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CHAPTER 4

THE "AESTHETICS" OF FUNDAMENTALISM IN RECENT JEWISH FICTION IN ENGLISH

AXEL STÄHLER

In the minds of many Westerners, Muslim fundamentalism has replaced communism as perhaps the greatest single "threat" to the existing world order. From this perspective the Palestinian intifada becomes just another episode in a "clash of civilizations." For them, there is an intrinsic link between Palestinian "terrorism" and, say, the al-Qaeda bombing of an American warship off Yemen. Almost totally absent from such arguments is any inclination to examine Jewish fundamentalism, or so much as to ask whether it, too, might be a factor in the conflict over Palestine, one of the reasons why it seems so insoluble.

There is, in fact, a great ignorance of, or indifference to, this whole subject in the outside world, and not least in the United States. This is due at least in part to that general reluctance of the mainstream American media to subject Israel to the same searching scrutiny to which it would other states and societies, and especially when the issue in question is as sensitive, as emotionally charged, as this one is. But, in the view of the late Israel Shahak, it reflects particularly badly on an American Jewry which, with its ingrained, institutionalized aversion to finding fault with Israel, turns a blind eye to what Israelis like himself viewed with disgust and alarm, and unceasingly said so.

American Jews, especially Orthodox ones, are generous financiers of the shock troops of fundamentalism, the religious settlers; indeed a good 10 percent of these, and among the most extreme, violent, and sometimes patently deranged, are actually immigrants from America.¹

David Hirst's observations, published in the American newsweekly *The Nation* in 2004 and extracted from the latest edition of his *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East* (1977; 3rd rev. ed. 2003), were strongly disapproved of by some representatives of American Jewry. Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, maintained in a letter to the editor that "David Hirst's absurd thesis of so-called 'Jewish fundamentalism' as a threat to the world order and the leading factor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has nothing to do with the reality of the Israeli political structure" and, after emphasizing the commitment of the State of Israel to its democratic values, Foxman in conclusion reiterated "the threat posed by the religious fundamentalists in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran" instead.²

However, the phenomenon of "so-called" Jewish fundamentalism is a concern not at all exclusive to Hirst. Published one and a half decades earlier and one of the first book-length studies on Jewish fundamentalism in Israel in English was Ian S. Lustick's *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*³ in which the political scientist had already argued that "[d]espite divisions on the Arab side, and the intransigence of many Palestinians, it is the Jewish fundamentalist movement that has emerged as the greatest obstacle to meaningful negotiations toward a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement."⁴ Lustick's study, significantly, "originated in a research paper written under contract for the Defense Academic Research Support Program of the United States Department of Defense."⁵ Since then, occasioned no doubt by the resurgence of fundamentalisms and their proximity to terrorism, a flood of publications not only on Islamic and Christian fundamentalisms but also on Jewish fundamentalism (some of them comparative) has appeared in print, most notable among them in the Jewish context, perhaps, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (1999) by Norton Mezvinsky and Israel Shahak, to whom Hirst refers as well.⁶

Little, or no attention is given in these studies to the interrelations between fundamentalisms and fiction. And yet, even before academic interest in the rather recent phenomenon of modern Jewish fundamentalism in Israel noticeably manifested itself in the English-speaking world, anglophone Jewish writers acknowledged its topicality and its attraction for the relatively small number of American Jewish immigrants to Israel. Indeed, fundamentalism, particularly Jewish fundamentalism, seems to have become a salient topic in Jewish fiction in English in recent years. Especially since the Lebanon War in 1982, a number of Jewish authors writing in English and engaging themselves in debates about the moral integrity of the State of Israel and about Jewish identities have addressed

the rise of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel. In this chapter, I propose to discuss this emerging pattern (as opposed to the more familiar topic of Jewish Orthodoxy) with reference to novels by Philip Roth, Tova Reich, Melvin Jules Bukiet, and (in several ways the odd one out) Simon Louvish. I argue that each of the novels under consideration here is based on the assumption that fundamentalism, however misguided, is in some way part and parcel of the "Jewish condition," or even of the *condition humaine*, and—although this dilemma cannot be resolved—needs to be confronted as such.

As anticipated by Alvin H. Rosenfeld as early as 1973,⁷ during the last three decades the confrontation with Judaism has gained more and more prominence in anglophone, particularly American, Jewish literature. Writing in 1991, Miriyam Glazer confirmed Rosenfeld's suggestion that there was emerging a new Jewish "literature of the theological imagination,"⁸ and in the intervening years this trend seems to have lost nothing of its momentum.⁹ Prominent among those writers who have recently engaged in their fiction with Judaism (most of them, quite intriguingly, women writers) are, for instance, Tova Reich, Pearl Abraham, Allegra Goodman, Tova Mirvis, Aryeh Lev Stollman, and, with uncharacteristic success for an anglophone writer from Israel, Naomi Ragen, whose best-selling novels—in which the author (who emigrated to Israel from the United States in 1971) explores the world of ultra-Orthodox Jewry—are hugely popular in the United States.

While fundamentalism in many respects appears to be a trait particular to the religious, it is important to keep in mind that, as Lustick argues, it is not exclusively so but "is conceived as a style of political participation characterized by unusually close and direct links between one's fundamental beliefs and political behavior designed to effect radical change."¹⁰ Accordingly, in the further discussion of the subject I will adopt as a working definition of fundamentalism that suggested by Lustick, who, for the purposes of his own study, defines a "belief system" as fundamentalist "*insofar as its adherents regard its tenets as uncompromisable and direct transcendental imperatives to political action oriented toward the rapid and comprehensive reconstruction of society.*"¹¹ [author's italics]

Jewish fundamentalism in Israel appears to manifest itself predominantly in two distinct and irreconcilable varieties: nationalist-religious and ultra-Orthodox. The "operational objective" of Jewish nationalist-religious fundamentalists in Israel, as summed up by Lustick, is

to accelerate the pace at which the Jewish people fulfills its destiny. This includes, for most of these activists, establishment of Jewish sovereignty over the entire, biblically described, Land of Israel, substitution of "authentically

Jewish" forms of governance for Western-style liberal democracy, and rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, thereby implementing the divinely ordained, albeit long-delayed, messianic redemption.¹²

It is quite important to note that while the fulfillment of all these objectives is considered essential for the advancement of redemption, Jewish (and that does not necessarily mean Israeli) sovereignty over the whole of the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael hashelema*) is the necessary prerequisite for all the others. Hence, the territorial gains of the Six Day War of 1967, which "restored" to Israel not only the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights but also, more importantly, the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria (more commonly known as the West Bank) and the Eastern part of Jerusalem, were interpreted by fundamentalists—both Jewish and Christian—as a sign of the beginning of redemption (*at'halta d'geulah*). This explains why Jewish fundamentalism in Israel began to emerge as a recognizable force only in the aftermath of this war, although its antecedents reach much further back into history.¹³ The shock of the Yom Kippur War just a few years later, in 1973, which despite Israel's eventual, and dearly bought, victory exposed the nation's vulnerability and the (alleged) incompetence of the ruling Labour Alignment, precipitated the formation of an organized fundamentalist movement and prepared the ground for the political ascendance of Menachem Begin and the Revisionist Zionism of the right-wing Likud coalition in 1977.

Best known among the various fundamentalist groups in Israel and arguably for a long time politically the most influential is, perhaps, the Gush Emunim (the Bloc of the Faithful), which was established in 1974 and which (more or less in collusion with successive Likud governments and other nationalist-religious parties since 1977) promotes Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. This movement receives its theological inspiration largely from the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935; a.k.a. Rav Kook), the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, and, more particularly, his son Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook (1891–1982; a.k.a. Rav Tzvi Yehuda); who elaborated on his father's ideas and, by virtue of his charisma, assumed a leading role in the movement. It was especially Rav Tzvi Yehuda who, by "linking specific political events (the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War) and concrete political programs (Jewish settlement and annexation of the occupied territories) to the divine plan for the final redemption,"¹⁴ provided authoritative imperatives of what has been called the "Zionism of Redemption" (Hanan Porat).¹⁵

When in 1982 the Israeli town of Yamit in the Sinai was dismantled prior to the peninsula being returned to Egypt in accordance with the

Camp David Accords of 1978/1979, Gush Emunim's futile intervention only weeks after Rav Tzvi Yehuda's death precipitated a severe crisis for the movement. The question of how to advance their cause more effectively proved to be a divisive issue. While some of its adherents were in favor of gaining broad support from the Israeli public with a campaign of "political and cultural outreach,"¹⁶ others urged direct and decisive action to promote redemption against all opposition—if need be, violent action.¹⁷

Also very much opposed to the promotion of redemption is Haredi fundamentalism in Israel, largely ignored by Lustick in his study.¹⁸ The term, which means "God-Fearer," refers to a "variety of groups making up the ultra-Orthodox wing of Judaism."¹⁹ Although also messianic in outlook, Haredi doctrine differs from nationalist-religious fundamentalist ideology as embodied by the Gush Emunim most substantially in the related questions of the beginning of redemption and of human agency. Haredim strictly refuse to acknowledge the alleged beginning of redemption (the victory of the Six Day War is of no significance to them in this context) and strongly oppose to Zionism, because, in their view, redemption cannot be promoted otherwise than by an observant life. For this reason, they are even prepared to cede territory to save Jewish lives. These seemingly moderate views, however, as Shahak and Mezvinsky have pointed out, are situated within an ideological superstructure that is no less inflexible and intransigent than that of nationalist-religious Jews.²⁰ The Haredi operational objective is the establishment of a theocracy and the strict enforcement of the *Halacha* (the Jewish law) in Israel.²¹

When Glazer confirmed Rosenfeld's suggestion that there was emerging a new Jewish "literature of the theological imagination,"²² she referred to Anne Roiphe's *Lovingkindness* (1987) as "the most problematic and controversial" of its kind, an assessment accounted for by the critical reception the novel received in the American press.²³ In this novel, Roiphe explores in great detail the transitional state of the "returnee," to the Jewish faith and to Israel. Through her story, the reader witnesses the metamorphosis of the narrator's daughter from an insecure American dropout girl into an Orthodox Jewish woman living in a women's yeshiva in Jerusalem and, finally, into another returnee's wife. Confronted with the emerging "other" in her daughter, and against her innermost resistance, the narrator (who, to some degree, appears to be an alter ego of the author)²⁴ finally comes not only to accept her daughter's decision but also, having relearned "cultural relativism" and having been made aware of her own spiritual dearth by recurrent dreams of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, finds herself compelled to reconsider her own existence as a secular and feminist Jewish-American intellectual.²⁵

"I am different from when you last saw me,"²⁶ Annie's daughter tells her on the phone, calling unexpectedly from Israel. A difficult child, Andrea suffered from eating disorder, indulged in self-mutilation, and had three abortions. "Please call me Sarai," she now writes in a letter to her mother, "I have changed my name to one in keeping with my new life" (7). Her choice of name denotes a new beginning that envisions perpetual growth and redemption in fulfillment of the covenant, the transformation from barren Andrea, in both spiritual and physical senses of the word, into Sarah, who after her initial barrenness became "the mother of us all" (67).

