home with the feeling that it would have been more fitting to have written 'mad dog' on his back rather than on the actual dog Balak.

The reader marvels at destiny's just dispensations when Reb Feysh meets misfortune. While he covertly posts notices of excommunication in the dark of the night, Balak frightens him, and he is seized by a fit of apoplexy. As Reb Feysh lies helplessly in the street, the white notices scatter in the wind. He imagines them to be the pale, shrouded ghosts of the ancestors of those whom he was about to excommunicate (p.411). Immobile in his sickbed, Feysh cannot understand how he could have been struck down while performing a mitzvah (p.313).

Such a portrait of a man who has abandoned the study of Torah for its own sake and has legislated its precepts for his own self-aggrandizement is the vehicle for a scathing attack on the religious establishment of the time. We are told that the walls over which Feysh has plastered his notices are eventually whitewashed, but (the narrator adds) it is inevitable that others will follow in his footsteps with more notices (p.397). The last we see of Reb Feysh is the figure of a man lying motionless in his bed and jealous of the attention that Yitzhak is getting as Shifra and Rivka crowd around his deathbed. Feysh's zealotry and his disapproval of Yitzhak are revealed to be merely the petty need to be at the center of attention.

Reb Gronam Yekum Purkan is the equally unsavory, pious rhetorician of the novel. As Balak perches on the podium

beneath his robe, Gronam lambasts the people of Jerusalem for their impiety. In the most overblown manner he describes his vision of the apocalyptic destruction of Jerusalem. If only the Jews would not sleep with their heads uncovered such a fate could be averted (p.306). Moreover, in addition to the trivial nature of his harangues, none of these public statements end on any note of consolation.

Reb Gronam is depicted as a destructive force in the community with a satanic desire to indiscriminately expose society's sins and transgressions. He does so without much effect. All of his wild exhortations are viewed as theatrics; his flinging his arms, beating his breast, and his dramatic looks towards the heavens effect only those few who are prone to tears and sighing deeply over the human condition (p.584).

However, in the midst of the parody, the Jerusalemites are also indicted for enabling such fanatics to draw a crowd. There are no theatres or fun-houses in Jerusalem, so they must congregate to hear the likes of Reb Gronam for their entertainment. The Jews share the blame for allowing such men to become the religious spokesmen in the community. According to a Hasidic parable that Agnon relates,

> The Holy One Blessed be He said, "I have set before you great righteous men and you were not advised by them; so now, when I set these imitations of righteous men over you, you will follow after them (p.465)."

Men like Feysh and Gronam flourish in such a period until they are either stifled by their own apoplexy or become the central arena for ridicule.

In Hochman's discussion of the setting of Yesterday or the Day Before he remarks that "the great rabbis became tradesmen humbled by the crown of the Torah which resided in Jerusalem (p.260)." It must be added that meanwhile the lesser men surfaced and aired their pride and zealotry upon an ailing community.

Such is precisely the situation also in Brenner's Breakdown and Bereavement. The pious Reb Yosef embodies the intellectual ideals of neo-Orthodoxy. During the first period of his life he immersed himself in Bible and Talmud, and then in his second period he studied grammar, philosophy, and science. He is hopeful that in his Palestinian period there will be a harmonious synthesis of the two worlds. He has tremendous faith in the power of Jerusalem to uplift not only the mind of Man but also that of every living creature. It has been his observation that even the cats and mosquitoes of Jerusalem are endowed with a "special sixth sense (p.187)."

Harboring such a complete faith in the powers of the Land and in the divine scheme of things, Reb Yosef has little patience for the religious phrasemongers who accuse the young Zionists of being phrasemongers. His own attitude towards the younger generation is much more tolerant and understanding: "... the younger generation is less sinful than rebellious and it rebelled out of a sense of anger and frustration at its own

lack of faith (p.131)." He sees the parent's generation as being partly to blame by making the tradition too stringent and inflexible.

However, Reb Yosef's power and wisdom are checked at every step in his attempt to settle in Jerusalem. Almost every one of his books are being held in the custom's house in Jaffa until he can pay the duty to have them released. The source of his learning is trapped by the inconstant and inequitable forces of the Turkish bureaucracy (p.39). He is prevented from teaching in the religious school system in Jerusalem because, unconvinced that the Sephardic mode is linguistically and historically justifiable (p.50), he clings stubbornly to the Ashkenazic mode of pronunciation. Subsequently, the extent of his teaching and his means of support is the tutoring of an occasional student (p.87).

Reb Yosef is frustrated further by his constant bickering with the ignorant yet powerful Reb Goldmann. At a time of drought in Jerusalem the question arises of whether to institute a special fast. Reb Yosef and all the Biblical and legal texts seem to justify such a decree, but Goldmann opposes the action because the advent of rain would lower the price of his water (p.96). The court is swayed by Goldmann's power, and Reb Yosef remains a dejected figure of complete and utter impotence. He sighs to himself, "Was it his fault if drought happended to be good for Goldmann's business (p.112)."

Yankele Goldmann emerges as the religious authority figure in Jerusalem. Brenner's description of his "bulging

Adam's apple and drooping paunch (p.151)" makes him a suitable symbol of the Holy City's depravity and its empty piety. Reb Goldmann, in addition to being the proprietor of a large boardinghouse, is the ex-father-in-law of Reb Haim's son. As a result of his daughter's divorce he insists upon taking Haim's precious Torah as security for delinquent alimony payments. He places the Torah in the chapel of his boarding-house and uses it to maintain complete control of the religious proceedings (p.124). Goldmann had insisted on using the Lurianic liturgy and, by virtue of his power as landlord, everyone but Haim had eventually agreed (p.55). Moreover, Goldmann's crudeness is revealed as commensurate with his irresponsible wielding of power when he proposes to Haim that the reason for the divorce might have been Hanoch's inability to fulfill the marriage vows (p.108).

Goldmann despises everything and everyone in Jerusalem, but he derives his satisfaction from wheeling and dealing morality and manipulating as many plebeians and politicians as he can. His ultimate tactic is to use the dedication of a second Torah scroll as a publicity stunt for his guesthouse and for the opening of his Academy for Torah and Universal Studies (p.232). The ceremony in the synagogue is gawdy and strained as Goldmann carries the Torah under the bridal canopy for all the press to see. Brenner bitterly summarizes, "Only directly over the canopy, which rode high on four stilts, did the gloom seem to lift a little (p.234)."

The wisdom of Reb Yosef is completely displaced by the

power of Reb Goldmann, and the religious foundations of Jerusalem appear to be built upon the whims of false piety. Brenner adds in the name of Reb Haim, "Here in Jerusalem, he had heard it said, there was little real learning, while as for piety -- why not admit it -- it was only an outward show (p.138)." As in Gardeners and Yesterday or the Day Before the Jerusalemites in general are implicated as being partners in this disgrace.

Chapter Two

The Unsettled Woman

Before the advent of political Zionism and its promises of reconquering the Land there was always a weak but constant stream of European immigrants who made their ascent for purely religious reasons. There are accounts of religious communities in Eastern Europe who, throughout the 19th century, would pack their belongings, load their wagons, and point them in the direction of Palestine.

