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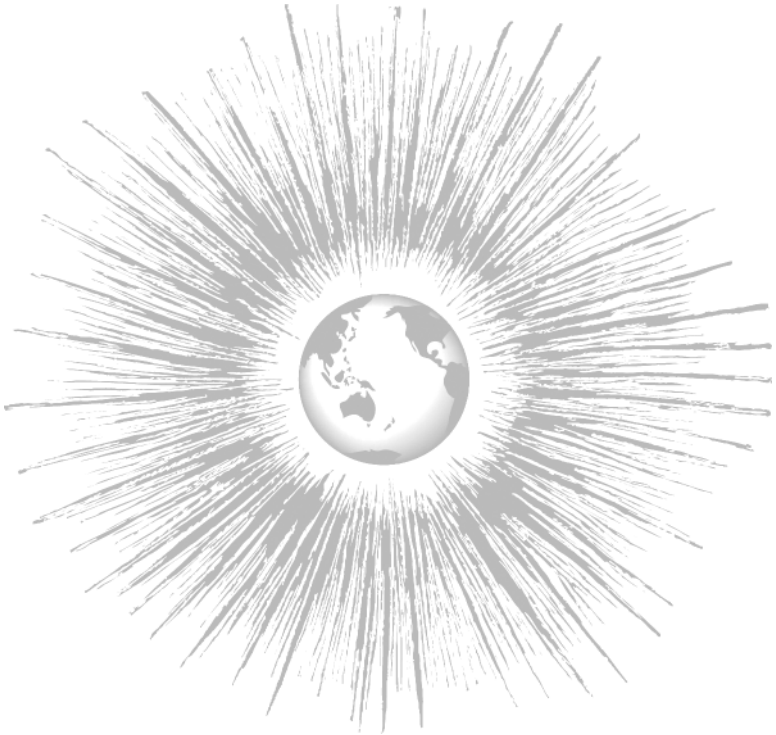

ABSTRACT:

This essay concerns two Jewish men from different historical formations: the Apostle Paul, a Jew living in the Roman Empire in the first century and one of the founding figures of Christianity, and Theodor Herzl, a Jew living in late-nineteenth-century Austria and the founding father of Zionism, a Jewish nationalist movement. My central argument is that both men employed an assimilationist strategy that linked their identity to powerful social forces of their time, strategically restructuring their identity so that they could move into the most powerful centers of their social system—Paul navigating himself towards Rome and Herzl setting his gaze west even while physically moving east. My objective here is to demonstrate how these two Jewish figures used Christianity and Zionism, respectively, to assimilate towards those who hold real power, each of them appropriating the ideology of his movement in order to join the most powerful sector of his "world." Yet I also intend to demonstrate that, while they both shared a desire to assimilate to power, the strategies they implemented to reach their goals were radically different: Paul using a universalistic discourse, what I shall call "Israel in the spirit," whereas Herzl chose the particularistic discourse of "Israel in the flesh." This is due, I argue, to the fact that both of these great historical figures were reacting to the social and political forces of their times, Paul to the centripetal forces of ancient world-empires and Herzl to the centrifugal forces of the modern world-system.

Assimilating to Power in Two Different World-Systems: An Analysis of Paul and Herzl

Khaldoun Samman

I. RACE AND THE MODERN *ORIENTALIST* WORLD-SYSTEM

> Like any set of durable ideas, Orientalist notions influenced the people who were called Orientals as well as those called Occidental, European, or Western.
>
> *Edward Said*

> The majority of non-Jewish citizens—no, all of them—declare that they do not recognize us as Austro-Germans ... All right, we shall move away; but over there, too, we shall only be Austrians.
>
> *Theodor Herzl*

> The State of Israel is part of the Middle East only in geography.
>
> *David Ben-Gurion*

As Immanuel Wallerstein, Anibal Quijano, and the late Edward Said have all argued, modernity, at its very root, is a highly racialized global system (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992; Quijano 2000; Said 1979). I'd like to identify this global order as the Modern *Orientalist* World-System to describe a world which is politically, economically, and culturally stratified, with race constituting the very epicenter of the stratification with the "West" and "whiteness" ranked as the superior race/civilization, signifying all those qualities and characteristics in a manner exactly opposite to the Orient (Said 1979). In this conception, the racialization of the binaries constructed by the Orientalist world-system produces the opportunity for a sector of the racialized groups (the constructed Orientals)

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to racially reconstruct themselves from one side of the dichotomy (the Orient) to the other side (the Occident). That is, in the process of being placed on the losing end of the racist discourse, I argue in this essay, a sector of the "Orient" pursues an aggressive policy of assimilating towards power by reproducing the racialized discourse of the modern Orientalist world-system. As we will see with Theodor Herzl, there is a desire in Jewish nationalism to remove the "Orient" from the self by whitening and Occidentalizing the Jew, usually at the expense of an Orientalized "Other," with the ultimate goal of producing an Occidentalized/modern Jew.

Since the majority of the research produced to describe and analyze the modern world-system rarely incorporates race, religion, identity, and culture as a central organizing feature of modernity, we find it of utility to add the adjective "Orientalist" to our notion of the contemporary world-system so that we as researchers of this global system are made more aware of the centrality of race in the production and reproduction of core-periphery relations. Indeed, the dichotomous structure of the binaries of Orientalism, as described by Edward Said (1979), is a constitutive part of the modern world-system. Moreover, these constructed binaries are not simply the by-product of the economic international division of labor, forming the "superstructure" of a mode of production, but rather constitute those very same social relations. Without the *racialized* construction of core-periphery relations, the systemic unequal relations found in the global order would dissipate overnight. Hence, without the racialization of difference, or the Orient/Occident, black/white dichotomies, the actual function of core/periphery relations would be difficult to maintain, to say the least. *Race is the world-system*, making possible capital accumulation on a global scale, without which the core would have difficulty monopolizing global resources. It is the racialization of people, as an "ideological" construct, that lubricates commodity chains, the colonization of land, people, and natural resources and the diffusion of military personal and resources throughout the global south. Behind, inside, and informing the modern Orientalist world-system is a racial discourse that makes it possible to imagine the "Other" as unworthy of a fair and just distribution of the global resources, with race providing a rationale based on a notion of a superior race, culture, and religion.

What I would like to do in this essay, therefore, is to argue that the overriding feature of the modern Orientalist world-system is the *production* of a new *nationalized* and *racialized* paradigm of ethnic, racial, and religious identities that had not existed under the old historical social formations (see Winant 2004; and Stavrianos 1997). In the process of becoming peoples, nations, and races, Jews and Arabs, Greeks and Turks, North African Arabs and South Saharan Africans, and blacks and whites have all been torn apart from one another by

the interjection of the modern Orientalist world-system into their earlier intertwined social relations, causing a drastic transformation in the identity of peoples around the globe. Indeed, many of the conflicts that look religious or cultural in character, stemming from time-immemorial, are actually a product of a very recent development (Samman 2005). Modernity, in a sense, restructured every aspect of the world, from its class make-up and trade patterns to its formal political structure. Religious, gender, and ethnic identities were especially impacted by this new reality.

To better understand the complete reconstitution of race in the modern Orientalist world-system, this essay will compare two Jewish men from different historical formations: the Apostle Paul, a Jew living in the eastern Roman Empire in the first century and one of the founding figures of Christianity, and Theodor Herzl, a Jew living in late-nineteenth-century Austria and the founding father of Zionism, a Jewish secular nationalist movement.

In what follows I hope to demonstrate that both of these figures employed an assimilationist strategy that linked their identity to powerful social forces of their time, strategically restructuring their identities so that they could move into the most powerful centers of their social systems, with Paul navigating himself towards Rome and Herzl facing west even while physically moving east. My objective here is to demonstrate how these two Jewish figures used Christianity and Zionism, respectively, to assimilate towards those who held real power, each of them appropriating the ideology of his movement in order to join the most powerful sector of his "world."