Suzy Durruty argues that Roiphe's novel is organized around the dichotomy of catastrophe and redemption and suggests that the territories of the United States and of Israel, respectively, embody that very dichotomy. She interprets America as an "espace du péché" and Israel as an "espace possible de la rédemption" and as a mirror highlighting the vices of American society.²⁷ It certainly is true that Annie is very self-critical and that she acknowledges the hollowness of the American way of life and even of her own feminism. Yet, in Israel to see her daughter, she feels "a stranger among strangers in an alien land" (260) and finally returns—not to the faith, at least not yet²⁸—but to her own native United States.

Roiphe's novel is of interest in the present context not because of its portrayal of fundamentalists in Israel for, indeed, there is none: the religious men and women she describes are Orthodox, not fundamentalist, Jews—although the borderlines, to some extent, may be considered to be fluid.²⁹ *Lovingkindness* is relevant here rather because it addresses, in much detail, the lack of orientation among the younger generation of American Jews in the 1980s³⁰ and the political disappointment and spiritual dearth of their parents' generation. It thus serves to explain, to some extent, the phenomenon of the spiritual "return," which provides the motive to emigrate to Israel for a disproportionately high number of the altogether relatively few American Jews having made *aliyah* (Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel, literally "ascent" or "going up").

Arguably, in Tova Reich's *Master of the Return* (1988), the line between Orthodoxy and fundamentalism has been crossed.³¹ The novel is set among the followers of a Hasidic sect in Israel whose objective is the restitution of the Temple Mount to the Jews and the erection of the Third Temple. With these pretensions, according to Lustick's definition, they appear to be fundamentalist rather than "merely" Orthodox. Reich explores with her description of this fundamentalist "groupuscle"³²—latter-day followers of the very Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772–1811)

who also invades Annie's dreams—the phenomenon of the return both to the Land of Israel and to the Jewish faith, the *teshuva*.

Whoever accomplishes the *teshuva* is a *ba'al teshuva*, a "master of the return"—hence the novel's title. Yet, although the fundamentalist community she describes comprises Jews of various Ashkenazi backgrounds as well as Oriental Jews and descendants of those Jews who settled in Palestine prior to the Zionist immigration waves, Reich's particular focus is on *ba'alim teshuva* from the American diaspora. The significance of the concept of the *teshuva* for the negotiation of contemporary American Jewish identities that Reich projects in this as well as in her next novel, *The Jewish War* (1995), is confirmed by the fact that she received for her *Master of the Return* the prestigious Edward Lewis Wallant Award, established to honor outstanding works of fiction that have significance for the American Jew.

The journal of Shmuel Himmelhoach, addressed to his newborn son Akiva and presented in excerpts in the first part of the novel, records his various attempts, both spiritual and physical, at reaching the small Ukrainian town of Uman. Rabbi Nachman is interred in Uman and to his latter-day followers in Israel it has become a symbol of the purity to which they aspire. Shmuel, whose journal is therefore a record also of his attempts at "expunging every remnant of the defilement" that was in him before going about the task of creating his "new self"³³ (13), never quite reaches Uman. Instead, the corpse of the former hippie and light designer for "the most notorious rock groups" (4) is discovered close to the tomb of a revered rabbi some time after his journal has been found.

Rich in absurd detail, Reich's narrative subsequently describes the conveyance of the body by members, both male and female, of his sect to the cemetery in Safad. Shmuel's own obsession with purity, augmented by what appears to be a "fundamentalist" misogyny resting on the certainty of female impurity and the danger of women distracting the men from their thoughts of purity, is echoed in the conversations among the members of the cortege. A particularly bizarre instance is the debate over whether his crippled widow, Ivriyah, should be allowed to talk to the men about Shmuel. After a lengthy discussion, she is finally allowed to say a few words, provided that she cross the little stream and the men turn their backs toward her and do not gaze upon her (79). Yet after she has finished, it emerges that none of the men actually heard what she said, because, to be on the safe side, they stuffed their fingers into their ears, while the corpse was being carried away by an even more zealous yeshiva student who would not "permit" either himself or the deceased to listen to the voice of a woman (80).

The role of women, subject to the patriarchal mode adopted by the fundamentalist sect, is further explored in the following chapters, in which a wedding and a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai are narrated. There, the little boy Akiva and the Haredi Abba Nissim, apparently searching for him, go missing. The loss of the child is used by Reich to construe a reworking of the biblical narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac (the *akedah*), which she invokes as an archetype of both fundamentalist single-mindedness and the gender relations in fundamentalist communities. As the Bible has it, Sarah, when she learned that she was going to be pregnant, though well stricken in age, laughed within herself.³⁴ Sarah's laughter, Reich suggests, "was not from intellectual arrogance or common skepticism," but that,

riding the keen edge of prophecy, she had seen that the child she would bear would not be hers at all; no, as soon as this child was weaned, the moment she released the child, he would be claimed by his father, by his faith-driven father, Abraham (239).

The attempted sacrifice of Isaac is the ultimate proof of Abraham's blind faith in his God and the final confirmation of the covenant that promises Abraham not only the multiplication of his seed but also "the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."³⁵

In *Master of the Return* the *akedah* is literally reenacted. Abba Nissim, the Haredi abductor of Ivriyah's son Akiva, leads the boy secretly in the dawn of the second day of the Jewish calendar to Mount Moriah, where he prepares to perform the sacrifice. He is already wielding the blank steel when Israeli soldiers capture him. "God sees!" he cries ecstatically, referring to the name given to the site of the attempted sacrifice by Abraham,³⁶ and: "Now I see that God sees!" (237). For Abba Nissim the once more rejected sacrifice signifies the renewal of the covenant, and when shofar blasts pierce the morning air he believes redemption to be at hand. It is typical of Reich's satirical stance that those shofar blasts are produced by another rapturous soul seeing the commotion around Abba Nissim and Akiva and that the religious import of the whole episode is thus revealed to be ambivalent, to say the least.

In *Lovingkindness*, the sincerity of the transformation of Andrea into Sarai is questioned by her mother in various ways.³⁷ In *Master of the Return*, the returnees' way of life is more severely denounced as a mere pose by an emphatically secular character in the novel:

You people aspire to becoming tragic figures, and you're even willing to incur the most hideous suffering to earn the right to assume that pose.

Or ecstatic figures, or mystic figures—whatever the role, it's nothing more than aesthetics. What does it have to do with faith? Not that you wouldn't like to believe. You wish for it ardently, you long for it, you strain for it, but for the most part you just don't have it in you. So you settle for the counterfeit of faith, for the style, the externals, the costume, which appeal to you so much aesthetically. And what aesthetics boils down to in the end . . . is nothing less than *avodah zarah*, idol worship. (226)

While this criticism does not, I believe, reflect the overall bias of the novel, the point it makes seems valid enough and, if it were true, would indeed present a serious challenge to the "fundamentals" of this particular brand of self-styled fundamentalists. For idol worship is, of course, not only a violation of the first and second commandments but also the most prominent among the reasons for the expulsion from the Promised Land; it is the ultimate breach of the covenant. Indeed, in the novel, the sect's hopes of the rebuilding of the Temple are dashed when their own headquarters in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem adjacent to the Temple Mount is razed to the ground by the Israeli authorities and redemption is once more deferred.

In her next novel, *The Jewish War*, Reich returned to the subject of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel and, indeed, it is probably the most comprehensive and the most pertinent literary contribution to the discussion of Jewish fundamentalism to date. It chronicles the rise and fall of a fictitious group of secessionist Jewish settlers who, at the end of the twentieth century, create the Kingdom of Judea and Samaria with a view to promoting redemption. Weaving together in her narrative the opposing doctrines of ultranationalist-religious (fundamentalist) settlers, ultra-Orthodox Haredi anti-Zionists, pragmatic Zionists, and evangelical fundamentalists, Reich in *The Jewish War* once again deeply probes the dimensions of fundamentalisms, Jewish identities, and the meaning of the "Land of Israel."