Agnon portrays such a group in his novella In the Heart of the Seas wherein the motivations and purpose of aliyah were to study Torah, merit children, and be buried in Jerusalem. The men formulated the plans for the journey, and the women, except for those who preferred a writ of divorce, echoed their approval.

Agnon treats the men and the women as two distinct groups at each step of their way. They ride in separate wagons, have different topics of conversation, and serve completely separate functions. The mens' function is to recite the proper blessings and read the proper Biblical passages in order to ensure a safe journey; that of the women is to cook and sew and gather the wood for a fire. Hananiah, the righteous poor man who joins the group, is the only male that helps them with their menial work.

The men never seem to have any misgivings about their

decision to move. The women, however, quickly begin to miss the family they left behind, and they grow bitter from the mens' lack of appreciation for their devoted labor. As they pass through one of the larger towns along the way, Satan tempts them with beautiful scarfs and dresses, and he reminds them of the scarcity of such fine goods in Israel.

When they arrive at the sea, they are frightened by the waves and by the thought of a watery grave, and they beseech their husbands to take them back home. The men refuse, and so they ask for a divorce. The divorces are granted, but shortly thereafter the women fear the prospects of a grave outside of Israel and beg to be taken back. The men accede to their wishes but, when they continue their religious discourse, they discuss the burdens of being married. When it is actually time to board the boat, the husbands and the wives are of two different minds regarding the wisdom of their decided ascent. "Thereupon each of the comrades took his goods in hand and went aboard with his wife holding onto his tails and going up with him (p.57)."

Religious aliyah is portrayed clearly as male-centered and male-motivated. The women, though mouthing their consent, are often much more ambivalent about leaving their homes and are more anxious about the future. The men live in their symbolical world of an epic journey to Jerusalem; the women carry the burden of the practical matters and the worries about the difficult process of resettlement. Upon arrival in Jerusalem the men remain safely within their allegorical scheme; however, as implied in the final pages of the novella,

the women have a different fate: "Pessel, the daughter of Rabbi Shlomo, perished from the kick of a mule, and Feiga perished from the blows of Ishmael (p.122)." Somehow, the women seem to take the brunt of Israel's many obstacles to settlement.

The novels of the Second Aliyah imply that the process of settlement was also an especially difficult one for women at that time. The woman often fails to find her place in the building of the new Land; she even feels excluded from the process. Not unlike the previous religious aliyot, the dynamics of the Second Aliyah seem, through the sensitive perspective of the woman, to be totally male-centered. At a time when women were becoming worldly and well-educated in Europe, they are assigned the traditional roles of mother and homemaker in their new setting. Their romances with the Land itself were often short-lived, while the men either monopolized the Zionist enterprise or felt a more powerful primitive urge to restore the Jewish connection to Mother Earth.

Nevertheless, there is generally a greater depth of character attributed to the female personalities relative to the male. They are often more complex, more elusive, less formularized than the young Zionist chalutzim with their grand ideas. The reason is not that the men are necessarily cardboard characters, but that they align themselves very readily with the ideology which they are trying to fulfill. The women often drift from place to place or from idea to idea without aligning themselves so closely to any one philosophical stance towards the Land. As depicted in the four novels they

are more intuitive, more questioning, and perhaps more skeptical about the redemptive power of an idea. Because of the woman's complexity and her ambivalence, her struggle to settle in the Land is much more convoluted than the man's. As a consequence, such a struggle is often a miserable failure.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the major female characters in the four novels. Efforts will be made to isolate particular female perspectives on the period and to analyze the extent to which women felt a part of, or apart from, the Zionist enterprise.

In Breakdown and Bereavement Esther Hefetz alludes to a famous photograph which was made into a postcard entitled, "Harvest." Esther tells her cousin Yehezkel that she, along with others of her settlement, actually posed for the picture. The postcard was supposedly a reflection of life on the kevutzah and was distributed in order to attract people to the healthy, rigorous life in Palestine. The whole group of farmworkers stands proudly in the fields reaping the products of their labor, and Esther herself poses among them "with her wide-brimmed straw hat and a basket on her shoulder (p.65)." However, as Esther begins to tell of her disillusionment with life in the farming community, the reader begins to see "Harvest" as a false and deceiving picture of the period. This picture of comraderie, of equal sharing and participation in the Jewish socialist experiment, was only the most superficial depiction of the kevutzah experience.

In reality, Esther had done the work of a cook. She had offered her personal sacrifice for the good of the communal whole by catering to the demands and whims of forty hungry mouths. It was a thankless job in which her work was constantly subjected to the bourgeois complaints of the European stomach. "One wanted sour cream, another four eggs in his omelet, another stewed fruit, another pudding every day (p.65)." Moreover, because she was neither pretty nor flirtatious, she was treated as if she had no human rights at all. She tells Yehezkel how, during the Russian Revolution of 1905, she had worked for the cause of the Jewish Workers' Bund and her work had not been appreciated. She had borne such high hopes for socialism in Palestine, and then she had been treated so crudely and with such indifference that she had begun to consider her continued sacrifice as ludicrous (p.66).

At the time of our story, Esther is no longer a young idealist, nor is she the attractive, fruit-picking, ideal woman of the time. Her experience on the kevutzah was a failure, and now she lives with her father and sister in Jerusalem. She manages the house, she becomes a nurse in the mental hospital, she cares for Yehezkel during his recuperation and anxiously hopes that her care and affection will be reciprocated. Yet Yehezkel is made uncomfortable by Esther's devotion and can only bring himself to appreciate her lyrical thoughts and philosophical acumen.

Esther, after all, is physically repulsive to Yehezkel and lacks all indications of delicacy. She is pale and thin,

unaware of the feminine arts, and is much too blunt and aggressive in romance. Even when she attempts to imitate the women around her, she misses "the last tasteful look in the polished mirror (p.62)." Esther has few illusions about herself, but eventually she feels that she too deserves to be pampered and to live a little. Meanwhile, Yehezkel despairs that he cannot love such a woman, though in many ways she is his female equivalent and ideal helpmate.

Ultimately, Esther becomes convinced by Yehezkel's callousness and bitterly disappointed with her lot in Palestine. She despises her pious father who constantly quotes from the Talmud yet is insensitive to her needs. As she rides by his side in the wagon to Tel Aviv, knowing of the ill health of her sister Miriam, she thinks to herself, "Let him get what he deserved (p.275)." Indeed, this vindictive wish is her sentiment towards all men in order that their callousness might be purged away (p.274). The lie of religious piety, of the Zionist ideal, and of man's humanity stares her in the face.

Reb Yosef's fate is less painful than her own. Esther is devastated by her sister's death whereas her father continues to believe that Miriam's soul is a shining star hovering over the Jezreel Valley (p.307). Esther continues to slave over her helpless father and her Uncle Haim in Tiberias, while the two of them assume that the money she saved will be available to bring Haim's grandson to the Galilee. The woman remains invisible, unappreciated, and unconsoled in her rootless state of continuous sacrifice on the Land.

The younger Miriam resents and resists this position of total sacrifice. Her main desire is to become educated so that she can go to an institute and become a teacher. She feels as if she has been transplanted onto Palestinian soil unwillingly and removed from the great cultures of the world. Consequently, she has a profound sense of not belonging and a fierce passion to travel to America.

