Chapter 5

Summing Up

Elizabeth Lowell, in “Popular Fiction: Why We Read It, Why We Write It,” says that most publishers talk highly of literary fiction but make money on popular fiction. Literary fiction cannot be popular, because it is difficult and inaccessible and because it needs to be endorsed by critics, who are usually difficult to please. In popular fiction, the only critics who really matter are the readers, who judge an author by his or her ability to make an often told tale freshly exciting. Popular fiction entertains readers rather than exercise them. In modern society, popular fiction is story after story pointing out that life is not a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing, not just a chain of defeat and despair, but full of possibilities, victory being one of them and joy being another and that life is worth the pain (elizabethlowell.com. n.d .Web. 2 May 2012).

Ira Nadel, in Leon Uris: Life of a Best Seller, says that the American Jewish novelist Uris wrote thirteen novels, most of which hit the best-seller list, were translated into numerous languages of the world and were adapted into popular movies and TV miniseries and that, in the process, Uris paved the way for writers such as Irving Wallace and Tom Clancy (Rev. in Jewish History, Life, and Culture. Series ed. Michael Neiditch. Web. utexas.edu/ppers/books/naddeo. 2010. 2 May 2012).

Uris wrote popular novels that the readers could not put down because their narratives meshed perfectly with the public’s desire to revisit and understand the tumultuous events of recent history. One of those tumultuous events was the
Holocaust, which, when exposed, rattled the conscience of the world. Uris seized
upon the opportunity to tell heart-rending tales of man’s inhumanity to man in his
Jewish novels. He launched his Jewish fictional project with Exodus, which traces the
history of the diaspora up to the establishment of the modern State of Israel. He
followed it up with Mila 18 and QB VII, which presented in horrifying detail the
Warsaw ghetto uprising by the Jews against their Nazi tormentors and the ghoulish
medical experiments carried out by the Nazis on the Jewish inmates of concentration
camps. Net he wrote The Haj, Mitla Pass and A God in Ruins projecting a different
image of the Jewish people—no longer on the run or besieged, but in the constructive
roles of nation-building, writing and governance.

The notion of Israel as a sacred homeland to which the Jews of the diaspora
are longing for years and years to return is one of the oldest and most central tenets of
Judaism. However, the focus in Exodus is not merely on the homecoming, but also on
the tortures, the humiliation, the alienation, as well as on and the observance of
religious rites and rituals to which the Jews adhere even in ghettos. Exodus covers the
whole history of Jews and the wave of anti-semitism from the time of the Bible to the
Holocaust, when the Jews witnessed their own sons and daughters, fathers and
mothers being slaughtered, butchered and gassed right in front of their eyes. Exodus
offers the reader a comprehensive view of the events of history that led up to the mass
murder of Jews in death facto ries across Eastern Europe by the Nazis.

According to Jack Fischel, Exodus was written at a time when American
Jewish support for Israel was not as impassioned as it would be on the eve and in the
aftermath of the Six-Day War, but the novel succeeded in tapping a subterranean
pride among American Jews; Sociologist Norman Mirsky claimed that it was "virtually impossible to find a Reform Jewish home in the 1950s without a copy of Leon Uris's *Exodus*" [sic]; and, in a letter to Stephen Whitfield, dated April 16, 1985, Uris revealed, "I have received thousands of letters in the last quarter of a century from people telling me how *Exodus* has substantially changed their lives ... particularly in regard to young people finding pride in their Jewishness." Fischel adds that, in the Soviet Union, *Exodus* was translated into Russian and distributed by young Soviet Jews in pirated typescript from hand to hand; that journalist David Twersky has noted that Russian Jews of that generation still tell of the importance of *Exodus*, and how it helped to trigger the post-1967 Zionist awakening in the Soviet Union; and that, commenting on the significance of *Exodus*, Nobel Prize novelist Saul Bellow wrote, "Admittedly, some people say, *Exodus* was not much of a novel, but it was extraordinarily effective as a document, and we need such documents now. We do not need stories like those of Philip Roth which expose unpleasant Jewish traits" (Jack Fischel, *Remembering Leon Uris*. American Jewish Life: Arts & Letters. highbeam.com. 22 March 2010. Web. 01 June 2012).