In the center of the novel is the process of transcending the "caterpillar stages"³⁸ of the American diaspora existence of the main protagonists. In its course, all of them metamorphose into full-blown nationalist-religious fundamentalists who, by acting out their beliefs, pose a serious threat from within to Israeli security. The novel's main protagonist is Yehudi HaGoel—Jerry Goldberg as was. His chosen second name means "The Redeemer," and it supposedly indicates that the "butterfly stage" is really his true and essential nature, for

The true Goldberg was the emerging Yehudi HaGoel, . . . a self-created entity who would soon tear himself from the roots that anchored and

constrained him, would shed his sullied, middle-class skin, and would appear for all the world to see, complete and fully formed. (31)

The allusion to Yehudi's metamorphosis is taken up again later. For, traveling, as it were, "by coffin" to Israel during the war of 1967 to circumvent the official traveling prohibition, Yehudi, enclosed in his narrow box, was "in a holding stage, as in a cocoon"; in fact, it was "as if he had died in America and would be resurrected in Israel . . . It was resonant with metaphor and symbol" (52). In Hebron, his destiny is, some thirty years later, to become the "anointed" king of the Kingdom of Judea and Samaria and then to lead his followers, including his three wives and his children, to their sacrificial suicides in the Cave of Machpelah.

From early on, Yehudi is accompanied by Hoshea HaLevi, formerly known for his baseball skills as Herbie "Hubba-Hubba" Levy (8). As adolescents they meet at a Zionist summer camp, financed by Yehudi's father, where they are immersed in Zionist doctrine, preparing for "the radiant day when they would cast everything aside and make the ultimate ascent to the Zion of their dreams" (13). Unlike many of their fellow "campers," they never lose sight of their purpose, and throughout their time at Yeshiva College they anticipate "the transforming, climactic moment of *aliyah*" (14). Yet the ground where Yehudi and Hoshea first prove themselves is Kugel's Hotel and Country Club in the Catskill Mountains ("acknowledged Jewish territory" [35]). Hoshea has a summer job there as a waiter, but he also stands in as master of the ceremonies in the casino and shows considerable oratorical talent:

And then he would seize and wring their hearts like dishrags, purge the dross from their souls with an account of the modern-day State of Israel—draining the swamps, reclaiming the deserts, campfires and accordions and *horas*, stunning dark-skinned girl soldiers in thigh khaki uniforms, boy soldiers with knitted yarmulkes clipped to their hair leaning on submachine guns, an open Talmud spread out in front of them across the back of a tank. Ah, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, her cupolas golden in the sunset, bins of golden oranges and grapefruits, the novelty, the glorious novelty, of healthy Jews with muscles and good teeth, nerve and sass. (18)

The images Hoshea conjures up are a clever blend of romanticizing Orientalist and Zionist stereotypes and, surprisingly, at this early stage, are entirely lacking any religious profundities but rather invoke something of the American pioneer spirit of the frontier. The description of his success among the affluent elderly American Jews vacationing at

Kugel's not only proves the power of his words but also anticipates the novel's catastrophe (in both senses of the word) and reflects on a particular aspect of diaspora-Israel relations:

"For the *aliyah* fund," they whispered conspiratorially, patting him on the back and on the bottom, squeezing his biceps, and, in general, sizing him up and checking him out as if they were considering buying him, as if they were claiming him in the way they might claim the live chicken they twirled around their heads on the eve of Yom Kippur, the bird that would expiate their sins, that would serve as their ransom and their substitute, the poultry that would be dispatched to the slaughter in their stead and would allow them, thus absolved, to remain comfortably at Kugel's or wherever to carry on with the good life—a good, long, and peaceful life; meanwhile, he, Hoshea, a consenting adult and to all appearances sane, would be willingly sent in their name, like the fowl of atonement, to make this *aliyah* he craved so passionately—to that land teeming, by his own admission, with fetid swamps to be drained, barren deserts to be reclaimed, and doomed boys and girls battling to survive every blessed sacrificial minute. (18–19)

To the American Jewish establishment, Israel does not appear to be the "safe haven" as it has been promoted through the Zionist narrative but rather as its very opposite and, indeed, as a kind of sacrificial offering for the "good life" in the American diaspora. At the same time it is implied that, from the point of view of Kugel's clientèle, all those wanting to make *aliyah*, sacrificing the good life, and most probably also themselves, are gullible fools. On another level, the lack of idealism and the general indifference of those American Jews, subject to the base instinct of feeding themselves and preoccupied with their bowel movements (17), as well as their own blatant gullibility, are the targets of Reich's satire. Yet there is still another level of meaning to this passage. For at the end of the novel, there will indeed be a "sacrificial" (self-)slaughter on another Day of Atonement, not, however, for the "good life" but to further the process of redemption—and, paradoxically, this very sacrifice will constitute a major threat from within to the security of the secular State of Israel.

Like Hoshea, and perhaps even more, Yehudi possesses the power of the word, which, compounded with his personal charisma, he uses to astounding effect—and, again, it is remarkable that the religious dimension is as yet absent from his magniloquent triumphs:

His presence turned into vapor the question "Who does he think he is?" as it was emerging from between the skeptic's lips; without being able to define his effect exactly, it was undeniable that Yehudi HaGoel was

somebody. His power over the crowd was to mold it into a single organism that reflected, exactly, his mood. When he was up, crying, "Israel is home! Israel is life! Israel is ours! Israel Is!" the crowd soared with him, ready to drop on the spot everything that ever used to be important and to make the ascent at once. When he was down, wailing, "Remember the camps! Remember the gas! Remember the ovens!" the men and the women in the throng understood him completely, understood the danger they were in, yes, even here, even here in the Land of the Free, understood the historical imperative, understood why Israel was absolutely necessary, necessary without qualification or compromise, understood the morality of why not only their own lives, but also the lives of all humankind on the planet would be irrelevant, no longer worth sustaining or preserving should Israel be annihilated. (33)

Paradoxically, it is precisely the almost disappointing lack of "proper" anti-Semitic discrimination that, in the early 1960s, riles Yehudi, or Jerry Goldberg, as he then still was:

Despite its reputation as the land of equal opportunity, never was Yehudi really given a fair chance in America to pull out all of his Jewish guns and show what he could do. And he deeply resented this deprivation. At rallies in protest against any threat to the State of Israel, Yehudi in those days would declare himself a disciple of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Martin Luther King is my *rebbe*," Yehudi would cry. He would cross lines, chain himself to fences, trespass on property, go limp like a noodle, be carted off in a paddy wagon, undergo routine processing at a police station, and despite his vehement objections, to his utter chagrin, be released back onto the streets. It was neither pleasant nor fitting for Yehudi to be dismissed as harmless; such treatment hurt him deeply. (34)

Although she never overtly psychologizes and eschews facile explanations, Reich manages to convey a certain sense of the inevitability, or at least of the consistent linearity, and of the plausibility of the development of her main characters toward their fundamentalist stance. In Yehudi's case it is a formidable single-mindedness that lets him focus exclusively on the path of his redemptive project and his self-fashioned identity as "The Redeemer." In Hoshea's case, his singularity of purpose is rooted in a "revelation" he experienced at Camp Ziona. When Yehudi's team "miraculously" defeated Hoshea's in a color war, although the actual scores suggested the very opposite,

Hoshea completely comprehended, absorbed in his molecules, the concept of divine personal supervision. In Judaism, this is a central tenet, one of the essential principles of faith without which one cannot be said to

believe truly. Real faith came at last to Hoshea HaLevi after the toilet paper race at the truce ceremony at the end of the color war in Camp Ziona; it struck him with the force of revelation. Moreover, Hoshea resolved then and there to link his destiny with Yehudi, who, thanks to the concept of divine personal supervision, could never be defeated, would never lose. (13)

It is a resolve to which Hoshea remains true, even unto the end. But before that, acting the role of high priest of the Kingdom of Judea and Samaria, he will be the one to anoint Yehudi.

The power of the word is attested to in Reich's novel not only by the passionate and well-wrought sentences of Hoshea and Yehudi but also, for instance, by the intertextual reference to Leon Uris's world bestseller *Exodus* (1958):

Ben-Canaan was a compact, muscular, intense man, from Galveston, Texas, originally, Eddie Cohen he had been called in those days, whose life had been changed irrevocably when he picked up the novel *Exodus* in an airport lounge before boarding his flight from Houston to Los Angeles, where he was journeying in the hope of launching a career as a movie stunt man. Within a month, he was on his way across the American continent corrupted by its cowboys and its commercials, across the ocean polluted by its sunken luxury liners and pirate ships, across the decadence and gas chambers of Europe to Israel. Almost immediately, Elkanah Ben-Canaan was drawn into the settlement movement, which seemed to him to embody the spirit, the idealism, the adventure, the rejection of materialism, the heroism of the original Zionist pioneers. (113)

Once again, the fundamentalist stance is suggested to be a pose, which, in this case, is generated and sustained by the impact of literary fiction on the impressionable Eddie Cohen. For him, Uris's novel provides the narrative of an ideal state of purity to whose reconstruction (see Lustick's definition of fundamentalism) he aspires to contribute.

