

# AJS PERSPECTIVES

*The Magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies*

**One Big, Happy Family**

Litvaks and Galitzianers, Lay Down Your Arms

Science Finds Unity in the Jewish Gene Pool

**Genetic Diseases? Yes. But Must We Call Them 'Jewish'?**

**The Fallacy of Biological Judaism**

**Study's Claim On Intelligence Of Ashkenazim Spurs a Debate**

By NATHANIEL POPPER  
The biological distinctiveness of ethnic groups is fraught scientific territory, but a new study plunges into the debate by theorizing that Jews is in the genes.  
The study, which will be published in the upcoming issue of *Biological Journal of the Royal Society*, says that more

**JEWIS ARE NOT WHITE**

BY MICHAEL LEONER

# The Jewish Race?

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# FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Colleagues,

Any kind of identification of the Jews as a race now has a suspicious ring to it. As Moshe Rosman observes in his new book, *How Jewish is Jewish History?* (Littman, 2007), “In the wake of the terrible fate suffered by the Jews in the twentieth century, partially as a consequence of racial theory, and the general discrediting of such theory since the Second World War, Jewish intellectuals today would not contemplate classifying the Jews as a race, and would certainly not write their history as a racial one.” Indeed, it would be understandable enough, after everything that has happened, if we all just breathed a collective sigh of relief at the disappearance of the idea of racial Jewishness and devoted our attention to more pressing questions.

But it would not be wise to do so. For a long time and in many different ways the Jews were categorized as a race not only by their most vicious enemies but by many of their own leading thinkers.

It is important to remember that this was the case not only to obtain a better grasp of the past but in order to see more recent developments in a clearer perspective. For as Rosman points out (and several of our contributors corroborate), some of our contemporaries, including some Jews, “perplexed by the phenomenon of Jewishness and its resistance to ready definition, still sometimes take refuge in what, upon reflection, is a biological—even racial—characterization.”

The effort to understand both the more systematic and substantive Jewish race-thinking of the nineteenth and early twentieth century and the more hesitant and nebulous race-tinged ruminations of some post-Holocaust Jews has yielded a great deal of solid scholarship. Intellectual and social historians, sociologists, and scientists have written extensively about the various ways in which European, American, and Israeli Jews of different eras have conceived of themselves in racial or quasi-racial terms. This work is far from obscure. But since it goes somewhat against the grain, it may to some extent be hiding in plain sight, invisible to those who are disinclined to see it.

Convinced of the significance of the research in this area and eager to do

what we could to call it to everyone’s attention, we decided to highlight it in this issue. We have asked the authors of a few of the most interesting recent books, articles, and theses on the subject to recapitulate concisely some of the results of their research. We also asked some of them to go a little further and reflect on specific questions related to their prior publications. When we put all of their contributions together, we found that we had collected a set of essays that should be helpful both to those who are unfamiliar with this general subject and those who have previously been attentive only to one or another aspect of it.

Heidi Lerner’s technology column will not focus, this time, on the issue’s principal theme but on a number of web-based learning and teaching resources for Jewish studies. Finally, Robb Young, a graduate student in biblical studies at Yale University, discusses some of the differences between the way the Bible is studied there and at the institution he attended previously, The Hebrew University. Other graduate students please take note: We would very much like to hear from you and to publish what you have to say.

**Allan Arkush**  
*Binghamton University*

*The Association for Jewish Studies wishes to thank the Center for Jewish History and its constituent organizations—the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, the Yeshiva University Museum, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research—for providing the AJS with office space at the Center for Jewish History.*

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The Association for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce the following Institutional Members for the 2007-08 membership year:

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- Participate in a Center for Jewish History Seminar and deliver a minimum of one lecture (during or beyond the grant period) based on research at the Center and the collections used; or participate in exhibition planning (for curatorial fellows only).

For eligibility and application requirements see [www.cjh.org/collections/fellowships.php](http://www.cjh.org/collections/fellowships.php)

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

**B**order crossing, eh?

When our annual conference convenes later this year in Toronto, the Association for Jewish Studies will meet for the first time outside the boundaries of the United States. Given the international reach of our organization, it is fitting that we should do so. We represent a membership that is international in scope, and our organization supports the development of research and teaching in Jewish studies globally.

Headquartered in New York, our organization actively extends itself beyond North America to colleagues on other continents. AJS has always had a solid base among Israeli scholars, and a growing membership in western European countries. In recent years, under the aegis of our International Cooperation Committee, led by Berel Lang, we have reached out to colleagues in Eastern Europe, through travel awards and other means. Similar international initiatives are under consideration.

In addition, the border crossing of our conference this year reflects the border crossing inherent to the meeting and mixing of the different areas, fields, and disciplines that comprise Jewish studies. More scholars are finding a natural home at AJS for their academic work, bringing new perspectives and subjects to our organization, and enriching their own work through that encounter. Scholars in fields

that are not usually associated with Jewish studies have come to see the work of AJS as increasingly relevant to their own endeavors, with our annual conference as one important set of exchanges in which they participate.

Ever since our conference ventured out of its ur-home at the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, abandoning its cozy elegance to meet the need for larger accommodations, the space of the conference has both reflected and defined the shape of the organization. During the first several decades of our organization, the cluster of important Jewish studies programs in the greater Boston area and in the Northeast more broadly made that city and region appear to be the epicenter of Jewish scholarship. But the proliferation of Jewish studies in many other locales has meant the development of other serious centers and consortia elsewhere. When the conference convened in Chicago in December 1999—the first time meeting outside of Boston—the organization gave up its geographic mooring. Like comparable learned societies, we convene in different locales, bringing the conference closer to the places where our members live and work.

When I was finishing my graduate studies and contemplating places where an academic position might bring me, my doctoral advisor, who was then approaching retirement, reminisced about his first appointment—in southern California. It was, he recollected, during an era when “west of the Rockies” not only meant more expensive delivery fees but connoted living beyond the pale. As he recalled it, the litmus of civilization then, was how many days past Sunday would one receive one’s copy of the Sunday *New York Times*. In those days in southern California, it was Tuesday.

While views may differ on what constitutes the center of civilization (both place and newspaper), it is clear that today, while there are several significant centers of Jewish studies, there is no *one* center, no single locale where our conference must weigh anchor.

And so, in 2007, our organization takes the significant step of convening outside the 50 states. In anticipation, it seems appropriate for me to write a few words about what is now my hometown, and the country in which it sits. Toronto, the largest city and the largest Jewish community in Canada, rated this year by *Economist* magazine as the fifth most livable city in the world, is home to the largest concentration of academic Jewish studies in Canada.

Canadian multiculturalism and diversity foster the perpetuation of ethnic neighborhoods, and Jewish neighborhoods are part of the more general clustered landscape of a mosaic society. The Greater Toronto Area, a large urban expanse that extends beyond the municipality of Toronto into densely populated suburbs, is home to over 180,000 Jews, roughly half of Canada’s Jewish inhabitants. Per capita, the Jewish population of Canada is fourth largest in the world—and, as a percentage of the total population, Canada’s Jewish population comes in third.

From the perspective of the neighbor to the south, Canada seems much like the United States, only perhaps quieter, more polite, more left-leaning and climatically challenged (much in sympathy with Voltaire’s dismissive, if short-sighted, description, “quelques arpents de neige”). Yet differences abide. Canadians, of course, make much of *not* being the USA, something emphasized palpably at past AJS conferences, as Canadian participants must pick up badges



and programs on site, rather than receiving them in the mail like their U.S. counterparts.

In addition to remembering that Canadians say “washroom” and “zed,” and use “eh” the way the French use “n’est-ce pas,” conference participants may be interested in other Canadiana, in preparation for crossing the border. As some of you may know, for Canadian university students, postsecondary education is not the geographic rite of passage that it is

for the vast majority of American students—the first move from home and into the quasi-independence of dorm life or off-campus housing. Canadian students, in large numbers, continue to live at home and commute to university classes—although with each year, that trend is shifting, as students elect to attend out-of-town universities. Canadian universities are public, chartered, and supported by the provinces through tax dollars. Ontario tuition is approximately \$5,000 per year.

Much as the loosening of the AJS annual conference from its Boston moorings was both a symbol and an agent of the development of the organization, this first crossing of an international boundary bodes a future evolution, one that we all have a hand in shaping.

See you in Toronto, eh?

**Sara R. Horowitz**  
*York University*

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Roman North Africa (2nd-6th centuries, C.E.)**  
*To be published by Brill*

Support for these grants has been provided by  
The Cahnman Foundation of New York.

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

AJS is pleased to announce the Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards, the first annual book award program to be offered by the Association for Jewish Studies, made possible by generous funding from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation of Portland, Oregon. These awards will recognize and promote outstanding scholarship in the fields of Jewish studies and will honor scholars whose work embodies the best in the field: innovative research, excellent writing, and sophisticated methodology. The awards are structured to recognize all areas of Jewish studies research, paying tribute to both the breadth and depth of AJS members' scholarship.

Beginning in 2008, AJS will award two \$5,000 Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards on an annual basis. The prizes will be given in a total of eight subject years—two per year—with subjects rotating over a four-year period. The preliminary list of subjects includes:

- Philosophy and Jewish thought
- Biblical studies, Rabbinics, and archaeology
- Jewish literature
- Pre-modern Jewish history (antiquity through medieval era)
- Early modern and modern Jewish history
- Social science, anthropology, linguistics, and folklore
- Jews and the arts (visual, performance, music)
- Gender studies

Any book published in English within four years of the deadline will be eligible for consideration, and any AJS member will be qualified to submit their book for consideration or be nominated for consideration by a third party (publisher, etc.). Scholars at all stages of their careers will be eligible to apply; in this way, the Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards will both honor academics who have not yet secured a widespread reputation, as well as pay tribute to more senior scholars who have made major contributions to the field. Judging will take place by a committee of scholars who represent excellence in the year's designated fields.

Recipients of the Jordan Schnitzer Book Awards will be recognized at a reception held each year in their honor at the AJS conference; the award will also be announced in AJS publications and other professional and national media. AJS plans to accept nominations and application materials from February through May of 2008, with the first recipients to be announced at the AJS's 40th Annual Conference, December 21–23, 2008 at the Washington Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C. Further details regarding application materials and deadlines will be announced at the AJS conference in Toronto this December; please also check the AJS website in early 2008 for more information.

AJS's upcoming 39th Annual Conference at the Sheraton Centre Toronto, December 16–18, 2007, promises to be a groundbreaking event. The first meeting to be held outside of the United States, it has already set several records, including the greatest number of paper and session submissions and the highest number of conference sessions (more than 150) in AJS history. To accommodate the numerous

outstanding proposals submitted to the conference, AJS for the first time has added additional session slots after lunch on Tuesday, December 18. We encourage members to stay until 4:00 pm that day to participate in the afternoon's excellent panels. Also a first will be the participation of Jewish educators from the Toronto community who, thanks to a generous grant from the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Toronto, will receive professional development credit for attending the meeting. We look forward to their involvement, as well as to welcoming many new Canadian members to AJS.

On a final note, AJS said good-bye this spring to Karin Kugel in her role as administrative assistant, a position she began in 2003 with the organization's move to New York. Karin's contributions in this position were many, especially her behind-the-scenes programming work on our new website, her oversight of *Perspectives* production, and her redesign of the conference program book. Although now based in Massachusetts, Karin continues as the managing editor of *Perspectives*, webmaster of AJS's website, and as a consultant on several other projects. We are delighted for Karin's continued involvement and wish her much luck in her other new ventures. We also welcome Kristen Loveland to the New York office as AJS's new administrative assistant.

**Rona Sheramy**  
*Association for Jewish Studies*

# The Jewish RACE?

## FRENCH-JEWISH RACIAL IDENTITY AND THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT

*Lisa Moses Leff*

Given our current repugnance for calling Jews a “race,” it may be surprising to learn that Jews themselves, in France at least, adopted this terminology to define themselves in the mid-nineteenth century. When they did, they weren’t merely borrowing terms from their enemies, as scholars once believed. On the contrary, a generation before anti-Semites began to use racial language to define Jews as unwelcome strangers in the nation, prominent French-Jewish writers had already begun to use this terminology to quite different ends. As we shall see, exploring the circumstances under which they first adopted this new language to express their sense of self provides a particularly good vantage point from which to understand key issues in both Jewish and French history.

Although it is somewhat difficult to

identify exactly when French Jews began to refer to themselves as a race for the first time, such language had clearly arrived by mid-century. To get a sense of how this terminology was used at the time, one need but look at some key works focusing on Jewish history marketed to the educated French-Jewish reading public in the 1860s by Gustave d’Eichthal, Hippolyte Rodrigues, Joseph Salvador, and

... THE PARIS-BASED ALLIANCE ISRAELITE  
UNIVERSELLE AWARDED A PRIZE IN 1862 TO  
ALFRED LEGOYT FOR HIS STATISTICAL STUDY  
DEMONSTRATING THE “VITALITY” OF THE “JEWISH  
RACE” IN EUROPE ...

Maurice (Moses) Hess, who, though German, made his home in Paris and regularly contributed to French-Jewish periodicals. The books put forth similar arguments: the Jews are an ancient race that has

retained its vitality through the centuries, and its religion, conserved through endogamous practices, offers moral lessons particularly relevant for the nineteenth century. Somewhat in tension with their emphasis on Jewish distinctiveness was their claim that the message of Judaism was universal, since it was the parent of Christianity and Islam, and its mission still today was to bring, as Hess put it, “humanitarian religion” back to the whole world.

These works were reviewed, celebrated and summarized in the French-Jewish press, where journalists were already describing Jews as a biologically defined people whose religion was essentially a set of lessons relevant for the contemporary world. And in the spirit of these works, the Paris-based Alliance Israelite Universelle awarded a prize in 1862 to Alfred Legoyt for his statistical study demonstrating the “vitality” of the “Jewish race” in Europe, a work that again emphasized both Jewish distinctiveness in

physiological terms and the universalism of the teachings of Judaism. These are but a few examples of a widespread phenomenon: in the mid-nineteenth



century, race discourse was generally used by assimilated Jews in France who were seeking to articulate both their indelible uniqueness and their essential connectedness to all humanity simultaneously.

Where did this language come from, and why were these Jews, all educated in secular institutions, embracing it at this particular moment? As it was used by other French writers at the time, race-talk provided a useful model of national integration in which various groups could come together without abandoning their particular beliefs. The origins of this conceptual framework lay among French historians in the 1820s. First theorized by the brothers Augustin and Amadée Thierry and adapted by François Guizot, “race” was seen as the analytic key to history. Change in human societies, the Thierrys had argued, took place because of conflicts between migrating and warring racial groups, each of whom brought with them distinct forms of culture and politics. For Amadée Thierry, for example, much of French history was a history of conflict between the Franks and the Gauls, two races distinct from one another in temperament, appearance, and morality. While this theory could be used to justify racial violence, most nineteenth-century French historians saw their own era as one of racial harmony. As Guizot asserted, the Revolution in France had finally brought an end to the long-standing struggle between the nation’s races by establishing a legal and institutional framework that mediated between them. This way

of thinking would certainly have appealed to the assimilating elite of nineteenth-century French Jews, who themselves nourished the utopian hope that the Revolution (once fully completed, of course) would bring about an era of Jewish political, social, economic, and even spiritual well-being by allowing Jews to reconnect to the world around them.

But by the time the mainstream Jewish press adopted it in the middle of the century, race-thinking was about more than just the right of distinctive groups like themselves to exist in peace within a nation. In



Portrait of Ernest Renan. Reprinted from William Francis Barry, *Ernest Renan* (New York: Scribner, 1905), frontispiece.

the 1830s and 1840s, this discourse was reshaped by the utopian socialist Saint-Simonians who were as interested in the international as the national arena. As the left-wing historians Jules Michelet and Edgar Quinet used it, racial discourse became the backbone of what Jacob Talmon described as “the romantic phase” of political messianism in

which the fulfillment of nationalist dreams would lead to world redemption. These influential writers saw races as poised at a new moment in history—a final moment of racial fusion, a final end to the cycle of conquest and submission. They saw the nationalist movements emerging across Europe as racial yearnings finally taking political form. For Michelet, the French Revolution was a model for what was to come on a global scale: democratic institutions would form to mediate between the world’s races. Similarly, Quinet argued that like the Catholic Church before it, contemporary France’s mission in the world was to make “an alliance between the human races,” by spreading its morality and its science. By the time Jewish writers adapted it in the early 1860s, race theory in mainstream public discourse was thus embraced by thinkers committed to democratic movements on a global scale.

