

Githens-Mazer does not imply that after 1916 Irish nationalism recovered an authenticity previously suppressed by the proprietary of the home rule movement, but that the Irish Catholic Anglophobia that was latent to Irish nationalism before 1916, and was rejected by the conciliatory politics of home rule, was re-legitimised by British reactions. In other words, the British behaved according to the roles traditionally assigned them by Irish nationalism and the Irish, enraged by British military heavy-handedness, readily recast themselves as the intransigent rebels of British prejudice.

This raises the question as to whether the rising might equally be thought a cultural trigger point for the British, seeing them draw upon ethnic assumptions about the Irish. Charles Townshend has demonstrated the crudity of British thinking about Ireland, particularly within the military establishment. The home rule party MP John Dillon criticised the government's and the military's heavy-handed reaction in a famously anguished outburst in the House of Commons. His critique rested, at least in part, on his sense that the British did not understand the people they were dealing with. Dillon saw two generations' conciliation, worked at by British Liberals and British home rulers, come undone in as many months. The Liberal-Home Rule dynamic that had shaped Irish nationalism for fifty years was shunted aside by a Fenian-Tory reaction and a heavy dose of Irish sectarianism, Protestant and Catholic.

This reviewer is only too aware of the pressure to publish as quickly as possible after completing a PhD. And this urgency can only be enhanced when the matter of the PhD is about to be subject to a major anniversary. Githens-Mazer was awarded his PhD in 2005 and his book was published in time for the 90th anniversary of 1916. A rapid turnaround by any standards and, unfortunately, at times this shows. Irish Academic Press, who no doubt hoped they had a strong seller on their hands, should have invested more in the copy-editing and there are instances when the writing might have been sharpened up, avoiding repetitive phrases and the like. It would, however, be petty to allow this to undermine any sense of the effectiveness of the book. Though much of the text is taken up with familiar narrative, and cannot compete with Charles Townshend's beautifully crafted *The Irish Rebellion* (London, 2006), Githens-Mazer's account is clear, reliable, and insightful. Though those familiar with the historiography of the Irish revolution may not find the insights gleaned from the application of Smithian theory revelatory, close reading will yield rewards. On the other hand, students new to the subject will find Githens-Mazer's working out of an analytical framework, laced with lively detail, very helpful indeed.

MATTHEW KELLY
University of Southampton

Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*. Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. 386 pp. \$59.95.

Over the last century, much has been written on Polish-Jewish relations. Joanna Michlic's achievement is a comprehensive, balanced, thoroughly researched study of how Jews have been viewed by Poles, especially by politicians and writers. She adverts to studies of popular attitudes toward Jews, but focuses mostly on such disparate

prominent figures as Roman Dmowski, Cardinal Hlond, Wladyslaw Gomulka, Lech Walesa, and many lesser but influential personalities. Using what she calls a 'holistic sociohistorical analysis, rather than traditional historical writing,' Michlic shows how the 'polyfunctional myth' of Jews as the 'harmful other' has been mobilised by nationalists, communists and anti-communists in Poland.

Though many Jews hold negative and uninformed stereotypes of Poles, the author argues that Jewish stereotypes of Poles are not an important element in Jewish national identity or Israeli nationalism, whereas 'anti-Jewish idioms constitute an important element of modern Polish ethno-nationalism and ethno-national identity, which have only recently begun undergoing modification' (p. 15). Ironically, only now that Poland is inhabited almost exclusively by Poles, have some Polish intelligentsia and politicians tried to create retrospectively a multinational, multi-confessional Poland.

The great strength of this book is its comprehensiveness and rich evidentiary base. Michlic has read very widely and deeply, mostly in Polish but also in Hebrew, Russian and other languages, though not in Yiddish. The broad outlines of the story will be familiar to those who have followed Polish-Jewish relations, but they will learn much from the details, and the general reader will gain a clear comprehensive picture. All should appreciate the absence of the jargon and vacuous 'theorising'.