Quite intriguingly, Israel as a redemptive project of the fundamentalist settler movement appears to embody the very same pioneer spirit that "made" America but which America, long since "corrupted by its cowboys," seems to have lost. A possible inference—relayed through the internal focalizer (Eddie/Elkanah)—is that Israel, as a "space of redemption," achieves significance as a model for the "universal" process of redemption. The affinity between the pioneer spirit of the Zionists and of the settlers in America observed here by Reich has also been remarked upon by Ella Shohat, who perceives it to be one of the reasons for the

American bias toward Israel to which Hirst referred in the text prefixed to this chapter:

The classical images of sabra pioneers as settlers on the Middle Eastern frontiers, fighting Indian-like Arabs, along with the reverberations of the early American biblical discourse encapsulated in such notions as "Adam," "(New) Canaan," and "Promised Land," have all facilitated the feeling of Israel as an extension [*sic*] of "us"—the U.S.³⁹

Reich's novel itself is, in many ways, a counter narrative to Uris's strongly ideologically informed myth-making bestseller. Myth-making is, of course, a corollary of narrative, and in her novel, Reich subtly engages in the metafictional and metahistoriographic debate initiated by Hayden White's well-known and much-debated challenge to "fact"-writing historiography.⁴⁰ In *The Jewish War*, the narrative construal of myths and their potential for propagandist exploitation is repeatedly remarked upon. Early on in the novel, Yehudi's encounters with instances of anti-Semitism, regrettably lacking in menace, are described as "common skirmishes of no consequence and no mythic resonance" (34). Mythic resonance is, however, what he aspires to, although until he made *aliyah*, "there really was only one occasion when Yehudi had the opportunity to confront the enemy—the prototypical, classical Jew-hater—in something that resembled full-scale battle, and to prove himself" (34). Yet this event,

generally unheralded in its time and sung of by only a small number who knew the words, later became a critical element in the emerging Yehudi HaGoel legend, the ordeal that, in retrospect, in some measure defined and authenticated him, launched him into the position of a fighting leader, cast him as a hero who might be prepared, when necessary, to abjure even the nonviolent teachings of the exemplary Rabbi King [i.e., Martin Luther King]. (34–35)

Any myth, it is implied, is a narrative construction. Yet at the same time, myth is also seen to influence subsequent events. However, the poetic function of narrative emphasized here and almost a commonplace in the wake of New Historicist theories not only reflects on Yehudi's acumen in manipulating his "legend" but also constitutes simultaneously an indirect metafictional and, indeed, a "metafundamentalist" comment. For fundamentalisms, it is suggested, are also narrative constructions that contribute toward the formation of a "fundamentalist imaginary," as do fictional narrative constructions of fundamentalisms, like Reich's—or, for that matter, of the other authors discussed in this chapter 4.

After his initial enthusiasm, boosted by the victory of the Six Day War, Yehudi feels a growing enmity toward the secular State of Israel, which originates in his disapproval of what he deems to be its reconciliatory policy (e.g., the Camp David Accords).⁴¹ To him and his followers, this appears to be a sin that excites the wrath of the Lord and forestalls redemption. Protesting against the alleged inability of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) to protect Jewish settlers from Arab terrorists, Yehudi presents his argument picketing an army camp immediately after the Israeli pullout from Lebanon in 1982:

The miracle of the Six-Day War heralded the beginning of redemption and ushered in the messianic age wherein all reality is sanctified, political reality no less than religious reality; everything is holy, even the secular is consecrated, holiness embraces all things; the land itself, which has been wrested from the forces of evil through the miracle of the war, is imbued with holiness, with the Divine Presence, the *Shechinah*; to cede even a minuscule portion of this holy soil would be a fatal capitulation to the evil powers; the era of tolerance has passed, a new, benevolent totalitarianism has taken its place, the totalitarianism of holiness; sanctity has been bestowed on the individual and on society, on commerce and on politics, on the land and all that it contains; the duty to settle, to wage war, to conquer, to intervene actively to further the redemption and bring about the fullness of the messianic era is the loftiest, the most sublime, the most exalted, the holiest form of worship. (138–39)

This "theology of holiness" and the concomitant bid for a "totalitarianism of holiness" quite clearly derive from the writings of Rav Kook and encapsulate the position of the Gush Emunim. Yehudi's firm belief in the beginning of redemption, which he undertakes to further not only with peaceful actions (hunger strikes and pickets) but also with terrorist acts against his Arab neighbors, is manifest as well in the name he gives his daughter: At'halta D'Geula literally means "the beginning of redemption" (101). That his daughter is later abducted by Haredim is surely another instance of an event "resonant with metaphor and symbol" (52): the "Messiah-Waiters," as they are called in the novel (63), obviously carry the day—redemption, as in *Master of the Return*, once more is deferred.

Yehudi's "official" antagonist is General Uri Lapidot of the IDF, who, time and again, during the various stages of his military career, is entrusted with enforcing the claims of the state against the messianic-Zionist sect. In the novel, he represents a pragmatic and liberal Zionism. Equally repelled by the "barbaric intolerance" (136) of the Haredim, by their rejection of

the secular state and its organs, and by Yehudi's religious nationalism, Lapidot perceives his own and any other enlightened Israeli-Jewish identity to be threatened by the contending varieties of Jewish fundamentalism (134-36). As the commanding officer of the siege of Yehudi's kingdom, which by now quite literally exists in the "underground" (in the Cave of Machpelah), he reflects:

And today, down there in Hebron, the city of *his* forefathers, too, there was this other aberration holding down the fort, this breed of religious Jews who, unlike the black-hatted ultra-Orthodox, did not disdain the army—far from it, they enlisted willingly, trained diligently, fought enthusiastically, they knew all the tricks—a lethal mixture, as Lapidot saw it, of messianic religious zeal and rabid nationalism. And where did all of this lead? To this sickly mutation, this rotting fossil, the so-called Kingdom of Judea and Samaria. (136-37)

The foundation of this very kingdom crowns Yehudi's travails to advance redemption and the coming of the Messiah. With its foundation the novel commences and, after narrating the events that lead to its inception, it ends with its destruction—the collective suicide of Yehudi and his followers as the last and most effective resort in the struggle for their beliefs. While the deathly drug administered to nigh on a thousand men, women, and children, is having its effect, Lapidot, observing the besieged compound from his commanding post, after having finished reading a valuable antiquarian copy of Flavius Josephus's *The Jewish War*, muses about the "authenticity" of the historical account:

In the opinion of General Uri Lapidot, *The Jewish War* was a novel, despite Josephus's protestations that what he had aimed for in his so-called historical account was the truth from beginning to end. Masada, certainly, was real; there was abundant archaeological evidence of its existence, and if Lapidot believed in anything at all, he believed in stones. But as for the mass suicide that took place there, all that remains of significance is Josephus's report, and, as a historian, Josephus was not reliable. As far as Lapidot was concerned, Josephus was a notorious opportunist and self-server, a writer of fiction. (270)

The simultaneity of Lapidot's skeptical reading of Josephus's "history" and of the collective suicide in the Cave of Machpelah at the very end of the novel once again emphasizes the insoluble intertwining of fact and fiction in narrative representations. While in the fictional world of the novel the analogy prompts an affirmative reading of the historical precedent

recounted in Josephus's *The Jewish War*, the reader of Reich's eponymous novel has, of course, been made aware of its fictional character, and then the analogy may work, in turn, further to discredit Josephus. All the same, the events narrated in the novel are associated not only with the "historical" fate of Masada,⁴² but also with more recent historical precedents, for example, with the collective suicide of the followers of James Warren Jones in Jonestown, Guyana (1978), repeatedly alluded to in the text,⁴³ or with the storming of the "Branch Davidian" compound in Waco, Texas (1993), by agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). These references emphasize the resilience, and the contingency, of fundamentalisms and, again, lend credibility (or at least verisimilitude) to the events described in Josephus's *The Jewish War* as well as in Reich's.

Like Eleazar ben Jair, the leader of the Jews in Masada, Yehudi, in an address to his followers, calls for their collective suicide. But where Eleazar, according to Josephus, admits that the rebellion may have been misguided,⁴⁴ Yehudi insists on the exalted purpose of this ultimate expedient in furthering redemption:

After all, Yehudi cried, what do we, what does the Kingdom of Judea and Samaria signify except the embodiment of a principle? That principle is our unnegotiable right to possess and dwell in the heart and soul of the ancient biblical homeland promised to us alone by the God of our fathers. And that principle can prevail even if we, the people of the Kingdom of Judea and Samaria, do not survive; indeed, even if, to assure the perpetuation of that principle, it is absolutely necessary that we die. . . . it is the most bitter blow that we can inflict upon the State of Israel, a shock from which it can never recover when it enters our underground halls in its customary pride and arrogance to be struck with amazement by our death and by our courage, to discover dreadful silence, to find us at peace, our bodies still bedecked in the pure penitential garments of this Yom Kippur . . . the State of Israel will be chastened and humbled once and for all. Never again will it dare to risk acceding to the surrender of even a millimeter of this holy land that is the province of God alone to give and to take. In the struggle between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Judea and Samaria, the Kingdom will perish, but it will be the State that will be defeated. That will be the miracle and the wonder. (265-66)

After the collective suicide, in the dark sky above the Cave of Machpelah a ghostly procession seems to pass:

A tall, slender, bridelike figure in a white robe at its head, trailed by a long column of smaller, nearly transparent figures, like children, also

clothed in white. It was as if they were all dancing toward some heavenly being, yet never quite reaching him. (269)

The allusion is to the *Shechinah*, in the Kabbalah the bride of God and His feminine principle. According to different traditions in the Talmud and Midrash, the *Shechinah* either withdrew from earth after the destruction of the First Temple to return in the time of redemption or went into exile with Israel to return to the Land with the Chosen People.⁴⁵ The reunion of the male and female aspects of divinity—the final metamorphosis, aspired to but not yet achieved—betokens the beginning of redemption.⁴⁶ Yet Yehudi, “The Redeemer,” does not achieve redemption as the ascending *Shechinah*-like figure, leaving the earth, never quite reaches God.