Following these romantic nationalists, French-Jewish writers used racial language to situate their identities in a context beyond the purely national. As conceived by these assimilated writers, the special mission of the Jews in the nineteenth-century world was most certainly internationalist. The most striking examples of this come from the writings of Jews involved in the Saint-Simonian movement of the 1820s and 1830s, which would so shape racial thinking in France. Léon Halévy, for example, argued in 1828 that through their inherited knowledge of international banking and commerce, Jews would know how to bring peace and prosperity to the whole world. Similarly, in a

series of unpublished works from the 1830s, Gustave d'Eichthal argued that since the Jewish racial nature combined Eastern and Western elements, then Judaism, as the law of that universal people, could serve as a model for the administration of justice in a modern international order. Versions of such claims became commonplace in the mid-nineteenth-century Jewish press as well. Jews' uniqueness and their particular utility in the nineteenth century were centered on the fact of the unity Jews displayed in their dispersion.

Yet in spite of this apparent enthusiasm for racial terminology, French-Jewish writers also seemed somewhat nervous about its potential uses, even before the rise of racial anti-Semitism. Such worry is clearly present in *Archives Israélites* editor Isidore Cahen's ambivalent response to Ernest Renan's scholarly work on ancient Israel and the historical Jesus in 1862. Although Cahen clearly liked the fact that Renan had characterized Jesus as embodying the characteristics and teachings of the Jewish race, he voiced real concern over the underlying anti-Jewish tone of the scholar's work, and especially, his explicit insistence that the Jewish people's vitality was a thing of the past. Confronting Renan's idea that history should be seen as a progressive rejection of Judaism by the Aryan race in an

April 1862 article, Cahen attacked the work's most basic theoretical foundation in race theory:

We protest Mr. Renan's assertion that the advancement of human society is tied to its rupture from the Jewish idea . . . [W]e don't like these absolute formulas, that claim that one religion or another has the monopoly on one idea or another, excluding one religion from the benefits of the other; we regret this doctrine of races, that instead of basing human society on an exchange of services and merits, is always paving the way for proscriptions.

While most Jewish writers—including Cahen himself—would continue to use the language of race to describe the Jewish people, such early protests can help us to achieve a more refined understanding of how and why they were adopting the language. When such terminology was useful for asserting minority rights, including the right to cultural or religious difference, race-language was used because of its powerful democratic message. But where such language became a warrant for exclusion, Jewish writers would vehemently reject it. Indeed, looking closely at how Jewish leaders responded to racial anti-Semitism when it emerged in the

1880s and 1890s, it appears that it was not race-language itself, but its exclusionary *use* that Jewish leaders found so objectionable. Even as they came to use it, then, the French articulated a critique of racial discourse. In seeing its dual nature even as they came to embrace it, Jewish writers were perhaps more aware than others in their world that race-language could be used to wildly divergent ends.

*Thank you to the editors and publisher of Jewish History for allowing Perspectives to publish this article based on Lisa Leff's previously published work, "Self-Definition and Self-Defense: Jewish Racial Identity in Nineteenth-Century France." Jewish History 19:1 (January 2005): 7–28.*

*Lisa Moses Leff is Associate Professor of History at Southwestern University. She is the author of Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France (Stanford University Press, 2006).*

# AJS 39th Annual Conference

December 16-18, 2007 • Sheraton Centre • Toronto, Ontario

See the AJS website ([www.ajsnet.org](http://www.ajsnet.org)) for the latest information on conference sessions, special evening events, musical performances and films, and visiting Toronto.

*(see page 59 for further details)*

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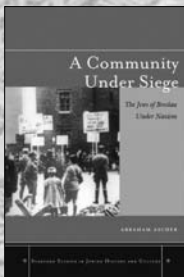
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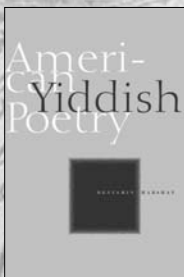
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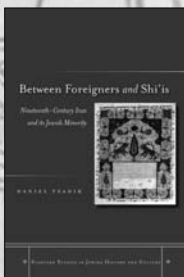


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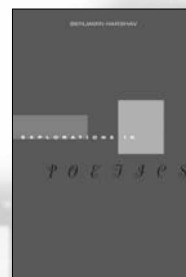
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# ZIONISM, RACE, AND THE GREAT ZIONIST RACIALIST NOVEL

Mark Gelber

The Zionist movement arose at a time when racial science and racialist discourses were becoming more and more securely established in the Western world. While this naturally set the stage for the enlistment of racial science in the Zionist cause, there seems to have been a widespread reluctance among political Zionists to exploit the rhetoric of race or to adopt it unreservedly. Despite the fact that there were some strongly committed racialist thinkers and activists such as Arthur Ruppin, who held influential positions in the World Zionist Organization, Zionism as a movement neither formulated a racial political philosophy nor instituted racial policy.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that a racialist orientation was fundamental to Central European cultural Zionism. Ahad Ha'am by and large avoided the rhetoric of race and only rarely incorporated racialist perspectives or rhetoric into his Hebraic cultural or spiritual Zionist polemics. However, Nathan Birnbaum, a pre-Herzlian Jewish nationalist from Vienna who propounded his own distinctive version of cultural Zionism, saw things differently. Birnbaum argued in favor of the potent cultural capacity of the Jewish nation, based

to a large degree on its positive racial characteristics.

This capacity could be actualized through Zionism and then, according to Birnbaum, utilized in order to transmit European civilization

to Asia and Africa. In theory, the Jewish nation reconstituted in its homeland would function as a cultural force mediating between Eastern and Western racial groups for the benefit of humanity. It is important to emphasize that the rhetoric of race here as elsewhere within the Zionist movement was

## COMPLEMENTING THE POLEMICAL LITERATURE, RACIAL ELEMENTS AND RACIAL PERSPECTIVES NATURALLY MADE THEIR WAY INTO CULTURAL ZIONIST LITERATURE AND ART, PROVIDING IMPORTANT CATEGORIES FOR THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF JEWISH AESTHETIC PRODUCTION WITHIN THE REALM OF CULTURAL ZIONISM.

for the most part racialist in nature and not racist, if I may be permitted to make this distinction. In other words, the lively discussion about race in cultural Zionist polemical literature normally presented a view of racial difference and uniqueness within the overall framework of the equality of races and the shared capacity of all humans to develop their own potentialities within racial groupings. Racialist formulations which tended toward racism and claims of the racial superiority of one race over others were generally absent.

The notion of a distinct Jewish racial identity served to reinforce the idea of a unique Jewish national identity. In order to construct and

to corroborate the idea of a separate Jewish nation, nationalist thinkers sought to validate the notion of a modern and secular Jewish national identity untethered from traditional religious conceptions of Jewishness. Race could be employed purposefully in this context. At the same time, acceptance of the racial argument helped to reinforce the case against Jewish assimilation and integration into "foreign" racial-national groups. As it turned out, this argument also appealed to non-Jewish observers who were sympathetic to Zionism and its various cultural expressions precisely because they made a strong case for Jewish national difference that indicated the necessity of

concomitant political and social exclusionary measures.

The issue of racial purity turned out to be neutral in this regard, since there were those cultural Zionists, like Birnbaum, who viewed the Jewish people as a product of racial admixture, and others, like Heinrich Loewe of Berlin, who believed in

fundamental Jewish racial purity. In fact, they represented different streams within cultural Zionism, which was able to accommodate both as part of a larger discussion. Contemporary scientific (*sic*) literature on the Jewish race was similarly full of disagreements about the issue of purity, as it was with regard to other contentious topics related to race.

Complementing the polemical literature, racial elements and racial perspectives naturally made their way into cultural Zionist literature and art, providing important categories for the critical analysis of Jewish aesthetic production within the realm of cultural Zionism. Poetry which celebrated the "Jewish

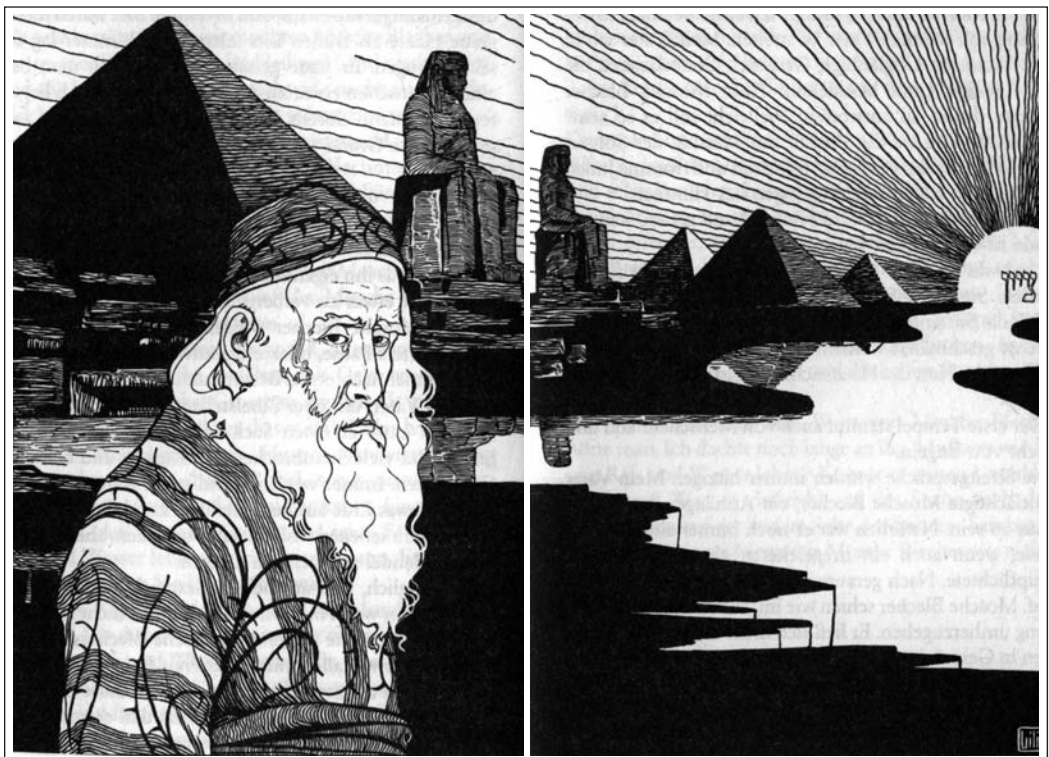
blood” and its potentialities became a focal point of interest in Zionist circles. For example, Richard Beer-Hofmann’s poem “*Schlaflied für Mirjam*” (1897, Lullaby for Miriam) stimulated great interest in this regard, especially its arresting lines: “. . . and blood in us deep/ Flows from those past to those yet to be, Blood of our Fathers, restless and proud.” Furthermore, Zionist art criticism attempted to discern the particularist Jewish racial characteristics of artwork created by Jewish artists. In the case of a

Jewish-nationally conscious artist like E. M. Lilien, who identified with Zionism and chose Biblical and other Jewish-related topics for his artwork, the recourse to the rhetoric of race in the critical commentary appears to be appropriate, uncomplicated, and even natural. This same critical tendency, however, is characteristic of the cultural Zionist appreciation of artwork unrelated to Jewish themes or created by artists who failed to evidence Jewish-nationalist leanings or consciousness, despite their indisputable Jewish racial connection. One thinks of Max Liebermann or Camille Pissarro in this context; both were appropriated by cultural Zionism in this sense, even if this appropriation process appears in retrospect to have been problematical, strained, or clumsy.

It is in this light that we must consider the emergence of the great Zionist racialist novel. As a genre, the Zionist novel manifests several general tendencies. Herzl’s *Altneuland* (1902, Old-New Land), which can be regarded as

paradigmatic, highlights the transformation of an alienated, decadent, disinterested, disillusioned, acculturated Jewish male intellectual into a self-conscious member of the Jewish nation, perhaps as a sign of a burgeoning commitment both to life and to the future of the nation. In the Zionist racial novel, an additional factor comes into play. Within the development of the plot, this same protagonist-type eventually comes to realize Jewish racial belonging and a new responsibility

The development of Jewish racial consciousness and the actualization of Zionist ideology are combined polemically in the great Zionist racialist novel, *René Richter, Die Entwicklung eines modernen Juden* (1906, René Richter, The Development of a Modern Jew). The work was written by Lothar Brieger, an interesting if forgotten participant in the early cultural Zionist scene in Berlin, and it deserves to be read as the seminal fictional text of racialist Zionism despite its numerous aesthetic flaws,



*Passah* [Passover] by Ephraim Moses Lilien. Reprinted from Börries Freiherr von Münchhausen and E.M. Lilien, *Juda* (Berlin: E. Fleischel, 1900).

to race is expressed, based on the blood relationship to one’s ancestors. For example, in a novel by Beer-Hofmann, *Der Tod Georgs* (1900, The Death of George), the protagonist overcomes his decadent passivity by unexpectedly affirming life and his Jewish heritage. Arriving at an awareness of the proud and ancient blood flowing in his veins, he realizes a new sense of self, based on the perception of the deepest layers of his soul and their historical roots in the Jewish racial experience.

improbabilities, and fundamental lack of verisimilitude. In the novel, the racial aspect acquires primacy because the narrative perspective and narrative voice are essentially racialist. Also, before the protagonist comes to identify with Jewish nationalism, he becomes convinced of the primacy of his Jewish racial identity. Thus, the novel justifies Jewish nationalism and Zionism by the pragmatic role they can play in terms of Jewish racial preservation and development.



The Zionist novel tends to differentiate between diverse Jewish types, usually in order to facilitate the identification of the Jewish enemy “within,” who can be just as pernicious an enemy of the people, as the despicable anti-Semite “without.” In Brieger’s work, the inner Jewish differentiation is predicated on racial purity. Thus, the novel posits the existence of a Jewish aristocracy—a “Jewry within Jewry”—based on inbreeding and an ideal of tradition. In a totally fantastic sequence, René Richter traces his genealogy back several centuries and discovers that he is a descendant of the Biblical tribe of Benjamin, which produced the first Jewish king. According to the fiction, this aristocratic tribe instinctively safeguarded its racial purity throughout the ages. Some common ground with racial anti-Semitism is established, or at least some of the anti-Semitic argumentation leads the protagonist to affirm his Jewish racial self and eventually to become proud of his racial lineage. The enemy envisioned in the novel, of the Aryan race as well as the Jewish race, is racial admixture itself. Thus, René Richter learns that his blond hair, tinged with red, is a sign of the racial elite; supposedly, the elite caste of every race, including the Jewish race, is blond-haired. In Brieger’s novel, the Jewish aristocrat appears to share more in terms of racial characteristics with the Prussian aristocracy than with other Jewish types, which are inferior and tend towards assimilation and racial attenuation and disappearance.

Late in Brieger’s novel, the protagonist gravitates to Zionist

circles and he subsequently embraces the cause enthusiastically. This sequence is complemented by the depiction of a new and healthy love relationship and marriage between him and a childhood sweetheart, who had patiently remained true to him through the years. This relationship is based partially on the racial compatibility of the pair, since she can also trace her lineage to fine Jewish stock. On one occasion he explains his love for her as follows: “I love her because the blood of the same race flows in our veins, because our ideals are namely these [racial].” Zionism, in the novel, is depicted as a movement which aims to reorganize the Jewish race, to detach it from an enervating struggle with the Aryans in Europe, and to reunify the dispersed Jewish racial strains in the ancestral homeland. Its ultimate goal is to rejuvenate the race and build a new Jewish empire based on the principle of race, in harmony with the ancestral land and in beneficial proximity to other Semitic tribes. By dedicating their lives to the ideal of race in the land of Israel (and while working the land), René Richter and his wife serve a higher goal to the benefit of humanity. They accept the duty and privilege of laying the groundwork for the eventual arrival of the Jewish masses, who will come sooner or later, as the host countries inevitably expel their Jewish residents.

Whereas anti-Semitism in eastern Europe served to preserve the racial purity of much of its Jewry, it simultaneously threatened the continued existence of the nation. The novel suggests that only the Zionist idea can provide a solution

to the racial dilemma at the heart of the Jewish question in Europe. The last scene of the novel depicts the young couple on board an ocean steamer, having dissolved their Berlin household and having said their last good-byes to Europe, confident in happy anticipation of the future of the regeneration of the Jewish race and the Jewish renaissance in Zion.

Judging from its unenthusiastic reception and commercial failure, Brieger’s great Zionist racialist novel does not appear to have resonated well with early twentieth-century Zionist and non-Zionist, or Jewish and non-Jewish, readers. Perhaps the unhappy fate of the novel can be traced to its aesthetic demerits rather than to its specific ideological position, since other evidence shows that the racial Zionist position continued to be popular up to the end of World War I. Nevertheless, racialism decidedly lost its appeal within Zionism sometime in the 1920s; only a few, isolated figures and publications continued to trumpet this ideology in subsequent years. Consequently, this entire literature, including its poetry and the great Zionist racial novel, disappeared from Jewish consciousness, even before racial ideologies were totally discredited following the tragic experience of Europe and Jewry during the Nazi era.