Michlic traces the social and political functions of anti-Jewish images. After the partitions of Poland, she argues, Polish Romanticists displayed varied attitudes toward Jews. Positivists were pro-Jewish until the late 1890s when they began to stress the evils of capitalism. Many Polish activists were disappointed in the failure of Jews to acculturate to Polish society and culture, and after 1918 the myth of Jew as harmful alien became very popular. 'Not the size of the Jewish population or its cultural qualities or actions caused anti-Semitism; rather, anti-Semitism stemmed from the ethno-nationalists' view of the size, qualities, and actions of Jews. Their premise was the concept of the Jew as the chief harmful alien' (p. 76). Michlic is aware that she relies on published works for her evidence of Polish perceptions of Jews, but she sees no reason to believe that they did not reflect popular opinion, especially in light of pogroms and other anti-Jewish manifestations in interwar Poland.

Michlic makes a plausible argument, sustained by careful readings, that negative images of Jews before World War II, not mainly Nazi propaganda, conditioned the behaviour of many Poles during the war, though, of course, the Soviets and Nazis were the major determinants of Polish and Jewish fates. But Polish post-war historiography and 'collective memory' dismissed anti-Semitism as 'an exaggerated problem' created by the enemies of the Polish cause. Polish honour and the good name of the country were challenged and most Poles reacted by denying the criticisms levelled at them, though only the Polish Socialist Party saw a place for Jews in Poland after the war and even its electorate 'opposed the inclusion of Jews in a future Polish nation-state' (p. 182).

Ironically, while the rationale for anti-Semitism among many Poles in the twentieth century was that 'the Jews' were the bearers of communism, and therefore intrinsically anti-Polish, in the 1960s and after the Polish communist regime accused 'the Jews' of being anti-communist and simultaneously anti-Polish. Jews were enemies of socialism and were held 'responsible for all past ideological and political errors of the Communist Party' (p. 252)

Aside from minor errors and a peculiar insistence on calling Poland's capital 'Warszawa' throughout, though 'Warsaw' is quite familiar to English readers, I see two shortcomings in this admirable book. While Michlic generally attempts to put the 'Jewish question' in the larger context of Polish society and politics, she does not do

this sufficiently for the interwar period. The reader cannot immediately grasp how economic strains, social tensions and developments in adjacent countries contributed directly to many people's attitude toward Jews. More importantly, the book lacks a comparative perspective. Why were Jews so important to Polish national identity formation, but not in neighbouring countries with equally long anti-Semitic traditions (Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Germany)? What, if anything, made Polish anti-Semitism unique? Is there anything that can be said about the socioeconomic characteristics of those who defended Jews in Poland and saw a place for them in a civic state?

These questions will have to be raised by other analysts. Meanwhile, we have been given ample documentation and a synthesis of a complex, sensitive and ongoing issue.

ZVI GITELMAN

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Yasir Suleiman and Ibrahim Muhawi (eds.), *Literature and Nation in the Middle East*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. 264 pp. £100.00 (hbk).

Literature and Nation in the Middle East is dedicated both to expanding the body of literature about Arab, national identity, and to dismantling the ways in which Middle Eastern literature, and its role in identity construction, have traditionally been understood.

Indeed, as Yasir Suleiman makes clear in his introduction, the editors' intention in assembling *Literature and Nation in the Middle East* was to work against two of the paradigms that have shaped the field of modern, Arabic literature (and that assert themselves frequently in the identity politics of the modern, Arab world). The first is the idea that pan-Arabism, or pan-Arab identity, has historically foiled the rise of national literatures. The second is that literature reflects a nation's identity rather than constructing it. To this end, Suleiman and Ibrahim Muhawi have put together a fine collection of chapters on novels, poetry (both oral and written) and translations, each of which illustrates the critical role that literature has played in national identity construction. Contributors to this volume focus primarily on the literature of nations that have contested identities (Palestine) and identities in crisis (the Sudan, Iraq). They also examine the literature of exile (Lebanon), literature in translation (Arabic to Hebrew), literature written in languages other than Arabic (Hebrew, English and French). Also included is the literature of the margins (of those whose identities were lost or challenged by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the modern, Arab state). Collectively, the articles instruct the reader that while 'uruba, or Arab-ness, has contributed to regional identity, the personalities and the peculiarities of local forces – real, remembered or imagined – have both reinforced and challenged the pan-Arab ideal.

The approaches favoured by the contributors are as varied as the case studies included in *Literature and Nation in the Middle East* (Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, the Sudan, and Israel). Some chapters provide close readings of novels or poems, situating literature historically and culturally, but focusing specifically on textual and rhetorical analysis. Others favour historical accounts of the relationship of literature to the rise (and, often, struggle) of the nation-state in the Arab world. Still others offer a