Reb Yosef has very definite ideas about the role of the woman and gives Miriam no encouragement to become educated. Yet he is not averse to her travelling abroad. He is driven mad with the guilt of having brought her to Jerusalem against her will, and he can somehow justify her wanting to leave. Moreover, he prefers her to travel to America rather than make any attempts at communal living in the Gallil. He likens Miriam's motivations to those of the women described in the midrash who hope for Jerusalem's destruction and wish to be carried off by one of the lords of the conquering army. Reb Yosef mumbles bitterly, "And today the lord was America, only America, nothing but America (p.212)."

Miriam is more beautiful and much more feminine than Esther, yet she resists the role of the woman even more. She is a very poor cook, she ignores the housework, and finally she drives her father into Goldmann's boardinghouse by her lack of cleanliness. "Miriam had actually handed him an unwashed spoon with somebody's leftovers on it (p.110)." The only one of the feminine arts that she knows is coquetry as she manipulates her tutor Schneirson, and primps for the young Doctor Hamilin. Hers is, for the most part, the portrait of

an adolescent girl. She smokes in secret, she has love pangs which can be turned on and off at will, she pouts and childishly threatens to kill herself if she does not have her way. However, at the age of seventeen Miriam is fast becoming a woman with keen intuitive powers and mature desires. Yehezkel is awed by her nimble spirit and acute mind, and Esther acknowledges her desire to live freely as being more than just a childish outcry.

Miriam eventually breaks away from home and rents a small room in Jaffa. Anxious and uncertain about the future she sits alone in her room. As she remembers the story of a young princess who did the same, she pricks her finger with a rusty hairpin which becomes the instrument of her death. This gothic tableau, replete with a spider web for a bandage, is a striking symbol of the woman's fate in Palestine. The woman on her own has no place in Palestine, no noble means of support. She fiddles with the accoutrements of her femininity, dreams of the storybook life of the young princess, has no will of her own, and ultimately commits unintentional suicide.

When Esther arrives at her sister's side she does as much as she can to help her, but even her alert mind and her nursing skills are not enough to assuage Miriam's raging fever. Similarly, Brenner implies, the woman's talents remain ineffectual as the men (and even the Master of the Universe) ignore them. Esther is distraught with anger and guilt, and she cries to her dead sister, "Don't you want to live? Don't you want to (p.286)?" With Miriam's death Esther's

own will to live is vanquished. These final cries reflect her own struggle to convince herself of a reason to continue.

The two sisters, two completely different types of women, are both defeated in their new setting. Esther could only pose as a chalutz in the picture "Harvest," Miriam could not find any conquering lord to sweep her away to another country. Both are uprooted from their native land. Holding onto their father's coattails they are pulled unwillingly up to Jerusalem. They are placed down in intemperate conditions, and, subsequently, both transplants are unsuccessful. Either the land rejects them, the men do not nourish them, or these female flowers are in need of richer soil.

Similarly, in Gardeners, Barash's Mira Temkiss is never able to adapt to life in Palestine. She tries the agricultural life in the Gallil but is never at ease in the communal setting. In Manasseh Kliger she finds a diligent, enterprising chalutz figure to marry. She eventually divorces him, leaves the country, and returns only to see her daughter for a final time and then drown herself in the Mediterranean. Though Gardeners is constructed around the brothers Manasseh and Ephraim, and their fulfillment of the Zionist ideal, Mira is undoubtedly the most organic and fully developed character in the novel. Through her reactions to the Land and her painful misgivings about its promise do we learn about the ordeal of settlement.

Mira goes first of all to the kibbutz but is not at all suited to its life-style. She is too delicate for the work with the soil. She becomes lonely and sick, and she eventually flees from a torrid kibbutz romance. Altogether she tried three kibbutzim, but the life there was too primitive for her. She returns to her wealthy aunt and uncle in Tel Aviv who represent the distastefully bourgeois aspects of the life she had left in Russia -- the concern for prestige and material riches.

Mira came from a wealthy background. She had been educated in the best schools in Grodna and had been exposed to its cosmopolitan cultural life. At one time she had exhibited an interest in socialism; however, the adventure and freedom of travelling, rather than the ideals of socialism or Zionism, first motivated her to come to Palestine.

When she marries Manasseh Kliger and moves in with him and his brother, her sense of adventure is painfully out of consonance with their stable and placid ideals. Her education, her relative sophistication, and this penchant for adventure make her curious about all of life's possibilities and thirsty to experience its beauty and excitement. The brothers Kliger, pale in comparison, are intent upon their gardening, the success of their flower business, and the Zionist ideal to make the Land fertile and prosperous. By their diligence they are ultimately successful with their crop. Nevertheless, Mira finds it ironic that the beauty of the flower has been reduced to a commodity. She begins to feel isolated on their land at Maayan Ganim, she misses the life in the city, and

gradually she begins to express her growing discontent. Furthermore, she intentionally upsets the brothers with her nostalgic recollections of her lost wealth and the cultural benefits of Grodna (p.52).

Mira's pregnancy accentuates her frustration and her sense that happiness and freedom will evade her as a Mother in Israel. She carries her child like a burden, and giving birth is more of a relief than a joy. She begins to regret her marriage of convenience and to resent her premature motherhood. Indications of a second pregnancy fill her with horror and disgust. She consults a physician, takes some pills, and forces a miscarriage. The arrival of the "redeeming sign (p.106)" of the miscarriage fills her with the same sense of satisfaction that a woman might normally feel after childbirth. She later interprets the miscarriage as the only willful act of her life (p.152). Hence, Mira embodies the inversion of the Zionist ideal imposed upon the married woman, When Manasseh hints to Mira that he would like a son in the family, she bitterly replies, "The time has passed when the woman was a babymaking machine." She continues by saying that, although the men have rejected the customs of their fathers, they still expect the women to be just like their mothers (p.116-7). Such an accusation can be justified by viewing the brothers' simplistic conception of the conquering of the Land by planting flower beds and siring Jewish babies.

Mira's despair and her romantic desire to free herself from her suffocating surroundings often strike the reader as being melodramatic and irresponsible. Nevertheless, they

reflect a depth of thought and emotion which the brothers do not exhibit. Her affection for the water and her love to walk barefoot on the moist sand stand in opposition to Manasseh's harnessing of the land and his sense of the practical (p.66). Mira is very intuitive about life's variety and more attuned to the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, whereas Manasseh and Ephraim align themselves and their work with an ideal and assume that the world of relationships will work itself out.

Mira upsets the pattern. She is drawn to the romantic stranger, to his shiny car and his descriptions of life in Australia. She requests and receives a divorce, and she leaves the two brothers and her daughter for the exotic life of limitless possibilities. When the life of beauty and culture is found wanting, she returns to Palestine to see her daughter for the last time and then commits suicide. Unable to live in either world, Mira is drawn to the water that she loves and drowns herself in the Mediterranean. Her suicide by water is a symbol of her rootlessness and of her ineffectual attempt to settle in the Land. The only hope that remains is that Ophra, Mira's daughter, will not suffer such a fate, and that a younger generation of woman, by virtue of its birth in the Land, will not be torn by tragic yearnings for another world.