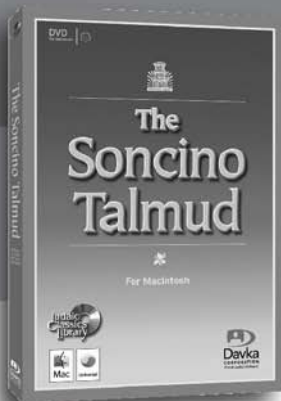
*Mark Gelber is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and German-Jewish Studies at Ben-Gurion University, Beer Sheva. He is the author of Melancholy Pride: Nation, Race, and Gender in the German Literature of Cultural Zionism (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2000).*

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# SIGMUND FREUD'S RACIAL THEORY OF JEWISHNESS

Eliza Slavet

Since the Holocaust it has been difficult to employ a “racial” definition of Jewishness without sounding perverse or even anti-Semitic. And yet, within Jewish communities and families—both observant and secular, both conservative and liberal—there is often an almost obsessive desire to know whether a person is Jewish. The definition of “Jewishness” in these cases is almost always purely “genealogical” in that the question is not whether a person feels, thinks, acts, or looks Jewish, but whether such suggestive signs are evidence of the “real thing”—the fact that the person has a Jewish parent (or even a grandparent), the fact that the person *really* is Jewish. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear (Jewish and non-Jewish) people say that someone is “half-Jewish” or a “quarter Jewish” or even a “mixed breed,” even as they are fully aware of the racial (and possibly racist) logic of such descriptions. For better and often for worse, the concept of race is a historical reality whose influence reaches far beyond the color line.

My current manuscript, provisionally entitled *Racial Fever: Psychoanalysis and the Jewish Question*, is an attempt to explore race as a concept beyond the realm of physical variation and to consider

racial thinking without reducing it to racism. These days Sigmund Freud’s work is more often read in the context of philosophy and literary theory than

alongside the scientific authors with whom he was deeply engaged.

While I focus on the latter context, my own work was initially inspired by Jacques Derrida’s book, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1996), in which he explores the “compulsive, repetitive, and



Sigmund Freud, 1856-1939. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

nostalgic desire for the archive,” the “irrepressible desire to return to the origin.” Archive fever is often accompanied by what I am calling “racial fever”: the irrepressible desire of individuals and communities to define themselves and others through genealogy, to discover (and sometimes invent) ancestral memories that seem to

explain the tensions and compulsions of the present, and (in turn) to see these narratives as indisputable history and palpable facts “on the ground.” This fever is felt *in* and *on* the body, even as it is invisible, undefinable and ultimately indecipherable. Sometimes it seems to take the form of a sickness, at other times it is a fervor, an intense craving, or a zealous enthusiasm. Now and then, it seems to lie dormant, biding its time.

The idea of racial fever emerges directly out of psychoanalysis.

Throughout his life, Freud explored the ways in which individuals’ lives seem ruled by their pasts, tracing patients’ physical symptoms to psychical traumas and identifying their compulsions to repeat as the result of memories of a distant past. In his earliest work, Freud rejected his teachers’ overemphasis on heredity by proposing that his patients suffered not from familial degeneracy but from “reminiscences.” He initially resisted the idea that an individual’s memories reached farther back than childhood. Along the way, however, he realized that there were certain conflicts and patterns which were inexorable; individuals seemed to be burdened with memories not only of their earliest lives, but

of the effects “produced on the endlessly *long chain of our ancestors*.” Yet it was not until his final book that Freud specified what he meant by “our” ancestors and explicitly explored the Jewish question.

Written during the last five years of his life, Freud’s *Moses and*



*Monotheism* (1939) has long been regarded as an autobiographical curiosity which, while shedding light on his feelings about his own Jewishness, potentially compromises some of the more convincing aspects of psychoanalysis. In addition to being a bizarre reworking of the biblical story of Moses, this book draws upon dubious and seemingly outmoded theories of race and heredity. However, *Moses and Monotheism* is a serious work in which Freud proposes a theory of Jewishness—what it *is*, how it is transmitted, and how it continues to survive. Rather than an aberration, Freud’s last book is the culmination of a lifetime spent investigating the relationships between memory and its rivals: heredity, history, and fiction. By proposing that certain events in the distant past were so traumatic that their memories were inherited by successive generations, Freud eventually integrated the two realms—the biological, permanent, and racial on the one hand, and the psychic, experiential, and cultural on the other. In *Moses and Monotheism* he theorized that Jewishness is constituted by the inheritance of a specific archaic memory which Jewish people are inexorably compelled to transmit to future generations, whether consciously or unconsciously. It is for this reason that I consider Freud’s theory of Jewishness to be a racial theory of memory.

Freud was well aware that his reconstruction of the origins of the Jewish people was bound to offend—not only scholars of ancient history, religion, and biology, but laypeople (whether Jewish or non-Jewish). For many readers, Freud’s

proposal that Moses was not an Israelite but rather an Egyptian was the most shocking, for (as Freud acknowledges) it seemed to “deprive a people of the man whom they take pride in as the greatest of their sons.” Yet contrary to what most readers have assumed, by insisting on the Egyptianness of Moses, Freud did not disavow his

own Jewishness or the Jewishness of his “institution” (that is, psychoanalysis). Instead, he subtly questioned the self-evident character of such definitions. Even in the biblical narrative, Moses was an Israelite only by virtue of his genealogy; after he was weaned he was brought back to Pharaoh’s daughter and “he became her son” (Exodus 2:10). Thus, while he might be genealogically Jewish, he was “culturally” Egyptian.

Though Freud uses texts, traditions, and rituals as the basis of his reconstruction of the origins of the Jewish people, he ultimately concludes that such forms of “direct communication” are not enough to explain the deep power and persistence of the Mosaic tradition. Instead, he proposes that the memory-traces of Moses—and the Mosaic tradition itself—have been biologically transmitted from one generation to the next. Like a number of other Jewish scientists of the early twentieth century, Freud draws from various contemporary theories of evolution and heredity and insists that acquired characteristics are heritable. This

was not misguided or outdated Lamarckism, but rather a reasoned and creative response to the political and scientific debates of his day.

What is perhaps most radical about Freud’s theory of Jewishness is not its racialism, but the humanism inherent in his peculiar reconstruction of the historical origins of the Jewish people. To make a long and complicated story short, according to Freud, Moses was an Egyptian man who chose a “rowdy band of Semites” as his people upon whom he imposed an abstract

monotheism based on an Egyptian sun-god cult. Finding the Mosaic tradition too difficult, the Semites killed this Moses and apparently forgot all about the episode. While Moses’ tradition remained “half-extinguished” for many centuries, it eventually “triumphed” (and survived by being biologically transmitted from one generation to the next). By making the “choice” of the Semites a human rather than divine matter, Freud seems to suggest that humans may also be able to overcome those differences which seem to set peoples apart.

Yet this hopeful humanism is tempered by his recognition of man’s limitations. According to Freud, what made the Jews Jewish was not only Moses’ choice or his tradition, but rather the Semites’ violent murder of him. In proposing that the memory-traces of these events were biologically inherited, Freud illuminates the ways in which history is often experienced as a matter beyond human intervention; the Jews remained Jewish not because of history, but because of the naturalization and internalization of history in the

THOUGH FREUD USES TEXTS, TRADITIONS, AND RITUALS AS THE BASIS OF HIS RECONSTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE, HE ULTIMATELY CONCLUDES THAT SUCH FORMS OF “DIRECT COMMUNICATION” ARE NOT ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN THE DEEP POWER AND PERSISTENCE OF THE MOSAIC TRADITION.

body. Where Freud's *Moses* has been seen as an attempt to cure the Jewish people (if not also Western Civilization) of their collective neurosis, it is far more representative of his skepticism about the potential for such change.

Freud's skepticism is not entirely pessimistic. Throughout his life, he argued that the return of the repressed is inevitable, and in his final book, he extended this idea to suggest that despite all reforms, repudiations, and repressions, Jewish people will remain Jewish and Judaism will survive. As shocking as this may sound, however, such a guarantee of the future is not necessarily hopeful, for it also suggests that the "fixity of identity"—racial fever and the violence which is so often legitimated by it—is inescapable. While the most decisive event in

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Jewish history (according to Freud) was the Semites' murder of Moses, the inheritance of these memory-traces persistently compels individuals to try to make sense of this history. The discomfort—and strength—of Freud's theory of Jewishness is the notion that when the repressed *returns*, we cannot predetermine whether the return will be for better or for worse. We can, however, take historical and

human actions to anticipate and work through these returns and to sustain the more "noble and precious" elements in the future.

*Eliza Slavet is Lecturer and Visiting Scholar in the Literature Department at the University of California, San Diego, and Lecturer at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, New York University.*

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# MAURICE FISHBERG AND THE AMBIGUITIES OF JEWISH IDENTITY

Mitchell Hart

Maurice Fishberg's magnum opus, *The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment* (London: Walter Scott Publishing), first appeared in 1911. It has just been republished by Kessinger Publishing. Kessinger advertises itself as a company that republishes extremely rare and hard-to-find books, and then keeps them in print indefinitely. A wonderful service. But it is difficult to understand their choice of Fishberg's work. *The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment* was reprinted in 1975 by Arno Press (New York), then again in 2006 by Transaction Publishers, with an introductory essay by William Helmreich. The book remains in print, hardly difficult to obtain.

What might account for the repeated republication of Fishberg's work? Assuming, of course, that the publishers believed there was some profit to be made, that an appetite and market exists for such a book, we then might query the belief in such a market. Why the continued interest, or even assumption of interest? After all, other works from the same period, treating the same or similar

topics, have been all but forgotten. In 1909, the Austrian Jewish physician and social scientist Ignaz Zollschan published a long monograph on Jews and the

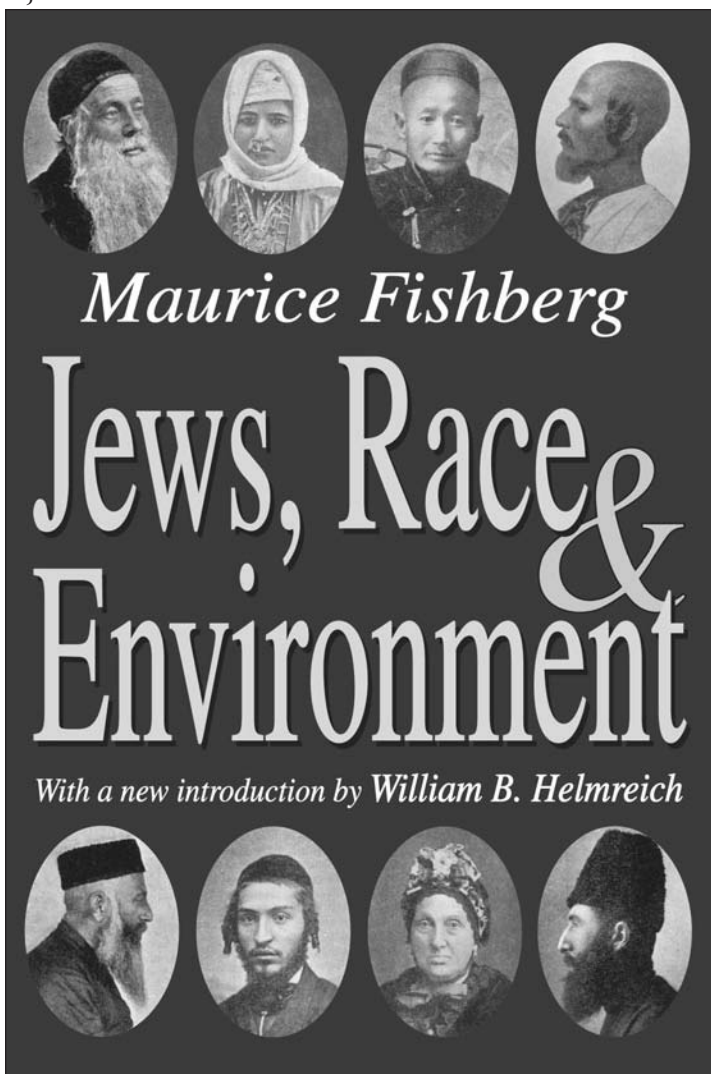
question of race; the work was republished numerous times over the next few decades. True, it is in German and would thus have to be translated. But Arthur Ruppin's work, *The Jews of Today*, could

environment. Ruppin's work was originally published in German in 1904, then revised and republished in 1911; an English translation appeared in 1913. Ruppin, arguably the most important Jewish social scientist of his day in Europe, had a greater impact on people's thinking about Jews and race, and on Jewish social science more generally, than did Fishberg. Yet his seminal work has not been reissued (though this is certainly a desideratum).

Why Fishberg? I would argue that, at minimum, the answer lies in the very title of the book itself, in the ambiguity and complexity suggested by the phrase "race and environment."

The fundamental issue Fishberg implicitly raised in the title of his work remains an open question for Jews and others. What are the Jews? Are they a race? What is the relationship between biology and culture, nature and nurture, in their constitution? The immediate attraction of Fishberg's book, then, lies first in the conjunction "and" in the title: race and environment; "and" rather than "or." Fishberg certainly could have come down more decisively on one side or the other, as so many others did at the time. But he did not.

The question of Jewish identity, with regard to race and culture, biology and environment, was never really "solved" by science; it was "solved" by politics, at least for half a century or so. It was the Holocaust, and the



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certainly lay claim to being just as important as Fishberg's for the history and development of Jewish thinking about Jews, race and

fundamental role racial thinking played in Nazi ideology and policy, that decided the issue of the Jews and race, that placed the very asking the question “Are the Jews a race?” beyond the bounds of scientific and social respectability. Nazism and the Holocaust made all but invisible a complicated intellectual and cultural past in which the Jews were not solely the objects and the ultimate victims of a racial scientific discourse but also participated in and contributed to this developing discourse. Fishberg’s work is significant, and in all likelihood fascinating, because it also reminds us of this complicated past. It takes us back to a time before the 1930s and 1940s when thinking and writing about the Jews in racialized language was thoroughly respectable, even mandatory for scientists or public intellectuals who wished to participate in the most urgent contemporary debates.

As so many, including Fishberg, wrote at the time, the Jews were especially interesting and important to the ongoing debate over race and environment because with them, or through them, one could investigate almost all of the crucial issues raised by science: collective identity and survival; racial purity; the mixing of the races and the import of endogamy and exogamy; the connection between geography, environment, and physical and intellectual characteristics; race and poverty; race and crime; race and hygiene. What is normal, what pathological? How do we account for types, for groups traits, for statistical patterns? The Jews were a favorite subject among non-Jewish and Jewish social scientists and

popular writers about race long before the Nazis, during that century or so when racial thinking was normative, at the center rather than at the margins of legitimate science and public thought.

Fishberg’s work is instructive, and also perhaps so intellectually exciting, because it also allows us to see the ambiguities or contradictions within the discourse about Jews and race at work. We can see the degree to which Fishberg, like other anthropologists, physicians, statisticians and other scholars at the time, granted the ontological status of the Jews as a “thing” to be investigated, dissected, categorized, akin to other

HOW RACIAL IS FISHBERG’S NARRATIVE? HIS OVERARCHING POINT IS THAT THE JEWS ARE NOT A PURE RACE, AND THAT WHATEVER PARTICULAR OR PECULIAR PHYSICAL AND INTELLECTUAL TRAITS SCIENTISTS CAN IDENTIFY AS “JEWISH” OWE FAR MORE TO HISTORY, ENVIRONMENT, AND CULTURE THAN TO HEREDITY.

groups, but also akin to plants and animals. Again, like so many others, Fishberg participated in the naturalization or materialization of the Jews; their past, their bodies and minds, their present-day conditions were to be understood as the product of natural forces—the natural selection process set forth by Darwin, the sociological and economic conditions analyzed by social scientists, and/or the bioracial mechanisms of heredity delineated by racial scientists. Thus, when we read Fishberg we can see, in one of its fullest forms, the variety of approaches taken by science to grasp the Jew as a natural being. Fishberg’s book offers us a wonderful example of the construction of the racial discourse about the Jews, the way in which science works to make the Jew into

a racialized or biosocial being, amenable to scientific analysis.

Unlike Fishberg and others at the time, we do not assume or take for granted this ontological status of the Jews. We are as interested in, or even more interested in, the discourse—the narrative that is constructed about the Jews as a race or *Volk* or nation. But, in the end, perhaps we are still uncertain about the status of the Jews. “*Was sind die Juden?*” as one German anthropologist wrote at the end of the nineteenth century. “What are the Jews?” Not “Who is a Jew,” either according to Jewish law or popular culture, but “What are the Jews” anthropologically. This was, in the end, the intellectual impulse to Fishberg’s research (the political or ideological impulse, on the other hand, was assimilationism, the desire to demonstrate scientifically that the Jews could and would integrate into European and American societies, and the concomitant desire to refute the Zionist claims that such a goal was impossible).

