

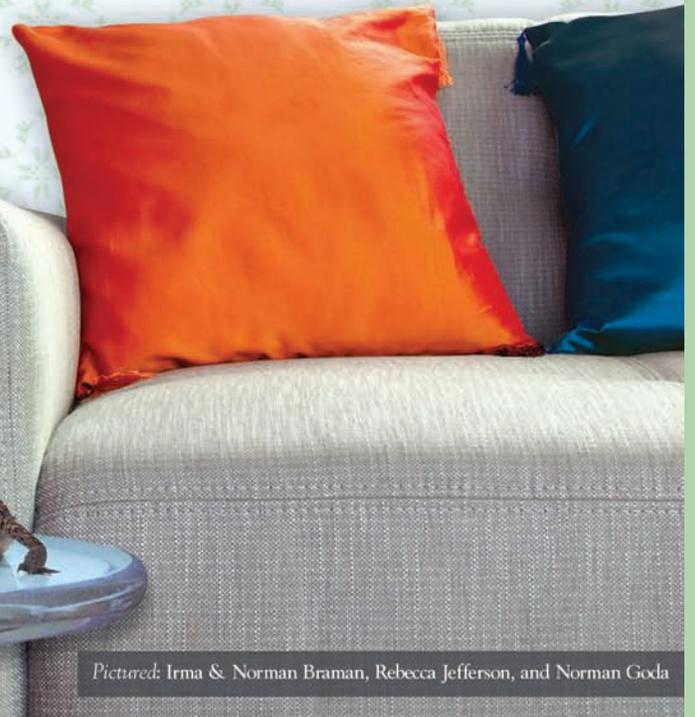


NEWSLETTER OF THE
CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
No.20 & 21, Spring/Fall 2010



[haTANIN]

התנין



Pictured: Irma & Norman Braman, Rebecca Jefferson, and Norman Goda

Director's Notes



What's new at the Center? A lot, actually. Like most academic units throughout the US we are struggling to make do with diminishing resources. I could go on at length bemoaning the difficulty of managing a program in higher education in the current economic climate and especially the difficulty of acquiring replacement lines for retiring faculty at a time when departments everywhere are shrinking. But the truth is, even without one or two crucial positions and a few more I would love to have, the Center continues to thrive and its activities over the past two years have increased at an almost dizzying pace.

So what's new? To begin with, since the last issue of *HaTanin*, the Center moved upstairs to the second floor of Walker Hall. We are now located in a beautiful suite of offices with our own seminar and conference rooms along with a high-quality AV system for screening films – an increasingly important part of the curriculum. And we can now house faculty which contributes a great deal to the intellectual synergy within the Center. We also succeeded in hiring two new faculty members – the historian Norman Goda who comes to us from Ohio University and now holds the Norman and Irma Braman Chair in Holocaust Studies, and Rebecca



Jefferson who was formerly part of the Genizah Research Unit at Cambridge University Library and is now Head of the Price Judaica Library. The impact of both is becoming increasingly apparent and I wish them long and successful careers here at UF.

Perhaps, there is no better way to gauge the growth of the Center than through its curriculum. Last year alone some six new courses were generated by Center faculty, some thanks in part to a Posen grant. These include new courses on Jewish film, on narrative, in Israel studies and in Hebrew Bible. I have increasingly come to believe that growth in our program depends on establishing a series of introductory funnel courses. This year for the first time we now have such courses as Introduction to Jewish Studies and Introduction to Holocaust Studies.

The Center continues to organize a good number of faculty seminars, workshops and symposia. In November we had our second advanced workshop on reading Jewish literature with