*Mila 18* is based largely on what actually happened in the Warsaw ghetto. On July 22, 1942, the Germans began mass deportations from the Warsaw ghetto. By the time they ended on September 21, Yom Kippur, some 260,000 inhabitants of the ghetto had been deported to the Treblinka extermination camp. A sense of bitter disillusionment and abandonment settled upon those who remained in the ghetto, the majority of whom were teenagers. Many blamed themselves for not resisting and for allowing their families to be deported. It was clear to them that they would share the
same fate. So, they resumed the attempts at establishing a fighting underground organization. On January 18, 1943, the Germans launched another action. The underground leadership, believing it to be the onset of the final deportation, ordered its forces to respond with arms. Upon discovering the resistance, the Germans decided to halt the action. This incident marked a turning point for most of the ghetto population, which from then on prepared for mass resistance and for hiding in underground bunkers in the cellars of homes. The final action began on April 19, 1943, the eve of Passover. The fighting groups and ghetto inhabitants barricaded themselves in bunkers and hideouts, their demonstrations of resistance taking the Germans by surprise. In response, the Germans began to systematically burn down the buildings, turning the ghetto into a firetrap. The Jews fought valiantly for a month until the Germans took over the focal points of resistance. It was the first popular uprising in a city in Nazi-occupied Europe (Yad Vashem. Combat and Resistance: Warsaw Ghetto L’veam.yadvashem.org. n.d. Web. 4 June 2012). The Warsaw ghetto uprising proved to a nervous Europe that the Nazis were not, after all, invincible. Of course there is also the bitter fact of centuries-long anti-semitism in Europe, particularly in Poland.

Apart from the heroic but futile show of courage by the Jewish inmates of the ghetto, Mila 18 draws attention to a peculiar obsession of the Jews throughout their history—to document their suffering. Alexander Brandel, the ghetto historian, modelled on the real-life Emmanuel Ringelblum, the famous Warsaw Ghetto archivist (Nora Levin 209), represents hundreds of Jewish annalists who have kept alive this Jewish passion for recording the troubled history of the Jewish race. It so
happens that there was indeed a Warsaw ghetto diary which was never recovered in its entirety. Yad Vashem, in the article *Combat and Resistance: The Human Spirit in the Shadow of Death* at yadvashem.org. says:

One phenomenon that testifies to an impressive level of spiritual survival is the effort made by Jews to document their lives in the ghettos and the camps. Artists and intellectuals, children and ordinary people, wrote and drew in order to document the fear and crisis that pervaded Jewish society. These activities were not only helpful in allowing many to rise above the humiliations and injuries they suffered, but also sometimes alerted the free world to the reality of their lives. Even in the camps themselves, one finds evidence of activity through which the prisoners could--if only in their imagination--transcend the barriers of their status and of the surrounding camp environment. While only a few took part in these activities, their importance lies not in their quantity but in the strength of spirit needed for their realization within the reality of persecution and humiliation. (Yad Vashem. *Combat and Resistance: The Human Spirit in the Shadow of Death*, yadvashem.org. n.d. Web. 3 June 2012)

As has already been stated, *QB VII* is based on a real court battle that Uris had to fight on account of his earlier writing on the Jewish theme—*Exodus* to be specific. It may be said that the court battle more than justified Uris’s commitment to tell the world the truth about the Holocaust, namely that it was not part of any geo-political strategy or military tactic, but the culmination of centuries of bigotry and the horrific
manifestation of pent-up prejudice amounting to virtual ethnic mania. At the end of World War II, the world came to know of the mass murder of Jews in their extermination camps. But very few people—certainly not ordinary citizens—were aware of the details of the German atrocities, particularly, the pseudo-scientific experiments that were carried out on the Jews in the concentration camps. The credit for acquainting ordinary people with the bizarre details of these medical experiments goes largely to Uris.

Uris’s *The Haj*, in telling the story of the founding of the modern State of Israel from an Arab perspective, inevitably places the Jews on a higher pedestal than the Arabs, not merely because the Jews were the victors, but also because it is the authorial viewpoint. This is what renders the novel controversial: Uris gives the impression of always looking down on the Arabs. Of particular interest is the difference between the Barak-Kammal bond in *Exodus* and the Gidcon-Ibrahim accommodation in *The Haj*. It is true that *The Haj* tells the story of the Arabs, covering more than just the establishment of the State of Israel, particularly the Arab refugee problem and the Arabs’ inter-tribal relations. It may also be said that by the time he came to write *The Haj*, judging by the unconvincing denouement of the novel, Uris had found out that he had grabbed the proverbial tiger by the tail. At the same time, it is obvious that the passing of years had wrought a change of attitude on Uris’s part.