How racial is Fishberg’s narrative? His overarching point is that the Jews are not a pure race, and that whatever particular or peculiar physical and intellectual traits scientists can identify as “Jewish” owe far more to history, environment, and culture than to heredity. But can Fishberg really be called an anti- or nonracist? Not really, at least not in this work (in the 1930s he would join with his friend Franz Boas to spearhead an anti-racist campaign aimed at the idea of Aryan supremacy). But in 1911 Fishberg is still asking questions that preoccupy

anthropologists, demographers, physicians, and others who take race very seriously as a key to understanding groups, including the Jews. Thus, Fishberg insists in the preface to the book that there is no need for him to defend bringing out such a book, given that “the whole world is interested in the subject of the Jews as a race, and the getting into closer touch with the ethnic relations of the Jews.”

In his narrative he is often more ambiguous and ambivalent about race. One example: In his first chapter on demography, Fishberg discusses the widespread theory that the Jews enjoy a heightened ability to acclimate to dramatically different climates, and that this ability is in fact a racial trait, a result of “Semitic blood.” Fishberg rejects the notion of Semitic blood; but he does not reject the argument that the Jews enjoy this ability to acclimate, nor does he fully reject the idea that race helps us understand this. If the Jews “do

prosper in tropical as well as in cold climates, it is probably more due to the racial elements which they have acquired in the countries of their present sojourn than to the ‘Semitic’ blood which is alleged to flow in their veins.”

Are most Jews any more certain these days about the nature of Jewish identity, about the relationship between genetics and culture—even if most would not employ the term “race”? There is enough uncertainty about the answer to this question, given the ongoing research into DNA profiling, genomes, genetic diseases, markers of genetic identity, that we might comfortably assume that a majority of Jews (not to mention non-Jews) remain unclear (and confused) about where biology ends and culture begins when it comes to Jewish identity. Race *and* environment, not race or environment. Fishberg, in the end, went back and forth, unable to decide incontrovertibly on one

explanation or another. And neither can we, at least not without the help of ideology or the history of the Holocaust. Thus, politics might dictate the answer “Jews are not a race,” because to assert the opposite is to invite another catastrophe in the name of social, racial, or eugenic purity. Science, though, has still not finished working out the relationship between biology, history, and culture. Thus, for many Jews, and probably even more non-Jews, the answer to the question “What are the Jews?” is not at all obvious and certainly not simple. That, perhaps, is what makes Fishberg’s work still important, fascinating, and even relevant almost a century after its initial publication.

*Mitchell Hart is Associate Professor of History at the University of Florida. He is the author of The Healthy Jew (Cambridge University Press, 2007).*

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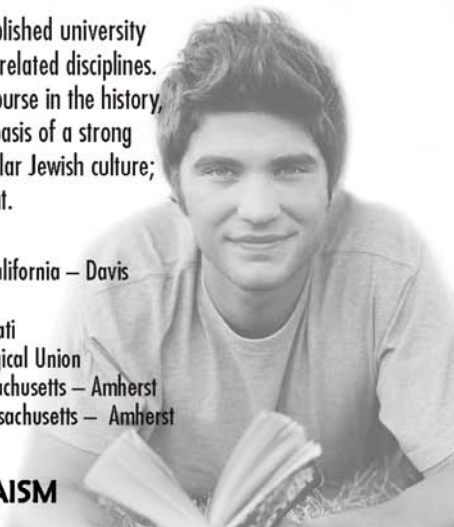
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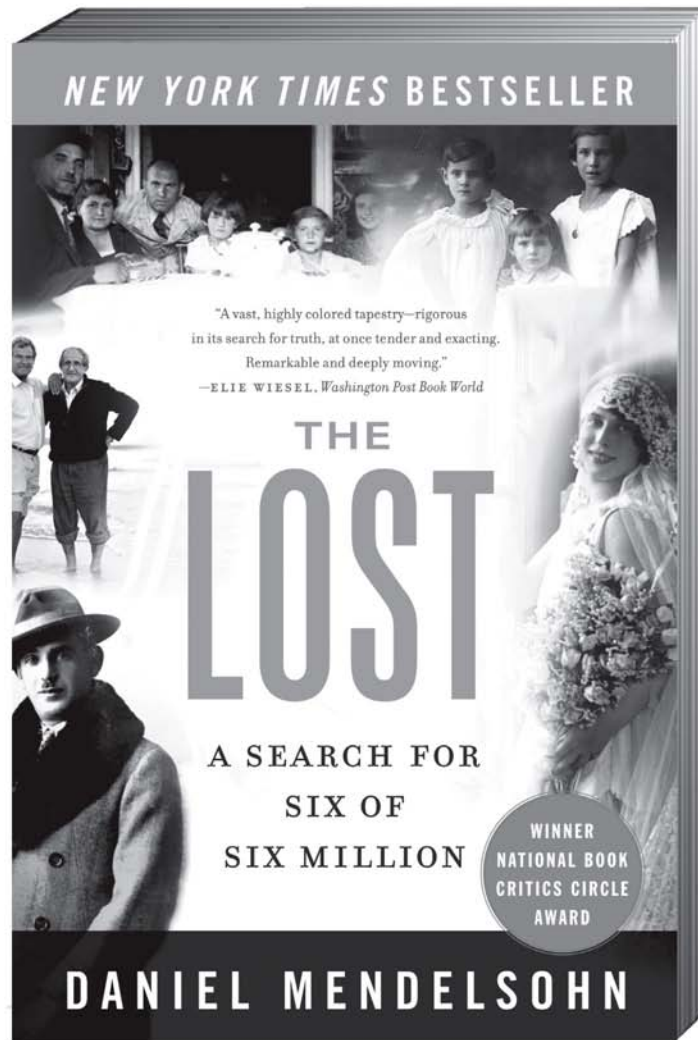


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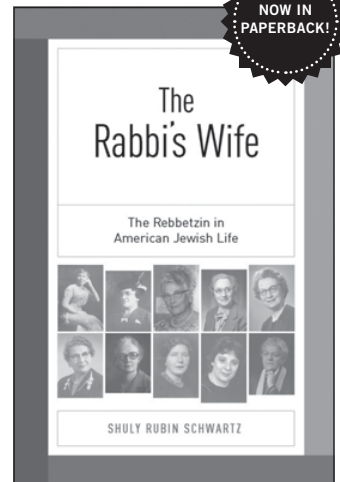
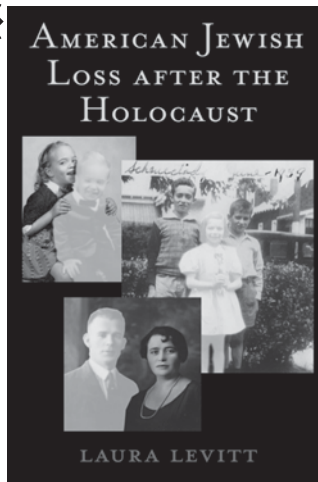
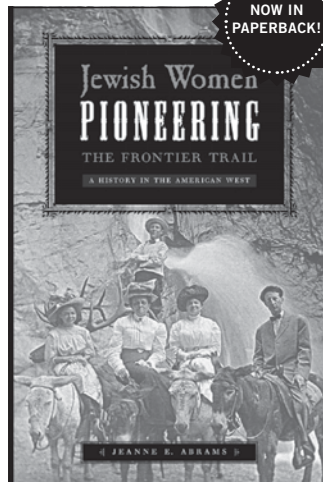
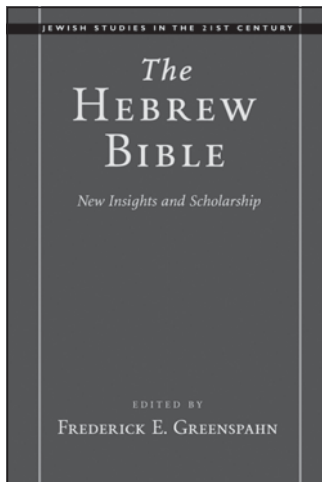
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## MY WORK

My interests range from Jewish scholarship to American Judaism to Jewish women's history, but the central concept I seek to understand is that of leadership: What propels certain individuals to shape the course of events? How do they succeed in influencing others? And how do leaders effect institutional change? Whether studying the development of Jewish educational camping, the evolution of Jewish scholarship in America, or the impact of Jewish feminism, I strive to identify the leadership qualities that made these transformations possible.

## MY BOOK

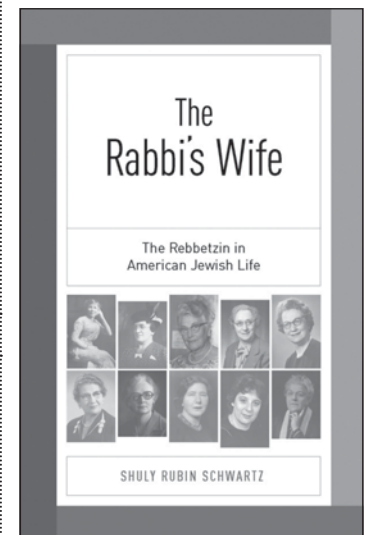
My most recent book, *The Rabbi's Wife: The Rebbetzin in American Jewish Life*, winner of the National Jewish Book Award in Modern Jewish Thought, focuses on female religious leadership. Long the object of curiosity, admiration, and gossip, rabbis' wives have rarely been acknowledged as the Jewish religious and communal leaders that they were and are. We know a great deal about the important role played by rabbis in building American Jewish life in this country, but we rarely consider the extent to which the rabbinate functioned as a two-person career for most of the twentieth century. Many bright, talented, ambitious women married rabbis to serve the Jewish people during an era when the rabbinate was closed to them and when women felt compelled to choose between marriage and career. Though they gained their title, status, and audience through marriage, many rebbetzins successfully exercised power in their own right, influencing countless individuals through teaching, counseling, writing, preaching, and entertaining. *The Rabbi's Wife* reveals the ways these women succeeded in both building meaningful leadership roles for themselves and becoming an important force in shaping Jewish life in America.

## MY STORY

I am the Irving Lehrman Research Associate Professor of American Jewish History at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and Dean of the Albert A. List College of Jewish Studies, JTS's undergraduate school. My administrative work also focuses on leadership: List College, through its dual-degree programs with Columbia University and Barnard College, is dedicated to cultivating responsible Jewish citizens and leaders.

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# FASHIONING JEWISHNESS IN A BLACK AND WHITE WORLD

Eric Goldstein

Jewish web surfers looking for a band for a wedding or bar mitzvah may be surprised (and possibly delighted) to find “Hip Hop and Rap” and “Reggae and World Beat” listed among the major varieties of Jewish music on the

website of the Jewish Arts Regional Touring Service (J-ARTS), a booking agency for Jewish music groups.

Clicking on these categories reveals a wide array of performers specializing in these genres, acts that

range from the Israeli-born hip-hop artist Yoni Ben-Yehuda (known as “Sneakas”) to Rabbi Mikael Zerbib, whose album *Mussareggae* blends the Jamaican music style with Jewish ethics. Similar offerings include the Original Jewish Gangstas, who use “Pro-Tools, condensor mics, pre-amplifiers, and their own lyrical creativity to combine the wisdom of Judaism with the bump of hip-hop.”

The acts on J-ARTS provide a small taste of how many young Jews in the United States today are creating a Jewish culture that draws heavily on African American and, in the case of reggae, Afro-Caribbean styles of expression. Although this trend is being pursued by many types of Jews, it owes much of its current vogue to the lively subculture known as the “Jewish hipster” movement and its unofficial

organ, *Heeb* magazine. Since its debut in 2002, *Heeb* has often linked Jews with blacks as part of its overall campaign to demonstrate that Jewishness can be “cool,” a

point often made with *Heeb*’s special brand of over-the-top comedy. The magazine’s very first cover, for example, featured black hands placing a round piece of *shmurah* matzoh on a turntable, a theme echoed in a long-running satirical advertisement in which an

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY WILL NOT BE TOTALLY SURPRISED AT THE WAY IN WHICH YOUNG JEWS TODAY ARE BORROWING FROM AFRICAN AMERICANS, SINCE JEWS HAVE HAD A LONG AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH BLACK CULTURE.

African American man proclaims a piece of Streit’s matzoh to be “a big ass cracker!” Another *Heeb* feature was the “Nell Carter Memorial Page,” honoring the Presbyterian-born diva who converted to Judaism. The writeup on Carter expressed glee that Jews have “lucked out in getting some of the best black celebrities as converts.”

The trend so apparent in *Heeb* soon appeared in other quarters as well. In 2003, writer-director Jonathan Kesselman presented the first “Jewxploitation film,” the *Hebrew Hammer*, which used similar comic hyperbole to explicitly link Jews and African Americans. Drawing on the popular blaxploitation genre of the 1970s, the film followed the adventures of a tough Jewish action hero who speaks with “a mix of Black Panther argot and Yiddish” and “struts through the ‘hood”

instilling Jewish pride in its youth.” The music industry, as suggested above, has become perhaps the most active arena in which young Jews link themselves with black culture. The most famous example is Matisyahu (né Matthew Paul Miller), the Chabad/Lubavitch devotee who was named top reggae artist of 2006 by *Billboard* magazine.

What can we make of these examples of a contemporary Jewish culture that draws heavily on black influences? In all of these cases, it is apparent that the use of black images and style allow young Jews to link themselves to what they

perceive as the assertiveness and independence of African Americans. Despite contemporary society’s claim to be a “multicultural” one, the black-white divide is still a powerful enough construct to make

African Americans the most powerful symbol of difference in American society. As a result, they are an attractive touchstone for Jews who have become frustrated with the constraints placed on them by their membership in the white mainstream.

Those familiar with American Jewish history will not be totally surprised at the way in which young Jews today are borrowing from African Americans, since Jews have had a long and intimate relationship with black culture. In the 1920s and 1930s, Al Jolson, Sophie Tucker and other Jewish performers were well known for their blackface routines, which lampooned blacks but also contained elements of tribute and identification. Irving Berlin drew on black culture in composing songs like “Alexander’s Rag Time Band,” as did George

Gershwin in writing his opera, *Porgy and Bess*. As memoirs of the interwar years record, Jewish youth frequently listened to “race records” and invited black musicians to perform at their dances. Some made excursions to Harlem and other black neighborhoods in the urban north to seek out nightclubs and dance halls and sometimes romantic liaisons.

What, then, separates the contemporary Jewish appropriation of black culture from these earlier examples? First and foremost, prewar Jews who experimented with black culture did so under a very different set of social circumstances. Not yet fully vested as a part of the white mainstream, Jews before 1945 were often described, and described themselves, as members of a distinct “race.” Although this did not necessarily mean that they were seen as non-white, it did mean that they occupied an uncertain place in America’s racial constellation. Their

ability to move in sectors of white society while remaining distinct in many ways unnerved the white, non-Jewish public, who derived a sense of stability and security from seeing their society as neatly divided into black and white. As their puzzlement about Jews reached a

fever pitch in the interwar years, the climate placed significant pressure on Jews to downplay characteristics that could be interpreted as “racial” and to conform to the behaviors and mores of white society.