Yet I also intend to demonstrate that, while they both shared a desire to assimilate to power, the strategies they implemented to reach their goals were radically different: Paul using a universalistic discourse, what I shall call "Israel in the spirit," whereas Herzl chose the particularistic discourse of "Israel in the flesh."[1] This is due, I will argue, to the fact that both of these great historical

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[1]. *Israel in the flesh* and *Israel in the spirit* are terms that Paul used to assert his theological revision of Judaism and the justification for a new reading of the symbol of Christ, with the flesh representing the particularistic practices of his Jewish community, especially dietary restrictions, circumcision, and the rest of the Law. Israel in the spirit, on the other hand, symbolizes for Paul the transcendence of those practices and rituals that are specific to the Jewish community, replacing them with the figure of Christ, so that Gentiles (non-Jews) are welcomed into Christianity without having to become Jewish first. Inspired by the brilliant work of Daniel Boyarin (1994), I am using this terminology to describe the difference between particularistic and universalistic identities, Christianity being universalistic ("Israel in the spirit") and nationalist-Zionism being particularistic ("Israel in the flesh").

figures were reacting to the social and political forces of their times, Paul to the centripetal forces of ancient world-empires and Herzl to the centrifugal forces of the modern world-system.

Both Paul and Herzl experienced conversions that clarify the analysis we wish to make here, offering clues to the way identities were experienced in these two different historical systems. Daniel Boyarin, in his *A Radical Jew* (1994), describes Paul's conversion to Christianity in the mid-first century thus:

> An enthusiastic first century Greek-speaking Jew, one Saul of Tarsus, is walking down a road, with a very troubled mind. The Torah, in which he so firmly believes, claims to be the text of the One True God of all the world, who created heaven and earth and all humanity, and yet its primary content is the history of one particular People—almost one family—and the practices it prescribes are many of them practices which mark off the particularity of that tribe, his tribe.... Not only he but many Jews of the first century shared this sense that something was not right. [The event of the Resurrection of Christ] provides the answer to the dilemma that Saul is facing. The birth of Christ as a human being and a Jew, his death, and his resurrection as spiritual and universal was the model and the apocalypse of the transcendence of the physical and particular Torah for Jews alone by its spiritual and universal referent for all. At that moment Saul died, and Paul was born. (p. 39)

Compare Paul's conversion then to that of Herzl some eighteen centuries later. As Jacques Kornberg (1993) tells us, in June of 1894:

> The state idea had taken hold of him. He felt possessed; elaborations of the idea raced through his mind out of control while at work, walking, when in a conversation. Gripped by an obsession, he feared he was losing his sanity. Everything came together for him in the notion of a Jewish state.... Eliminating Jewish defects through emancipation...making Jews independent, masters of their own fate. From this experience he would put down his idea of a Jewish State, a national home for the Jews that would one day remake the Jews "on the gentile model...gaining honor in the eyes of Gentiles." (p. 160)

Like his predecessor Paul some two millennia earlier, Herzl was a Jew living among Gentiles, feeling pressure to assimilate to the cultural environment in which he lived. But unlike Paul, who inherited a world that despised living in the flesh, Herzl encountered a world in which particularistic identities were seen as an essential part of the cultural life of all the peoples of Europe. For what is most interesting about the life of Herzl is that, after not being permitted to live as a German or a European by the Gentiles around him, he experienced a conversion on the streets of Germany in which he envisioned a return to an Israel in the flesh, concluding that the Jew, like the other "civilized Gentiles," must have a state of their own. Indeed, his conversion from assimilation to Zionism was not

unlike the conversion Paul experienced on the road to Damascus, except that whereas Paul converted to an Israel in the spirit, a universalistic identity transcending particularism, Herzl turned in the opposite direction, that is, toward Israel in the flesh, a particularistic identity shedding universalism for the sake of creating a homeland for a specific group.

In my view their two conversions tell us much about the radically different "worlds" these two major Jewish figures lived in. Their "worlds" are what Immanuel Wallerstein identifies as a world-empire and the modern world-system. Wallerstein cleverly reminds us that historical social systems have varying time-space vectors and, as social scientists, we have to be cautious of the term *world*, for *world* is a relative term that cannot be reduced to mean the whole globe. The latter meaning is not found before the nineteenth century when, after many expansions and contractions, the modern capitalist world-system finally incorporated the entire globe. Prior to this historical breakthrough the world coincided with *world-empires* or even smaller units like tribes or clans, which Wallerstein identifies as *mini-systems*. What is a "world" is thus relative to the unique composition of the time and space that we are speaking of (Wallerstein 1991: 135–48).[2] It is only in the modern period that the world-system is truly global, for it is only at this time in history, beginning with the long sixteenth century, that we may say our unit of analysis is neither a tribe, a clan, a city-state, nor an empire, but a system of multiple political units unified by one world-economy. World-empire, on the other hand, is characterized by a political center with a simple division of labor and multiple cultures that are syncretically interlinked by a unified imperial order. This formation is radically different from the modern world-system, where the absence of a political center together with a complex, yet singular, international division of labor, is the defining feature (Wallerstein 1984: 153).[3] These are the two world-systems that Paul and Herzl must navigate when negotiating their identities, and they each inform the social context for our comparisons of these two great Jewish historical figures.

Wallerstein's distinctions are a useful starting point for our attempt to show how Paul and Herzl negotiated their identities in two radically different *worlds*: Paul in a vibrant world-empire and Herzl in our modern world-system. In the age of world-empires, identities functioned in a world characterized by unified political structures, with the inhabitants feeling great pressure to construct identities of a universalistic type. Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas Hall, in

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2. See also Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall (1995: 109–35).

3. Wallerstein's clearest discussion of this topic is his chapter "Theoretical Reprise" (1974: 346–57).

their book *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems* (1997), provide a clear explanation of what may have informed this pressure towards universalism for a person like Paul in the first century. They argue that trade diasporas during this period were linked to trade ecumenes, a world Paul is clearly a part of as we will shortly discuss, whom in the process become agents of "a cross-cultural integrating force," performing as a "specialized ethnic group." As such, they became influential social actors, establishing "cross-cultural understanding…sufficient to underwrite long distance trade" (p. 168).[4] In the modern world-system, on the other hand, characterized by an interstate system with multiple national identities, the inhabitants are under great stress to produce a particularistic identity, since an ideology of race and difference dominates. Once each "people" had been constructed as naturally, racially, and culturally belonging to a specific group, the idea of a state, at least for those perceived to be most civilized, followed soon thereafter. After years of painful efforts to be included as a rightful member of the "civilized" world, Herzl realized that, if Jews were to be regarded as "civilized," a Jewish state was essential. This realization, I believe, is what informed his conversion-like episode and gradually pushed him towards his desired Israel in the flesh.

In the next section, I begin the analysis with Paul in the age of world-empires, proceeding on to Herzl in the age of the modern world-system in the third section, with the intention of comparing the patterns of identity formation in these two radically different world-systems. This analysis will allow us to understand the manner in which these two figures negotiated their identities so as to assimilate towards power, with Paul using the symbol of Christ to shed his Jewishness and thereby assimilate into a universalistic Hellenistic culture, and Herzl using Zionism to shed his "Orientalness" and thereby assimilate into European culture.

II. NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN A WORLD-EMPIRE: PAUL AND THE JEWISH QUESTION IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

> There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.
>
> *Apostle Paul*

4. Chase-Dunn and Hall are here referring specifically to the Muslim trade diaspora. But I think the similarities between the Jewish Diaspora of the first century and that of the Muslims in the seventh century allow for a more general statement on trade diasporas. See for example the work of Jerry H. Bentley (1993).