In Between Sea and Desert Miriam Weiss has a similar passion for the sea and comes very close to sharing the same fate as Barash's Mira. The sea draws her to its shores and captivates her by its fierceness and by its rhythmic constance. Miriam's own sense of rootlessness and discomfort in the Land is reflected in her view of the violent nature of her arrival in Palestine: "The sea vomited her, the workers there, and the children onto these sands (p.12)." As in Gardeners the central female figure feels a complete lack of will in the determining of her fate. Weak and fatigued, she walks silently along the shore, "her feet treading heavily in the fine, deep sand (p.7)."

Miriam is the daughter of a wealthy lumber merchant who provided her with the best of everything. As a product of the Haskalah the father insisted that his daughter obtain a secular degree, play the piano, and study Hebrew (p.29). Miriam is exposed to the best of Russian culture, she fulfills her father's wishes and even exceeds them by learning Bible from her maternal grandfather. Through her exposure to the secular world she is drawn enthusiastically to socialism. She is especially interested in the socialist women's struggle as presented by Rosa Luxembourg[12], and, like her, is repelled by the nationalistic chauvinism of Zionism. However, she is quickly disillusioned by the futility of the socialist endeavor

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[12] (1871-1919) Jewish Marxist active in Polish and German Labor Movements who felt that socialism and Jewish Nationalism were conflicting ideals.

and becomes drawn to Zionism through the memory of her grandfather. Subsequently, "Miriam became a Zionist with the same imaginative enthusiasm and the same thirst for sacrifice (p.32)."

She comes to Palestine with Ephrati, a male friend from her hometown with whom she goes first to an agricultural settlement at Petah Tikvah. Ephrati is quietly satisfied with his humble fulfillment of the Zionist ideal; yet Miriam tires from working the land, from the emotional strain of adjustment, and from the burdensome labor conditions. Her melancholy is a more dominant factor than his simple passivity, and so the two of them leave for Jaffa to find another means of support (p.33).

Unfortunately, Miriam is also distressed by the urban form of Jewish pioneering. She has difficulty finding work and feels stifled by the general lack of culture. Even the Workers' Clubs bore her and make her sad. These bastions of cultured conversation depress her even more than the life on the kevutzah: "The pictures of Marx, La Salle, and Herzl were hung without glass (on whitewashed walls), and the flies swarmed around them at will (p.38)."

Miriam decides at one point that she wants to become a school teacher, and she verbalizes her discontent to the schoolmaster, Mr. Zifrin. Zifrin mentions in their conversation that he cannot understand the women's general dissatisfaction with life in the Land of Israel. Miriam responds, "It's no surprise. You men are busy in public matters and in your work. There is always some substance in your lives.

But what is there for the women?" Zifrin replies, "And what about the house and the children (p.15)?" Once again the implication is that the women are expected to comply with the traditional role of their mothers and grandmothers while the men exchange Tradition for the building of the country.

For a while Miriam thrives on her love for Carmeli, the Zionist activist who travels in the highest diplomatic circles for the cause of Jewish sovereignty. Symbolically, he represents the essence of the Zionist cause that women strive to get close to, yet are never permitted. Carmeli abandons Miriam for the life of political action, and Miriam finds no other alternative than to return to the sea and drown herself. It is only when she meets Raisa Rosen, who has come to the seashore for the same purpose, that Miriam can turn away from her deathwish and continue living in Palestine (p.525). She and Raisa then compare their experiences with Carmeli and confirm their intuitions of men's over-dramatized ideologies and their general lack of emotional substance (p.534).

Miriam's consciousness of the pioneer-woman's plight is raised by her discussion with Raisa which continues up until dawn. She emerges from her intentions to commit suicide with a hope that women's fears and instability in the Land might be replaced by a sense of sharing and unity. Shortly thereafter she hears the story of the rape of Reb Shabtai's daughter. Reb Shabtai had come to Palestine as an immigrant of the First Aliyah and had settled on a small farm in the North. His daughter was raped by Arab workers and never recovered

from the trauma. Miriam strongly identifies with the fear-struck shell of the girl that survived the rape, and she senses that the position of the woman in general is reflected in the girl's vulnerable state. Through Miriam's eyes the woman of Palestine is like Dinah bat Yaakov (Gen. 37), and the men, like Hamor ben Shechem, take advantage of her and expect her to be a docile concubine.

Miriam's ultimate response is to form a woman's kevutzah where women can have their own sense of purpose and where they need not stand at a distance and envy the men's accomplishments (p.617). As opposed to her work at Petah Tikvah, this time Miriam's delicate, bourgeois hands are sustained in their labor by an independence of purpose. "Her mind was set at ease by seeing that her hands also produced as their(m.) hands (p.617). Kabak implies that the woman's strength comes through a sense of shared allegiance, and that her redemption, like that of the man, comes through the labor of the land. Moreover, if the men monopolize this national struggle, the women either remain stifled by their sense of impotence or resentful of their being dragged into the men's Zionist dreams as convenient companions.

Emma Zifrin and Abigail Levy are two such women. While Miriam and the other chalutzot grow closer and stronger on the kevutzah, Emma and Abigail sit silently on a bench in Jerusalem selling their oranges to the passing soldiers (p.628) of Allenby's liberating army. Never having exercised their own will to achieve their own independent process of settlement,

they pass their days abandoned in their widowhood and in complete anonymity. In no way do they participate in the victory over Turkish rule or the fulfillment of the Zionist dream signalled by the Balfour Declaration.

Agnon's Sonia is in many ways similar to Miriam Weiss. She comes from a well-to-do Russian home where she received a good education, an appreciation for culture, and a taste of socialism. She bears a worldliness and an articulate sophistication which make Yitzhak Kummer appear all the more simple and inexperienced. Much like Miriam relative to Ephrati, Sonia is bored by Yitzhak's Zionist line and quickly tires of him. The narrator, who has little patience for such airs of sophistication, states that if Yitzhak would only tell Sonia of his impoverished background it would be to his favor since she has read those Russian stories that appreciate the poor (p.125). We learn that the main reason that she came to Palestine was because she had written some leftist articles in a socialist magazine, and, consequently, her father had sent her away in order to avoid any purge.

Sonia arrives somewhat enthusiastic about the Zionist project, but she too faces many problems in settling into a new life-style and finding something of value to do. She tries working in the vineyards, but the physical labor is not suitable to her. With a bit of influence she acquires a job as a nurse, but the work is too routine. She enrolls in

the Bezalel Art School for a while, but she finds the heat in Jerusalem uncomfortable. The city's garbage, the water rationing, and the pervading sadness are all distasteful to her (p.157). The world of Jaffa's various clubs and meeting-places is the only Palestinian scene that appeals. She feels comfortable around famous people, and she joins enthusiastically into the rhetoric of how ideas stand in the way of work (p.105). During the day she knits and decorates her room. At night she joins the critics at the club and discusses the failings of Zionism. Like other single women of the Second Aliyah she attends meetings, hears lectures, and subsists on the monthly allowance of her father (p.157).

When her father's business goes bad, and he is not able to send her any more money, Sonia's Zionist fervor quickly falters. (Curiously enough) her first instinct is to throw herself into the sea (p.158). In parallel to Brenner's Miriam, Barash's Mira, and Kabak's Miriam the promise of oblivion that the water offers is a strong attraction in the face of feeling trapped on the Land. In reality, however, Sonia cuts her hair short, loses her consciousness for fashion, and gives up her interest in men. Implicit in this action is the author's statement that a certain type of femininty and a certain type of woman cannot be sustained by the psychological climate and conditions of the Land. Sonia settles for part-time work in a kindergarten. The other half of the day she studies German in the hopes that she might soon have saved enough money to leave Jaffa and continue her studies in Berlin.