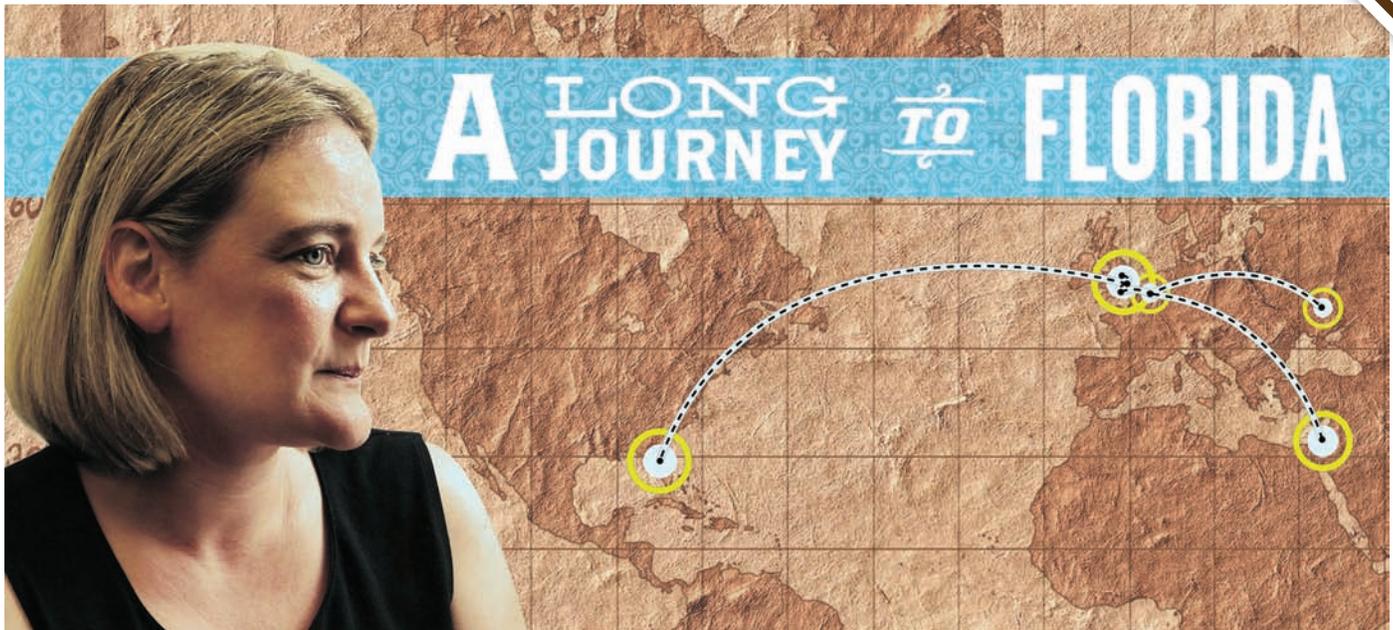
Dan Miron and in March a similar event took place on translating the Hebrew Bible, this one with Robert Alter. Both workshops attracted scholars from universities around the country. The Center also organized three symposia including a panel on Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*, a seminar on Walter Benjamin with Samuel Weber and in the spring a one-day session on *The Merchant of Venice*.

Among the many public programs last year was a three-person series on Israel as a multicultural society, a fall concert with Frank London on Jewish holiday music and a spring concert with Yair Dalal.

Finally, let me congratulate Patricia Woods and Robert Kawashima who were promoted to associate professor, and to various faculty members on the completion or publication of their most recent books: Avraham Balaban *Ten Mothers: Representations of Motherhood in Modern Hebrew Literature* (HaKibbutz HaMeuchad); Mitch Hart, ed. *Jewish Blood: Metaphor and Reality in Religion, History and Culture* (Routledge); Todd Hasak Lowy received a contract from the Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature for Asaf Schurr's novel *Motti*; Dragan Kujundzic, ed. *Who or What – Jacques Derrida* (Dis-

course); Judith Page (with Elise L. Smith) *Women, Literature, and the Domesticated Landscape: England's Disciples of Flora, 1780-1870* (Cambridge); Tamir Sorek for the paper edition of *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State* (Cambridge) and for winning the Provost's Excellence Award for Assistant Professors, University of Florida 2010; Kenneth Wald for a new (6th edition) of *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield); Patricia Woods for organizing the mini-symposium published in *Political Research Quarterly* 62:4 (December 2009). I should also add a congratulation to Andrew Gordon who retired as Emeritus Professor of English in July 2010 after 35 years of teaching at the University of Florida. His performance in the role of Shylock as part of the excerpts that accompanied *The Merchant of Venice* symposium was one of the highlights of our public events this past year.

Jack Kugelmass, Director
Melton Legislative Professor



IN THE SUMMER of 1914, the Kroonland passenger ship left Antwerp and headed across the Atlantic towards New York carrying 997 passengers. On board was 20 year-old Israel Kleiman whose family had sent him from his home in Russia in the hope of ensuring his future safety and well being. With less than \$50 to his name, Israel finally reached Ellis Island on July 1st only to be turned away because of a skin rash. Thankfully he was helped by a friend to reach England where he stayed and earned his living as a tailor; Israel later begat four children, seven grandchildren, and eleven great-grandchildren, including me.

Nearly a century later, I have traveled with my family across the same ocean to take up the position of Head of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica at the University of Florida. As if history were repeating itself, Israel's great-great granddaughter Lily broke out in a rash on arrival but, luckily for us, her chicken pox appeared after entry had already been granted!