Understanding Paul's Conversion to Christianity in the Context of the Greco-Roman Empire

At the time of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus in the latter half of the first century of the Common Era (c.e.), the Roman Empire was undergoing major political and economic changes. Later in this period the old pagan, pluralistic cults of the Roman empire would begin to decline. The period has been described as an "age of military anarchy" when, in an attempt to beat back the enemies of Rome, emperor after emperor restructured the empire. As a result, the state apparatus was radically transformed from one based on a multiple-city-state foundation to that of a centralized bureaucratic state.[5] Without the traditional federation of city-states, each of which was a partially self-governing unit within the larger Roman orbit, the old theological view of the world was coming into crisis. The official cultus was essentially bound up with the institutions of the city-state, and now that the latter had lost their quasi-independent status, the state was in danger of being left without any religious foundation. It was this crisis that would finally push the elites of the empire to look favorably on a religious movement that was more in touch with the new socioeconomic reality, a movement that would culminate in the conversion of Constantine several centuries after Paul. I maintain that the emerging Jewish Christian movement, led by Paul, would eventually fulfill the needs of the emerging social structure. As Christopher Dawson (1954) points out:

> The new unitary state required a religion of a more universal character than the polytheistic cults the city-state possessed, and, as a matter of fact, we observe…a tendency towards a vague semi-philosophic monotheism in pagan society.… The Church was the one living creative force in the spiritual life of the age. It brought to society just those elements…of which the Empire itself stood most in need. (pp. 42–43)

Geoffrey Barraclough, in his book *The Medieval Papacy* (1979), makes this point even more forcefully, when he argues that "[Christianity] was an instrument of cohesion, a pillar of the imperial structure, a 'state religion' to underpin [the] government," which did "not wish to leave schism or division in any place" (pp. 21–22). I argue below that, as a Diasporic Jew having witnessed firsthand the limits of the old structure, Paul was pulled into and attracted toward the emerging idea of a unifying Deity, a universal Christian God.

5. This is the thesis of Christopher H. Dawson (1954: 28–52).

But before we discuss this we need to understand the difficult first-century world in which Paul lived.[6] The hostility of the Greco-Roman world in the first century of the Common Era must have been stressful to the Jews of the Diaspora. During this first century, as was the case earlier, there were "many Jews traveling the highways and trade routes," traveling long distances and visiting major cities, not only in the Hellenistic east, but "as far west as Italy and North Africa" (White 1990: 60). These Jews, accustomed to the larger Greco-Roman culture, must have been unsatisfied with maintaining a strictly Judeocentered interpretation of the Law, especially an interpretation that did not permit them to worship their deity as members of the larger communities with which they were in regular contact. Indeed, as was the case with many cities outside of Palestine that contained a large Jewish population, there tended to be a relaxed attitude to Jewish Law, where Greeks, Romans and Jews intermingled in worshipping the God of Israel together in the same synagogues (Meeks 1984). No doubt this was a response of the Jews of the Diaspora to the fact of "living as aliens, as an ethnic and religious minority, in the dominant culture of urban life in the Greek east and then Rome itself" (White 1990: 60). But running parallel to this negative pressure was the difficult issue a strict interpretation of the Law presented to the Jews of these Greco-Roman cities, especially those Laws that insisted on maintaining a clear separation from the gentiles in worshiping "the God of Israel." Something had to give, and the result was the eventual break between Judaism and Pauline Christianity.

This was especially true for Paul, who found unacceptable the idea that participation in any given community ought to exclude all other people and only be available to those defined as insiders. As noted in the Gospels' account of Paul's struggle with the Jewish-Christians of Palestine, Jews that practiced "those rites that are special, performed by and marked in the body," were misled by their shortsighted commitment to maintaining their religion as "an affair of a particular tribal group, 'Israel in the flesh.'" As Boyarin (1994) remarks on this theme:

> The insistence on the literal, the physical, is a stubborn resistance to the universal, a tenacious clinging to difference. By substituting a spiritual interpretation for a physical ritual, Paul at one stroke was saying that the literal Israel, "according to the flesh," is not the ultimate Israel; there is an allegorical "Israel in the spirit." The practices of the particular Jewish people are not what the Bible speaks of, but faith, the allegorical meaning of those practices. It was Paul's genius to transcend "Israel in the flesh." (pp. 37–38)

[6] In discussing Paul in this section, I draw heavily on my forthcoming essay, "The Social Origins of Universalistic Monotheism: A Comparative Analysis of Paul and Muhammad." *Journal of Religion and Society* (forthcoming, Summer 2006).

In Paul's interpretation of the Torah, from circumcision and dietary regulations to Sabbath observance and other practices, the laws were no longer applicable to the faithful, for faith in Christ Jesus had overturned all those practices that were once the property of a particular ethnic group. The laws had been replaced with a universal message for all of humankind. Thus for Paul faith in the Resurrection of Jesus was a revolutionary moment that had theologically overturned those Laws that were applicable only to the Jews. "It remains, after all, a valorization of difference," according to Boyarin's provocative observation, one that Paul sought to transcend, and "is precisely the motivating force behind Paul's entire conversion experience and mission" (Boyarin 1994: 54). Rather than clinging to difference, Paul preached its erasure, maintaining a strong stance against all those Jewish Christians, especially the messianic Christian Jews in Jerusalem. His persistence on this issue was due to his desire to subordinate the ideal of difference, found in the notion of a "chosen people," the Jews, and replace it with the ideal of human unification. The Christ event, the Resurrection of Jesus, was "the vehicle for this transformation of humanity" (Boyarin 1994: 106).

The early Jewish Christian community at the time of Paul adopted strategies early on that were pertinent to its future success. The one in which I am interested here is the manner by which this early Jewish-Christian strategy transformed Jewish monotheism from one of being identified with a specific community (the Jews) to another, more abstract monotheism having no affiliations to any one group of any kind (see Long 1991; and Strange 1991). I will focus on first century Pauline Christianity, where this innovation became incorporated into the Christian ethos, making it finally possible for a person like Paul to live an identity that is more conducive to living in a world-empire. This period interests me insofar as it will clarify the process by which the early Jewish Christian community in the first century c.e. radically altered the traditional Jewish understanding of the sacred. In doing so, this diverging Jewish sect turned Judaism on its head and changed forever the relationship of the one chosen people to God, temple, and land. After such changes, land and people were reshaped by the Christian movement, in effect making monotheism more palatable to empire and its Greco-Roman inhabitants.

What is most interesting to keep in mind is the fact that, no matter how universalistic a message the Hebrew Scriptures offer, it is obvious that they represent the victory and success of those redactors who are interested in portraying the struggles and aspirations of a particular people under great stress.[7] The uni-

[7] Redactors are the unknown author(s) who assembled, selected, and edited the Pentateuch, otherwise known as the Five Books of Moses; see the recent book by Richard Elliott Friedman (1997). The fact that there were redactors is an interesting topic in it-

versalists, although present throughout ancient Israel (the best example can be found in the Hellenistic period as many authors have shown),[8] lost the struggle and remained marginal within the Hebrew Scriptures. It is only with the rise of Christianity and Islam that we see the universalists succeeding and transforming the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures in their favor.

This social context is absolutely crucial for our analysis of the emergence of this new Jewish Christian sect in relation to Paul's teachings, for it will produce a strategy that positions itself in opposition to the victors of this early struggle, with the end product being a universalistic monotheism that performs extremely well in a world-empire social environment. According to the biblical account, from the moment of the conquest of the territory of Canaan to the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., a period of roughly twelve centuries, the Israelites ruled their territories outright for only a fraction of that time. For most of it they were, at best, vassals of the great superpowers that surrounded them. This is a profoundly significant fact that is all too easily left out when discussing this biblical period. Even those moments when they enjoyed outright "independence," their status depended largely upon the balance of power of the great superpowers of the ancient Middle East. Indeed, it was usually the case that when this balance of power disintegrated and was replaced by one major power, as was the case with the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C.E., with the Babylonians in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E., and with the Romans in the first century C.E., the Israelites found their world turned upside down with their lands dispossessed and their people sent into exile.