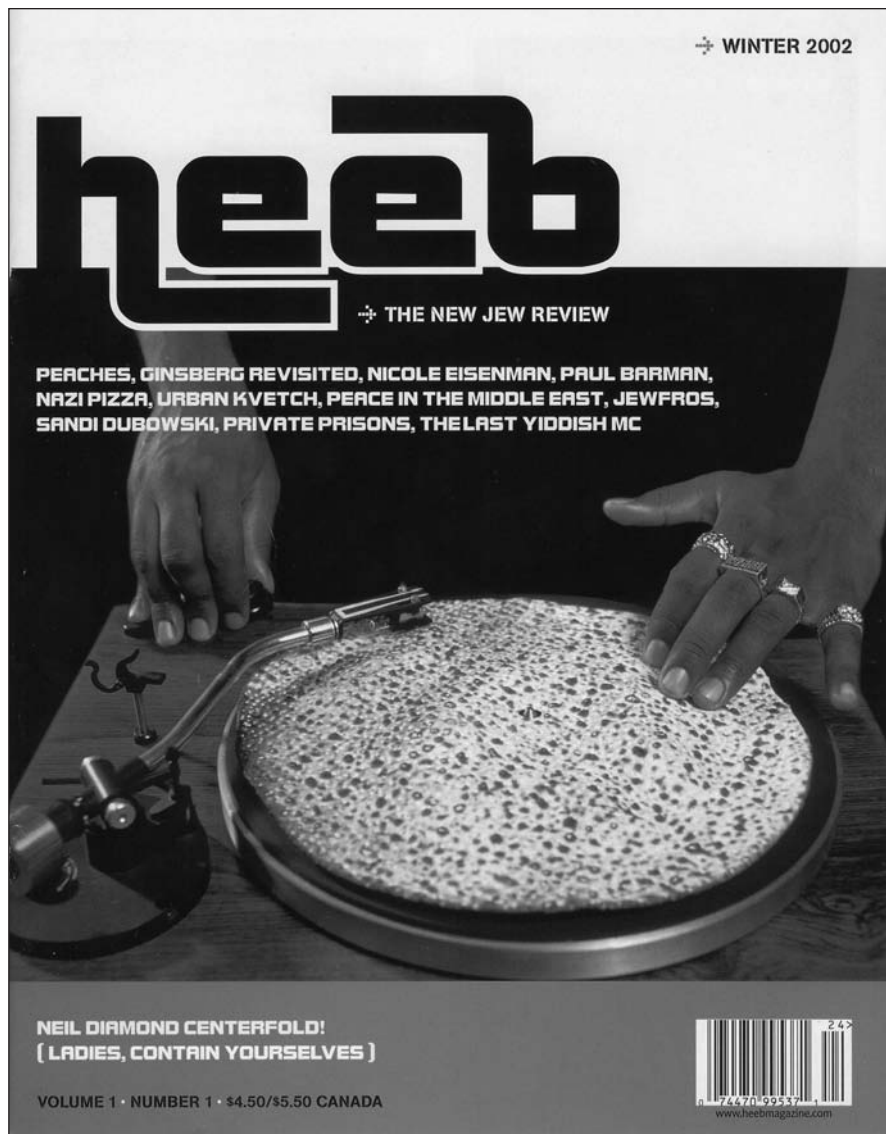
In this context, Jews who bristled under the pressures of acculturation often found black culture to be a welcome escape valve. It could provide a surrogate for feelings of

on blackface, providing a mask that obscured his difference to the white world, which saw him simply as a white man lampooning blacks. Berlin’s early music seems to have expressed a cultural connection to African Americans, even as he obscured his debt to black culture in his public statements, underscoring that he and other Jewish popular songwriters were “of pure white blood.” Jewish youth

“slumming” in Harlem or on Chicago’s south side similarly found that they could temporarily transgress the mores of white society and then safely return to its confines. In short, while Jews of this period may have privately looked upon blacks as figures of longing, their excursions into black culture were intended only as temporary and guarded diversions from their ongoing pursuit of acceptance in white society.

The Jews today who are incorporating African American

culture into their own cultural repertoires are motivated by a much different set of circumstances, which have also led to some important substantive differences in the results. After World War II, questions about Jewish racial status finally receded and Jews experienced



Cover of *Heeb* 1:1 (Winter 2002). Photo credit: Seth Kushner.

difference that they were not comfortable expressing publicly, one that they could access in ways that did not threaten—and often even enhanced—their status as white. In *The Jazz Singer*, Jolson’s character, Jack Robin, was able to get in touch with his Jewish heritage by putting



new opportunities for integration into the white mainstream. Although Jews continued in many ways to think of themselves in racial terms, they rarely voiced these feelings publicly as they took advantage of new opportunities for inclusion. After 1965, however, two major shifts began to occur in American Jewish identity. First, a growing acceptance of difference in American culture lessened the pressure on Jews to downplay their distinctiveness. Second, the emergence of Black Power movements and civil rights legislation that identified minority status with peoples of color made many Jews uneasy with how they were now defined as part of the white power structure, a designation that cut against their own “outsider” consciousness. Ironically, having begun to achieve the privileged status they had long sought, they now felt troubled by the threatened loss of their group distinctiveness.

Not surprisingly, the 1970s saw some early traces of the Jewish cultural borrowing from African Americans evident today. Activists

for the Soviet Jewry movement often imported slogans from the civil rights movement and some young Jews donned “Jewfros” in imitation of their black counterparts. The fact that Jewish integration has continued to reach unprecedented levels in recent years helps explain the intensifying appeal of African American culture, which gives contemporary Jews a powerful tool for asserting their difference. Unlike the flirtations of Jews with black culture in the 1920s and 1930s, today’s Jewish interest in hip-hop, reggae, African American-Jewish celebrities and black cultural style is part of a broader assertion of Jewish particularity. *Heeb’s* borrowings from black culture appear alongside articles outing television’s “crypto-Jews” and celebrating the “crazy curls, shapely schnozzes, and hefty hips” of “the Jewess.” Jewish hipsters may listen to Hasidic reggae, but they also wear the “Yo Semite” t-shirts manufactured by the San Francisco-based Jewish Fashion Conspiracy. In other words, young Jews today who are appropriating black culture do not use it as a cover for their own distinctiveness while publicly

seeking to fit in. Instead, they try to use the cultural cache enjoyed by blackness to argue that Jewishness is similarly “cool” and different.

The one thing that does unite the young Jews of today and those of the prewar period is the way in which they have to navigate the power of America’s black-white divide, a system into which they do not neatly fit. In the 1920s and 1930s, Jews who had to downplay their Jewishness in order to be accepted as “white” found black culture to be one of the few outlets that could relieve—if only temporarily—the pressures of acculturation. Today, Jews who desperately *want* to be recognized and legitimized as different find they also have to turn to black culture in order to invest Jewishness with the heft needed to be taken seriously in a “multicultural” world.

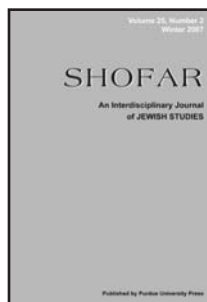
*Eric Goldstein is Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Emory University. He is the author of The Price of Whiteness (Princeton University Press, 2006).*

## Contribute to the New Syllabi Directory on the AJS Website

The Resources section of the AJS website now includes a directory of Syllabi in all fields of Jewish studies. The site already has more than fifty syllabi on Jewish history, literature and culture, philosophy, and more. Members are invited to contribute to the directory by emailing syllabi in MS-Word or pdf format to the AJS office at [ajs@ajs.cjh.org](mailto:ajs@ajs.cjh.org).

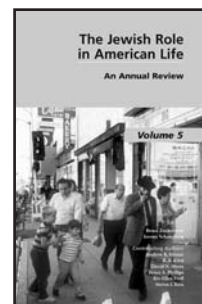
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*Shofar*, now in its 25th year of publication, is a quarterly scholarly publication edited and produced by the Purdue Jewish Studies Program and published by the Purdue University Press. It is the official journal of the Midwest and Western Jewish Studies Associations.



### The Jewish Role of American Life: An Annual Review

ISBN: 1-55753-446-2 • \$25.00

The relationship between Jews and the United States is necessarily complex: Jews have been instrumental in shaping American culture and, of course, Jewish culture and religion have likewise been profoundly recast in the United States, especially in the period following World War II.

## BOOKS

### Mel Gibson's Passion: The Film, the Controversy, and Its Implications

by Zev Garber, ISBN: 1-55753-405-5 • \$14.95

There is no question that Gibson's *Passion* is the most controversial Jesus—if not, religious—movie ever made. *Mel Gibson's Passion: The Film, the Controversy, and Its Implications* exposes the flaws of Gibson's cinematic Christ and lays out assertively and persuasively the rationale of Jews and Christians in how to grasp and comprehend the passion and execution of the Christian Savior known scripturally as the “King of the Jews.”

### Death of a “Jewish Science”: Psychoanalysis in the Third Reich

by James B. Goggin and Eileen B. Goggin, ISBN: 1-55753-193-5 • \$38.95

James and Eileen Goggin describe the interaction between Jewish and Gentile analysts before and after the Third Reich, demonstrating how most of the Gentile analysts quickly adapted to the new regimens demands, while the Jews were forced to emigrate.

### The Jewish American Novel

edited by Philippe Codde, ISBN: 1-55753-437-3 • \$34.95

In his book, Codde traces for the first time this intriguing thematic mixture in the works of some well-known and some forgotten but fascinating Jewish American novelists: Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Edward Lewis Wallant, Isaac Rosenfeld, Daniel Stern, Jonathan Baumbach, and Norma Rosen. In its displacement of canonical barriers and its inclusive thematic movement, the book addresses and resolves a double lacuna in US-American literary historiography.

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# BIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE AND AMERICAN JEWISH IDENTITY

Lynn Davidman and Shelly Tenenbaum

For a century preceding World War II, the dominant worldview in Europe and the United States divided people into racial groups, each with defined physical and mental traits that were viewed as biologically determined. Scientists argued that individuals' skin color or facial structure disclosed their internal characteristics such as intelligence and even social values. Since the defeat of Nazi Germany, however, the idea of a Jewish race has been largely discredited among scientists, social theorists and producers and consumers of popular culture. Hitler's reliance on racial notions of Jewishness to justify his extermination policy made any application of the term "race" in reference to Jews appear sinister and anti-Semitic. After World War II, racial distinctions referred to color only while "ethnicity," a new term that highlighted cultural differences, defined Jews and other white European groups.

Even though the idea of Jewish racial identity has been delegitimated, contemporary American Jews persist in relying on biological discourse to understand their Jewishness. In *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (2000), sociologist Steven M. Cohen and religious studies scholar Arnold Eisen argue that moderately affiliated Jews manifest a high degree of tribalism, a sense that Judaism is in their blood. Within the last few years, *Lilith*

magazine had two articles on the growing numbers of infertile Jewish couples who are seeking Jewish women's eggs for in vitro fertilization not for religious reasons but to maximize the chances that their children would resemble them. Similarly, in her

inalienable nature of their Jewishness. If it is surprising that unaffiliated Jews emphasize biological essentialism as the basis of their Jewish identities; it is even more surprising that adult children of intermarried parents would view their Jewishness as an ascribed identity. The availability of options is clearly central in families where more than one religion is present; nevertheless the majority used some form of biological language to discuss their Jewish identities. Our interviewees often employed the rhetoric of genetics to describe how being Jewish is an internal and essential part of their identities. In fact, the genetic essentialism of their Jewish identities led some, including adult children of intermarriage, to question whether

or not a person could convert and become "really" Jewish. The biologically innate nature of Judaism was reinforced by our respondents' claim that Jewishness is revealed through distinctive identity markers such as intellectual attributes or typical Jewish physical features. Comments about innate Jewish intelligence as well as about hair, eyes, and noses surfaced often in the interviews.

As sociologists, we are interested in hereditary traits not because they are intrinsically significant but because in their narratives the unaffiliated Jews and children of intermarriage repeatedly used biological terminology. In reality,



Jews, race, and genes in the headlines. Courtesy of *The Forward* and Michael Lerner.

survey of contemporary texts such as encyclopedias and the "Jewhoo" website, historian Susan Glenn argues that editors of encyclopedias and biographical reference books employ "blood logic" in their selection of subjects. For example, the editors of an encyclopedia on American Jewish women included as Jews people whose parents were both Jewish even if they had rejected Jewish identity or converted to another religion.

In our recent study of adult Jews who had never affiliated with a synagogue and of adult children of intermarriage, we repeatedly heard from our respondents a strong emphasis on the inherent,



Jews are heterogeneous in regards to type of hair, eye color, and nose shape. In a 2002 interview with *The Forward*, Sander Gilman, author of *The Jews' Body*, rejected all stereotypes about the Jewish

nose except one: "In 35 years of

working on this topic, I have never seen a Jew without a nose." There is no such thing as a Jewish gene and since Judaism is a religion that accepts converts, Jewishness is not a biological construct. Yet, despite

Jewish than those who intermarry, and Jewish activists are not more Jewish than are Jews who do not affiliate with any ethnic

hereditary inborn traits, our interviewees interpreted Jewish genetics as providing them with a large endowment of

## The Fallacy of Biological Judaism

By ROBERT POLLACK  
Observant Jews of centuries past understood that while being born a Jew was precious and important, one's Jewishness was not. The story of Ashkenazic inherited diseases should be sensitive to the possibilities. They transformed biological constraint into a social agent that gives them the freedom to choose to be Jewish even if they do not believe in the religion or observe traditional rituals. Over and over again, they weaved together contradictory beliefs about biological determinism and individual autonomy to create a new discourse of "genetic freedom."

or religious institutions. A belief, then, in biological uniqueness offers an ethnic anchor when boundaries between Jews and non-Jews blur. As American Jews increasingly live in communities where intermarriage is commonplace, and ritual observance and institutional affiliation are

possibilities. They transformed biological constraint into a social agent that gives them the freedom to choose to be Jewish even if they do not believe in the religion or observe traditional rituals. Over and over again, they weaved together contradictory beliefs about biological determinism and individual autonomy to create a new discourse of "genetic freedom."

### IF JEWISHNESS IS A MATTER OF GENES, THEN ORTHODOX JEWS ARE NOT MORE JEWISH THAN SECULAR JEWS, ENDOGAMOUS JEWS ARE NOT MORE JEWISH THAN THOSE WHO INTERMARRY, AND JEWISH ACTIVISTS ARE NOT MORE JEWISH THAN ARE JEWS WHO DO NOT AFFILIATE WITH ANY ETHNIC OR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

these realities, essentialist understandings of Jewishness are alive and well and remain socially significant. Why has Jewish biological discourse persisted into the twenty-first century?

Genetics may be viewed as a concrete, certain, logical, and comforting answer for Jews seeking to understand what it means to be Jewish. It also allows Jews to claim a Jewish identity without having to participate in any religious rituals or practice. Furthermore, the belief that Jewish identity is inalienable reassures Jews that their Jewishness is absolute and cannot be increased or lessened by any level of practice or belief. If Jewishness is a matter of genes, then Orthodox Jews are not more Jewish than secular Jews, endogamous Jews are not more

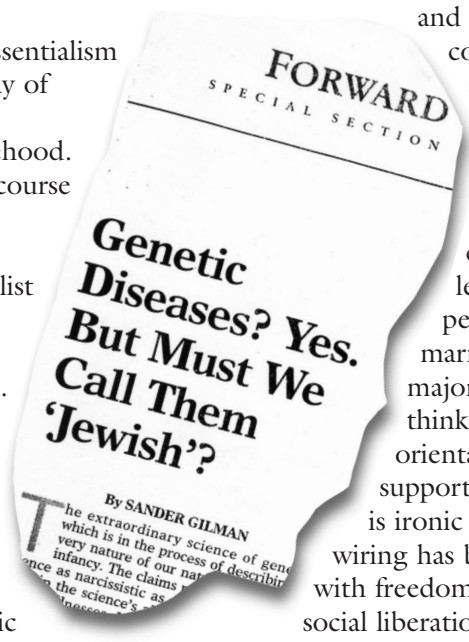
declining, genetic essentialism offers a powerful way of claiming a link with tradition and peoplehood. While biological discourse provides Jews with meaning and community, essentialist understandings of Jewishness do not disrupt everyday life.

Some observers may view our respondents' emphasis on biology as evidence for a kind of "genetic fatalism" that has become a convenient and powerful way to remove responsibility for human behavior. But far from claiming to be helpless in the face of their

American Jews are not the only ones to employ this discourse of genetic freedom. The shifting terminology from "sexual preference" to "sexual orientation" suggests that homosexuality is not a choice but an immutable part of one's being. Within the gay community, genetic determinism frees people from social expectations and offers a

compelling argument for liberation. Of Americans who believe that sexual preference can be altered, less than 20 percent support gay marriage, whereas a majority of those who think that sexual orientation is inborn support gay marriage. It is ironic that genetic wiring has become associated with freedom, autonomy and social liberation.

Although previous generations of Jews struggled to become "white folks" indistinguishable from the dominant majority group,





contemporary American Jews are claiming difference, including genetic difference, to separate themselves from white Christians. Having no other option but to check off the “white” box on various forms has become emblematic of how Jews are assumed to be white. Not being able to distinguish themselves from white Christians leaves Jews few options to assert their Jewish identities proudly. The scientific language of heredity has become a convenient and powerful strategy that legitimates notions of exceptionalism and allows Jews to be special and not just “vanilla.” If Jews are genetically distinct in terms of looks and intelligence, then they are *ipso facto* not white.

Just as race science had once validated the concept of a Jewish race, modern science gives credence to the idea that there is a biological basis to Jewishness. We are living in an age of genetics where we regularly read about discoveries related to the power of genes. According to scientific reports, there are genes that predispose people toward certain diseases, weight gain, alcoholism, and cigarette addiction, and there are genes that influence whether an individual has artistic abilities or will be homosexual. A recent finding reported in the June 15, 2006 edition of the *New York Times* under the title “That Wild Streak? Maybe It Runs in the Family” even links risk-taking behavior to a gene.