Upon his return to Jaffa Yitzhak becomes sensitive to Sonia's apathy towards him and to her narcissism. He sees her walking along the shore with Yarkoni, the melancholic artist who has left his true love behind in Europe. The two of them while away the time in meaningless conversation about the beauty of the landscape. Thus Sonia is characterized as emasculating, frivolous, and bored with her lack of prospects in the Land.

In Agnon's schema there is also the breed of the religious woman in Jerusalem. There are indeed remnants of the "women of valor" so highly praised by Jewish tradition. Innocent and cloistered, they work tirelessly to sustain their husbands in their studies and in their dying dreams of a Jerusalem rebuilt. Rivka struggles to keep Reb Feysh alive, Hinda Puah has barely a minute to spare as she sustains Reb Alter in his wish to spend his last days in Jerusalem, and the young Shifra spends the week of her wedding helplessly watching her husband die. The loyalty and valor of the religious woman is overwhelmed by the sickness and death in the Holy City. Shifra wants to ask the same kinds of questions that Sonia asks, questions like "What am I doing here? What do I want here?" However, she is afraid to utter such doubts (p.599).

Agnon's summarization about women of the period is sarcastic and disheartening:

> The land is a land without women. The Arab women are veiled, and, as for the daughters of the old Yishuv, there is a vast difference between you and them. What's left for you but those old spinsters whose bags are full of quinine pills, a thermometer, and powders for the constipated.

> And if you go down to Jaffa and chance to stroll with a certain upright young woman, you must fulfill the breadth of your affection in thought alone. This same man assumes the measure of an artist, extending his arm towards the sea and saying, "Oh how lovely is the sea!" (p.457)

For Agnon, the woman, both religious and secular, is an invisible element in Palestine leaving no impression. Shifra will be an old nursemaid pampering the ailments of old men. Sonia is a colorless, dispassionate figure whose pale longings for the past keep her from affirming the Land. Unlike Miriam Weiss, she remains on the seashore and never makes the noble progression towards self-will and self-fulfillment.

Chapter Three

Caleb's Share

Chapters I and II paint a fairly dismal picture of a young generation's struggle to plant itself firmly on Palestinian soil. The religious baggage of Eastern Europe is often shed upon entry. Redefining the religious and the secular, Judaism vis-a-vis Zionism, is a difficult process often too burdensome for the young immigrant to resolve. The religious figures that emerge in the Land are often sad and frustrated vestiges of a quickly forgotten culture. The woman of the period is often tragically unsuccessful in her attempts to become absorbed into her new environment. Analogous to a bad transplant, she remains an uprooted individual. Her lack of will, her ambivalence, and her cultured sensitivities prevent her from sinking new roots.

However, even the most pessimistic author has a well-defined concept of what will be the enduring features of the generation, those that will overcome the hardships of settlement and become absorbed into the changing face of a nation. The characters that personify these enduring features in the four novels will be referred to as "Caleb figures." Like the Biblical Caleb (Numbers 13:30) they have spied out the Land, they report well of it, and are unafraid of the giant obstacles to be overcome.

By virtue of Caleb's trust and optimism he is allowed to be the only man in addition to Joshua who will survive the desert experience and conquer the Land. So must the Caleb figure of the Second Aliyah survive a period of national drought (1905-1917) before he can begin to conquer. Unlike Joshua he is not necessarily a man of heroic proportions, but he is the stuff from which a nation grows. By his strength does the Land yield a home, and by his courage are others encouraged to remain resolute in their ideals.

The talush[13] will appear in Hebrew Literature as the suffering anti-hero of the period. His defeat will reflect the torturous emergence of the twentieth-century individual. The Mosaic trailblazer[14] will fashion the ideology for nationhood and contribute his leadership, yet never witness his ideas being realized. (Herzl, who dies one year before the first wave of the Second Aliyah, is just such a figure.) However, the Caleb figure's continued persistence will be the trailblazer's tools and will prevent the surrender of many potential telushim.

Agnon's Hananiah in In the Heart of the Seas is a prototype of the Caleb figure within the context of the Hasidic Aliyah. He is the poor righteous man who joins the

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[13] The equivalent in Hebrew Literature to the uprooted protagonist which emerged in the European novel in the nineteenth century.

[14] "Trailblazer" is Dr. Weinberg's rendering of the term, "Maapil," which appears in Numbers 14:44 and serves as the title of one of Kabak's short stories. The term implies one who acts daringly but will not live to participate in the ultimate goal of his action.

hasidim in their journey. He is clothed in rags and carries all of his possessions within the space of a kerchief. Yet, he constantly invokes the name of God and gives praise to the Land of Israel. He does not have a definite trade, yet he makes fine boxes for all of the travellers and an ark for their Torah scroll (p.13). While the other men are busy studying the Holy Books, Hananiah drives the women's wagon and helps them with their chores. Moreover, as the tenth man, Hananiah completes the number needed for a prayer quorum.

When the time comes for the group to continue their journey by ship, Hananiah is nowhere to be found, and the travellers embark without him. We learn later that he was detained on an important mission--to restore a Jewish robber-chief's tefillin to his widow. He brings the present robber-chief together with the widow and thus releases her from her tortured state as an agunah.[15] Having missed the boat Hananiah spreads out his kerchief and floats upon it to the Land of Israel. "No wave of the sea rose to drown him, nor did any beast swallow him (p.64)." Hananiah is reunited with the hasidim on their first Shabbat in Jerusalem, and, it is told, he lived for many years in Israel and "neither weakness nor weariness could be recognized in him (p.124)."

Through his portrait of Hananiah Agnon implies that a number of virtues are requisite to the religious aliyah. A

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[15] A Jewish woman whose status of widowhood has not been determined and therefore cannot remarry. For Agnon she is symbolic of the Land that cannot remarry.

man must be humble and practical and a diligent tradesman in the craft of preparation for ascent. He must not be weighed down with worldly goods; rather, his freedom from possessions (only a kerchief-full) should serve him as the vehicle for his journey. However, before the miraculous part of the journey can be undertaken the man must complete his duties in the Diaspora. The widow and orphan must not be abandoned nor the righteous Gentile stranded in his search. And even when he arrives at his destination he must preserve his humility. Sitting on the ground, Hananiah eats the fruit of the Land of Israel and says "the Messiah will have to invite me higher up if he wants me (p.120)."

In the concluding chapter Agnon summarizes the dynamics of a successful absorption into the holiness of the Land:

> It is widely known that every righteous man who comes up from outside the Land to the Land of Israel must begin by falling from his original level. For the air of the Land of Israel is holy and a reduction is necessary to precede being. His Name be blessed, came to their aid and gave them the strength to accept submissively all that befell them until they were worthy to receive a fresh intelligence, the intelligence of the Land of Israel. (p.121-2)

Similarly the true Caleb figures of the Second Aliyah have to fall from their accustomed level in Europe and to submit to a certain reduction in stature in order to breathe the air of Israel. Patiently they await a "fresh intelligence," but meanwhile they take care of the practical chores of building and planting and preparing the soil for their physical sustenance.