The social context in which the Hebrew Scriptures came to fruition, therefore, made possible the peculiar religious meaning that the land, and specifically Jerusalem, would come to symbolize in Jewish social and religious discourse. It is "improbable that the Hebrew prophets would have asserted their view of the chosen people and the Holy Land so clearly if the Assyrians, Egyptians, and other great powers of the time had not existed" (McNeil 1991: 162). Consequently, the Israelite production of what came to be known as the *Torah*, with its historical account of a unique people who have made a contract, or covenant, with the One God, has to be contextualized in this political environment.

The most significant "peculiar" practices of the Jews were, undoubtedly, the covenant and the Promised Land. Both were based "on a particularistic idea and

self. Obviously they selected and edited scrolls that accommodated their contemporary social and political concerns.

8. For further elaborations on this theme, see M. Hengel (1974); and Lee I. Levine (1998: chapters 1–2).

provided the foundation on which the Israelites built their nation" in the face of international realities (Long 1991: 21). Thus one can say that "God's promise to favor the Israelites in return for their allegiance and obedience helped form them into a people by setting them apart from others," especially from the empires that looked for every opportunity to incorporate them formally and directly (Long 1991: 21).

Indeed, it was these so-called "peculiar practices" that Tacitus and other writers of the ancient world despised. Tacitus's statement is revealing in this respect:

> [Jewish customs], which are at once perverse and disgusting, owe their strength to their very badness.... Among themselves they are inflexibly honest and ever ready to show compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves, nothing is unlawful. Circumcision was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men. *Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country.* (cited in Simon 1996; emphasis added)

Living amongst people with these attitudes, it is not surprising that Hellenized Jews and their early Christian converts took on the project of adapting Judaism to bring it more in line with the larger world they lived in and, in the process, made the Jewish notion of the One God more attractive to their Greco-Roman clientele. The fact that they emphasized more and more the universal strand of monotheism at the expense of the particular can be seen, therefore, as an adaptation to Greco-Roman philosophical and religious ideals (Boyarin 1994: 58). By calling into question the particularity of Judaism to the Jews, they fine-tuned their message for an already existing Greco-Roman community that had similar ideas about God (Boyarin 1994: 58).

But elements of a non-particularistic form of monotheism were already quite visible before the emergence of the Christian sect. Greek culture, as early as the fifth century B.C.E., claimed Zeus to be the God who goes by many names. The Romans also were well on their way to framing an officially syncretistic form of political universalism, as James Strange (1991) convincingly argues. Martin Hengel has also shown that, immediately preceding the emergence of the Christian movement in the second half of the first century C.E., there already existed a great appreciation for the Jewish notion of monotheism on the part of Greek philosophy. The alleged abstraction of the Godhead greatly appealed to many literate Greeks and Romans. He concludes from this:

> The universal religious attitude of learned men which developed in the Hellenistic period through *"theocracy"* regarded the *different religions as in the end only manifestations of the one deity*. Thoughtful Greeks … may have acknowledged Jewish belief in its unfalsified form to be a high stage of spirituality, and Greek philosophy with an interest in religion had long been on the way to monotheism.… (Hengel 1974: 261)

The Stoics as early as the fourth century B.C.E. succeeded in pushing their empire towards monotheism. According to Zeno in Citium of Cyprus (335–263 B.C.E.), the whole universe was governed by divine reason, "and men should therefore live in conformity with it and with the order of nature established by it." A saying of Zeno also presents the view "that men should not live in a state of division according to separate cities and peoples and differing rules of justice; rather all men should be viewed as belonging to one state and community and sharing one life and order."[9] Chrysippus (280–207 B.C.E.) would extend this vision to the word *polis* by equating it with the universe so that god and humans were in harmony.

This had a powerful spiritual effect throughout the empire, one that Hellenized Jews would soon hear loud and clear. Indeed, a comparison of Plutarch's writings with Paul's demonstrates just how influential the idea of universalism was to the literate population of Rome. Compare these two well-known verses: The first belongs to Plutarch, who argues that the gods of Egypt should be preserved as "our common heritage" and not made the peculiar property of the Egyptians:

> Nor do we regard the gods as different among different peoples nor as barbarian and Greek and as southern or northern. But just as the sun, moon, heaven, earth and sea are common to all, though they are given various names by the varying peoples, so it is with the one reason [logos] which orders these things and the one providence which has charge of them, and the assistant powers which are assigned to everything.… (cited in Griffiths 1989: 248)

Paul's address to the people of Athens, narrated in *Acts*, is remarkably similar:

> Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Aeropagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you." (*Acts* 17: 22–23)[10]

[9] The last two citations are from Griffiths (1989: 237–58).

[10] The Paul of *Acts* repeats this theme regularly, as this example illustrates: "We also are men, of like nature with you, and bring you good news…[of] a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations

Again Paul returns to the same theme, this time making a direct connection:

> Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God.…You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus.… There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3: 26–28)

Notice the commonality between Plutarch's statement that we do not "regard the gods as different among different peoples nor as barbarian and Greek and as southern or northern" and Paul's assertion that "there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

Hence, the Christian conception of the One God having no affiliation to any particular group or location or place fits Paul's drive to simplify deity worship quite nicely. After the Jewish notion of a chosen people had yielded to the universal "brotherhood of man," and the ties with the older Jewish center in Jerusalem had been broken, the Deity of this Christian Jewish sect, pushed aggressively by Paul, was placed in an excellent position to receive the attention of Hellenized Jews looking to assimilate into the larger world they called home.[11] Paul, a Hellenized Jew himself, must have felt these same anxieties; his theological innovations and his peculiar reading of the Christ event support this interpretation and were, I believe, his way of dealing with this fact. For Paul, this meant taking the message not only to Jews on the margins of the Greco-Roman world, but also directly to its center of power, to the land of Gentiles stretched throughout the empire and into the imperial city of Rome itself. This was his way of assimilating to power in the age of world empires.

Paul and Jerusalem: The Logistics of Sacred Sites in a World-Empire

Before bringing Christianity to Rome, though, Paul had to revise the strong bond established by Jewish discourse between the covenant and land, particularly the city of Jerusalem, with its connection to a specific people, in this case, of course, the Jews.[12] W.D. Davies asked the legitimate question whether Paul

he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons.…" (*Acts* 14:15–18).

[11] For an extended analysis of how Christians transformed the meaning of Jerusalem and sacred space, see Samman (2006).

[12] Rodney Stark provides a very useful analysis of this process in his book *The Rise of Christianity* (1997). For an analysis of a similar experience in our modern world, see Steinberg (1965).

was the earliest Jewish-Christian to develop the view that the Christian community had now replaced the Jerusalem Temple as the dwelling place of God. As a Jewish-Christian he seems radically to reject the Holy Sanctuary at Jerusalem. The church for Paul:

> is the fulfillment of the hopes of Judaism for the Temple: the presence of the Lord has moved from the Temple to the Church. It is easy to conclude that there was a deliberate rejection by Paul of the Holy Space in favor of the Holy People—the Church. He conceived the presence of the Divine apart from holy space. Whereas the Temple in Jerusalem was seen as central to many of the Jews of his time, for Paul it was important to stress that the Divine presence is not confined to the Temple but found in every place. (Davies 1974: 186)[13]

Hence, the a-territorial quality that it shared with paganism, unconfined by a specific place and, most of all, free of any affiliation to an ethnic group, was a method that Paul and some of the early Jewish-Christians used to move their newly founded Jewish sect in a new direction, one that would fit well with the Greco-Roman practice of Temple worship.

This theological presentation of Paul's vision of the Holy Land is important for our discussion because it sets in motion an important development in Christian thought that would allow a more universalistic identity to fit in line with a world-empire. Paul adopted a type of monotheism that could accommodate itself to the network of imperial cult worship that was widespread throughout the Greco-Roman landscape. Such an analysis is useful for any attempt to answer the perplexing question of how the new Jewish-Christian sect overtook the imperial cult and became *the* religion of empire, a process that is all the more baffling given the fact that this religious movement had its beginnings in a peripheral corner of the empire. The early Jewish Christian sect mobilized Roman pagan strategies as a way to present Judaism in ways familiar to the non-Jewish, Greco-Roman culture.[14]

Paul's project was the initial major step in this direction. Such accommodations would come at a high price, causing many conflicts between the Apostles

[13.] As Davies argued, "it is ubiquitous, unconfined by space" (1974: 186).