Concomitant with the burgeoning expansion of the field of genetics, this microscopic unit has become idealized and mythologized in American pop culture, books, films, soap operas, cartoons, magazines and everyday conversations. “It’s in my genes,” people shrug in explaining why they are afraid of roller coasters or why their houses are cluttered. For sociologists Dorothy Nelkin and Susan Lindee,

the gene has become a “cultural icon,” viewed as the primary determinant of human traits, both physical and behavioral.

Three weeks after the *New York Times* article on the possible link between risk-taking behavior and genes, the newspaper published an article exploring how race may be implicated in genetic differences that affect people’s health. Both the general and Jewish presses report on “Jewish diseases” including Tay-Sachs, breast and colon cancer, as well as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Although researchers are careful to point out that the data on illnesses demonstrate correlations rather than causal factors, and to assert that there is no such thing as a “Jewish gene,” many American Jews nevertheless believe in the genetic basis of their Jewishness.

Although race science lost its validity and “race” disappeared as a term for self-definition among American Jews, the idea that Jewish identity is primordial persists in contemporary America. Jews continue to believe that their Jewishness is both hereditary and permanently fixed. Whether Jews employ the rhetoric of genetics—as they do in contemporary America—or rely on terms such as blood and race—as they did during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—their understandings of Jewish identity rely on biological discourse. By substituting new terminology but maintaining a biological emphasis, race, albeit an illegitimate basis for making a Jewish identity claim, has become relegitimated.

We do not reduce Jewish identity to biological factors. Choice, of course, is central to any discussion of American ethnicity and religion. America offers a supermarket of religious alternatives in which a person can switch denominations, freely choose which rituals to practice

and whether or not to engage with any religious traditions. The existence of four branches of American Judaism—Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Orthodox—as well as Hanukkah bushes and Jewish Buddhists testify to the salience of choice in American Jewish life. We argue, however, that for contemporary American Jews, being Jewish is not only about choice, a sacred American ideal, but is also perceived as an ascribed identity that is a matter of biology and genes. The emphasis on choice may be less true for groups for whom religious and ethnic identities are intertwined, such as Jews. How to be Jewish is a matter of choice. Whether or not to be Jewish, however, is often perceived as a given and hence as a biological imperative. American Jews, who are both an ethnic and religious group, face the challenge of balancing their fundamental American belief that they are free to pick and choose among a variety of identities and practices with their conviction that an essential Jewishness is part of their very nature.

*Thank you to the editors and publisher of Sociological Quarterly for allowing Perspectives to publish this piece based on the previously published article by Shelly Tenenbaum and Lynn Davidman, “IT’S IN MY GENES: Biological Discourse and Essentialist Views of Identity among Contemporary American Jews.” Sociological Quarterly 48:3 (2007): 435–450.*

*Shelly Tenenbaum is Professor of Sociology at Clark University. She is the author of A Credit to Their Community: Jewish Loan Societies in the United States, 1880-1945 (Detroit, 1993).*

*Lynn Davidman is Professor of Judaic Studies, American Civilization, and Gender Studies at Brown University. She is the author of Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism (Berkeley, 1991).*



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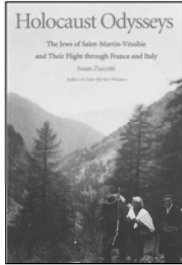
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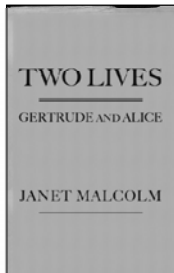
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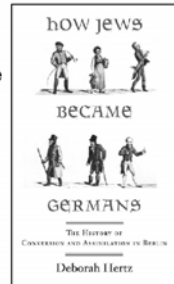
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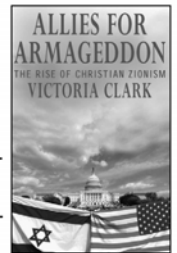
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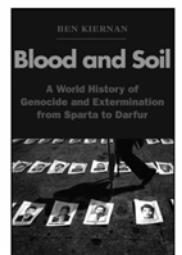
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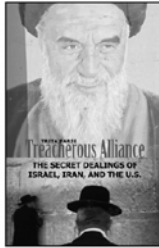


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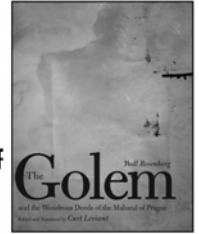


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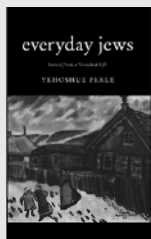
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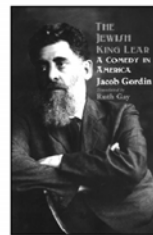


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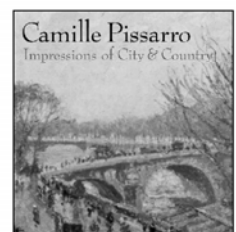
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# ON THE POLITICS OF GENETIC RESEARCH PERTAINING TO THE JEWS

Raphael Falk

Scientists have always been very sensitive to assertions that they smuggle politics into their ostensibly objective research. Those of us who study the genetic relationships between Jews and non-Jews are no exception to this rule. When I first submitted my manuscript on “Zionism and the Biology of the Jews” to a university press in Israel, my human genetics colleagues sharply criticized me for suggesting that one of the motives underlying their scholarship in the 1960s had been the desire to participate in the collective effort to turn Israel into a “melting pot.”

Despite the ongoing dispute over the nature of Jewish identity, it has always been assumed that there exists a common biological denominator to Jewishness, however it might be defined sociologically, culturally, or religiously. The Jews are supposed to be the linear progeny of the Israelite tribes—named after the sons of the biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—which solidified three thousand years ago into a nation that adhered to a unique cultural inheritance and was augmented by a constant influx of “non-Jews” through assimilation and conversion. Formally, a Jew is the offspring of a Jewish mother, or someone who has been (properly) converted to Judaism.

In the nineteenth century, the concept of race obtained a more “scientific” socio-political as well as biological foundation. Thinkers like Herder and Hegel conceived of the *Volk* as an entity bound up with *Blut und Erde* (blood and soil), thus conferring primary biological significance on the politics of nationality. Herbert Spencer’s

DESPITE THE ONGOING DISPUTE OVER THE NATURE OF JEWISH IDENTITY, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ASSUMED THAT THERE EXISTS A COMMON BIOLOGICAL DENOMINATOR TO JEWISHNESS, HOWEVER IT MIGHT BE DEFINED SOCIOLOGICALLY, CULTURALLY, OR RELIGIOUSLY.

interpretation of Darwin’s theory of evolution as a “struggle for existence” that also embraces social relations further strengthened claims for the inherent biological basis of socio-political entities. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Jew-hatred increasingly had recourse to biological arguments, propounding “anti-Semitic,” i.e., bioracial rationales for traditional social and cultural allegations. Zionism, as a contemporary political movement, explicitly accepted the claims that Jews were a distinct race-nation, or *Volk*, and based its demands for a national homeland precisely on the Jews’ blood ties.

Even as the “blood and soil” conception led to the establishment of independent states throughout Europe, it certainly did not embrace out-of-Europe colonialism, and soon it collapsed in Europe as well with the catastrophe of National

Socialism. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, however, was a late (or belated?) fruit of the European national movement of *Blut und Erde*. To a large extent this is also its predicament: Instead of gradually adapting to the context of a Western open national society, Israel in its struggle for its very existence fostered an ethnocentric policy entrenched in claims of racial blood connections. How else could one understand a Knesset member wondering at a ceremony in 2004, “What is wrong with the Palestinians? Is theirs a cultural deprivation or a genetic defect?”

Matings among human beings are not randomly distributed. Physical (geographical and topographical) as well as cultural, social, and ethnic factors circumscribe more or less closed breeding populations, i.e.,

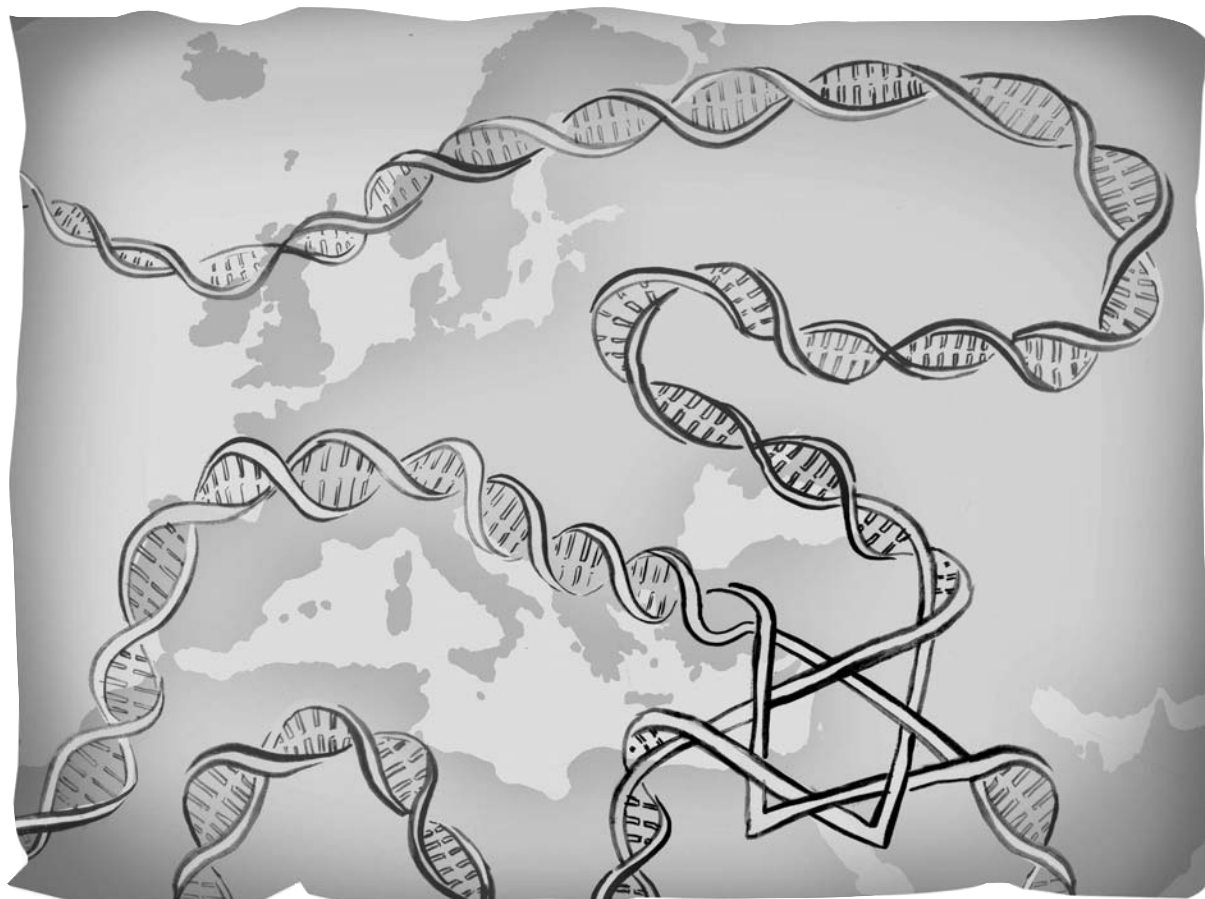
communities in which matings are preferentially within the community rather than with members of other groups. Such communities consequently acquire specific distinct gene frequencies. Jewish communities that were segregated for ages by sociocultural circumstances in Europe, in the East, and elsewhere, comprise semi-isolated breeding populations. In the past, anthropologists as well as geneticists actually used differences between Jewish and adjacent non-Jewish communities to establish the hereditary nature of characteristics, often ignoring the significant level of intermarriage between the neighboring communities and the patent differences in living conditions of the populations.

It was only after the experience of National Socialism’s ravaging racism that the scientific community concluded and the UN ruled that

human races were not biological entities. Yet an interest in genetic composition of human communities has not disappeared. Quite to the contrary, the more sophisticated scientific methods for genetic characterizations become, and the more the achievements of genetic research become known to the general public, the more interest in this subject increases. Biological racism has not disappeared but has merely assumed a different guise.

unequivocally distinct from their Middle East neighbors. The physician Chaim Sheba went so far as to establish a new research discipline, which he called “anthropological medicine,” using the distribution of genetic disease in various communities to trace historical relationships between Jewish communities and establish the characteristics of what he called the biblical *Homo israelensis*. He not only dated the origin of Jewish

genetics at the level of DNA. On the other hand, new methods to follow detailed sequences of the DNA molecules did uncover great hereditary variability at the most basic level of DNA sequences, which allowed unprecedented genotypic characterization of breeding populations. Since much of the variability in the DNA was due to rare mutation events, the presence of the same mutant-variant in different populations provided



strong indication of blood relationships between them. Sophisticated computer programs were designed to construct phylogenies for these populations, on the assumption that they comprise branches of a tree that diverged from a common root. The frequencies of the shared mutants further allowed estimated dating of successive branching events. These programs,

Reprinted from *The Forward*, August 24, 2007, B1. Kurt Hoffman/*The Forward*.

Israel as a country of migrant and isolate populations was recognized already in the 1960s, primarily through the work of Elisabeth Goldschmidt, as a center for research into the dynamics of population genetics. Concurrently, there have been unceasing efforts to establish common origins for all Jewish communities, including geographically and culturally remote ones, and to trace their roots to the Mediterranean basin, while identifying Jews as a group

communities in Iran, Libya, Yemen, and France but also claimed to have discovered undercover Jewish communities, like the people of Sardinia, who carried a hereditary blood disease, thalassemia, common in Eastern Jewish (and non-Jewish) communities.

Modern molecular research has shown that such “superficial” similarities of diseases, or even of the presence of specific proteins, do not necessarily imply identical

however, primarily designed for constructing vertical phylogenies of different (non-interbreeding) species, ignored possibilities of secondary genetic relatedness, such as those based on horizontal sociocultural relations.

Advances in the characterization of various diseases, like thalassemia, cystic fibrosis, Gaucher’s and Tay-Sachs’s diseases, familial Mediterranean fever, and BRCA, at the molecular DNA level have

indeed indicated that many Jewish communities could be characterized

phylogenies, confined to primary common roots. The relationships

roots of Oriental, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi Jews in the biblical Middle East, Palestinians emphasize the differences, suggesting that Oriental Jews and Palestinians share common ancestors, while deeming the Ashkenazim to be related to the Turks and Slavic people, i.e., to be of Khazar origins.

## NO DOUBT JEWISH POPULATIONS HAVE BEEN MOST CONDUCTIVE TO GENETIC RESEARCH OF THE DYNAMICS OF HUMAN POPULATIONS. BUT THE SCIENTISTS INVOLVED APPEAR NOT TO HAVE BEEN ALERT ENOUGH TO THE SOCIOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR WORK.

by specific genetic variants that are conspicuously more or less frequent among them than in the relevant non-Jewish populations. This, by the way, has substantially increased the efficiency of genetic counseling in persons of Jewish descent since it narrowed the number of variants that should be checked when testing individuals as carrier of hereditary “Jewish” diseases. Significantly, findings of the same “specific Jewish variant” in distant Jewish communities, such as those of Iraq and Poland, indicated blood relatedness between them. Such shared genetic variants provided the basis for the construction of phylogenies of branches from a common root, including the date of the communities’ last common ancestor. Researchers declared, for example, that they could date common ancestors of Ashkenazi and Iraqi Jewish communities 2,500 years ago, thus refuting allegations of Khazar origins of Ashkenazi Jews. They never considered the alternative of genetic relatedness being secondary to cultural relations.

Once I raised this possibility, my students immediately provided me with evidence of scholars and other persons who emigrated from their communities and settled in distant foreign Jewish communities. One can hardly ignore the fact that genetics of human populations comprise trellis-like patterns of relatedness due to secondary sociocultural interplays, rather than straight forward branching tree-like

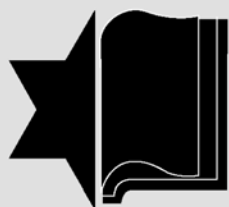
between Jewish communities are no exception.

The discovery of the relative conservation of long sequences of DNA (haplotypes) of the human Y-chromosome, a chromosome strictly transmitted from father to sons, was quite sensational. A lineal paternal relationship of Kohanim of both Ashkenazi and Sephardi origins was indicated. Further intensive research allowed the graphic presentations of “Multidimensional scaling plots” that placed different Jewish communities in a compact cluster that largely overlapped with a cluster of the non-Jewish Mediterranean populations. These clusters were conspicuously distinct from the clusters of Europeans, North Africans, or Sub-Saharan. Instead of helping to defuse political and ideological controversies, however, the popularization of these and similar findings of the integrated genetic panorama only further encouraged simplistic and antagonistic political interpretations.