Before I headed west, however, I spent nearly five years of my life traveling east. An interest in the history of another member of my family, this time an uncle, led me to volunteer on kibbutz Hanita in the Western Galilee one summer after I finished school in 1989. While most of my maternal family had left Russia for England and America, my great, great uncle, Kopel Korin, had headed to Palestine where he became one of the founding members of the labor movement known as the Histadrut. Having fallen in love with the mountain top kibbutz overlooking the sea, I returned several times to Israel, completing three *ulpanim* and a one year course in graphic design. In my spare time, I discovered Hebrew poetry and this new interest, combined with other factors, led me to embark on a degree in Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London. In

my first year of college, I attended an undergraduate class on medieval Jewish history which included a discussion about the Cairo Genizah. The story of its discovery in a synagogue attic immediately appealed to my romantic sensibilities and I determined myself to combine a love of poetry with this set of more than 200,000 Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts. In my final year, I went to the British Library to look at its Genizah manuscript collection. There I discovered a Hebrew poetry manuscript that had been incorrectly identified in the handlist and I set about uncovering its true identity and provenance. The resulting dissertation won a prize, and I applied and was accepted at the University of Cambridge to study medieval poetry manuscripts in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection. My Masters degree was based on a small corpus of Genizah poetry manuscripts that had been vocalized with Tiberian vowel signs, but in a

way that provided clues about the medieval scribes' pronunciation patterns. After its completion, and having initially failed to get funding for my doctoral studies, I was given the fantastic opportunity of working in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit by its director, Professor Stefan Reif. I was hired to work on the second volume of the Bibliography Project which involved researching and collating every published reference to the Genizah manuscript Collection (by 2010, the entire project had amassed over 90,000 references). This data provides an important tool for Genizah scholars endeavoring to navigate their way through vast numbers of uncatalogued fragments.

WORKING AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY Library I met one Robert Jefferson, then a conservator of manuscripts, and pursued him with a phoney story about needing a book repaired. The line was pitched, the book got stitched, and some months later we were hitched. Concurrently, another form of dogged perseverance had paid off and I had managed to move to the top of the reserve list for a scholarship from Trinity

The history of collectors and collections is now my passion, and it was probably with this in mind that the Price Library of Judaica first caught my notice.

College, Cambridge to pursue my Ph.D. studies. With the guidance of my supervisor, Professor Geoffrey Khan, I expanded the number of vocalized poetry manuscripts in my study and was able to make some interesting conclusions about the use of Tiberian vowel signs at a time in the Middle Ages when the Hebrew vocalization systems were still in flux, as well as draw some fresh conclusions about the popular use of Hebrew hymns.

With the completion of the Ph.D., I was promoted to full-time Research Associate at the Genizah Unit and placed in charge of the Bibliography Project. That same year, my daughter Lily was born and the second volume of the Bibliography which I co-authored was published. In addition to the work on the Bibliography, I became more involved in the Unit's fundraising and outreach activities. To this end, I arranged exhibitions and gave presentations to visitors to the Library and the Genizah collections, including four ambassadors, notable individuals like Claudia Roden, Mimi Gardner Gates and Irwin M. Jacobs, academics, students and interested members of the public. I also edited five issues of the Unit's biannual newsletter, *Genizah Fragments*, and was responsible for its recent redesign.

In 2006, I was involved in a project to compile an inventory of Cambridge University Library's Genizah collections. This project and its ramifications sparked in me a renewed interest in the history of the discovery of the Genizah manuscripts, particularly unanswered questions about how other libraries around the world acquired their manuscripts. Reading through archives of the Jewish Chronicle, I stumbled upon a reference to a Count d'Hulst who had recovered Genizah manuscripts for the Bodleian Library in Oxford. So determined was I to track down this man of mystery that lack of funds, a shortage of annual leave, and even a heavy pregnancy with my son Isaac could not stop me from searching through underexploited archives held in the Egypt Exploration Fund, the British Museum, the National Archives, and the Bodleian Library. This research enabled me to shed new light on the history of the Genizah and the pivotal role played by Oxford University in the race to recover it. I am currently working on a book based on my



discoveries in the archives entitled *Collected Papers of the Scholars and Antiquarians Who Discovered the Cairo Genizah* to be published by Brill as part of their new Cambridge Genizah Series.

Having worked for nearly twelve years with a great collection of manuscripts, I was keen to manage a collection myself, and the idea of continuing to build such a great library as the Price Library of Judaica held much appeal for me. Furthermore, the opportunity to explore untapped American archives, as well as the gift of living in a country that my husband and I have long admired for its vibrancy and “can do” attitude, led to my application for the position.