[14.] I found the following books especially useful in explaining the process of synthesizing Judaism with the religions of pagan Rome: Rodney Stark (1994) and the earlier writings of Adolph Harnack, especially his *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries* (1908); Arthur D. Nock (1933); Ramsay MacMullen (1984); and Robert Wilken (1992).

as is well known.[15] Paul, of course, was a central figure in this early struggle of the church. As his letters testify, the tensions between him and Palestinian Jewish-Christians take up much of his writing space. But there were many others who would come to share his desire to accommodate Christian theology to the larger Roman world. Origen (185–253) of Alexandria, one of the first great theologians of Christianity writing in the early third century, for instance, would follow in Paul's footsteps and build on Paul's writings on Jerusalem and the Holy Land.[16] These early Christians would slowly develop a route that led them not to Jerusalem, the sacred center of the Jews, but straight into that other, imperial sacred center: Rome.

Land is essential to this transcendence of difference. The thought of the land in Judaism is inextricably bound up with that of the Temple and Jerusalem. The a-territoriality of the Apostle Paul's treatment of the Jewish people seems to reemerge in his interpretation of the "church as the temple of God: holy space seems to have been 'transubstantiated' into a community of persons, the Body of Christ" (Davies 1974: 185–86). But nowhere is this clearer than when Paul brings into the Temple courts an uncircumcised Greek. Here he is overturning the older Jewish linking of Temple with ethnicity. In the Old Testament, as discussed above, we learn that the Temple was closed to the Gentiles, where only those who were circumcised were permitted to enter. Paul consciously disregards this prohibition and as a result is attacked, denounced, arrested, and finally executed:

> When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place."... The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. (*Acts* 21: 27–30)

I believe this was Paul's way of protesting the equation of the Temple with a particular people. As a Hellenized Jew, born and raised in Tarsus, he would have known that sacred sites were rarely the property of a single people, but rather were open to any who chose to enter them. But this example also illustrates the differing cultural practices between the Hellenized Jews of the Diaspora and the

[15.] For this theme see the overview of early Christianity by W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (1984: chapters 3–4) as well as Paula Fredriksen (1988).

[16.] Robert Wilken (1992) provides an overview.

more conservative wing of this emerging sect, with the latter, not surprisingly, living in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

This development in early Christianity included, among others, a theology of a land that is hostile to anything resembling the Jerusalem of this world. The emphasis here was on refocusing the attention of the Christian community away from any "Jewish contamination"; this included the land of Judea itself, which was too closely identified with the Jews for the taste of the new, increasingly Gentile movement. Indeed, we may go so far as to say that, for the first three centuries of Christianity, Jerusalem and the land of Palestine, except for a few curious travelers, was insignificant to the Christian imagination (Walker 1996). What mattered were Greco-Roman cities like Antioch, Corinth, Galatia and, of course, Rome itself, where real power lay. *For the new Jewish Christian sect to be successful in this Gentile-dominated empire, to sell its brand of Judaism, it had to shed the skin of its Jewishness and clothe itself with a more Gentile-friendly (Greco-Roman) vision*. The "flight" away from Jerusalem was an important part of this shedding.

As a result, Paul and early Christianity broke decisively with the Jewish community and slowly disappeared into the Greco-Roman world, only to re-emerge several centuries later as the rulers of the empire. For the early Jewish-Christians the practices of the Jews in the pre-Resurrection period had to be overturned. In other words, "Israel in the flesh," for these Hellenized Jewish-Christians, was now viewed as a nuisance that must be overcome.

Thus, as an example, for the Christians of the first three centuries C.E., "Jerusalem below," as one early Gentile Christian pilgrim remarks, "was worthless now because of the Jerusalem Above."[17] Christians in this early period "thought holy places were what Jews and pagans had; Christians knew better" (Markus 1994: 258). Jesus, after all, promised to his followers a "much greater land, truly holy and beloved of God, not located in Judea." On this point, the Gospel of John is very explicit; in chapter four Jesus is having a discussion with a Samaritan woman:

> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem." (John 4: 19–20)

[17.] This pilgrim was one of the few early Christians to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; see Karen Armstrong (1997: 170–71). For pilgrimages in this early period see John Wilkinson (1977).

Indeed, no clearer distinction can be made than the way the New Testament overturns, quite consciously one might add, the Hebrew Bible's understanding of land. "In the Old Testament," as Connor Cruise O'Brien reminds us, "it is God who offers land to Abraham, and Abraham accepts"; but "in the New Testament it is Satan who offers land to Jesus, and Jesus refuses" (O'Brien 1987: 3–4). Moreover, for these Gentile Christians "Jerusalem was now the Guilty City because it had rejected Christ" (Armstrong 1997: 171). Paul's mission to transcend "Israel in the flesh," together with his desire to accommodate Judaism to his Gentile way of being, had come full circle and was now fully completed, eventually even turning the heads of the most privileged and powerful sectors of his world-empire.

III. Negotiating Identity in the Modern World-System: Theodore Herzl and the Jewish Question

> We will have a university and an opera [in the Jewish state], and you will attend the opera in your swallow-tailed coat with a white gardenia in your button-hole.
>
> *Theodore Herzl*[18]

Unlike Paul's experience of living in a world-empire where identity felt most at home when it took on a universalistic quality, Theodor Herzl would experience a radically different world. As mentioned above, in our modern world-system identity is much more at home when it takes on a particularistic character. Here we will deal with the transformations of the modern period, where we see the development of revived and powerful particularistic forces that are antithetical to the universalistic visions of the older world-empires such as the one that Paul lived under. In a sense, Israel in the flesh comes back with a vengeance here, challenging the very same forces that for centuries relegated its particularistic faith to the margins. Only this time Israel in the flesh is not the weakling of the old, struggling for its existence among powerful empires, but is itself the driving force of modern history, a small yet powerful piranha eating away the big white whale. To gain cultural power in the modern world, a reimagining of Israel in the flesh, especially the type found in the core of this social system, was absolutely essential, a message that Herzl clearly recognized after his conversion of 1894.

The old world-empires of Paul's time have come and gone, and in their place we see a radically transformed world by the time Herzl invented Zionism. By this

[18.] Citation from Kornberg (1993: 179).

time in world history, the ecumenical nature of world-empires had disintegrated both materially and politically, before disappearing entirely in the nineteenth century, producing in its wake a drastic transformation in the structure, philosophy, and identity of those living in the world of multiple states. Universalistic identities similar to Paul's broke up into fragments in which ethnic and religious affinity became outwardly the basis of identity. Modernity, as it were, attacked the central nervous system of world-empires, spreading through their bodies like a cancer, and in the process leaving no organ untouched.[19] Modernity restructured every aspect of the old social order, from its class composition and trade patterns to its formal political structure and religious, gender, and ethnic identities. As a result of this decapitation, entities such as the Holy Roman Empire or the Dar al-Islam, were slowly and surely hacked to pieces, and in their place we begin to see the rise of French, German, Greek, Arab, Turkish and other nationalists.[20]

So what did this modern world-system look like from a biographical point of view? Let us explore Herzl's biography for clues about how the new world order affected this fascinating Jewish figure. As it was in Paul's time, living as a Jew in modern Europe must have been quite stressful. Whereas Paul negotiated his Jewish identity within a world-empire context, however, Jews in the modern period had to negotiate their identity in a world where "Israel in the flesh" dominated. For in the modern world-system, as Wallerstein has persuasively argued, the old world-empires, with their one political center, have been eradicated in favor of multiple states with multiple cultures (Wallerstein 1974b). Thus Herzl found himself in a radically different context from the one Paul experienced. Paul was shedding his Jewishness so that he could feel at home in a world-empire that favored Israel in the spirit over Israel in the flesh. Herzl, by contrast, in his quest to feel at home in the modern world, had returned to Israel in the flesh the better to accommodate himself to a world that was more *at ease living with a particularistic identity than with a universalistic one*, an identity that fit with the modern world, *especially when it came flavored white and European*.