Whereas the Jewish communities are conceived by the Israelis as ancient isolates that maintained their identity for thousands of years, the purported commons roots with the other peoples of the Middle East are pushed back to biblical pre-nation epochs. Yet, the people of Yemen consider the same kind of evidence to be proof that the Jews of Yemen are integral participants in the Yemeni nation. Whereas Israeli researchers identify the common

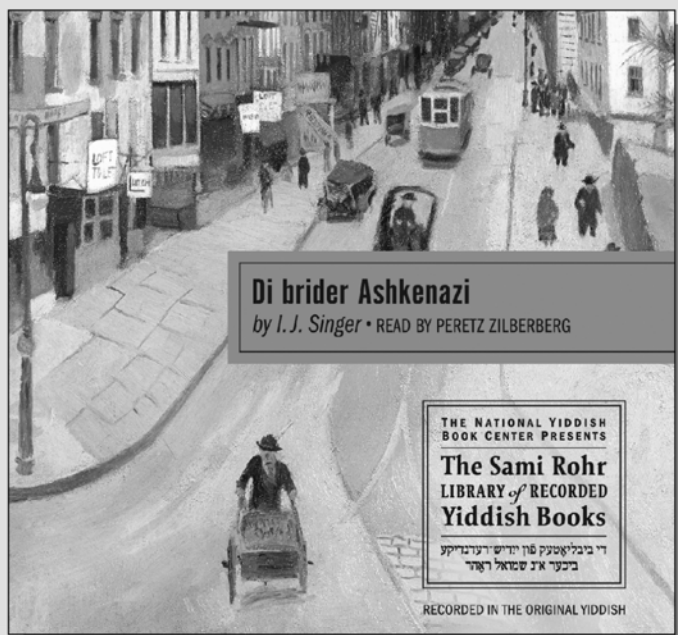
No doubt Jewish populations have been most conducive to genetic research of the dynamics of human populations. But the scientists involved appear not to have been alert enough to the sociopolitical implications of their work. Ignoring the dependence of their hypotheses on context, and not examining alternative hypotheses, scientists have in the past provided weapons to politicians who made unfortunate use of them. It is not difficult to imagine this happening again.

*Raphael Falk is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Genetics and Program for the History and Philosophy of Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of Tzionut v'ha-biologia shel ha-yehudim (Tel Aviv, 2006).*



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## WEB-BASED LEARNING AND TEACHING RESOURCES FOR JEWISH STUDIES

*Heidi Lerner*

### *Introduction*

Web-based tools and content are everywhere making their way into the classroom. Scholars are also looking at the role that they can play in promoting digital technologies. Not only are they using the Internet but they are also beginning to contribute to the development and creation of web-based pedagogical resources. Although many universities and institutions have created digital archives and websites to make collections and content more accessible, most have not explored these sites' teaching potential. This article looks at three current websites related to teaching Jewish studies. They are available for noncommercial purposes, are free of charge, and are affiliated academically. Technologies that enable the collaborative development and the sharing of educational content among Jewish studies teaching and student communities support these sites.

### *1. Center for Online Jewish Studies*

The Center for Online Jewish Studies (COJS) was created to bring together scholars, historians, educators, and technologists and mount quality curricular materials on the Internet ([www.cojs.org](http://www.cojs.org)). The center's founder, George S. Blumenthal, originally came up with the concept in 2002. In 2004, he organized the meeting with a group of Jewish studies scholars and technologists from which the blueprint for COJS emerged. The initiative focuses on inter-institutional collaboration and

innovative uses of technology to make educational materials on Jewish history, culture, religion, and literature available to people of all ages and levels of education. The COJS team now includes scholars,

[COJS] FOCUSES ON INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION AND INNOVATIVE USES OF TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON JEWISH HISTORY, CULTURE, RELIGION, AND LITERATURE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION...THE PROJECT AIMS TO DEMONSTRATE HOW COLLABORATION AMONG SCHOLARS, LIBRARIANS AND ARCHIVISTS, AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY CAN RESULT IN THE CREATION AND DISSEMINATION OF QUALITY EDUCATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN JEWISH STUDIES.

students and educators from institutions located around the world. The project aims to demonstrate how collaboration among scholars, librarians and archivists, and the business community can result in the creation and dissemination of quality educational and instructional materials in Jewish studies.

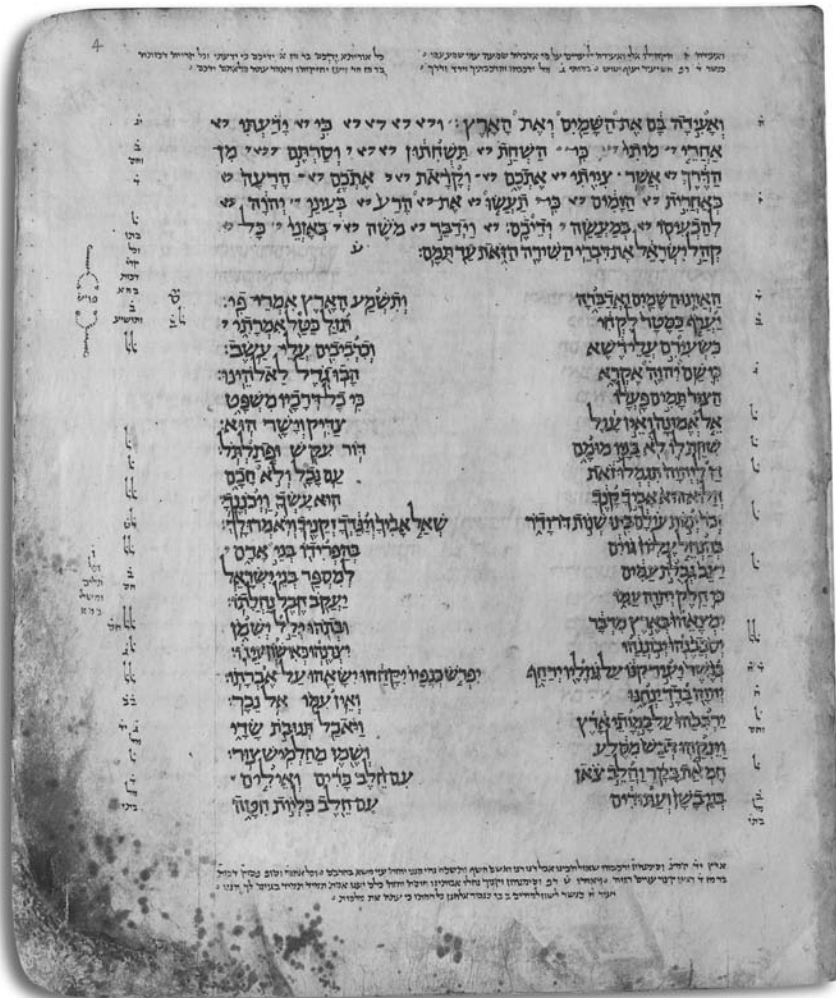
COJS is an evolving digital library and collaborative project consisting of scholarly essays, documents, and artifacts that focuses on Jewish history, culture, and civilization. The staff initially worked with partners from over thirty-five institutions to digitize more than one hundred thousand objects related to Jewish history located in their collections. These joint projects have led to the

creation of adjunct websites that can be accessed from the main COJS website and many of the digitized images are freely available for viewing by the public. The site brings together a wide range of heterogeneous primary and secondary sources in multiple formats that include text, sound, image, and video. It includes video and audio lectures by scholars.

COJS is structured hierarchically. The homepage provides a brief overview

of the site and links to the four major modules of the site.

"Exploring Treasures of the Jewish Past" provides links to the digitization efforts of COJS and its partners. Users of the site can currently view the entire Great Isaiah Scroll and the Aleppo Codex online housed at the Israeli Museum. COJS digitally photographed selections from the manuscript collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA). Viewers can see entire versions of an illuminated Haggadah from Spain and a 1290 *mahzor* from Germany, as well as fragments from the Cairo *Genizah*. Other COJS digital projects include manuscripts from the Julliard School and collections from the Central



From "The Aleppo Codex Online" on the COJS website, www.cojs.org. Courtesy of the Center for Online Judaic Studies and the Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi Institute.

Zionist Archives, American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Museum, and Yeshiva University.

“Understanding Jewish History” links to nine “mini-websites” developed by professors associated with COJS. The sites cover Jewish history from antiquity to the early modern period. The first site to go live addresses the Dead Sea Scrolls. The site presents an overview of the importance and role in history of the scrolls, and collates primary and secondary materials, many of which are linked to the full-text version, videos, images, and other websites.

“Engaging Jewish Culture and Civilization” links to theme-based websites that provide educational resources on different aspects of Jewish life and culture, including Jewish women, Jewish history,

Passover, and the Spielberg Jewish Film Archive. COJS funded a few of these sites; others are sites that the organization finds useful and educational.

“Network for the Teaching of Jewish History” is intended to be a resource for instructors who are teaching areas of Jewish history with which they may not be familiar. The site will provide links to interactive educational modules and an educators’ blog to help teachers communicate and share their experiences.

Making quality information available requires much more than just putting it “up on the web” in an attractive way. The material needs to be searchable, browsable, and maintainable. A goal of COJS is to be a central repository of online

historical documents, artifacts, and resources relating to Jewish studies. But these materials will be difficult to access if the site does not have any search mechanisms. These are lacking in COJS’ current stage of development. Users can only move through the site by clicking on navigation tabs. Most quality websites offer full indexing of their sites that allow at least basic searching for author, title, subject or discipline, and type of materials by keyword and Boolean search terms. The resources at the COJS website are also “hidden” from major search engines. One hopes that the developers of the site will add searching capabilities in the future or, at the very least, a sitemap.

## 2. Using the Internet in College-Level Hebrew Language Courses—*Hebrew@Stanford*

The Internet offers many opportunities for technology-based learning and teaching in college-level language courses. Recent advances in technology have provided valuable new resources for foreign language teachers and learners. These include web-based text, streaming audio and video, satellite radio and television, and DVD. Interactive resources include wikis, instant messaging, and video conferencing. New resources are also available for exercises and assessment. New online materials for learning Hebrew are supplementing classroom activity and also provide an opportunity for long-distance learning. A very interesting collection of multimedia and interactive language activities is Hebrew@Stanford Multimedia created by Dr. Vered Shemtov of Stanford University ([www.stanford.edu/class/hebrew/hsa/index.html](http://www.stanford.edu/class/hebrew/hsa/index.html)).

Hebrew@Stanford Multimedia is a web-based learning resource site for Hebrew language instruction. The site contains streaming audio and video, interactive exercises and a collection of resources that expose

students to the Hebrew cultural heritage, literary and intellectual materials, and daily life. Most of the materials available on the site are freely available to the public. A few are restricted to Stanford University students because of copyright issues. Hebrew@Stanford was not designed to support—or exist—as a single online course but to supplement a variety of curricula and learning programs. The goal is to share with Hebrew language teachers and students web-based content developed at Stanford and at other institutions that can enhance and expand awareness of Hebrew language and culture outside the classroom. The Hebrew@Stanford website includes links to two other institutional sites: The Hebrew program at the University of Texas has developed a set of web-based learning tools for the study of Modern Hebrew literature and language ([www.laits.utexas.edu/hebrew](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/hebrew)). The Center for Advanced Research and Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota provides a set of online materials for the teaching and study of Hebrew ([www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/materials/language/hebrew.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/lctl/materials/language/hebrew.html)).

Hebrew@Stanford also includes material from the multimedia Hebrew language series *Hevenu Shalom Alekhem*. The program was developed by the Pedagogic Center of the Jewish Agency for Israel and adapted to the web by the Hebrew Language team at Stanford University. The series is made up of twenty Hebrew language lessons, each consisting of a dialogue and scene depicting the everyday life of new immigrants to Israel along with new vocabulary and grammatical patterns. The vocabulary appears after each part of the dialogue. Exercises for learning new language patterns appear at the end of the segment. Each video clip is in RealAudio format as an MP3 audio file that can be downloaded onto a student's computer or iPod.

The website features many video and audio clips by native speakers that provide students with models of authentic speech. The speakers elaborate on a wide variety of topics about their culture, family, daily life, and more. Dr. Shemtov worked with Stanford's Digital Media Services department to provide maximal functionality for the Hebrew@Stanford website. The site makes use of Virage Videologger software, which makes video content searchable and interactive ([www.virage.com/content/products](http://www.virage.com/content/products)). Users can search for a specific clip, a key frame, a word, or phrase in closed caption text or even a spoken word within video files. Search options include: keywords, file format (all clips, image files, or text files), level of proficiency (from Novice Low to Advanced), verb tense, and item type (interview, scene, translation, grammar note. . . [et al.]).

### ***3. MODIYA Project: Jews/Media/Religion***

MODIYA Project: Jews/Media/Religion is a fully searchable, open-access repository for scholars, teachers, and students of multiformat materials relating to the interrelation among Jews, media, and religion ([modiya.nyu.edu](http://modiya.nyu.edu)). The project is a collaboration between New York University's (NYU) ITS Faculty Technology Center, ITS Academic Computing Center, NYU Digital Library Team and the NYU Center for Religion and Media. This group first met during the 2003–2004 academic year. The resultant website is extensive and provides access to a variety of courseware and content related to the material culture and history of Judaism. On its homepage, a sidebar lists a series of units. Each of these units includes an introductory essay and links to subtopics and related resources. There are also media resources, including digital and music resources and a link to the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archives, as well as syllabi.

There has been a lot of discussion in the academic and information technology communities about the use of open source software and academic community collaborations. A major advantage of open source software, which is usually free, is that it allows developers to customize and modify the software. The Modiya Project website is built on an open source software package called DSpace ([www.dspace.org](http://www.dspace.org)). DSpace is software for setting up digital library collections on the Web. The software enables the creation, indexing, and searching of associated metadata so that the items are easily retrievable. Different scholarly communities within and beyond a single institution can adapt and customize the DSpace system to meet their individual needs and manage the data submission process.

This program allows control over contributions and access to a website. Scholars who wish to contribute to the Modiya site must first register. Each item that is submitted is then described using a format that was developed by the project team. This allows materials to be searchable and accessible on a public interface.

### ***Conclusion***

The use of technology in higher education has grown quickly over the past two decades, both in teaching and research. COJS, Hebrew@Stanford, and Modiya Project illustrate the tremendous potential of the Internet as a medium for education and instruction. These three websites would not be possible without the generous support and collaborative efforts of Jewish Studies faculty and scholars, academic information technology departments, and business partners who choose to share their research, pedagogy, knowledge and resources to benefit others.

*Heidi Lerner is the Hebraica/Judaica cataloguer at Stanford University Libraries.*



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# STUDYING THE BIBLE IN JERUSALEM AND NEW HAVEN

Robb Young

Fascinated during my teenage years by software engineering and programming languages, I pursued a BS in electrical engineering from the University of Oklahoma, which I received in 1991. During my professional career over the next decade, however, I began to question whether I could find long-term fulfillment in jobs that were essentially aimed at ensuring my financial stability. My interest in the Bible and related cultures inspired me to consider a postgraduate education in biblical studies and a career in that field. In 2001, I therefore applied to the Rothberg International School at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and was accepted into the MA program for the Bible and the Ancient Near East.

I received my degree in two years, but remained in Israel two additional years conducting predoctoral studies. Advised by my colleagues that it would be wise to obtain my PhD through a degree-granting institution situated in the country where I eventually planned to teach, I applied and was accepted into the PhD program in Hebrew Bible at Yale University, nestled in the seaside community of New Haven, Connecticut. Now in my third year as a PhD candidate, I feel that I have already had the opportunity to savor the best of two

different worlds. Although my perspective is necessarily subjective, I feel it might be helpful to share my insights, comparing and contrasting the different programs and approaches in the two countries in which I have studied.

First of all, one should not overlook the fact that the academic calendars of both The Hebrew University and Yale revolve around the religious holidays of their countries' respective cultures. Regardless of



one's faith background, it is somewhat disconcerting to be asked to

attend class on what one personally regards as a holy day. At both universities, students whose faith is not reflected in the prevailing academic calendar may feel somewhat aggrieved, but neither institution can be faulted, in my opinion, for failing to eliminate school days in order to facilitate sacred observances "across the board."

The culture also determines the language of instruction. In Israel, Hebrew is of course the predominant language and is utilized in the classroom. Students are fluent in Modern Hebrew and

have already passed proficiency exams in Bible before attending a university. This obviates the need for the exercise customary in many western institutions of reading the biblical text, translating, and parsing most verbal forms. At The Hebrew University, degree candidates must also attain competency in English and German, and they are strongly encouraged to learn French. Yale, on the other hand, mandates reading fluency in German and French, with no particular emphasis on Modern Hebrew. A student who has passed through both learning environments, therefore, is in a position to avail himself or herself of biblical scholarship written in no less than four modern languages.