Now I am here, my first priority is to meet the research needs of the Center for Jewish Studies and the wider university. In addition to expanding and developing the Library’s core holdings, I believe that it will be important to concentrate upon prevailing key subject areas such as Hebrew and Yiddish literature, Holocaust Studies, and Land of Israel Studies, and hot topics like Muslim-Jewish relations and other interfaith issues. Having recognizable strengths will help bolster the Price Library’s reputation as one of America’s major research libraries for Jewish Studies. I would also like to bring greater attention to some of the Library’s more unusual aspects, including its important sub-collection of memorial books commemorating lost Jewish communities, and its many ephemeral items such as rare pamphlets and catalogs. Of course, such plans will only be realized if I can adapt to driving on the right side of the road . . . 🚗

ENDOWMENTS ESTABLISHED - IN SUPPORT OF THE - CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Dr. Warren Bargad Endowment

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Braman Chair in Holocaust Studies

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Mikki and Morris Futernick Professorship

Gary R. Gerson Lecture Series Endowment

Gary R. Gerson Visiting Professorship Endowment

Gary and Niety Gerson Scholarship Fund

Alexander Grass Chair in Jewish Studies

Greenbaum Family Professorship Endowment

Charlotte A. Gunzburger Endowment

Jewish Studies Endowment

Arthur and Violette Kahn Visiting Scholar Endowment

Kolko Memorial Scholarship Endowment

Samuel M. Melton Endowment

Samuel M. Melton Legislative Professorship Endowment

Panush Judaica Fund Endowment

Samuel and Bessie R. Proctor Fund Endowment

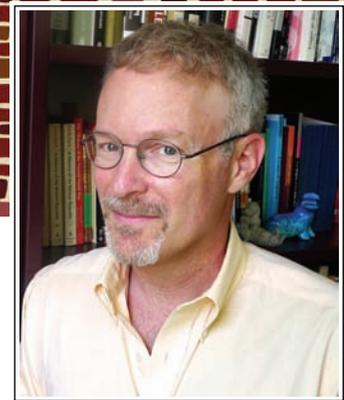
Marshall A. Raff Scholarship Fund

Harry Rich Endowment for Holocaust Studies

The Betty Schram Memorial Endowment

The PLAYGROUND

by NORMAN GODA



NORMAN GODA assumed the Norman and Irma Braman Chair in Holocaust Studies in the Fall of 2009. He had been chair of the Department of History, Ohio University. He is the author of *Tomorrow the World* (1998), *Tales from Spandau* (2007) and co-author of *US Intelligence and the Nazis* (2005). His current book project is tentatively titled *The Playground: The Struggle for Humanity in the Warsaw Ghetto*.

My current project examines and contextualizes the construction of children's playgrounds in this, the largest Nazi-imposed ghetto in May and June 1942, along with the incongruity that playgrounds represented. On the one hand Jewish leaders in Warsaw fought a losing battle with the desperate day-to-day conditions that included mass starvation, homelessness and disease. Meanwhile an impending sense of doom enveloped ghetto residents as word reached Warsaw of the deportation of Jews from other ghettos such as Lvov and Lublin. Warsaw's turn seemed sure to come. But at the same time Jewish leaders, particularly Jewish Council Chairman Adam Czerniakow, insisted on the construction of children's playgrounds with festive opening ceremonies including music, speeches, and parades, just weeks before deportations from Warsaw began. Czerniakow hoped for some level of spiritual resilience amidst unfathomable tragedy and fear. My research uses official German records but also hidden records from the Warsaw Ghetto itself including diaries and papers from the famous Oyneg Shabes archive assembled by Emanuel Ringelblum.

In part I reinforce recent writing on Nazi anti-Semitism, namely the argument that the Nazis feared mythical Jewish powers of subversion and organization even as they made Jewish life impossible. Two days after the Kristallnacht pogrom in Germany in 1938, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels voiced concerns about Jews in parks and squares. Jews, he said, must "not be allowed to sit around in German parks. Take the

whisper propaganda by Jewish women in park areas . . . There are Jews that really do not look all that Jewish. They sit with German mothers who have children and start. . . agitating. . . I see an especially big danger with this. . . They have no business in German parks." Jews were banned from German parks soon after. For fresh air, Jewish parents took their children to Jewish cemeteries. The notion that Jewish women on park benches remained dangerous even as they sorted through the wreckage of their lives, worked to free their husbands from arrest, and searched desperately for safe haven abroad, illustrates Nazi fears while foreshadowing future policies.