Commenting on the tenor of the Second Aliyah, Asher Barash states that the young men of the period went through a kind of second childhood. There was a stubbornness about them and a naive, pugnacious intention to affix all of the injustices of the Jewish past.[16] In Gardeners Manasseh and Ephraim Kliger are two such pioneers who refuse to be distracted from their goal of complete and permanent settlement in Palestine.

The two of them grew up in a middle-class, Galician family. They belonged to a Zionist youth group, and, when they tired of the abstract Zionist rhetoric, they made preparations to settle in Palestine. Their common vision is to acquire and develop a piece of Jewish real estate. They fortify each other constantly in their common struggle; however, the attainment of their goal still involves a degree of sacrifice.

The Kliger brothers willingly sacrifice their class status and their professional potential. However, on a more essential level, Manasseh and Ephraim sacrifice their individuality. Somewhat like the Biblical Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48:17) they are often confused for one another and yet are satisfied to be considered as a unit. They talk of their work and their dreams in the first person plural, and they

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[16] Asher Barash, Kitvei Asher Barash (Vol. 3), Tel-Aviv, Masada Press, 1957, p. 178.

are often addressed in the second person plural. Even Mira, who is married to Manasseh though, she prefers Ephraim, often does not distinguish the two of them in her mind.

This fraternal unity, the individual's sacrifice of self for the good of the whole, is the conquering element of the Kligers' struggle. Both of their energies yoked to the same conception of the Zionist ideal, they possess an unwavering diligence which overcomes (or by-passes) all physical and emotional obstacles. Within the framework of their shared intent they ignore personal doubt and melancholy and avoid any misgivings about the integrity of their project.

The brothers' singleness of purpose, however, is not very profound. When placed in contrast to Mira they appear to be shallow and simplistic characters. They exhibit a sort of tunnelvision which, in their quest to fulfill their chalutz fantasy, blocks out all interpersonal frictions and emotional problems. At one point in the novel Ephraim proudly watches Manasseh carrying a bag of fertilizer to the flower beds and Mira walking nearby carrying the weight of her pregnancy. He thinks to himself, "Life endures only by the merit of those who carry heavy loads (p.97)." Ephraim's pride and optimism completely ignore the tensions and distance which have built up between his brother and sister-in-law. He overlooks the inner conflicts which complete this tranquil scene. Like the postcard, "Harvest," in Breakdown and Bereavement (see above, p.39) the picture is more than a little deceiving.

Nevertheless, the brothers' hopes are ultimately realized.

They cultivate and develop their land at Maayan Ganim. The profits from their greenery enable them to bring their family over to join them. And a younger generation of Kligers grows up happy and satisfied in the Land. Though the tragedy of Mira's suicide marks the pain and sacrifice involved in their settlement, the Kligers have made the transition and accomplished their goal.

To some extent one must admit that the simple acts of irrigating fields and siring babies do furnish the necessities for absorption. Aided by the steady process of time, the persistent carrying of burdens provides the foundation for a Jewish future in Palestine.

In Between Sea and Desert the process of settlement and absorption is portrayed as difficult and tenuous. Many characters fail at the process, many others flounder for a long time before they discover the key to nourishment and growth in the Land. As implied in the title, Palestine is situated on such a small sliver of land that its Jewish inhabitants feel sandwiched "between sea and desert," between the worlds of the Christian tyrant and the Moslem warrior. In order to gain any feeling of stability the Jew must have an exaggerated sense of his security between these two worlds. For Kabak absorption requires an heroic, faith-propelled penetration through the salt of the sea and the sand of the desert and into the redemptive soil of Jewish history.

Early in the novel the Land of Israel is personified as

an old woman yearning to be young again (p.49). The young, idealistic Ephrati commits himself to this struggle towards rejuvenation with a pledge of betrothal to the ancient Land. However, before the union can be sanctified Ephrati must reckon with his past and work through his melancholy. Originally from Russia, he had run away from a submissive mother and a tyrannical father. He had turned to socialism and then Zionism for a sense of community, but he had always remained alone and very private about his thoughts and feelings. Unlike Carmeli, he is not charismatic or particularly attractive to women. He is even a little boring. His attractiveness to Miriam increases only when he plants himself firmly on a kevutzah in the Gallil. Ephrati responds to Miriam openly, and it seems that, once his marriage to the Land has been consummated, he is able to break out of his self-imposed loneliness. By making the "old woman" young he has grown out of the prison of his painful youth.

Juxtaposed to Ephrati is the cynic, Shklor who actually carries on an affair with an elder woman. In effect he realizes the metaphor that Ephrati has composed and shows the relationship between the chalutz and the Land to be less than that of a beautiful betrothal. The woman pays for Shklor's companionship, and he is her gigolo.

Implicit in this description is that, through Shklor's perspective, Ephrati's image of the Land as an old woman is undercut. Indeed, the Land is an old woman, but this woman tries to delude the young chalutz with her young appearance.

In actuality she is deaf to his needs and impossible to satisfy. The Land drains the chalutz of his energy and pays him the price of a prostitute. The cynic, residing in a Tel-Aviv boardinghouse, sees himself as a victim of the Land, whereas the Caleb figure establishes himself on the kevutzah as her obstinate suitor.

For Kabak there are a number of stances towards the fulfillment of the Zionist dream which will endure into the future. Through a number of different characters he describes various hopeful "looks into the horizon" which will eventually bear fruit. This phrase is first mentioned in reference to Zinner's sculpture, "Moriah and Golgatha." The figure of Moriah looks towards the horizon with the vision that Israel can be a light to the nations, an example of faith and morality for all to follow. In Zinner himself there is an intriguing mixture of artistry, mysticism, and universalism. The reader senses in the strength of his far-reaching vision that Zinner's search for abiding truth will be a perpetual element in the Land.

By the end of the novel Miriam Weiss is also assured a place in Israel's future. Her vision, however, is not so far-reaching. Instead of being constantly anxious and uncertain about the future she limits her scope to the concrete duties that surround her on the kevutzah. She looks no farther into time than to the next harvest (p.633). She leaves the realm of grand looks into the future to the men who like to indulge themselves in fantasy.

Ephrati has another conception of looking to the horizon. According to him one's look should be far-reaching but directed inward: "Let us focus upon our inner-selves until wide horizons are revealed within us (p.634)." Ephrati has managed to nurture a spirituality which has synthesized the universal humanism of Zinner and the naturalism of Miriam. The archetype for his vision is Amos who looked to the inner-horizon of his conscience, urged the people to reestablish the principles of the Temple cult, and then returned to his work on the Land. "The heart of Amos' work and his sustenance were his sycamore trees in Tekoah (p.635)." Similarly, Ephrati expects his work with the Land to keep him attuned to the needs of the Jewish people.

Yigal Zifrin, the youngest of the characters residing on the Gallil settlement, represents the generation which will inherit the legacy left by the Second Aliyah pioneers. He will reach and surpass the horizon to which he hears the others refer. Being the son of Mr. Zifrin and Emma, he is the product of both the most idealistic and the most cynical elements of the period. His closest friend, Tsiona, has died at a tender age. His father has also died, and his mother remains in Jerusalem peddling fruit on the street.