Uris’s *Mitla Pass* is an unabashedly pro-Jewish novel, which seeks to glorify the warriors of Israel who committed a tactical blunder in battle. The novelist’s objective is to celebrate the military might of Israel in an attempt to notify the world
that the Jew was no longer to be regarded as the neighbourhood whipping boy. A reading of *Six Days in June: Israel’s Fight for Survival* by Robert J. Donovan, et al. leaves the reader in no doubt that Uris hardly indulges in any exaggeration in his novel.

Uris’s novel *A God in Ruins* projects a wish-fulfilment—a Jew in the White House. Since anti-semitism has not evaporated in the aftermath of the guilt over the Holocaust, Quinn Patrick O’Connell, the U.S. Presidential candidate is not projected as a Jew until the eve of the election. When the discovery is made at the critical time, patently American traits such as marine honour, candour, honesty and faith in the republic, in the basic decency of the people, and in the power of truth take over and propel Quinn Patrick O’Connell into the White House—the first Jewish President of America.

Uris is completely committed to celebrating the Jewish identity and in doing this he makes no pretense of being objective but presents events from a biased perspective, illustrating David Cowart’s argument that the “lessons of history seem always to admit of radically different interpretations, and simple historical truth remains forever obscure” (qtd. in Kathleen Shine Cain, *Leon Uris: A Critical Companion* 20).

According to Fischel, addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict, Uris maintains that there has never been a successful Arab government based on democratic principles, nor will one ever exist. Zionism, on the other hand, was and remains democracy in its purest form, the only one ever produced successfully into that part of the world. Uris further argues that a large part of the Palestinian Arab population was no more
indigenous to the country than the Jews who were immigrating at the time. The Arabs had shown no inclination for self-rule until the Jews showed their own inclinations. Turning to Israel's War of Independence, in *Exodus*, Uris places the blame for the plight of the Palestinian refugees squarely in the lap of the Arabs, contending that the refugee problem was largely initiated and deliberately perpetuated by the leaders of the Arab world, who have taken the position that it would be better to let Palestine return to swamp and erosion for the next thousand years than to share an inch of it with the Jews. Uris used his novels as weapons to defend Israel against its enemies. Given the enormous popularity of *Exodus*, including its film version, and because of his other novels dealing with Israel, it is difficult not to conclude that Uris was influential in shaping American public opinion regarding Israel (Fischel, *Remembering Leon Uris*. American Jewish Life: Arts & Letters, highbeam.com).

Uris more often than not blows the Jewish trumpet and the characters in his novels reflect the same bias with which Uris approaches the historical events. Most of his characters represent types rather than fully realized human beings; they exist to humanize the impact of historical events. His protagonists are mythic, larger than life characters: Ari Ben Canaan of *Exodus* and Andrei Androfski of *Mila 18* are heroes cut from the same tough mould. Other characters are stereotypes, like the Jewish settlers of Palestine in *Exodus*.

According to Fischel, in his novels about contemporary Jewish history, Uris creates "tough Jews" as his fictional heroes, characters who do not go to the gas chambers like sheep but, as in *Mila 18*, fight back against their Nazi oppressors, and later against the Arabs in the war to establish Israel (*Exodus, Mitta Pass*, and *The
Haj). Perhaps no character in modern Jewish fiction, however, personifies the trait of the "muscle" Jew than does Ari Ben Canaan, a rough, tough Palestinian Jew, the hero of Exodus. Actually, in many of his later novels, Uris's main protagonists embody Ari's characteristics: Andrei Androfski, in Mila 18, Gideon Asch in The Haj and Gideon Zadok in Mila Pass (Fischel, Remembering Leon Uris. American Jewish Life: Arts & Letters, highbeam.com).