After the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939 they aimed to segregate Jews from Poles.

Warsaw's Jews (who through forced resettlement eventually came to number 450,000 people) were banned from the city's parks, promenades and public benches in July 1940, three months before the Warsaw ghetto was delineated and sealed. The ghetto borders set by the Germans excluded all parks, even those adjacent to the ghetto. Warsaw diarist Chaim Kaplan lamented the ghetto's stifling nature noting that "anywhere. . . a tree has been planted, or a bench has been placed, Jewish children are forbidden. . . . Within the limits of the ghetto there is not a single garden. . . . A stone wall now hides every treetop from our eyes. We have been robbed of every tree and every flower." Warsaw's Jewish children were especially affected. "How to explain it to a child," wrote the ghetto poet Wladislaw Szlengel, "what does the word mean afar, while he does not know what is a mountain and what we call a river."

But the problem of playgrounds in Warsaw also speaks to levels of Jewish resilience as well as Jewish leaders' own ambiguous understanding of ultimate Nazi intentions. Before the construction of the Warsaw Ghetto walls in November 1940, determined parents removed their Jewish armbands and took their children to Warsaw's parks. After the walls were built, the Ghetto had several tiny plots on corners where, for a steep fee, children of the better off could play and adults could relax. "An arrow in the Nazis' eyes!" noted Kaplan. "The arteries of life do not stop pulsing." Yet at the same time these were "desolate, lonely lots surrounded by high walls," and as Warsaw chronicler Emanuel Ringelblum noted, "children of the rich can enjoy them. . . . The poor children never see a patch of grass."

Adam Czerniakow committed to building public playgrounds in the spring of 1942. Partly, Czerniakow felt for the lost childhood of Ghetto children. On speaking with a group of young people in 1942 he confided to his diary, "They talked with me like grown-ups – those eight-year-old citizens. I am ashamed to admit it but I wept as I have not wept in a long time." At the same time, Czerniakow understood that children were at the center of any future that Jews in Poland might have. Thus even in the spring of 1942, as terrible rumors swirled and as Treblinka was secretly being prepared to exterminate Warsaw's Jews, Czerniakow, like many in the Warsaw Ghetto, believed that there was a Jewish future.

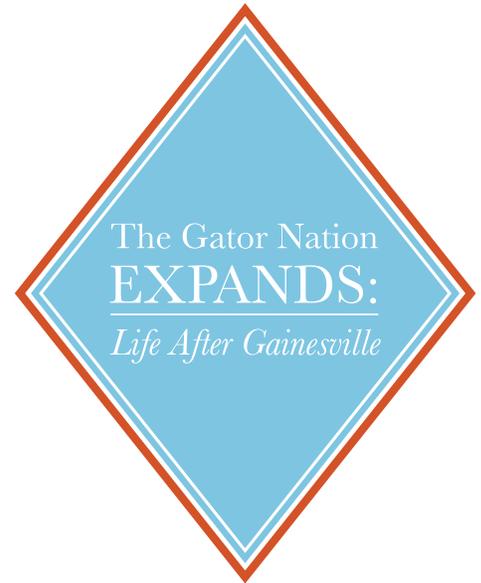
In May Czerniakow hired recently-arrived German Jews to construct the first public playground across from his offices on Grzybowska Street. They graded the lot, laid turf, and built swings and slides. On the wall of an adjacent house, Jewish schoolchildren painted frescoes of animals as well as traditional Jewish scenes. "Purposeful work under such condi-

tions is worthy of admiration," Czerniakow wrote. "Tears," he added, "will not help us." The German authorities allowed the construction, surely to hide from Warsaw's Jews their impending fate. And on June 7, 1942 the Grzybowska Street playground opened amidst great fanfare. Jewish dignitaries attended and a band played as thousands of schoolchildren marched into the square led by their teachers. "These are tragic times," Czerniakow argued in his speech, "but we must stand firm. . . . Whenever we hear children laughing and singing our windows will be let open to let in the sound. This will give us hope and courage to go and fight for the future." As Warsaw Ghetto survivor Mary Berg later noted, "The smiling, rosy faces of the children were perhaps the best reward for those who had created this little refuge of freedom for the little prisoners of the ghetto."