The only character in the novel to harbor any doubts about the chosen path of Yehudi and his followers is Hoshea's wife, Emunah. Ironically, her Hebrew name translates into Faith—indeed, formerly she was known as Faith Fleischman from Flatbush. Divided in her innermost self, Faith, although she feels the ardent desire to make *aliyah*, attempts, at least temporarily, to escape her externally prescribed and predestined role as a “Jewish woman” (44–45) by joining the Peace Corps for two years. Later, as Emunah, it is she alone—among all the other women in the “Kingdom” who, quite willingly, submit to the patriarchal mode imposed upon them by Yehudi's fundamentalist views—who experiences serious doubts about the course of events. In anguish, she writes to a friend who witnessed the tragedy of Jonestown and who, in her correspondence, had described the horrible sight to her:

“Felicity,” Emunah wrote, “the day we hand the children over to their fathers, on that day we become accomplices. Felicity, when they came to Jonestown, those poor souls, do you suppose they were coming to die or to live? For centuries my people have come to the Holy Land to die and be buried. The novelty of Zionism was the idea of coming here to live. What hubris must have possessed us when we subscribed to the notion that we of all Jews past and to come could change things? Felicity, I am buried alive.” (247)

Her misgivings are reminiscent of the premonitions attributed to the biblical Sarah in *Master of the Return* (239). In the end, however, Emunah, like the archetypal Sarah, and like all the other women in the “Kingdom,” acquiesces in the fate prescribed to her and her children by the faith-driven male.

Yet Reich does not target only Jewish fundamentalisms in her novel. That her criticism is leveled at any kind of fundamentalism becomes

clear in her satirical characterization of a Christian fundamentalist preacher who joins Yehudi's picket. The Reverend Chuck Buck combines his religious zeal profitably with commercial adroitness and, in contrast to Yehudi, although he too stage-manages his actions with a view to their propagandistic value, the Reverend's credibility is severely compromised by his show-biz mentality. In Jerusalem, he organizes a congress of anti-Semitic “self-accusation,” whose climax is his own confession that culminates in his declaration to have himself circumcised:

And yes, Reverend Buck confessed, yes, to his everlasting shame, he had not once, no, never in those days had he questioned the truth of the iniquity of the Jews . . . And, in truth, the proof of the horrendous guilt of the Jewish people had, in those days, seemed to him implicit in the centuries of punishment they endured, beginning with the destruction of their Temple and their exile from the Holy Land less than twoscore years after the crucifixion of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and then their suffering, the horrendous suffering over the nearly two millennia of diaspora that ensued . . . this suffering was so extreme, so unremitting, that it could not have been accidental or arbitrary, it could not have been interpreted as anything other than the will of God, or so Reverend Buck had reasoned before he saw the light . . . Indeed, to indulge in pity for them would have meant to question God's judgment . . . (167–68)

As for Yehudi, thus also for the Reverend, the “miracle” of the Six Day War proved to be decisive:

And then, one day, he was suddenly struck down by the crisis that ripped his assumptions apart, and changed, yes, changed his life. That crisis was the stunning miracle of the Six-Day War and the sinking in of the reality of the return of the Jewish people to Zion, the establishment of the State of Israel, the beginning of the end of the diaspora, the restoration of Jewish sovereignty over the holy city of Jerusalem and the biblical homeland. . . . From that day forth he devoted himself heart and soul to the Jewish State, for its destiny and the destiny of its people, he now understood, were inextricably bound up with his own, and the survival of Israel was laden with the promise of the end of days and the ultimate unconditional acceptance by the Jewish people of the glory of Jesus Christ. (168–69)

The appropriation of the eschatological significance of the Jewish possession of the Land of Israel by the fundamentalist preacher, whose latent anti-Semitism is only thinly veiled by his jovial humor (146 and 150), is an immediate reminder of the dark chapter of the Christian “mission” among the Jews, itself, arguably, a manifestation of an age-old Christian fundamentalism.

In her novel, Reich analyzes the problems that the association of the embattled Land of Israel with a fundamentalist eschatological vision—both Jewish and Christian—creates for both the present and the noneschatological future of the Middle East. Despite its satirical acuity and sparkling humor, *The Jewish War* is a profoundly tragic novel⁴⁷ that, although it pillories rabid religious and nationalist zeal and the fundamentalisms sustained by it, reminds us of their origins in our common humanity.

Like *Master of the Return*—but significantly, I think, unlike Roiphe's *Lovingkindness*—Reich's *The Jewish War* is written in the satirical mode. It may, of course, simply be Reich's particular gift to excel, as she does, in political and religious satire. But this does not seem to be a satisfactory explanation of the fact that hers are not the only works of fiction dealing with Jewish fundamentalism (as opposed to Orthodoxy) that resort to the satirical mode. Indeed, it seems to me, that the satirical is the preferred mode of Jewish authors engaging with Jewish fundamentalism. Certainly, all the texts I discuss here conform to this pattern.

To my knowledge, the first anglophone novel to address the phenomenon of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel is Philip Roth's *The Counterlife*. When the novel was first published, in 1986, the phenomenon itself, although by then in evidence for more than a decade, had not yet made much of an impact on English-language academic work. Largely a novel about the negotiation of Jewish identities between the parameters of diaspora and Israel, in its convoluted structure various "counterlives," alternative (fictional) constructions of reality ("one's own antimyth"),⁴⁸ are explored by Roth's alter ego and narrator Nathan Zuckerman. Faced with his brother Henry's choice of counterlife, to become an "authentic Jew" (74) in a Jewish settlement in the West Bank, Nathan visits Israel with the intention of reclaiming his brother. Yet the confrontation with the fundamentalist settlers whom Henry (now calling himself Hanoch) has joined leaves the professional writer almost "speechless" and he confesses himself to be "outclassed" (130). In his narrative he reflects on the intense atmosphere:

If I had nothing to say to Henry right off it was because, following Lippman's seminar, language didn't really seem my domain any longer. I wasn't exactly a stranger to disputation, but never in my life had I felt so enclosed by a world so contentious, where the argument is so enormous and constant and everything turns out to be pro or con, positions taken, positions argued, and everything italicized by indignation and rage. (130)

In Roth's novel, the fundamentalists are not predominantly religiously inspired. They are rather of the ultranationalist variety and their arguments have a certain persuasive, if fantastic, potential. They are less motivated by the religious imperative to conquer and settle the land, but rather by the notion of the perils of the diaspora and the image of Israel as a safe haven—a Zionist stereotype provokingly inverted in Roth's later novel *Operation Shylock* (1993). In America, one settler's argument in *The Counterlife* runs, assimilation and intermarriage

are bringing about a second Holocaust—truly, a spiritual Holocaust is taking place there, and it is as deadly as any threat posed by the Arabs to the State of Israel. What Hitler couldn't achieve with Auschwitz, American Jews are doing to themselves in the bedroom . . . First there was the hard extermination, now there is the soft extermination. And this is why young people are learning Hebrew at Agor—to escape the Jewish oblivion, the extinction of Jews that is coming in America, to escape those communities in your country where Jews are committing spiritual suicide. (103)

The American Jewish influx to the Land of Israel, extolled here as a countermeasure to the impending Jewish oblivion, is assessed by another, liberal Israeli voice in the novel as unsettling:

Who comes to this country now to settle and live? The intellectual Jew? The humane Jew? The beautiful Jew? No, not the Jew from Buenos Aires, or Rio, or Manhattan. The ones who come from America are either religious or crazy or both. This place has become the American Jewish Australia. Now who we get is the Oriental Jew and the Russian Jew and the social misfits like your brother, roughnecks in yarmulkes from Brooklyn. (77)

As in Roiphe's *Lovingkindness*⁴⁹ and, to some extent, also in Reich's novels, Israel, in *The Counterlife*, appears to be a hotbed of American Jewish zealots. Yet, concerned mainly with the negotiation of Jewish identities between diaspora and *Eretz Yisrael* in the personal sphere, the representation of fundamentalism in Roth's *The Counterlife* does impart only a very oblique sense of menace. A heightened sense of the potential dangers emanating from the Jewish fundamentalist movement in Israel is increasingly perceptible in the novels of Tova Reich and, particularly, in Melvin Jules Bukiet's *Strange Fire* (2001).

Bukiet's text is an intricate political satire told by Nathan Kazakov, the blind and homosexual Russian émigré speechwriter to the hawkish prime minister of Israel in the novel. When Nathan is shot by a

fundamentalist settler, whose real target he presumes to have been his employer, his investigation of the matter enmeshes him more and more in a web of conspiracies climaxing in an attempt at blowing up the Temple Mount involving settlers, Arab terrorists, the Israeli secret service, and his former colleagues. In the course of his investigation, Nathan encounters nationalist-religious fundamentalists in their settlement of Beis Machpelah near Hebron with which the group, from which the would-be assassin also originated, stakes the Jewish claim to the Promised Land: "God gave us this country thousands of years ago, complete with milk and honey," Nathan is told, to which he adds dryly: "And mud."⁵⁰ For the settlers' livelihood ironically depends on their selling the very soil of the God-given land (sediments of the Red Sea) by the bagful as a "natural cosmetic." (155)

Like other members of the group, its leader (now known as Der Alter) is Brooklyn-born, and Nathan, in a very few sentences, sketches the rabbi's profile:

Born as Moshe Zuckerman, my host changed his name to Moshe X as a youthful member of the JDL back in America in the late 1960s. This act of willful social provocation occurred before he discovered God and Israel in the 1970s and swapped his signature beret for a yarmulke. Yet even when the ordained and Aliyahed Rabbi X's beard reached his *pupik* and he became the venerable Der Alter in the 1980s, the fire in his belly still burned. (154)

This profile appears to be paradigmatic of the type of American Jewish immigrant to Israel with strong fundamentalist pretensions portrayed in all the novels under consideration here. Mordecai Lippman in Roth's *The Counterlife* and the protagonists in Reich's novels have a similar pedigree and so had, in real life, the notorious Rabbi Meir Kahane who founded the Jewish Defense League (JDL) in the United States in 1968 prior to his emigration to Israel, where he then established the ultranationalist and religious *Kach* party, since banned in Israel; so also had Baruch Goldstein, a fundamentalist settler from Kiryat Arba who killed twenty-nine Muslims in the prayer hall of the Patriarchs' Cave in Hebron in 1994.⁵¹