The fascinating thing about Herzl is that he initially attempted to remove his Jewishness so that he could accommodate to the other particularistic identities around him (see Kornberg 1993: 13–34). Before his revelation of a Jewish state,

[19] See Wallerstein (1988) for an analysis of the last remaining world-empires in the nineteenth century as they became incorporated into the capitalist-statist system.

[20] For a theoretically sophisticated account of how the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the capitalist world-economy affected the social structure of the late 19th century and early 20th century, see Çaglar Keyder (1987). The first chapter of Keyder's book is especially useful. See also the insightful selections of essays on specific nationalisms in the Middle East in Fatma Muge Goçek (2002).

as we will see below in greater detail, he did all that he could to be Austrian and a member of "European civilization" in the same manner that Paul attempted, quite successfully one might argue, to assimilate to his Hellenistic world. But those who identified as Austrians, French, Germans, and so on viewed the Jews as utterly alien and would have nothing to do with them. To feel at home in this world, therefore, Herzl could not appropriate the same strategy as his predecessor Paul. His revelation would have to be of a very different sort. The "Gentiles" in Herzl's world often felt an urgency to return the Jews to biblical Palestine, not as a means of safeguarding the Jews, but on the anti-Semitic assumption that they should be deported to "where they belonged" (Sharif 1983). There was absolutely no space for accommodation in a world where living in the flesh was taken as the naturalized and nationalized order of things. In this naturalized world of difference, the Jew was placed outside of the Austrian, European self and identified as belonging to an "Oriental other," a race geographically and culturally far removed. As such, the Jew needed to be physically removed from the Austrian and Western body and placed in his natural habitat, the Orient.

The otherness of the European Jew in nineteenth-century Europe has been thoroughly discussed elsewhere (e.g., Cheyette 1993; Gilman 1996; Mosse 1985; Theweleit 1989), but it may help the reader to revisit the issue with a quick overview. It should be noted that many Europeans identified the Jew as essentially a radically alien, Oriental outcast living in the midst of the Western world. A case in point is the nineteenth-century debate that emerged around Benjamin Disraeli's policy toward the Ottoman Empire. Disraeli's attempt to delay the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was seen by his opponents in the British Parliament as "Jewish" because they felt that, as a Jew, he was "bound to rally automatically to the Turkish side" (Rejwan 1999). Nissim Rejwan, the author of a recent book that deals with this topic, makes the following observation: "A Jew, even a baptized Jew, they argued, remained an Oriental, and therefore, in the struggle over the Eastern Question, Disraeli's loyalties were necessarily with Asia against Europe, with Islam against Christendom" (Rejwan 1999: 115). He cites at length one of Disraeli's most bitter opponents, T. P. O'Connor:

> [T]here has been among large sections of the Jews the strongest sympathy with the Mohammedan peoples.... In the time of the Crusaders, the Jews were the friends who aided the Mohammedans in keeping back the tide of Christian invasion which was floating against the East, and in Spain the Jews were the constant friends and allies of the Moorish against the Christian inhabitants of the country. [Disraeli's] general view then upon this question of Turkey is that as a Jew he is a kinsman of the Turk, and that, as a Jew, he feels bound to make common cause with the Turk against the Christian. (cited in Rejwan 1999: 115)

The equation of the Jew with the Orient was so taken for granted that the British author of a book published in 1877 could confidently complain: "Throughout the East, the Turk and the Jew are leagued against the Christian.…Throughout Europe, the most friendly Turkish part of the press is largely in Jewish hands. It may be assumed everywhere, with the smallest class of exceptions, that the Jew is the friend of the Turk and the enemy of the Christians" (Rejwan 1999: 115). Major European intellectual figures shared these same ideas. Herder, for example, called the Jews "an Asiatic people alien to our continent." Schopenhauer repeated this anti-Semitic idea by claiming, "they are and remain an alien, oriental people, and must therefore count only as resident aliens." Sombart later would appropriate the same view into his own work by calling the Jews "an Oriental folk transplanted into an environment both climatically and ethnically strange, wherein their best powers came to fruition." Finally, Rathenau perceived the Jewish people residing in Europe as "an Asiatic horde on the sands of the Mark."[21] Many Jews residing in Europe also accepted this anti-Semitic notion. Arnold Zweig, for example, argued that Jews were unsuited to European life: "We cannot do without Asia. We shall never be redeemed until we are back home there." For him, a Jew assimilated to Europe had betrayed Asia, "the inner Orient in which he is rooted" (Robertson 1999: 437). In his book, *The Face of the Eastern Jew*, Zweig further expanded on this idea by arguing that the customs and habits of Jews regarded as strange in the Occident would only become intelligible if seen as Oriental: "Anyone who was ever allowed into a mosque in an Islamic country during prayer will recognize the Jew as an Oriental" (Robertson 1999: 430).

The emergence of Zionism, therefore, needs to be understood in this context. Zionism as practiced by its best known proponents—who were responding to this European anti-Semitic conception—was strategically positioned to resolve the outsider status of the Jew, to transform the Jew from an Oriental other to a respectable and civilized inhabitant of "Western civilization." In the case of every Zionist leader, the objective was to search for ways by which the Jew could look and feel European, shed his Oriental skin, and receive an entrance ticket into European civilization. As the example of Disraeli suggests, the identification of the Jew as Oriental must have been quite unsettling for the emerging Zionist movement; indeed it was the concept of the Jew as outsider that the early Zionists aimed to change. The consequences of this cannot be overestimated, for

[21.] The citations of Herder, Schopenhauer, Sombart, and Rathenau are all taken from Ritchie Robertson (1999: 429).

the process of defining themselves out of the Orient and into the Occident had repercussions for the perception not only of European Jews but also of Eastern Jews (Segev 1998; Shohat 1988) and the now very orientalized Arabs (Said 1992). Zionists thus took it upon themselves to embrace and adopt the Western racist discourse about the "Oriental other" by strategically placing the Jew and his interests as European.

This assimilation can be clearly observed in Zionism's best known personality, Theodor Herzl. Indeed, his life work seems to have been marked by an obsession to resolve the otherness of the Jew, to find a new mode of assimilation that would bring Jews self-respect and honor in the eyes of Gentiles (Kornberg 1993: 160). The resolution of this Jewish dilemma came to him in the notion of the Jewish state. To remake the Jew on a Gentile model, and finally to solve the "Jewish Question," Herzl proposed the notion of a separate and independent Jewish state. He blamed the fact that Jews had been despised and entangled in a web of Oriental-like characteristics on their statelessness (Herzl 1988 [1896]). Their rejection by Europe was thus viewed as a natural consequence of the failure of the Jews to develop their own society, to empower themselves through the vehicle of the state. In order to negate this European rejection and to solve this Jewish dilemma, Herzl viewed it as essential to create a state in which Jews could finally pull themselves out of an Oriental-like existence.

For Herzl, the central objective of creating a future state was not only to emancipate the Jews from the grip of the ghetto, pogroms, and other forms of persecution, but also to create and fashion a new Jew on the model of a European. Only then could the Jew finally be recognized as the equal of his European colleagues. After the election of 1895 in Vienna, for instance, Herzl declared: "In the election the majority of non-Jewish citizens—no, all of them—declare that they do not recognize us as Austro-Germans.… All right, we shall move away; but over there, too, we shall only be Austrians" (Herzl, cited in Kornberg 1993: 178). This inverted logic made much sense to Herzl, for it captured his desire to be accepted by his beloved Germans. As a contemporary biographer of Herzl explains, "Only by evacuating Europe would Herzl come to be recognized as an Austro-German. Concurrently, only by leaving would Jewish bitterness toward their European homelands dissipate and turn once more into love" (Kornberg 1993: 178). Departing from Europe, therefore, was Herzl's way not of renouncing Europe and claiming his difference from the German and European self, but rather of identifying as a European in order to eliminate once and for all the distinction between Jew and Gentile. Kornberg's remarks on Herzl are telling in this respect: "Even spit and polish 'Aryans' now admired Jews" (1993: 179). The new Jewish state, as Herzl envisioned it, would not make a decisive break with Europe. On the contrary, its establishment would bring Jews respect and would

initiate a new era of "forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation" between Gentile and Jew.