More playgrounds opened by mid July, but amidst a darker mood, as rumors of deportation became more prevalent. Teacher Michael Zylberberg later remembered, "We were supposed to rehearse the children but there was no enthusiasm. Whispers had gone the rounds about the deportation of certain Jews." Czerniakow was determined to maintain a celebratory mood despite his own worries. "I visited three playgrounds," he wrote on July 19, 1942. "I do not know whether I managed to calm the population but I did my best. . . . What it cost me they do not see. . . . I am trying not to let the smile leave my face." The terrible truth arrived on July 22, when SS-Major Hermann Höfle arrived at Czerniakow's office and announced that all of Warsaw's Jews, regardless of age, would be deported. The following day, after unsuccessful attempts to have the Germans spare the orphans, Czerniakow committed suicide. "They demand that I kill children," he wrote. "I have nothing to do but die." By September 21, the Ghetto population was reduced from 350,000 to 73,000, and most of Warsaw's Jewish children were murdered.

Were the playgrounds a delusion? In his new book on Ringelblum, Samuel Kassow reminds us that every act in the ghetto must be understood against the background of what different Jews understood in that particular moment. In the spring of 1942 even Czerniakow's critics entertained hopes amidst fears – hopes that now appear just as delusional. "I consider it a certainty," diarist Abraham Lewin wrote in May 1942, "that the Anglo-American invasion of Europe will come to fruition in the near future. . . . This huge army will hit the continent like an avalanche and strike a death-blow at the enemy of humanity." This avalanche lay in the very distant future. But Lewin persisted. "Jews," he wrote, "are stubborn optimists. . . . If you want something, then it's no fairy tale." Lewin was murdered in January 1943.

Simon Rabinovitch



After completing a two year Alexander Grass Post-Doctoral Fellowship at UF, SIMON RABINOVITCH was appointed assistant professor of history at Boston University. He is currently working on a monograph entitled *Homeland Bound: Jewish Autonomism in Revolutionary Russia*, as well as the anthologies *Diasporic Nationalism in Modern Jewish Thought*, and with David Rechter, *Modern Jewish Politics: Ideologies, Identities and the Jewish Question*.

Throughout my two years as the Grass Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Florida I had been working on a monograph based on my doctoral dissertation. This book examines the movement for Jewish communal and national self-government in Russia, also known as autonomism. Influenced by a number of contemporary European political theories, Jewish autonomists in the early twentieth century sought to decouple national sovereignty from territory in order to make national demands equivalent to those of other minorities. I explore a number of themes in the book, ranging from the democratization of Jewish political life to the relationship between Russian nationalities policies and Jewish national self-consciousness. The central idea developed throughout the book is that autonomism, or the idea of Jewish autonomy in the diaspora, played a crucial role in the politicization of Russian Jewry and the development of modern Jewish nationalism. I believe this to be a point that has been missed in the existing historiography because of the eventual success of competing ideologies – Zionist and socialist. The tragic fate of European Jewry has for many compounded the difficulty in understanding that in the early twentieth century many Jews believed their national expectations could be fulfilled in Eastern Europe. In fact, although autonomism emerged in the same context as Zionism, as a Jewish embrace of European nationalism, by proposing that Jews could attain greater national self-consciousness without millions of Jews having to move from Eastern Europe to Palestine (or some other territory where they might

achieve a demographic concentration), autonomism was at the time seemingly more attainable.

Whether through faculty seminars or workshops with the many scholars invited by the Center for Jewish Studies, I feel my eyes have been opened to a range of new approaches to sources. As an historian, it has been particularly beneficial to me to hear from other faculty about many new ideas in literary analysis and critical theory. The analysis in my own work is more creative and sharper because of it.

During these two years I have taught directly in my fields of interest – Russian Jewish history and Jewish political history. So, teaching at UF has been a wonderful gift to my scholarship, as the undergraduate and graduate students have pressed

ALEXANDER GRASS *Undergraduate Essay Award*

Each academic year the University of Florida's Center for Jewish Studies presents the Alexander Grass Award for the best undergraduate essay written by a University of Florida student on a subject in Jewish Studies.

The award carries a cash prize of \$500. Up to two runner-up essays will be awarded prizes of \$250.

A committee made up of three members of the faculty in Jewish Studies at UF meets in the Spring semester to judge submissions. The committee considers essays written for courses in the past Spring semester and the current Fall semester (i.e., Spring and Fall, 2010).

Essays can be submitted by either a faculty member or by the student with the course instructor's approval with a cover letter from the faculty member. Essays must be on a theme related to some aspect of Jewish Studies, though the essay need not have been written in a Jewish Studies course. Essays should be approximately 12-15 pages in length double spaced. Essays written for either the senior thesis requirement or as independent study are ineligible.