The primary purpose of Uris’s Jewish novels is to bring out the greatness of whatever is Jewish. Most of them project the impact of historical events upon the characters rather than the characters themselves. Uris is more interested in the context of particular historical events than in the details of the events themselves. For example, when he examines the Warsaw ghetto uprising in Mila 18, Uris places it in the context of the history of Jewish settlement in Poland, the pervasiveness of antisemitism in Eastern Europe, and the covenant between Jews and their God.

The article Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1939: Antisemitism, at yadvashem.org, points out that hatred of the Jews had long been entrenched in Europe and that Jews in Christendom were humiliated, banished from their places of residence, forced to wear identifying marks, and confined to separate residential areas; the term antisemitism was first coined by antisemites in Germany in the 1870s; however, it was only in the 1930s, with the ascendancy of National Socialism and Adolf Hitler’s accession to power in Germany, that racial antisemitism became the official policy of a modern state. The new racial outlook defined Jews as a subhuman race. It warned that unless the “Aryan” race established its dominion, Jews would

Lawrence Langer in *Admitting the Holocaust: Beyond Theodicy: Jewish Victims and the Holocaust*, says:

The Holocaust is an expression of a particular atrocity, not of prior religious or historical moments of suffering. The failure or reluctance to admit this leads to much confusion and misunderstanding. The crucifixion of Jesus and the torment of Job are reported to us in Scriptures as part of a complex divine vision of an unfolding universe, which includes (but not exclusively) humankind. The destruction of European Jewry was not a part of a divine plan, but a human one. (27)

Langer adds, “The holocaust was a kind of physical and spiritual amputation, leaving parts of the self intact, requiring others to be mended with artificial “limbs” (30).

In his passion for the Jewish cause and in order to play the ethnic chronicler’s role with fidelity, Uris, in his Jewish novels, represents many Jewish religious rituals and communal practices, which reinforces the Jewish tenor of the novels. His obsession with Jewish culture, rituals and Judaism is quite pronounced in his works. In *Exodus*, a large number of Jewish terms and customs are explained in the course of the narrative, sometimes even direct translations being provided, but all done so artlessly that the reader’s attention is not diverted but riveted. Many incidents in the novel are enriched by recalling biblical parallels. Key scenes in *Exodus* are narrated with reference to the Jewish calendar and holy days. For instance, when the British Government allows the *Exodus* to sail from Cyprus, the Jewish community persuades
Ari Ben Canaan to allow the children to celebrate the first night of Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, in Cyprus before departing for Palestine (Uris, *Exodus* 191). Jewish terms and institutions are explained in the course of the narratives of the Jewish novels, for example, *bar mitzvah, sabra* and the *Passover seder*. The observance of the Passover Seder is presented in Uris’s *Exodus* (599). The celebration of the *bar mitzvah* of Stephan Bronski is presented in detail in Uris’s *Mila* 18 (319-21). In *Mitra Pass*, Uris mentions the Jewish dietary laws of keeping a *kosher* kitchen and other Jewish traditions: when Richard and Leah go to a hotel, a butler brings a pair of cold stuffed lobsters ordered by Richard, and Leah objects:

‘*Nu, what is it now?*’

‘Why ... why, it’s lobster ... uh ...’

‘Shellfish!’

‘Yes ... but...’

‘So, what kind of Jew are you, Richard Schneider? This is *traif*, forbidden food. Momma would have an apoplexy if she could see this.’

‘I’m sorry, Leah, but we don’t keep a kosher home....’

‘That’s not the half of it. You go to synagogues that have organs and mixed chorus and the men sit with the women and they don’t even cover their heads. And you call yourself Jews....’ (302)