The Hebrew Bible program at Yale, one of ten fields of specialization available at the graduate level in the Department of Religious Studies, has four full-time faculty members. This number is deceptive, however, due to the program's strong interdisciplinary approach. Students are encouraged to take courses in other

relevant subject areas such as Jewish studies or Near Eastern languages and civilizations. In Jerusalem, there is a separate department of Hebrew Bible with twenty active faculty members and approximately thirty courses offered in a given year. The diversity of instruction enables students to obtain exposure to a broad variety of methodological approaches and points of view.

Graduate courses at The Hebrew University typically consist of lectures conducted by the instructor, with select topics occasionally highlighted via short student-led presentations. At Yale, it



is not unusual for entire courses to be structured around the input of student participants, with each class session organized by one or two of them. In this setting, the instructors facilitate classroom discussion and also contribute pertinent ideas or comments. This method of instruction is consonant with Yale's goal of preparing its scholars to teach in an academic environment, something that PhD candidates begin to do in the third year of the program. One of the advantages of this approach is that it permits each student to draw upon personal research while concentrating on a particular area of interest or specialization.

The faculty in New Haven will, on occasion, pose perplexing questions to the class, such as "Who composed the book of Deuteronomy?" These stimulating zingers are designed to provoke far-reaching classroom discussions, which need not settle the issue or even reach a consensus opinion. In Jerusalem, the faculty tend to raise questions that are necessarily thorny but may nevertheless be resolved by painstaking examination of the biblical text, such as "Does the Molech offering refer to child sacrifice?" In this situation, the queries are less open-ended, and serve to guide the student's understanding toward a resolution of the problem.

A corollary to this teaching method at The Hebrew University is that philology is central to the academic approach to Scripture; after all, how can one study a text before one comprehends its constituent words? Professors raise questions that stem directly from the text itself, which is at the same time the first recourse for students in resolving these very

inquiries. While a Yale instructor might introduce a lecture on a biblical passage by asking "When was this text written?" the philological approach demands that this determination be made at the end of class, only after the text itself has been thoroughly examined.

There is a significant distinction between looking at the meaning of a text as it stands today and endeavoring to understand how it was interpreted by its intended

## THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DISTINCTION BETWEEN LOOKING AT THE MEANING OF A TEXT AS IT STANDS TODAY AND ENDEAVORING TO UNDERSTAND HOW IT WAS INTERPRETED BY ITS INTENDED AUDIENCE IN ANTIQUITY.

audience in antiquity. The issue of whether or not Daniel should be designated as a prophet is such an example: while modern researchers generally agree that Daniel was not a prophet, ancient texts affirm that he was indeed viewed as such. In Jerusalem, the focus is on the meaning of the biblical text as intended by the author, with modern religious significance intentionally set aside. While this goal is shared by Yale's biblical studies program, its Divinity School permits a fusion of both academic study and personal application, training seminary students in the use of the Hebrew Bible in Christian faith and practice.

The writing of papers is everywhere part and parcel of a graduate student's life, and philosophical differences are no less evident here. Papers at Yale tend to explore a topic, such as the history of the interpretation of a particular biblical passage. Such compositions vary greatly in length and may or may not yield broad results. At The Hebrew University, papers are typically intended to answer a

single, specific question, such as "Is the wilderness Tabernacle historical?" These papers are subjected to page limits by the instructor, and tend to have very localized conclusions.

Academic study of the *Tanakh* takes pride of place in the Hebrew Bible department in Jerusalem, and the approach taken is for the most part conservative. Explication of the biblical text begins with rabbinic literature or the medieval

commentators, and progresses from there. Yale adopts a broader purview, amenable to more postmodern ideas, including feminist and gender studies. It also exhibits a greater interest in the history

of Israelite religion; that is, the reconstruction of the society's actual religious practices lying behind what is presented in Scripture.

While my reflections have necessarily revolved around the different approaches that enter into play in two different universities, both institutions nevertheless have a great deal in common and exemplify the best of American and Israeli academic instruction. The two schools admirably reflect their religious heritage and embrace their respective cultures, and share the deep belief in the continuing impact of the Hebrew Bible in the world today. Both programs have their merits, and exposure to both systems of learning is highly advantageous to the serious student of Scripture. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to study at both of these time-honored institutions.

*Robb Young is a PhD candidate at Yale University.*



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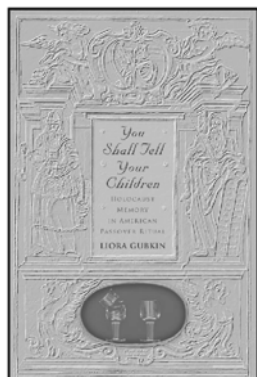
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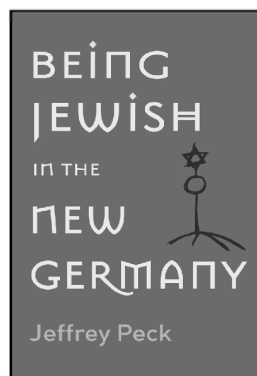
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To be considered for this position, please follow this link <http://employment.umn.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=64573>, and follow the instructions. You will be given an opportunity to attach a cover letter and a curriculum vitae. The letter of application should describe academic training; current and previous research and plans for future research; record of publications; and the undergraduate and graduate courses which the candidate is prepared to teach.

In addition to the materials submitted electronically, qualified applicants are asked to send 1) three writing samples (chapters from books, journal articles, or recent conference papers); and 2) three letters of recommendation directly to the search committee. These materials should be sent to:

Chair, Jewish History Search Committee  
Department of History  
University of Minnesota  
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267 - 19th Avenue South  
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Additional materials may be requested later. The search is open until the position is filled; the search committee will begin reviewing files on December 1, 2007.

For further information on the Department of History, please refer to our website: <http://www.hist.umn.edu>

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The Judaic Studies Blaustein Fellow will be expected to be in residence, to conduct research in Yale's library and archival collections, to participate actively in the intellectual life of the university, and to teach three semester courses over two years. The annual stipend will be \$40,000 plus health benefits. Candidates should send a cover letter, CV, project proposal, three letters of recommendation, and a list of proposed courses to:

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TEL: 203 432-0843  
Fax: 203 432-4889  
Email: [ivan.marcus@yale.edu](mailto:ivan.marcus@yale.edu)  
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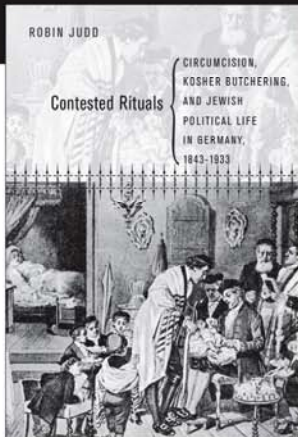
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## Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Cincinnati, Ohio

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Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion seeks to fill a junior tenure track faculty position at its Cincinnati campus in Early Christianity and Second Commonwealth Judaism, appointment on July 1, 2008. Candidates must possess a completed or nearly completed Ph.D. degree, and demonstrate a record of pedagogic excellence and a promising trajectory of scholarly publication.

The instructional component is threefold. First, in the Rabbinical School, teaching a selection of introductory and advanced courses in the literature and history of early Christianity, the literature and history of Second Commonwealth Judaism (including Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha), Hebrew bible and early rabbinic literature. Second, for the School of Graduate Studies, teaching advanced courses and seminars and overseeing Ph.D. comprehensive exams and dissertations in Early Christianity (with an emphasis on Pauline literature) and Second Commonwealth Judaism, and teaching introductory and advanced courses in Greek. Also entailed: advising senior M.A. theses and rabbinical sermons (Rabbinical School) and mentoring students in their academic planning (both Schools). Third, teaching a variety of introductory and advanced undergraduate courses in academic programs jointly run by HUC with consortium partners.

Candidates should be committed to excellence in scholarship, pedagogy, faculty governance, communal service and growth of a collegial environment; welcome interdisciplinary and team-taught approaches to teaching and learning; and be positively inclined toward Reform Judaism and be sympathetic to and participate in the community's religious life.

Applications, with references, curricula vitae, and other supporting materials should be sent by November 15, 2007, to:

Prof. Richard Sarason, Chair  
Search Committee in Early Christianity and Second Commonwealth Judaism  
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
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This conference aims to generate interdisciplinary exploration of Israeli music from the multiple perspectives of ethnomusicology, history, sociology, and literature along with other specialists in Israeli, Arabic, and Jewish cultures. Themes will include the role of music in national identity and national-



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ism among Israeli Jews and Palestinian citizens of Israel, religion and secularism, popular culture and political ideology, and musikah mizrahit. Along with the academic component of the programming, the conference will also feature two concert performances by major Israeli artists.

For more information, please see our website [www.virginia.edu/jewishstudies](http://www.virginia.edu/jewishstudies) or contact Prof. Joel Rubin ([joelrubin@virginia.edu](mailto:joelrubin@virginia.edu)) or Prof. James Loeffler ([james.loeffler@virginia.edu](mailto:james.loeffler@virginia.edu)).



### **Pulver Family Professorship in Jewish Studies**

Colby College

Colby College invites applications for the Pulver Family Professorship in Jewish Studies. This is a tenure-track position. The College expects to appoint at the assistant professor level, beginning September 1, 2008, but may consider candidates at other ranks. Departmental affiliation will reflect the candidate's discipline. Ph.D. in Jewish Studies or Jewish History expected by time of appointment. A record of teaching excellence is required; the successful candidate should be qualified to teach a survey of Jewish history from antiquity to the present, an introduction to Jewish religion, and other courses in Jewish history, thought, or literature (a total of five per year). An active, productive program of scholarship is also required. Send letter of application, vita, statements of teaching and scholarly interests, and three letters of recommendation to Professor Robert Weisbrot, 5329 Mayflower Hill, History Department, Colby College, Waterville, ME 04901. Review of applications will begin October 22, 2007 and will continue until the position is filled. Colby is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer, committed to excellence through diversity, and strongly encourages applications and nominations of persons of color, women, and members of other under-represented groups. For more information about the College, please visit the Colby Web site: [www.colby.edu](http://www.colby.edu)

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The award will cover, in the first instance, the period July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009 and, at the discretion of the reviewing board, may be continued into a second year.

The grant is intended to provide for the cost of obtaining scholarly material (e.g. publications), temporary help in research and production needs, membership in scholarly organizations, travel, computer, copying and communication charges and summer stipend for non-tenured academics.

Applications outlining the nature and scope of the proposed project including a budget should be submitted, in no more than two pages, by March 1, 2008 to Dr. Frank Mecklenburg, Leo Baeck Institute, 15 E. 16<sup>th</sup> St. New York 10011, NY. A *curriculum vitae*, names of three references, and supporting material (outline of proposed work, draft of chapters, previous publications) should be appended. E-mail submission to [fmecklenburg@lbi.cjh.org](mailto:fmecklenburg@lbi.cjh.org) is encouraged.

**MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY**, Department of Religious Studies, anticipates an August 2008 opening for an Assistant Professor specializing in **Judaism**, tenure eligible. Candidates are required to have a Ph.D. completed by August 11, 2008 with specialization in any area of post-biblical Judaism, and must demonstrate strong potential in research and teaching. The successful candidate will teach undergraduate and M.A. courses in Judaism as required. A research specialization in at least one of the following is preferred: a) medieval or early modern Judaism, b) Jewish religious thought, c) Judaism and gender, d) comparative history of Judaism and Christianity. Additional preferences include an ability to teach the World Religions survey course and a familiarity with issues and approaches in the academic study of religion. Applicants who submit applications by October 31, 2007 may be contacted for preliminary meetings with the search committee at the AAR/SBL Meeting in San Diego. Full consideration of applicants begins on November 30, 2007 and continues until position is filled. Send letter of application, vita, teaching portfolio (course evaluations, syllabi, statement of teaching philosophy), copies of all transcripts, sample of scholarly research, and three letters of reference to Professor Stephen Berkwitz, Department of Religious Studies, Missouri State University, 901 S. National Ave., Springfield, MO, 65897 (email: [stephenberkwitz@missouristate.edu](mailto:stephenberkwitz@missouristate.edu)). Missouri State University also requires a signed Authorization Form to be completed as part of the application. The form is available at <http://www.missouristate.edu/assets/provost/applicantdisclosureform.pdf>. After completing, please sign and include with the materials submitted. EO/AA EOE/AA Employment will require a criminal background check at University expense.

**TEMPLE UNIVERSITY** Department of Religion is searching for an Assistant Professor (tenure track) in Hebrew Bible. The position will carry a graduate and undergraduate teaching load of two courses per semester, cross listed with Jewish Studies. Research productivity and participation in international scholarly conversations are critical to success. Temple University is a public-funded large urban university, where the study of religion is carried out in a multi-traditional, multi-disciplinary setting. There is a high level of interest in the study of the Bible, and the position requires both expertise in this area, and openness to the diversity of our students. Applicants must have Ph.D. in hand by September 2008. Temple University is an equal opportunity employer. Send curriculum vitae, letter of interest, teaching portfolio, transcripts, and three letters of reference to Dr. Rebecca Alpert, Chair/Department of Religion/Temple University/ 1114 W. Berks Street/Philadelphia, PA 19122-6090. Application deadline: November 15, 2007.

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Application forms and additional information may be obtained by writing to:

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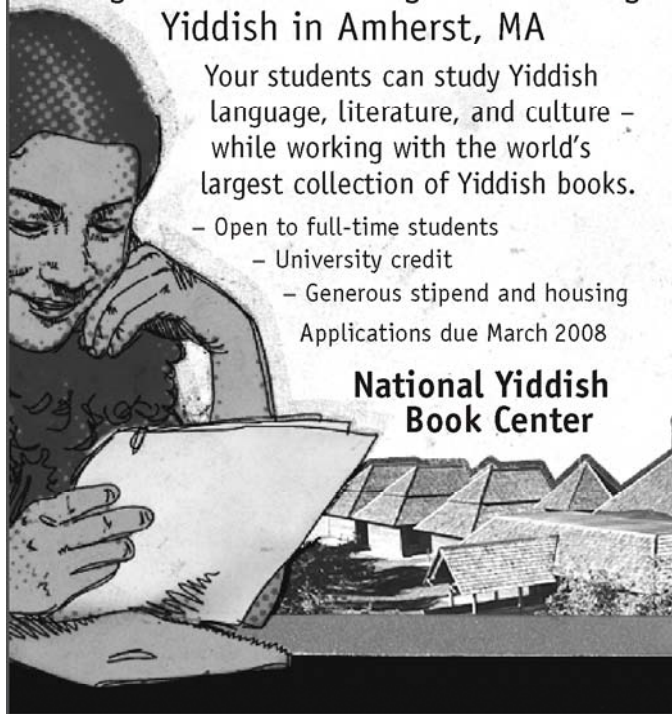
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- Plenary lecture by Professor Irwin Cotler, P.C., O.C., M.P., Sunday, December 16 at 8:00 p.m. Professor Cotler is the Former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Professor of Law (on leave) from McGill University, and an international human rights lawyer. Professor Cotler will present a talk entitled, "2008: Is It 1938 All Over Again?"
- Book Exhibit featuring leading publishers of Judaica and related scholarship.
- Sephardic music performance, "Songs of the Sephardim and Their Diasporas," by Judith Cohen and Tamar Cohen Adams, Sunday, December 16, 2007, 9:15 p.m.
- Information about cultural events, receptions, special gatherings updated weekly on the AJS website.
- Special reduced prices for the AJS Annual Gala Banquet, Sunday, December 16, 2007 at 6:45 p.m. (\$25 for regular and associate members and their guests; \$15 for student members).

*For further information about sessions, meals, hotel reservations, visiting Toronto, and special conference events, please refer to the AJS website at [www.ajsnet.org](http://www.ajsnet.org) or contact the AJS office at [ajs@ajs.cjh.org](mailto:ajs@ajs.cjh.org) or 917.606.8249.*

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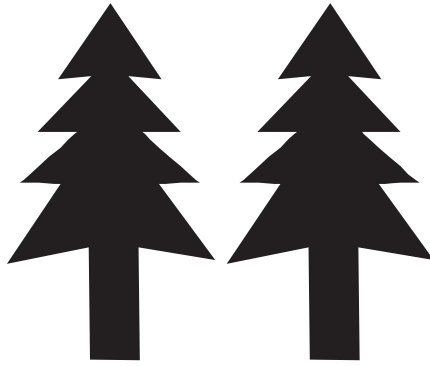
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