In his utopian novel *Old-New Land*, Herzl portrays several distinguished "Aryan" characters admiring Jews for their great achievements in a once-barren land. The novel begins with two characters, a German Jew and a German Christian, visiting Palestine in 1902; upon their arrival at the Port of Jaffa, they are repulsed by the miserable condition in which it lies. The port is described as an Oriental backwater, a place of dirt, squalor, idleness, and filth: "The alley was dirty, neglected, full of vile odors" (Herzl 1960: 42). The inhabitants are not only poor but dark and repulsive as well: "Poor Turks, dirty Arabs, timid Jews lounged about—indolent, beggarly, hopeless. A peculiar, tomblike odor of mold caught one's breath … The inhabitants of the blackish Arab villages looked like brigands. Naked children played in the dirty alleys" (Herzl 1960: 42). So displeased is the Jewish character by these sights that he proclaims "If this is our land…it has declined like our people." The German Kingcourt agrees: "Yes, it's pretty bad…. But much could be done here with afforestation, if half a million young giant cedars were planted—they shoot up like asparagus. This country needs nothing but water and shade to have a very great future." The Jew, intrigued by his statement, asks the German for a clarification: "And who is to bring water and shade here?" The German replies, somewhat annoyed by the obvious: "The Jew!" (Herzl 1960: 43). Then after twenty years of Jewish productivity and hard work within Palestine, the European characters return to the same port and find a completely modern, magnificent city, one very similar to any found in Europe: "Kingcourt, big things that we don't know about have happened while we've been away … What happened to old Palestine? … How changed it all is," cried the Jew Friedrich:

> There's been a miracle here…. Thousands of white villas gleamed out of luxuriant green gardens…. A magnificent city had been built beside the sapphire-blue Mediterranean. The magnificent stone dams showed the harbor for what it was: the safest and most convenient port in the eastern Mediterranean. Craft of every shape and size, flying the flags of all nations, lay sheltered there. (Herzl 1960: 56–59)

Stunned by this complete turnaround, the two characters are satisfied by how closely the new Jewish state resembles the European civilized world: "The people…seem more civilized than we do…. Just look up at the cosmopolitan traffic in the streets. And all the well-dressed people!" The cosmopolitanism and diverse population of the renovated port, however, do not distract the visitors from its now very European-like semblance: "Brilliant Oriental robes mingled with the sober costumes of the Occident, *but the latter predominated*. There were

many Chinese, Persians and Arabs in the streets, *but the city itself seemed thoroughly European*" (Herzl 1960: 59–61; emphasis added).

In his other writings, Herzl clearly indicated that he wanted to transport the very idea of Europe to the Levant, where along with football and cricket, "I shall transport over there genuine Viennese cafes. With these small expedients I ensure the desirable illusion of the old environment."[22] In his *Jewish State* he expands on this point by reassuring his readers that living in an Oriental sector of the world does not mean that "we" have to give up "our" European habits, customs, and comforts:

> Whoever has seen anything of the world knows that these little daily customs can easily be transplanted everywhere…. There are English hotels in Egypt and on the mountain-crest in Switzerland, Viennese cafes in South Africa, French theatres in Russia, German operas in America, and the best Bavarian beer in Paris. When we journey out of Egypt again we shall not leave the fleshpots behind. Every man will find his customs again in the local groups, but they will be better, more beautiful, and more agreeable than before. (Herzl 1988 [1896]: 135)

> Dull brains might…imagine that this exodus would be from civilized regions into the desert. That is not the case. It will be carried out in the midst of civilization. We shall not revert to a lower stage, we shall rise to a higher one. We shall not dwell in mud huts; we shall build new more beautiful and more modern houses. (Herzl 1988 [1896]: 82)

A discussion with his German Jewish friend Richard Beer-Hofmann shows how fully he envisioned his new Jewish state to be a European transplant: "We will have a university and an opera [in the Jewish state] and you will attend the opera in your swallow-tailed coat with a white gardenia in your button-hole" (cited in Kornberg 1993: 179).

Notice the systematic way in which Herzl projects the Jew into the European, civilized, modern construct and always at the expense of the "Oriental" other, a strategy that we see in the very similar case of the Irish immigrants upon entering the U.S. in the nineteenth-century when, as Ignatiev (1995) reminds us, they constructed themselves in opposition to the black slaves in an assimilationist project "to enter the white race…" (p. 2). Herzl and the movement that has come to be known through his work as Zionism clearly positioned the Jew as a member of the Occident and sharing no qualities with the Oriental and

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22. Citation from Geoffrey Wheatcroft (1996: 85).

thinking of himself and his interests as European.[23] By fusing the Jew with the German/European/Western/civilized amalgam, Zionism established a precedent that would help cement its newly acclaimed Occidental status.[24] In this way, the state of Israel would come to be seen as a floating space in an ocean of barbarism, one that was somehow geographically located in the Orient while remaining in Europe. Although embedded physically in the hard, tough soil of the East, its *Geist* was somehow oblivious of this environment, belonging instead to "Western Civilization." Ben-Gurion's statement that "the State of Israel is a part of the Middle East only in geography" recalls the image, described by G.H. Jansen (1971), "of the hydroponically-reared plant, its roots floating in a chemical solution, not embedded in the earth" (p. 219).[25] The problem, however, is that Israel is on earth, just not in the Orient according to Zionists like Herzl.

Appropriating this discourse in their quest to create a Jewish state, Herzl and the Zionist movement accepted only half of the equation of their anti-Semitic Gentiles: the need for the Jewish people to return to the "Promised Land." Ironically, they readily accepted the highly anti-Semitic notion of Jews as alien to any Western nation along with its corollary, that Jews have a natural, national identity of their own: Israel in the flesh. What they rejected, however, was identification with the "Oriental other." After settling in what they regarded as an ocean of barbarism, they worked tirelessly to negate their "Oriental" stigma and to construct an identity informed by European supremacy over the "Oriental" (Khazoom 2003). For Zionism's most significant thinkers, the European

[23] This idea comes from David Roediger (1991: 12): "White labour does not just receive and resist racist ideas but embraces, adopts and, at times, murderously acts upon those ideas. The problem is not just that the white working class is at critical junctures manipulated into racism, but that it comes to think of itself and its interests as white."

[24] For a contemporary view of what I call Occidentalization, see Thomas Cahill's recent book *The Gift of the Jews* (1998), in which he continually refers to the Jews as the inventors of Western Civilization: "By 'we' I mean the usual 'we' of the late-twentieth-century." He directly links "we" with "our" Western civilization on numerous occasions, as, for example, here: "The people of the Western World, whose peculiar but vital mentality has come to infect every culture on earth, so that, in a startlingly precise sense, all humanity is now willy-nilly caught up in this 'we.' For better or worse, the role of the West in humanity's history is singular. Because of this, the role of the Jews, the inventors of Western culture, is also singular" (p. 3).

[25] Indeed, Ben-Gurion wrote an article for the French paper *Le Monde* in 1958, titled "Israel, État Occidental."