One consequence of Uris’s close identification of his writing with the Jewish cause and his commitment to his chosen role of ethnic chronicler of the Jewish race, is the spate of intertextual echoes in his Jewish novels, particularly between *Exodus*
and *The Haj* since *Exodus* and *The Haj* virtually tell the same story, namely, the establishment of the modern State of Israel on the ruins and on the degraded soil of Palestine. For instance, in both these novels, waves of Jewish immigrants enter Palestine from all over Europe with different motivations, initially use Bedouin guards and Arab labour, but gradually switch over to the principles of personal labour and self-defence, when Jewish pioneers arrive to establish *kibbutzim* in close proximity to long-standing Arab settlements, accompanied by the Shomer to guard them (Uris, *Exodus* 225-31; *The Haj* 18-21). The city of Tel Aviv is deliberately planned so that it will be an all-Jewish habitation (Uris, *Exodus* 236; *The Haj* 22). In both the novels Uris describes the genesis and the growth of the Jewish army of self-defence, the Haganah (*Exodus* 256; *The Haj* 29), the antics of Kawukji / Kaukji, the mercenary Arab generalissimo (*Exodus* 275; *The Haj* 63), the machinations of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el Husseini / al Husseini (*Exodus* 253-54; *The Haj* 51-53), the role of the Taggart forts in the seesaw battle for control of Palestine (*Exodus* 275; *The Haj* 65), the role of the British Army officer P.P. Malcolm / Orde Wingate (*Exodus* 282-89; *The Haj* 72-78). In both the novels Uris offers glimpses of the Anglo-French geo-politics in the Middle East, sometimes in collusion, and sometimes at variance (*Exodus* 242-52; *The Haj* 24-28). The Jewish suffering due to anti-semitism and the universal Jewish longing to go up to Palestine, sustained for two millennia, are recorded in Uris’s *Mial 18* (177; 219) and in his *A God in Ruins* (437-38) also.

The Jewish cause is so close to Uris’s heart that he touches upon issues related to the Jewish race like anti-semitism in some of his non-Jewish novels too, for
example in *Battle Cry, Armageddon* and *Topaz*, illustrating the gradual removal of anti-Semitic prejudice from an American mind, delving into a possible motivation for Nazi anti-Semitism, and, showing patriotic Frenchmen helping Jews flee from occupied France.

*Battle Cry* presents, among other facets of American life, anti-Semitism as a socio-cultural disease in America that needs to be cured. Anti-Semitism raises its head in the novel when Jake Levin, a draftee from Brooklyn, arrives as replacement for Constantine Zvonski of the radio squad of the Second Battalion of the Sixth Marines, who sacrificed his life to save a patrol on Guadalcanal. Levin feels sorry for himself because he is a draftee and tries to make up for it by acting like an old salt. Speedy Gray, the Texan, makes it very clear that Levin is unwelcome. Gray walks out of the tent and is followed by other members of the radio squad. Levin is perplexed. Sergeant Mac explains to him that Levin has a lot of proving to do and he proposes to overwork Levin to enable him to prove himself. Gradually the members of the squad accept Levin, except Speedy Gray, the Texan bigot (Uris, *Battle Cry* 286-90).

One day the squad indulges in their favourite pastime of ribbing Levin till he loses all patience and storms towards the tent flap. Gray then bluntly calls him a Jew. Levin turns around and starts for Gray, but cuts short and leaves the tent. The other members of the squad reprimand Gray. But he asserts that Levin is nothing but a “kike draftee” and that he is yellow, like all Jews. Sergeant Mac reveals to Gray that Levin was Golden Gloves welterweight champ of New York for two years and that, when Spanish Joe was called to join the Division Boxing team, Levin too was asked
for (Uris, *Battle Cry* 311-12). Mac explains to a perplexed Gray why Levin did not join the Division boxing team:

“Sure. They're living at the Windsor and touring the country and living like kings. But he wanted to stay for the same reason that Marion turned down the public relations offer. He wants to stick with the outfit. He figures that too many of us got malaria and there’s too much work to do. Because he wants to be a Marine like the rest of us.”

(Uris, *Battle Cry* 312)

Granted three-day passes to attend their buddy Andy’s marriage to the New Zealand widow Pat Rogers, the whole squad is busy brushing and polishing up. Levin alone sits idle and disinterested. When Seabags and L.Q. Jones urge him to get ready, Levin says that he was not invited. Sergeant Burnside has to almost order Levin to get ready. Even then Levin gives a series of excuses and looks across the tent to Speedy Gray. The Texan turns half away and tells Levin to hurry up. Levin does so (Uris, *Battle Cry* 323-24).

For their second campaign of the war, the Sixth Marines are to land on the Micronesian atoll of the Gilberts Islands. On board the transport ship *J. Franklin Bell*, Speedy Gray meets Levin alone and makes peace with him (Uris, *Battle Cry* 365).