The essay must include a cover sheet with the author's name, the title of the essay, student identification number and email address.

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS MARCH 1, 2011.
Submissions should be sent to:

Professor Mitchell Hart
Department of History
025 Keene-Flint Hall
PO Box 117320

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS IN JEWISH STUDIES



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me to synthesize and articulate what is most important in these subjects. For me, the link between teaching and research is also more than merely theoretical. While teaching on Jewish politics and Jewish thought I have at the same time been assembling anthologies on those topics. In fact, it was through teaching a course on modern Jewish politics and political movements in my first semester at UF that I reached the conclusion that students – both undergraduate and graduate – have far too little material on Jewish politics and nationalist thought available to them in English. In response to this need, I am currently engaged in two projects intended to enlarge the number of sources on Jewish politics and Jewish nationalism available to students. With David Rechter, I am editing a volume of documentary sources entitled *Modern Jewish Politics: Ideologies, Identities, and the Jewish Question*, to be published with University of Wisconsin Press. This volume will cover the full spectrum of Jewish politics from liberal integrationists to socialist Zionists, and everything in between, highlighting the connections between Jewish political culture in Eastern Europe, Israel, and the United States. I am also editing a

volume entitled *Diasporic Nationalism in Modern Jewish Thought* for Brandeis University Press's new Modern Jewish Thought Series. This volume will provide annotated first-time translations from a variety of streams of diasporic-nationalist thought. In assembling this collection, I was amazed that a number of key texts for understanding the development and trajectory of Jewish national thought still remained without English translation. Examples from the fifteen or sixteen thinkers represented in the collection include selections from Perez Smolenskin's "Am Olam," Nathan Birnbaum's "Jewish Autonomy," and Vladimir Medem's "Social Democracy and the National Question." The exercise of choosing what should go in these anthologies, and why, was made all the more fruitful by the input I received from students and colleagues.

My postdoctoral experience at UF has been formative for me both professionally and personally. Certainly one could not ask for a more dynamic and intellectually vibrant place to begin a career in Jewish studies. *A sheynem dank, toda raba!* 🌟



REBECCA JEFFERSON is Head of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica.

"HaYoyvl-bukh fun Idishn tsemer: tsum akhtsn-yorikn yubileum" (Havana, 1943). The book celebrates 80 years of the Jewish Center in Cuba; and it is owned by just 3 other US libraries.

One of America's great Judaica research libraries, certainly the foremost in the southeastern states, is housed at the University of Florida. Known as the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica, this extraordinary collection comprises over 90,000 catalogued volumes, incorporates three major private collections, and is notable for its remarkable depth, scope and singularity. Moreover, the history of its acquisition is no less remarkable.

The University's Center for Jewish Studies was established in 1973 and with its foundation it quickly became apparent that a solid research library (in the range of 25,000 books) was needed to support its teaching program. To this end, the Libraries engaged Harvard's Judaica bibliographer, Charles Berlin, to review Rabbi Leonard C. Mishkin's book collection in Chicago with a view to purchasing it.

Rabbi Mishkin (1906–1996) was at that time the owner of the largest private library of Judaica and Hebraica in the United States. A professor of Jewish history at the Hebrew Theological College with doctorates in Jewish philosophy, history and education, Mishkin had amassed over 40,000 volumes in a range of languages covering every area of Jewish scholarship, but with a major strength in rabbinics, a large collection of periodicals, an impressive set of limited print *festschriften*, hundreds of Yiddish titles that had been published in the former Soviet Union, and numerous booklets commemorating German-Jewish communities and synagogues that were destroyed by the Nazis, as well as pamphlets relating to pre-1948 Palestine.

Berlin submitted an extensive report in which he noted that Mishkin's collection was "superb." With its purchase, he foretold, "Florida would be catapulted into the ranks of the larger university collections in this field. . ." surpassing long established

programs. Berlin also noted that "thousands of items in the Mishkin Collection – although of recent vintage – are in fact more rare than incunabula." The acquisition of this collection, he advised, would impose "certain responsibilities upon Florida" including an assurance that the collection would be widely accessible.