Yigal listens to the conversation about the future of Israel, but he becomes confused by the symbolic language (p.635). He leaves the group and finds a place on a bridge to sit quietly and consider his own future. His own "look to the horizon" is not so well-defined, but diffused and full

of doubts (p.637). He loves the life on the kevutzah, but he is not content to say that Tsiona and his mother were elements of the new society that could not endure the process of settlement. He feels that he must tie these loose ends by finding a place for his mother and by perpetuating Tsiona's religious faith. Through him the reader senses that the conquering of the Land is never complete and that absorption is never fully accomplished. To continue in the task we constantly need Yigal's spiritual strength. For Kabak that highly personalized strength is, above all, the indispensable tool of the Caleb figure.

Brenner's Yehezkel Hefetz is never able to cultivate such strength. Upon rereading the first pages of Breakdown and Bereavement we learn that, after a long period of unproductive inner-struggle, Yehezkel gives up. He leaves Palestine, falls ill aboard ship, and, utterly confused, he is dropped off in Alexandria (p.3). The author who finds Yehezkel's notes summarizes the lesson of his writings: "Even in these momentous, tumultuous days each of us continues to be pettily preoccupied with his own individual ennui (p.4)."

Although Yehezkel recognizes the merit of self-sacrifice, he is never able to reach beyond himself either for the sake of love or honor. His own sense of shame, guilt, and cosmic abandonment trap him in a perpetual state of self-degradation. He admires the selflessness of Zionist labor and envies the

gallant sense of duty towards the woman in distress; yet his moribund sense of his own physical and moral weakness paralyzes any inner nobility. Consequently, all of Yehezkel's life in Palestine is a dark, torturous, self-consuming experience.

Brenner's depiction of the entire period would be equally depressing if it were not for the figure of Menahem. There is something about Menahem which enables him to face adversity and translate his sufferings into vital confrontations with life. He is innately receptive to the mysteries of existence and is thereby content to live precariously "on the threshold (p.299)" of the Zionist adventure.

Menahem and Yehezkel met each other in Europe, travelled together to Palestine, and are working together on a kevutzah when Yehezkel contracts a hernia. When he offers to take Yehezkel to a hospital in Jerusalem, we learn about Menahem's buoyant sense of independence. In complete converse to Yehezkel he is jovial, spontaneous, and even raucous. Nevertheless, the two of them become good friends. Yehezkel even appreciates his indecent humor and his childlike freedom from inhibitions. Most of all he admires Menahem's ability to rise above his problems and keep them to himself.

The two friends are separated, but after thirteen months they meet again near Tiberias. Yehezkel has been through an enervating year of sickness and despair; Menahem has become even stronger and more confident about his future in Palestine. Like Haim's son, Hanoch, he is employed as a guard against Arabs on a settlement in the Gallil. However, whereas Hanoch was a confirmed agnostic (p.251), Menahem is unencumbered by

burdensome doubts about Divine Providence. Whereas Hanoch stuttered (reminiscent of Moses), Menahem's trademark is his good humor and his hearty roar of laughter (p.295). Like Moses, Hanoch dies before he can witness the chalutz struggle come to fruition; in contrast, Menahem, like the Biblical Caleb, will merit a perpetual inheritance in the Land.

However, in Brenner's scheme of characters Menahem is not typical of the chalutz who will endure. Schneirson, the young Hebrew nationalist who is Miriam's tutor, is the typical chalutz of the novel who will perpetuate bourgeois mediocrity far into Israel's future. Brenner's treatment of him as a prototype of the period is bitterly abrasive:

> They admired the splendid scenery from the deck of the ship, went into town feeling dreadfully moved, lost their tempers at the Arabs who approached them on the way, ordered their meals at the hotel, told tales about the local farmers who weren't hiring Jewish workers, went out to work one morning with a hoe on their shoulder and a bottle of water and half a loaf of bread tucked under their arm, wandered about the settlements, . . . and when they were through tramping about--ended up with some trivial post as a secretary or teacher in Jaffa or Jerusalem. (p. 69)

According to Brenner's perspective Israel's future will inevitably include many more Schneirsons than Menahems. These clever young rhetoricians will assume a veneer of confidence, explore the Land, defend national slogans, and treat people as if they were characters in their own allegorical epic (p.71).

Schneirson's interest in the Hefetz family is self-serving. He merely wants to exercise his erudition in the Hefetz home in order to impress Miriam. In direct contrast Menahem selflessly helps the Hefetz family settle in Tiberias.

He helps Esther find a job, and he even tries to assure Yehezkel that there are better times ahead (p.295-6). Menahem, the more laudable Caleb figure, performs his national duty on a very private level, without any fanfare and without any "brave words (p.295)."

Agnon's Yitzhak Kummer, in many ways typical of the young men of the Second Aliyah, does not succeed in his struggle to settle in the Land. Ultimately, his vocation as a house-painter is revealed as a tragic compromise from his dreams of working the soil. Rather than making the noble passage from innocence to experience Yitzhak regresses "from innocence to a dog's death, and each episode in the novel is a step toward this end."[17] He remains on the periphery of life both in Jaffa and Jerusalem, and with his death his Zionist ideals and his return to traditional Judaism are both deracinated. His tragically ironic fate marks his complete removal from among the enduring elements of the period. Bound on his deathbed like a mad dog, Yitzhak leaves no legacy.

By the end of the novel none of the major characters have much strength left. Yitzhak is dead, Sonia walks aimlessly on the seashore, Feysh is almost paralyzed in his bed, and Shifra's valor has been tried to its limit. The Caleb figures that have any stamina to persevere into the future are

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[17] Arnold Band, Nostalgia and Nightmare, Berkeley, University of California, 1968, p. 415.

few. There are only two consoling figures that appear after Yitzhak's fatal incident with Balak. Both are minor characters whose inclusion in the novel is not significant to the plot but symbolic of a self-perpetuating ideal.

The character Ephraim, the whitewasher of Mea Shearim's walls and billboards, appears occasionally throughout the story as one of the city's recognizable features. His life has been filled with tragedy. He is childless and impoverished, yet he has great respect for learning and great love for the study of Torah. He quotes regularly from the Book of Psalms and teaches its wisdom to a group of young boys at the House of Study (p.335).

When Yitzhak is about to die, Ephraim overhears the women of the house questioning God's justice (p.603). By citing verses from the Bible he tries to remind Shifra and Rivka of God's constancy and to console them with thoughts of His compassion. He even promises to pray at the Western Wall for Yitzhak's recovery.

Ephraim's trust in a just God leaves a lasting impression at the end of the novel as Yitzhak's fate is sealed. The words of the psalms are somewhat reassuring to the pious mourners, but the reader remains unconvinced of the beneficent ways of a merciful God. Ephraim's faith, like his whitewashing, only gives the semblance of inner strength. Like the whitewashers in Ezekiel 13, Ephraim ultimately does not really help fortify the Land against tragedy; he only gives false hope by scribbling prayers and placing them in the niches of

the Western Wall.

The true Caleb figure of the novel is Menahem, an outgoing young man who works on the agricultural settlement at Ayn Ganim. Menahem believes that the Land belongs to the Jews by virtue of the fact that in Jewish hands it has thrived, whereas under the rule of others it has not (p.177). His religion is the religion of labor, yet he maintains a strong tie with the religion of his fathers by studying his one tractate of the Talmud. When he completes it, he asks for God's strength, and he starts it all over again. Moreover, whether working or studying, Menahem always stands and is constantly prepared for action.