Another central issue targeted by Bukiet's political satire is the potentially close association between fundamentalist groups and the elected government of Israel. While cynically exploiting fundamentalist ideas for his own ends, Simon Levy, the Israeli prime minister in the novel, obviously succumbs to his own rhetoric, forming foolish ideas of kingship and messianic redemption. He is supported in his schemes by the inner

circle of his advisers. Their plan is to blow up the Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount and thus to provoke a major conflagration:

Only if the war to come entails pain will it produce the desired results. Another six-day wonder would secure the region temporarily, but there would be even more refugees, which would re-create the scenario that has proved so debilitating for the last half century. Only a truly devastating war, one which they almost win, one with casualties, will secure the future. Only if our backs are to the sea can we use the weapons we have. (324)

The reference is, of course, to Israel's nuclear arsenal and Bukiet's text seems to echo here the concern expressed by Shahak and Mezvinsky in their study that Jewish fundamentalism could "substantially affect Israeli nuclear policies."⁵² Furthermore, Bukiet's text seems to suggest that religious fundamentalism, if translated into political terms, evolves an uncomfortable proximity to fascism:

But for us, it's Israel's last chance for a truly, ultimately, eternally unified Holy Land, not under elections. Democracy is a frail system that allows people like Weiner to mess up the works. No, we need to return to the days of glory. We need to return to the Bible, whose ways we have abandoned. (325)

Again, like in Reich's *The Jewish War*, no "closure" is provided and it is left to the reader's imagination to probe the potential effects of this (pseudo-)fundamentalist action. Yet, while in *The Jewish War* the threat is mainly to the internal equilibrium of Israel, in *Strange Fire* the explosion in the tunnel system penetrating the Temple Mount, and killing the pretender to the Davidic Throne as well as his henchmen and women, poses an international threat and may well launch Armageddon. The only hope is that Nathan and a few others who escaped from the tunnels just in time may avert the impending doom by explaining what happened.

There seems to be, among anglophone Jewish writers, a mounting sense of the urgency of engaging with the phenomenon of Jewish fundamentalism and with the growing threat it poses not only to the fragile "balance" of the Middle East and the precarious peace process but also to the internal equilibrium of the State of Israel and its commitment to democracy. For, if viewed in chronological sequence, the novels address its potential wider ramifications with increasing seriousness.

In *The Counterlife*, ultranationalist fundamentalist attitudes to some extent appear to be the articulation of a kind of paranoia that, however fantastic it may seem, is partially vindicated by subsequent events in the novel when Nathan Zuckerman experiences British anti-Semitism. Still,

the exploration of the fundamentalist as one of several possible, and eventually discarded, "counterlives" is primarily part of a personal identity quest and although a certain menacing aspect seems to adhere to the actions and to the ideology of the fundamentalist settlers, this is not really the issue in Roth's novel.

Both of Reich's novels are focused exclusively on different manifestations of Jewish fundamentalism in Israel. In *Master of the Return*, a minor, and in some of its aspects perhaps even "quaint" and endearing, "aberration" is portrayed—eventually dealt with confidently, and effectively, by the Israeli authorities. In this novel, Reich's interest is centered largely on "crazy" individuals and the dynamics within the group, which are determined by gender tensions and the religious-ideological strife between Haredim (Abba Nissim, 118, 134, and 201) and religious nationalists (Reb Lev Lurie, 119).

In Reich's later novel, *The Jewish War*, the impact of what appears to be not merely a random group or "groupuscule" but a rigidly organized movement reminiscent of the Gush Emunim, and very well able to upset the internal Israeli consensus, emerges in her narrative as a serious threat from the inside to Israeli security. However, it is neither the continuous activism of Yehudi and his followers against Israeli Arabs or their fellow Jews (modeled on "historical" Gush Emunim schemes) that proves to be most explosive, nor yet the unilateral establishment of the secessionist Kingdom of Judea and Samaria (so far without historical precedent), but rather its fatal (and fatalistic) end. Indeed, the dimensions of the blow Yehudi and his followers deal the State of Israel with their sacrificial suicide may not readily be recognized by the non-Jew and perhaps not even by the non-Israeli Jew. Not only the historical reference to the mass suicide of Masada, a central "myth" of Zionist ideology, is significant in this context but, less obviously, though perhaps even more decisively, also the loss of Jewish lives occasioned by the conciliatory and therefore "traitorous" and "faithless" policies of the State of Israel (e.g., the Camp David Accords). In Jewish fundamentalist thought, strongly influenced by the Lurianic Kabbalah, "Jewish blood," as Shahak and Mezvinsky have pointed out, is considered superior to "the blood of non-Jews," which, for religious Jews, "has no intrinsic value."⁵³ According to Shahak and Mezvinsky, this tenet is well-known, although not generally endorsed, in Israel, and they see it also as underlying certain Israeli policy decisions.⁵⁴ In the light of this notion, the loss of almost a thousand Jewish lives on the holiest day of the year, the Day of Atonement, is indeed to be considered a terrible calamity for the State of Israel, internally and potentially also externally.

In Bukiet's novel, finally, the fundamentalist voice once again is given much less scope than in Reich's novels. Yet fundamentalist doctrines are shown to have penetrated deeply into political culture in Israel and the potential political effects of messianic fundamentalism are envisaged as a cataclysm of apocalyptic proportions.

Earlier, I suggested that Jewish fundamentalism appears to be a salient topic in Jewish fiction in English. However, none of the texts I discuss here was published after 9/11.⁵⁵ This was not a deliberate choice on my part, but, indeed, I am not aware of any anglophone Jewish writing published after the destruction of the World Trade Center that in a comparable way engages with Jewish fundamentalism in Israel. This may not mean anything. After all, 9/11 was only a few years ago and this may simply be too short a period to draw any conclusions. Yet, if not merely a token of my ignorance, it may mean something after all: Is Jewish fundamentalism, once again and even in the literary imagination, eclipsed by a "spectacular" act of outrage connected to Islamist fundamentalism? Or, perhaps also by the "fundamentalist" war on terrorism waged by the United States and her (mostly less dedicated) allies? Is, in the most recent "clash of fundamentalisms," the Jewish variety in Israel merely an also ran?

A similar constellation of opposing fundamentalisms, if without the added horrors of 9/11, was explored almost a decade earlier by Simon Louvish in his *The Days of Miracles and Wonders: An Epic of the New World Disorder*, first published in 1997—fully five years after its completion. In this novel, Jewish fundamentalism is mentioned only in passing as one of many⁵⁶ and is encompassed in an "apocalyptic" vision that takes issue with fundamentalism not in its various manifestations but as a constituent of the *condition humaine*.⁵⁷ The historical backdrop to the novel is the Gulf War of 1991 and the period immediately prior to it. But to this level are added many layers, among them the resurrection in the flesh (if without the heart and entrails) of Richard *Coeur de Lion*, the reflections on humanity and history of the undead early Christian saint Simon the Stylite, and disturbing descriptions of the shell-shocked life in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon during the early 1980s. Any attempt at condensing the multiple layers and voices of Louvish's novel—which include the sad and resigned musings of a "smart" bomb seconds prior to its impact, the bland outlook on life of a sandworm on the Lothian shore, and authentic newspaper clips—must of necessity come to naught. But from its orchestration of voices it emerges that Louvish's highly satirical and deeply unsettling novel is very much about the "clash of fundamentalisms," long before Tariq Ali coined the phrase in reference to Samuel P. Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations and the*

Remaking of World Order (1996)⁵⁸—indeed, Louvish quite uncannily seems to have “anticipated” even the latter half of Huntington’s title with the subtitle of his novel.⁵⁹

With reference to an earlier novel of Louvish’s, *City of Blok* (1988), also featuring his (anti-)hero Avram Blok who makes his reappearance in *The Days of Miracles and Wonders*,⁶⁰ Bryan Cheyette wrote in a review that Louvish “has probably anticipated—better than anyone outside Israel—further madness to come.”⁶¹ If anything, *The Days of Miracles and Wonders* is a rendering of this further madness. A madness, however, that is increasingly perceived in its global context and not centered on Israel even though Louvish’s focus remains the Middle East.

Another reincarnation in Louvish’s novel is that of the tenth-century founder of the Druze religion, the Caliph Abu Ali Mansur al-Hakim, whom the author conflates with the apocalyptic “Hidden Imam” expected by Shi’ites to return at the End of Time from his occultation.⁶² In a dream, the Caliph is thrown by the Stylite, whose column has grown out of all proportion, into the abyss, his descent reminiscent of Gibreel Farishta’s fall no less than Satan’s. In the light of this analogy and its subject matter it may be no surprise that Louvish did not at first find a publisher for his novel. Indeed, Louvish himself, as quoted in a review by Teddy Jamieson, attributed this reluctance to the effects of the fatwa pronounced on Salman Rushdie in 1989: “I think that in the wake of the Rushdie affair, people didn’t want to touch something which dealt with the Middle East and its conflicts. Anything to do with an Islamic theme was immediately verboten.”⁶³ Yet, as pointed out before, *The Days of Miracles and Wonders* is not a novel about any particular fundamentalism and in addition to Islamic, Jewish, and Christian⁶⁴ fundamentalisms another, and no less threatening or frightening, brand of fundamentalist belief is exposed in the self-righteous and single-minded commitment of U.S. “state-fundamentalism”⁶⁵ to the “remaking of world order” according to its pseudo-transcendental principles.