Defeated on Tarawa atoll, the surviving Japanese soldiers try to flee along a chain of islands beginning with Bairiki. Huxley’s battalion is ordered to pursue them. On the last island, Corah, as the radio squad is frantically attempting to contact the alligator bringing urgently needed plasma, Japanese snipers attack them and wreck their radio. Sergeant Mac sees Levin getting up and running away. Mac thinks that
Levin is really yellow. Speedy Gray dashes in to report that the alligator is moving towards the Japanese lines on the other end of the island. As they are wondering what they can do, Levin races past them, asking them to cover him, and carrying a blinker gun, which he has, thanks to his quick thinking, fetched from the command post.

Sergeant Mac is ashamed of having misunderstood Levin’s intention in running towards the rear of the camp. Levin runs to the water’s edge, signals frantically with the blinker gun to the alligator, and screams to those on board. The Japanese snipers spot him and fire at him. As gunfire rips his body and blood squirts from his stomach, Levin keeps signalling. The alligator receives his signal and veers. Speedy Gray carries Levin’s bullet-ridden body back to the aid station and fetches Doc Kyser. The doctor takes a look at Levin’s wound, nods his head slowly and leaves. Sitting beside Levin, Speedy Gray wets his handkerchief with water from his canteen and wipes the sweat from Levin’s forehead. Levin opens his eyes. He is glad to learn that the alligator got in. He asks Speedy Gray to hold his hand. With his last breath, Levin asks Speedy Gray to make sure that a Star of David and not a cross is put on his grave. Levin dies. Speedy Gray sits dazed and grief-stricken (Uris, *Battle Cry* 389; 420-24).

In *Armageddon*, towards the end of Major Sean O’Sullivan’s tenure as Military Governor of the surrendered German town of Rombaden, the German Conuncil meets. Ulrich Falkenstein, the respected former concentration camp inmate, informs Major O’Sullivan that it was an old German tradition to celebrate Hinterseer Day, in honour of the Rombaden poet, on the twenty-second of June, two days from then, with a public reading, in the town square, of his most famous work, the *Legend*...
of Rombaden and seeks permission to stage the traditional reading. Major O'Sullivan is intrigued because the Nazis allowed the reading of the Legend of Rombaden from the mythology of the Black Forest Trilogy to go on during their rule also. So, he tells the German Council that he will read the poem and give them a reply the next day. That night Major O'Sullivan reads the Legend of Rombaden and feels he has solved what had puzzled scholars when he was a teacher before joining military government—"the eternal enigma" of the German mind (Uris, Armageddon 154-56). Uris describes what Major Sean O’Sullivan has discovered;

But here, in Hinterseer’s pages, the German showed himself. Here was Siegfried! Here in the legend of Rombaden was that longing to be the super race! Here was that strange elation at the moment of death so prevalent in the German culture! Here was the hero’s reward for death in battle!

In the legend they looked upon themselves as the “chosen” people of God. But, what kind of a god? This was not the God of Jesus Christ! The god that they longed to identify themselves with was a pagan god! Wolfram was a god who lived in the forest and was more animal than human.

Did not the Germans, indeed, identify themselves more with the pagan than with monotheism, the Western concept of one God? Sean pondered. Once he had written what was termed a brilliant paper, on the “Origins of Anti-Semitism in the German Mind.”...
Sean now tried to link his paper to the Legend of Rombaden. He had written:

The Jews gave to the Western world a formal conception of one God. The Jews handed down from Sinai the basic “laws” or rules of Western morality, the Ten Commandments.

The German hates both the one-God concept and the stringency of the “laws” in his subconscious mind. On the surface and to the world at large he is both a Christian and a product of Western culture.

However, he is a split personality. Another part of him, a vital part of his soul, remains in the forest....

Despite his trappings, part of the German is pure pagan. In order for the German to become the pagan his unconscious desires he must throw off the formal concept of one God, and God’s laws. Therefore, the German must destroy the Jew, who stands between him and his pagan desires. (*Armageddon* 156-58)

Sean now perceives that Hitler understood and exploited the desire for paganism in the German people by the destroying the Jews (Uris, *Armageddon* 158).