Jewish settlers constituted a nation like France or Germany, radically unlike the "Oriental" inhabitants of the region they wish to remove. The "Jewish Question," therefore, was resolved by placing the Jews as a race in a nation of their own away from Europe while still holding onto the idea that the Jew belonged to the Western, or civilized, world. It is by this means that Herzl and his Zionist followers transferred the Jew from a status outside the Western concept of the self to one inside, a change that is clearly apparent in Herzl's writings. This is also, I believe, the route that was most readily available in his time, for as Wallerstein (1998) has argued, national identities "are the invention of the contemporary imagination," the product of a very recent development stemming from the institutional requirements of the modern world-system (p. 55).[26] One has to make sure, however, that such an invention is of a type that buys one the right kind of cultural capital, an idea that Herzl heard loud and clear and acted upon with great energy.

IV. CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

The similarities that emerge between Paul and Herzl from our analysis are stunning. Both Paul and Herzl, living under circumstances that were difficult for minorities, attempted to assimilate to the dominant group of their respective world-system, their efforts culminating in Christianity and Zionism respectively. Paul focused on the Resurrection event as a way of making his Jewish identity more palatable to the elites of the Greco-Roman world. Herzl similarly adopted the state idea in order to make his Jewish identity respectable to the Gentiles of Austria and Europe. Each man chose a strategy that allowed him to move away from Israel in the flesh, Paul becoming more Hellenized and Herzl becoming more Occidentalized. That is, Paul aggressively pursued a strategy of assimilation after his conversion to Christianity by radically reinterpreting Jewish Scriptures such as to provide a base for his newly found sect to flourish in the Greco-Roman world. Likewise, Herzl attempted to eradicate what he saw as a defect in the Oriental-like quality of the stateless Jew, proposing a disciplinary state that would produce a new Jew in the image of the civilized West. For both men such strategies articulated a discourse of mobility that they believed would provide their imagined community with the means to join the privileged sectors of their world.

[26] As the French philosopher Ernst Renan has said, "A nation is a group of people united by a mistaken view about the past and a hatred of their neighbors" (cited in Avi Shlaim 2001: xiii).

In short, we can say that both Paul and Herzl reoriented their identities by defining the Jew and his interests as European or Hellenic. Herzl was the more explicit of the two, in that on multiple occasions he referred to the practical purpose that the Jew, if given a state, would serve for the Western colonial powers, as a famous statement of his makes clear: By creating a state in the Middle East, he asserted on behalf of the Jews, "We should there form a part of a wall of defense for Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilization against barbarism."[27] The discourse of "the Jewish protecting the West from the Eastern, primitive world" became one of the central strategies that Zionists would employ, never tiring of reminding the West of their all-important role in holding back the barbarians of the East.[28]

Yet the fact that Paul and Herzl were both Diaspora Jews who lived as minorities in their two world-systems produced a desire within them to reconcile their difference, to negotiate an identity that, instead of eliminating them from the dominant society, would finally resolve their identity dilemma by "normalizing" the self in the eyes of the larger, dominant "world."

But the strategy of moving toward the power holders had to be negotiated differently in the two historical systems. As discussed earlier, by the time Herzl came on the scene in the late nineteenth century, the consolidation of the nation-state form, at least in Europe, had been largely completed. Along with this process we also begin to see the final disintegration of that large body of territory referred to as the world-empires of the past. As Wallerstein (1974a) suggests, it was in the initial formation of the modern world-system, "that not only were the boundary lines decided but, even more important, it was decided that there would be boundary lines," represented by a "fundamental change in the political structure of western Europe" (p. 32). John Ruggie (1993) similarly argues that, before the modern period, the idea of "external" and "internal" political realms, differentiated by clearly marked borders, made little sense. In premodern times, he argues, "there were only 'frontiers,' or large zones of transitions." This for him is due to the fact that such a world "had none of the connotations of possessiveness and exclusiveness conveyed by the modern concept of sovereignty" (Ruggie

[27] This Zionist discourse also goes back before Herzl, at least to Moses Hess several decades before Herzl: "Jews have a great calling to be a living channel of communication to the primitive people of Asia," so that the colonizing/civilized West may "open the roads that lead to China—those unknown regions which must be thrown open to civilization." Both citations are from Stavrianos (1981: 541–2).

[28] For an example of this strategy in action, see Benjamin Netanyahu's (1987) book appropriately titled *Terrorism: How the West Can Win*.

1993: 150). But from the point of view of this essay, the more important outcome of the earlier period is that it sustained a vision of unity, enforced by common bodies of law, religion, and custom, all of which were devised to create an inclusive, universal moral community (Ruggie 1993: 150). That universal community is what came to an end with the eventual rise of the modern world-system and the demise of world-empires.

This, then, is where the differences between Paul and Herzl are most striking. Paul and Herzl negotiated identities that were the inherent expression of two different forms of world-systems. Paul, living in a world-empire, negotiated his difference by negating those elements in his Jewish culture that were antithetical to the larger Hellenistic culture, thereby constructing a sect that permitted him and his followers to move culturally towards Rome. Herzl followed a similar strategy in his attempt to move West, but this time he had to go *one step further—to create a Jewish nation*, without which he feared the Jews would remain utterly different and pre-modern (read: Oriental). To move towards Paris, Herzl believed he had to create a Jewish state with the capacity to produce Jews in the image of Gentiles. For Paul the transition from Jerusalem to Rome was much simpler, since no Jewish state was required. Instead, eliminating Jewish practices that marked communal difference was enough. The Christ-event and the removal of markers like dietary restrictions, circumcision, and attachment to one special land were enough. Herzl also felt compelled to transform his Jewishness, to create the "new Jew," one who is rational, productive and, most of all, modern. But in order to produce that change in the Jew, a secular, "manmade" power would have to be called upon: not Christ, but a territorial state, where the Jew could work the land, produce wealth from real, direct production, and most importantly, remove those Diaspora characteristics from himself that Herzl believed had kept the Jew in a primitive, Oriental-like existence.

In his context, Herzl was doing what was expected of all "civilized" people: constructing a nationalist identity that aspired to an imagined community which has at its basis a territorial, finite quality to it. As Anderson argued in his seminal work, *Imagined Communities* (1995), "The nation is imagined as limited, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" (p. 7). At its most basic level, in its modern conception, "state sovereignty is fully, flatly, and evenly operative over each square centimeter of a legally demarcated territory" (Anderson 1995: 19). But the most significant aspect of this notion of community, for us, is the fact that "no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind." Hence, these identities impose an absolute claim of membership on a very specific and precise portion of mankind. Paul, on the other hand, constructed an identity that was radically different, universalistic in character, belonging to a vision of the world more congruent with world-empires. Rather than imag-

ining his identity as finite, possessing distinctive ethnic markers, he sought to encompass all mankind: "The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that.... Christians...dream of a wholly Christian planet" (Anderson 1995: 7). By contrast, "in the older imagining, where states were defined by centres, borders were porous and indistinct, and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another" (Anderson 1995: 19). This was the world that Paul lived in, where identities were much more fluid, much less place-oriented than the nationalist, particularistic types experienced by Herzl.

It is as though we have here two major representations of the "world." The first is a Herzlian vision, which is characterized by rigid structural rules based on formal political-legal distinctions and qualifications separating men and women into watertight compartments. The second is a universalistic vision, characterized by Paul's analogy of Israel in the spirit, where the structural properties of locality and nation are held at bay and formal allegiance to any political-legal authority is disregarded. It is a vision that is, as Victor Turner (1995) states, "an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual" (p. 96).

Belonging to the universal community of believers and to an ecclesiastical vision of the world, Paul would overturn any form of identity that bound him to a particular group, land, or ritual. He belonged to a vision of the world over which a particularistic identity had little, if any, moral or cultural hold. But faced with the encroaching modern world-system, Paul's universalistic type of identity became entangled in fierce confrontations with nationalist movements that were on the verge of completely destroying the old social order. World-empires were gradually fragmented, pluralized, and territorialized, leaving in their path an older world of overlapping, syncretic identities that eventually gave way to the more sanitized, racialized, nationalized form of identity that we know all too well today. In the end, Herzl's Israel in the flesh replaced Paul's Israel in the spirit. Now we must wait to see how our struggles today will negotiate between these two forms of identities, and whether a possible synthesis, or third way, may be on the horizon.

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