When, after his fall, the Caliph finds himself stunned on a hillock of sand in the Arabian desert, he is apprehended by U.S. soldiers. Yet the force of his charisma is so great that he later “converts” not only his captors, black Muslim soldiers, but also an entire unit of the U.S. Air Force, “three hundred young men of all races,”⁶⁶ to whom he announces the End of Time. They, along with some journalists, follow him on a long march through the burning desert toward the holy city of Mecca. Although his progress is entirely peaceful, he and his followers are blasted to smithereens by an overkill of all the firepower the U.S. Air Force can muster. Louvish’s description—evoking painful images of the media

coverage of the destruction of Iraqi columns during the Gulf War—is an enactment of the clash of civilizations and of fundamentalisms in an apocalyptic vision of the time when “everyone can hear the beat of the drums and the thunder of the chariots of war, and the clash of infidel against infidel, transgressor against transgressor, false *jihad* against false *jihad*” (311–12).

Gazing into the “intellectual confusion, moral vacuity and delusional fugues” (238) of the mind of a Maronite warlord, which may be paradigmatic of this age of fundamentalisms, this is what Simon the Stylite sees, before he withdraws in disgust:

The end justifies the means and the end is nigh. He has noted all the usual signs and portents. Ingathering of the Jews. Collapse of the communist Antichrist. Resurgence of the Caesaropapist hordes. Collapse of all morals, disintegration of the family, the loss of faith in reason. The iron needs of dog eat dog. Now, our rival eschatologies face each other naked on an open battlefield. Good versus evil. Gog and Magog, the only question being, which is which? (237–38)

The question, so easily settled according to the various fundamentalist truths, remains, quite deliberately I think, unresolved in Louvish’s text. Yet the ending of the novel may, perhaps, be read as a sort of answer:

And it came to pass, in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the Ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry . . . And the Lord said in his heart: I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake, for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. (415)⁶⁷

This answer to the question of good and evil, if answer it is, bodes no good. The evil inclination of humankind seems to be allowed to run free, its playing ground the Armageddon for which the unconcerned and innocent world provides the stage.

Some measure of relief is, however, projected in the novel by characters like the Greek-American “terrorist” doctor “Angel” (Petros Angelopoulos), who performs his own kind of medical miracles in the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut. Yet Angel himself is painfully aware of the inadequacy of the merely “physical.” As the inescapable quandary of our times he diagnoses that

People have to redefine themselves. That's the horrific challenge. How to find the magic equilibrium. To be true to your origins, your culture, your roots, but also to a non-conformist reality. The mind and the heart. How to connect them. The nerves, the arteries, the veins. I've done the physical route, cutting and repairing. Like reasphalting the roads. But beyond that? (81)

"It's a job for poets and writers," he answers himself, only to continue: "[B]ut who has any time for them?" For

There are also powerful people who hear Voices, and then hire enforcers to make sure those Voices don't fade away. They mold and sculpt the Voices into convenient forms, ironing away the ragged edges, leaving an efficient tool. It's the abuse of the creative urge, that's all. The superego gone wrong. (81)

The direct competition of literature and fundamentalisms in providing orientation to a humanity that has lost its bearings, it is suggested by Angel's reflections, rests on their common, yet irreconcilable nature: on the basis of the "creative urge," both in effect appear to be narrative practices, which, since the "narrative" or "discursive turn," are understood to "provide fundamental devices that give form and meaning to our experience."⁶⁸ To distinguish between literature and fundamentalisms as aids to human orientation, Angel introduces a moral dimension, of good and evil, when he suggests that fundamentalisms are the product of abuse.

Perhaps it is Angel's peace-seeking Israeli girlfriend Naomi, who, in a letter to the "terrorist" doctor, comes closest to the solution of the dilemma, by reducing the "superego" to its common humanity:

Of course, we no longer believe in opposites, since Freud everything is in the same pot. So keep on in your contradictions, Petros. The world does not need saints, just human beings, stop. Not Beyond Good and Evil, but realizing our capacity to be both. This is getting too heavy. But we'll have to let trauma pass into memory before we can try a lighter note. Keep up the good work! KEEP THOSE MIRACLES COMING! Love from all, angel, in friendship. (404)

In the review of Louvish's *City of Blok* mentioned above, Bryan Cheyette suggested that the author's "commitment to a saner world is clear but his fiction is in danger of becoming an unmediated reflection of the irrationality it condemns."⁶⁹ I understand Cheyette's criticism to point to the fine balance between the mere aestheticization of irrationality,

fundamentalisms in the case of the novels discussed here, which may come perilously close to a tacit condonement, and the literary engagement with the issue.

With regard to the perception of Jewish fundamentalism, Shahak and Mezvinsky claim that the great majority of academic studies in English "falsify their subject matter,"⁷⁰ mostly by omission. To ask whether fictional texts are complicit in this "falsification" may be off the mark. After all, the criteria for inclusion or exclusion in fictional texts are not only different but it is the (in contemporary Western discourse usually) undisputed prerogative of the authors of fictional texts to select and (re-)arrange their material. Yet certainly, the "translation" of fundamentalist doctrine into fictional literature, and thus its aesthetic mediation, signifies, to some extent, a domestication and contributes to the construction of a "fundamentalist imaginary."

As Foxman's immediate rejoinder to Hirst's suggestions shows, in an area so fraught with the perils of offending the sensibilities (religious, political, and emotional) of so many one has to tread softly. Certainly, any serious literary rendering of fundamentalisms demands not only a thorough knowledge of the respective tenets and sentiments, and the larger context, but also a deft hand at "aestheticizing" the fundamentalist other, for, indeed, to the authors whose novels I discuss here, it is the "other" they engage with in their fiction, as none of them have fundamentalist leanings themselves. In fact, as Jonathan Webber notes, "fundamentalism is in principle a category imposed from the outside rather than a self-descriptive category."⁷¹ Fictional, that is, aesthetic constructions of "fundamentalists" and "fundamentalisms," no less seem to be imposed from the outside. Yet, one may wonder whether "fiction-writing" (in the traditional sense) and the inside narrative construction of what appears to outsiders as fundamentalisms are really mutually exclusive or whether they are not, after all, the same thing in different guises—and if so, whether the moral category introduced by Angel, and insisted on by Cheyette, may not be essential to the "aesthetics" of fundamentalism.

In all the novels discussed here, fundamentalisms fail—as a desirable counterlife or as a redemptive project. Yet the "fundamentalist imaginary," generated by these texts as an aesthetic construct, emerges as an "interstitial space" in which the authors attempt to initiate, and engage in a dialogue (even if only a virtual one) in which fundamentalists are given a voice, which sometimes may even appear to be uncomfortably persuasive. That the preferred mode of representation appears to be the satirical, steering wide of anything that might be (mis-)construed as mere caricature, may be due to this ambivalence.

Finally, it may be interesting to note that the focus of the Jewish American authors consistently is narrowed toward Israel, toward the emergence of Jewish fundamentalism in this country, and toward Jewish American involvement in it. The Jewish American texts therefore seem much more "parochial" in outlook than the Israeli novel. Louvish (who, it is true, was born in Scotland and currently lives in London and whose work certainly defies easy categorization⁷²) widens the scope of his fiction to embrace the global clash of fundamentalisms among which Jewish fundamentalism, spectacularly upstaged in his novel by U.S. "imperialist fundamentalism," is only one of many—and this may be due to some extent to the entrenched position from which he is writing.

NOTES

1. David Hirst, "Pursuing the Millennium: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel," *The Nation*, February 2, 2004; quoted from the website of *The Nation*, <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20040216&s=hirst> (retrieved July 29, 2004).
2. Abraham H. Foxman, in a letter to the editor of *The Nation Online*, February 6, 2004; quoted from the website of the Anti-Defamation League, http://www.adl.org/media_watch/magazines/20040206_TheNationOnline.htm (retrieved July 29, 2004).
3. Ian S. Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988; 2nd ed. 1994). The phenomenon was recognized and discussed much earlier in Israel. Lustick draws on a number of older publications in Hebrew; see his bibliography. For an exposition of studies on Jewish fundamentalism in Israel in Hebrew, see also Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (London: Pluto, 1999), 150–63.
4. *Ibid.*, 3. The same argument is reiterated, and even intensified, by Shahak and Mezvinsky, who criticize Lustick for neglecting "important parts of ideology" and for being "apologetic"; see Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, vi and, for their criticism of Lustick, 57.
5. *Ibid.*, x.
6. Since the first publication of Lustick's book, e.g., the collection of essays *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective: Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity* (1993) was edited by Laurence J. Silberstein, a second edition of Lustick's book appeared in 1994, and in the same year was also published Peter Demant's short *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel: Implications for the Mideast Conflict* (1994). In some more recent publications a comparative perspective is endeavored, as, e.g., in Karen Armstrong's *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (2000), Richard T. Antoun's *Understanding Fundamentalism: Christian, Islamic, and Jewish*

- Movements* (2001), and David S. New's *Holy War: The Rise of Militant Christian, Jewish and Islamic Fundamentalism* (2002).
7. Alvin H. Rosenfeld, "The Progress of the American Jewish Novel," *Response* 7 (1973): 115–30.
 8. Miriyam Glazer, "Male and Female, King and Queen: The Theological Imagination of Anne Roiphe's *Lovingkindness*," *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 10 (1991): 81.
 9. See also, e.g., Meredith Goldsmith, "Thinking through the Body in Hasidic Culture: Reconciling Gender, Sexuality, and Jewishness in the Fiction of Pearl Abraham," in *Jewish Women's Writing of the 1990s and Beyond in Great Britain and the United States*, ed. Ulrike Behlau and Bernhard Reitz (Trier: WVT, 2004), 247 and esp. note 1. Among religious Jews in America an increasing drift toward tradition is perceptible; see Marc Lee Raphael, *Judaism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
 10. See Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord*, 5. For a more recent and comprehensive discussion of the relation of religious fundamentalism and political extremism see Leonard Weinberg, *Religious Fundamentalism and Political Extremism* (London: Cass, 2004).
 11. *Ibid.*, 6.
 12. *Ibid.*, 9–10.
 13. See, e.g., Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 1–4, which claims that it is "rooted in Jewish history" (1). Not surprisingly, perhaps, Islamic fundamentalism also thrived after the defeat, from the Arab perspective, of 1967. See, e.g., James Piscatori, "Islamic Fundamentalism in the Wake of the Six Day War: Religious Self-Assertion in Political Conflict," in *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective: Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 79–93.
 14. Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord*, 41.
 15. *Ibid.*, 45.
 16. *Ibid.*, 62.
 17. *Ibid.*; for Gush Emunim activism, see, e.g., 65–71.
 18. *Ibid.*, 6–7, where he states that Haredim "do not engage actively in politics," 6, Menachem Friedman distinguishes between conservative (Haredi) and innovative (nationalist-religious) Jewish fundamentalisms; see his "Jewish Zealots: Conservative versus Innovative," in *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Silberstein, 148–63. Shahak and Mezvinsky, especially, emphasize the rise of Haredi fundamentalism; see their *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 23–54.
 19. Peter A. Huff, "Haredim," in *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, ed. Brenda E. Brasher (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 207.
 20. Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 16, 19–22.
 21. *Ibid.*, 43.
 22. Glazer, "Male and Female, King and Queen," 81.
 23. *Ibid.*, 82.