In his novel on the Cuban missile crisis, *Topaz*, Uris describes how the French underground helped several Jews to escape from occupied France to Vichy France across the River Cher. One of the members of the underground thus engaged, Andre Devereaux, later becomes a high-ranking French diplomat and Intelligence officer. He comes to know of a traitor to the Western alliance and Communist agent within the French Intelligence Service, who has been disinforming the President of France,
Pierre La Croix. He tries to expose the traitor, but is baulked by disloyal members of the French Intelligence Service who are exploiting the monomania of their President. In the process he receives a good deal of help from a French Police Inspector, Marcel Steinberger of the Surete. Steinberger explains his dogged devotion to the case by telling Devereaux how he owes him a great favour:

“Why are you really doing this?”

“I owe you a great favor.”

“Me? But I’ve just met you.”

“We met before, a long time ago. I have a sister who lives in Israel. She and I are all that remain of our family. I was able to get her out of France before the Gestapo picked me up. You see ... you took us over the River Cher twenty years ago when we were children.” (Uris, Topaz 383)

In his novel *A God in Ruins*, Uris sums up the tragedy as well as the triumph of the Jewish race. A few days before the US Presidential election of 2008, the Democratic Presidential candidate, Quinn Patrick O’Connell, Governor of Colorado, learns from his newly-arrived half-brother Ben Horowitz the history of his birth as a Jew named Alexander, his disappearance into a Roman Catholic convent, and his subsequent adoption as Patrick by Daniel and Siobhan O’Connell. The significance of the discovery rattles him and his immediate circle, because it can be easily misinterpreted as a Zionist conspiracy to plant a Jew in the White House and could cause unforeseeable repercussions because of the still-smouldering strain of anti-
semitism. Their fear is expressed by Quinn Patrick O’Connell’s father-in-law, Reynaldo Maldonado thus:

“The problem is, Jew hating has always been close to the surface throughout the last two millennia. It’s the perfect system of bigotry, time-tested—the Roman sacking of the nation, the divorce of Jesus from the Jews in order to make a new religion, Islam, the ankle-deep blood of Jews by the Crusaders on the Rhine, the Inquisition, Martin Luther, the pogroms of Eastern Europe, and lest we forget, the Holocaust” (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 447-48)

However, Ben Horowitz spells out a different perspective that projects a triumphant image of the Jewish race, using the American Jewish population as a microcosm:

“We Jews are the most outstanding example of a patriotic minority... At only two percent of the population, we’ve created great industries and writers and musicians and doctors.... there are over seventy Jewish American Nobel Prize winners. Godammit, we deserve the respect of our countrymen!’ (Uris, *A God in Ruins* 448)

In assessing the writing career of Leon Uris, *New York Times* critic Pete Hamill writes: “Leon Uris is a story teller, in a direct line from those men who sat around fires in the days before history and made the tribe more human. The subject is man, not words, story is all, the form it takes is secondary” (Jeanne Claire van Ryzin. *Author Leon Uris to place his archive at UT's Ransom Center*, utexas.edu. 8 December 1997. Web. 4 June 2012).
The present thesis, taking its cue from Hamill, has concentrated on the story rather than on the form. It has evaluated Uris as an ethnic chronicler rather than as a literary artist spinning an imaginary tale.

It will be a welcome endeavour if some scholar were to undertake an analysis of Uris’s Irish novels *Trinity* and *Redemption*. It will be a really challenging endeavour if some scholar were to undertake an analysis of Uris’s American novels, namely, *Battle Cry*, *Armageddon*, *Topaz*, *A God in Ruins* and *O’Hara’s Choice*. Another suggestion for further research would be a study of Uris’s novel *The Haj* as a Fourth World Discourse.¹ Yet another suggestion would be a study of the postcolonial elements in the fiction of Uris.² Some scholar can fruitfully study *Semper Fidelis* as the informing principle of Uris’s novel *A God in Ruins*?
Notes

1 The present researcher presented a well-received paper titled “Leon Uris’s *Exodus* as a Fourth World Discourse” at the International Conference 2009 on Representation of Region and Nation in Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Madras, Chennai, during February 2009.


B. Thamarai Nayagam, an M.Phil. scholar of Gandhigram Rural Institute-Deemed University, India, has already done so with Uris’s *Battle Cry* and *O’Hara’s Choice* in his dissertation titled “*Semper Fidelis as Leitmotif* in the Marine Corps Novels of Leon Uris.”