The ideal figure of A. D. Gordon's Zionist vision, Menahem is able to overlook his own personal sufferings for the good of the growing community. When Yitzhak visits him briefly on the settlement, Menahem tells him that he does not know what personal happiness is; he only knows "that a man is obligated to bless bad tidings in the same way that he blesses the good" (p.539).

Shortly after Yitzhak is bitten by the dog, Menahem arrives in Jerusalem. His purpose for coming is two-fold, "to buy himself a new pitchfork and to exchange one tractate of the Talmud for another (p.601)." When he hears of Yitzhak's tragedy he goes immediately with Talmud and pitchfork to stand silently by his side.

With this scene Agnon depicts Menahem as his Caleb hero. He is an active master rather than a victim of his fate.

Menahem represents a successful synthesis of the religious and the secular, and he demonstrates that the world of the Talmud and that of physical labor need not be mutually exclusive. As he stands by Yitzhak's bed he has no words of consolation to offer, yet his presence evokes the hope that the world will be restored to its natural order (p.602).

In Gardeners Barash depicts a period of time in which the temper of the Land is not very receptive to the Jewish immigrant. The pioneer abandons his religious roots, and European Judaism atrophies. In addition, the woman is torn between the established culture of the West and the tasks to which she is assigned in Israel. Her imposed role and her lack of will rob Mira of her life. Nevertheless, the persistence of the Kliger brothers overcomes the difficulties of their adjustment, and their dedication to the simple ideal of Jewish labor on Jewish soil is ultimately the conquering ingredient of their settlement and absorption.

Faithful to the outline described in In the Heart of the Seas the brothers must undergo some sort of reduction in stature as a sacrifice to precede absorption. Mira's leaving undercuts the brothers' adolescent fantasies of life in Israel and fulfills their sacrificial obligation. However, time and historical circumstances also play a major role in the brothers' success. As it is necessary for their flowers to endure the slow process of time in order to blossom, so

must Manasseh and Ephraim endure a certain period of time before their graft to the Land takes hold. With concentrated energies they are able to wait out the difficult last days of the Second Aliyah until the signing of the Balfour Declaration. Subsequently, under British rule it is easier for the Kligers to bring the rest of their family to Palestine. The groundwork of their business having been laid, the brothers' long-range vision of a Jewish homeland can be revived.

In Between Sea and Desert both the religious figure and the woman are portrayed as ineffectual and ignored elements of the chalutz society. Judaism and the women are viewed within the novel as incidental companions to the secular, political, male-oriented movement. However, in Kabak's scheme both the woman and the Jewish spirit have a way out. They can both redirect themselves so as not to be stifled by various preconceptions of what they are or should be. The successful women gain their independence and a place on the Land by establishing a woman's kevutzah. And in the hearts of a younger generation Judaism is transformed from the insular folk religion of Eastern Europe to a religion emphasizing the ideals of the prophets and encouraging intense, individual spiritual strength.

Zinner's sculpture, "Moriah," becomes a symbol of the period. It is the sculpture of a young woman in chains whose steady gaze is far into the future. The name, Moriah, recalls Abraham's gaze toward Mount Moriah, ("He saw the place from afar off," Gen. 22:4) and it evokes a reminder of his

complete faith. Abraham is willing to sacrifice everything, yet God provides so that Isaac, his future, need not be placed on the altar.

A number of characters in the novel have differing opinions regarding what Moriah is looking towards. Their own messianic visions vary to include moral perfection, a Jewish state, and the release and soaring of the spirit. However, common to each character is the realization that a measure of sacrifice will be necessary for the fulfillment of his vision. For Kabak this realization is a major step in the redemptive process.

In Yesterday or the Day Before one has to look long and hard for those elements that make the transition from Europe to Palestine. Traditional Judaism stagnates, the women of both Jaffa and Jerusalem flounder with uncertainty and lack of purpose, and the protagonist becomes entangled in the vast web of an inscrutable justice. Much of the pioneering spirit of the Second Aliyah is exposed as being a bourgeois fantasy not too far below the surface. Many chalutzim leave the country, and many others just sit in clubs and coffeehouses muttering the rhetoric of the Zionist dream. Only Menahem, who has fused the ideals of the religious and the secular Zionist, is portrayed as an example of that resolute element that will persist into Israel's future.

It would be an oversight, however, if the dog Balak were not included as some sort of modest Caleb figure of the period (and no pun with kelev 'dog' intended). This soul-searching

dog has combed all of the streets of Jerusalem looking for a place to settle peacefully. He has been branded by Yitzhak's paintbrush as a mad dog and ever since has been victimized by peoples' irrational fears. (Indeed, how could a mad dog come to have "mad dog" painted on its back.) Ultimately Balak becomes that which he has been branded and unleashes his revenge upon Yitzhak who carelessly began this cycle of misfortune.

Much to his disappointment Balak does not draw any signs of the truth from the sight of Yitzhak's blood (p.596). Revenge does not yield any cathartic release but rather addicts him to the taste of human flesh. Nevertheless, Balak has made some progress. From his perspective he is no longer the innocent victim of some inexplicably cruel design. We learn that "he has vanished from sight and only incidents of his attacks testify that he is still alive (p.605)."

Where is Balak? He has finally found a place where he can sit quietly and undisturbed and view the beauty of the Jerusalem sky. He lies in a cave on the Mount of Olives surrounded by graves and removed from the mournful sounds of the city. No longer is Balak's view confined to the level of the street with its garbage and its corpses of dead animals. He can now see beyond the objects that were thrown at him and can observe the sublime order of the heavens. He takes a careful look at the stars and gains a profound sense that each one is in its prescribed place. Even the shooting star, an apparent aberration in the orders of things, is

understood as a facet of God's will (p.566).

By virtue of his becoming settled the dog's-eye view has been expanded. Beyond the clutter and apparent chaos of Jerusalem Balak can see a pattern in the universe which indicates God's directive hand. As a result he can transcend his predicament and accept his role as an active participant in a divine plan which is designed towards some unforeseeable purpose.

Each of the authors portrays the episode of the Second Aliyah as an arduous filtering process through which many features of the Diaspora culture are not able to pass. The rejected elements that are unable to adapt include some of the finest and most highly cultivated aspects of European Jewish civilization. Yet each author has a conception of the attributes that will sustain the momentum of Zionism into the future, and he identifies these attributes through the construction of a Caleb figure.

Barash's Caleb figures, Manasseh and Ephraim, persist in the Land by virtue of a childlike idealism and obstinacy. Kabak emphasizes patience, spiritual strength, and the restoration to Nature as the essential elements for absorption. Brenner's Menahem overcomes the obstacles to settlement by means of his good humor, his selflessness, and his ability to rise above personal despair. Agnon's Menahem conquers the Land by preserving the wisdom of religious tradition amidst

the tilling of the soil. Even the tortured Balak survives the hardships of the period by catching a glimpse of himself as part of a larger design. In these ways the Caleb figures meet the severe challenges of the Second Aliyah and gain a share in the equally challenging world to come.

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