24. See, e.g., Axel Stähler, "Mothers in Israel? Female Jewish Identities and *Eretz Yisrael* in the Works of Jewish Women Writers of the Anglo-American Diaspora: Anne Roiphe, Tova Reich and Linda Grant," in *Jewish Women's Writing*, ed. Behlau and Reitz, 204.
25. This and some of the following paragraphs are a revised and extended version of my "Mothers in Israel," 204–06.
26. Anne Roiphe, *Lovingkindness* (1987; New York: Warner Books, 1997), 2. Subsequently cited parenthetically in the text.
27. Suzy Durruty, "Dédoublement identitaire et ennemis intérieurs dans *Loving Kindness* de Anne Roiphe," *Annales du Centre de Recherches sur L'Amérique Anglophone* 21 (1996): 43.
28. A change in Annie's attitude is intimated when she throws away a prayer book given to her by Sarai's rabbi, which she then, however, recovers: "I couldn't leave it there," Roiphe, *Lovingkindness*, 253.
29. For attempts at distinguishing between fundamentalism and Orthodoxy, see, e.g., James Davison Hunter, "Fundamentalism: An Introduction to a General Theory," in *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Silberstein, 28–29 and, more broadly, Aaron Kirschenbaum, "Fundamentalism: A Jewish Traditional Perspective," in *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Silberstein, 183–91.
30. See also Roiphe, *Lovingkindness*, 206–07: "Another of those fool kids you Americans can't seem to raise right come to lurk around the yeshivas looking for someone to take care of them, searching for the meaning of life you Americans couldn't give them. It's your materialism, your chaos, your divorce rate, your drug scene, your porno magazines, your cut-throat competitiveness and you're shipping it to us, every crazy Jewish kid whose parents ran out of insurance for the mental hospital takes a trip on El Al and finds God . . . We are in need of true Zionists, of people of learning and technology and democratic principles, and what do you send us, your broken, drug-riddled, starry-eyed, wiped-out dropouts. And what do they do when they get here? They breed and make more of themselves, exactly what we don't need, thank you very much."
31. Tova Reich was herself raised in an orthodox home, went to yeshiva, and continues to study (in the religious sense). See Blossom S. Kirschenbaum, "Tova Reich (1942)," in *Contemporary Jewish-American Novelists: A Biocritical Sourcebook*, ed. Joel Shatzky and Michael Taub (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 305–13.
32. See Roger Griffin, "Fascism," in *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, ed. Brenda E. Brasher (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 176.
33. Tova Reich, *The Jewish War: A Novel*. Library of Modern Jewish Literature (1995; Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 13. Subsequently cited parenthetically in the text.
34. Gen. 19:11–12.
35. Gen. 17:8.

36. See Gen. 22:14: "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen"; Jehovah-jireh literally means "God sees."
37. See, e.g., Roiphe, *Lovingkindness*, 17–19 and 194–95.
38. Reich, *Jewish War*, 90. Subsequently cited parenthetically in the text.
39. Ella Shohat, "Columbus, Palestine and Arab-Jews: Toward a Relational Approach to Community Identity," in *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry, and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997), 100.
40. See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) and his *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
41. See Reich, *Jewish War*, 102, 106–07.
42. The fortified mountain above the Dead Sea was held in the Great Revolt against Roman rule from 66 to 70 CE and beyond, until 73 CE, by zealots. In his *De bello Judaico*, Flavius Josephus gives an extended account of the Roman siege, and of the fall, of Masada, see *Josephus*, trans. Henry St. J. Thackeray, vol. 3; *The Jewish War, Books IV–VII* (London: Heinemann and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), vii, 280–406.
43. See, e.g., Reich, *Jewish War*, 177 and 247. In Jonestown, too, more than 900 people died, among them 270 children.
44. For Eleazar's speeches, see Josephus, *War*, vii, 320–88 and particularly vii, 327–28: "Maybe, indeed, we ought from the very first . . . to have read God's purpose and to have recognized that the Jewish race, once beloved of Him, had been doomed to perdition."
45. For the concept of the Shechinah, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. "Shekhinah", vol. 14, cols. 1349–54.
46. See, for instance, Glazer, "Male and Female," 87 and Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 106–08.
47. For a similar assessment see also Andrew Furman, *Israel through the Jewish-American Imagination: A Survey of Jewish-American Literature on Israel, 1928–1995* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 190–91.
48. Philip Roth, *The Counterlife* (1986; New York: Vintage International, 1996), 147. Subsequently cited parenthetically in the text.
49. See, e.g., *Lovingkindness*, 206–07.
50. Melvin Jules Bukiet, *Strange Fire: A Novel* (New York: Norton, 2001), 156. Subsequently cited parenthetically in the text.
51. For an in-depth assessment of "The Real Significance of Baruch Goldstein," largely based on sources otherwise inaccessible to non-Hebrew speakers, see the eponymous chapter in Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 96–112.
52. Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 6.

53. *Ibid.*, 11; see also, for the alleged superior value of Jewish lives in fundamentalist thought, ix, 58, 62, 153–54.
54. *Ibid.*, 22, 153–54.
55. Bukier's *Strange Fire* was published in spring 2001. It may be worthwhile noting that Roth's *The Counterlife* and Reich's *Master of the Return* both appeared before the fatwa was pronounced on Salman Rushdie.
56. See, e.g., Louvish, *Days*, 146.
57. *Ibid.*, 131 and 125 where he refers to the *maladie humaine*.
58. Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London, New York: Verso, 2002). However, Ali's reference is one of disagreement and he argues polemically against Huntington's concept of the "clash of civilizations," see 281–83.
59. Of course, the phrase of the "new world order" is topical in the context of the First Gulf War and was used by George Bush (in reference to Winston Churchill) in various speeches in the aftermath of the "Cold War" and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. See, e.g., Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*, 31.
60. A fifth Blok novel, *The Fundamental Blok*, is in preparation; see <http://www.simonlouvish.com/unpublished.htm> (retrieved July 14, 2004).
61. Bryan Cheyette, "Madness now and to come," *TLS* (October 14–20, 1988): 1154.
62. For the related concepts of the "Hidden" or "Last Imam" and the "Mahdi," see, e.g., the respective entries by David Cook and Jeffrey Kaplan in *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, ed. Brenda E. Brasher (New York, London: Routledge, 2001), 232–33 and 291–92. The expectation of the return of the Hidden Imam is similar to Jewish messianism, as is the notion of promoting redemption by the establishment of a just messianic society; see David Cook, "Imam, the Last," *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, ed. Brasher, 233.
63. Teddy Jamieson, "Miracle Worker," *The List* (April 4–17, 1997), 91.
64. Louvish refers repeatedly to the crusades; see, e.g., Louvish, *Days*, 3–13, 94 *et passim* and to intra-Christian schisms, see, e.g., Louvish, *Days*, 95–96.
65. Tariq Ali, in his *Clash of Fundamentalisms*, refers to alleged U.S. imperialist fundamentalism as "the mother of all fundamentalisms," 281. See also the headline of a newspaper clip quoted by Louvish, *Days*, 209: "WASHINGTON'S JIHAD."
66. Louvish, *Days*, 311. Subsequently cited parenthetically in the text. According to Shi'ite apocalyptic beliefs the Last Imam will "appear in Mecca, at the Ka'ba, and gather a band of 313 followers to himself," Cook, "Imam, The Last," 232.
67. Cf. Gen. 8:13–22.
68. Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh, "Introduction," in *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, ed. Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2001), 10.

69. Cheyette, "Madness now and to come," 1154.
70. Shahak and Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism*, 150.
71. Jonathan Webber, "Rethinking Fundamentalism: The Readjustment of Jewish Society in the Modern World," in *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, ed. Lionel Caplan (London: Macmillan, 1987), 101. In the Jewish context, as Webber also points out, both Hebrew and Yiddish lack a word for "fundamentalism." In the monumental English-language *Encyclopedia Judaica* of 1970–1971 no entries for "Fundamentalism" or "Haredi(m)" are included.
72. Louvish, born in 1947 in Glasgow, soon afterward immigrated with his parents to Israel; during the war of 1967 he served as a military cameraman; in 1968 he left Israel to visit the London School of Film Technique; since then he has been living most of the time in London, but in the "Emerging Voices" series of new international fiction of Interlink Books he "represents" Israel.