Thanks to the remarkable efforts of a former Provost, Harold Hanson, the University of Florida acquired the Mishkin collection in 1977. The following year, UF also purchased a collection of books formerly owned by Dr. Shlomo Marenof, a Russian-Jewish émigré who had spent time in Palestine before he became a lecturer in Hebrew and Near Eastern Civilization at Brandeis University and one of the founders of the first strong Hebrew teachers union in the United States. Marenof's personal library of more than 3,000 works included important titles in Hebrew, with con-

centrations in biblical studies, Midrash and Modern Hebrew literature. Among Marenof's treasures was a clean copy of the Hebrew anthology *Bereshit* (In the Beginning): one of the last Hebrew books published in Russia under Communist rule in the 1920s and printed in Germany due to Soviet opposition to Hebrew culture. Worse still, the temporary license issued for its production prevented a proofreading stage which rendered this hard fought for, single edition publication replete with printing errors.

A large endowment for this fascinating and rapidly growing Judaica collection was created in 1977 by two university alumni, local real estate developers, Jack and Samuel Price, in honor of their parents, Isser and Rae Price. Isser and Rae were both instrumental in creating a Jewish Center in Jacksonville in the 1920s and, according to their daughter Eunice (writing in the Jacksonville community's online "Book of Life"), had raised their children with a deep commitment to the Jewish community, a love of *tzedakah*, Jewish philanthropy, and a profound sense of the importance of education.

In May 1979, the University hired Robert Singerman from the Klau Library at the Hebrew Union College to serve as the new Judaica Library's bibliographer. One of Singerman's first accomplishments was to secure a third major private collection to complement the Mishkin and Marenof collections. Fresh on the job, Singerman had learnt that Bernard Morgenstern, the owner of a secondhand bookstore on New York's Lower East Side, was desperate to sell his entire inventory (around 10,000 imprints mostly from the 19th and 20th centuries, including books, pamphlets and other ephemera of which about 60% was in Yiddish).

Singerman visited Morgenstern's bookstore in July 1979 where he found books "precariously stacked on the floor, in corners, and on shelves along the walls to a height beyond one's reach." Visitors to Morgenstern's poorly lit, twenty-five-year-old store were first greeted by a big sign in Yiddish and English: "Do Not Touch Anything!" Indeed, only "old Morgenstern could remove a book from the middle of one of the huge stacks without it toppling" (Katz, *Times Higher Education*, 1996). Yet here among the disordered piles and disarray (even Morgenstern did not know exactly what he owned), Singerman found many treasures, including editions of all the major Yiddish novelists, poets and dramatists (the sort of book rescue recently made famous in *Outwitting History*). In addition to a wealth of Yiddish literature, Morgenstern had amassed numerous books in Hebrew and a great number of pamphlets, many of which are now scarce.

The "3-M Collection" (as these three large acquisitions were dubbed) was officially dedicated as the Isser and Rae Price



"Fun ale na-venadn" (Buenos Aires, 1955). This edition of Yiddish poetry is owned by 16 US Libraries; the copy in the Price Library of Judaica is signed by the author.

Library of Judaica in March 1981. The Library's collections continued to be supplemented from time to time by smaller gifts and donations, including a substantial portion of books received as a bequest from Theodore H. Gaster (1906–1992) who had taught at the University of Florida. Gaster (son of Britain's Chief Rabbi of the Sephardic community, Moses Gaster) was a notable linguist and renowned scholar of comparative religion; he had in his lifetime amassed a personal library which included many works on the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of the Price Library's prize possessions from this collection has to be Theodore Gaster's own copy of his father's work, Samaritan Oral Law and Ancient Traditions to which he added an ex-libris on the fly leaf together with an undeciphered message in Samaritan script. Throughout the book itself, the younger Gaster has



“Bereshit” (Berlin, 1926); illustrated by Joseph Chaikov.

made deletions, annotations, and even corrections to his father’s text (fortuitous perhaps that the latter was no longer alive by this time!).

During his 27-year tenure as its librarian, Robert Singerman took the Price Library of Judaica from strength to strength. An extraordinary bibliophile and bibliographer, Singerman had a rare eye for collecting. Not only did he increase the Library’s holdings in line with other major American Jewish libraries, Singerman daily went hot foot to work in order to beat his peers to scarce titles and ephemeral materials. In addition to these items, Singerman gathered for posterity a huge collection of “anti-Semitica”. One of the strange items in this category was recently requested by *Harper’s Magazine* for their research into Wycliffe Hill, inventor of the Hollywood movie money spin-

ner, who in 1945 wrote the dubious work “Why the Jew Gets the Money”. The Price Library, it turned out, had preserved the only copy in the US of this bizarre booklet which creates a crass stereotype of a money-making Jew for which the author expresses profound admiration.

Singerman increased the number of periodicals held by the library, to include important journals, serials, and newspapers from around the Jewish world, most notably from Latin America. He focused attention on amassing hundreds of the limited print, post-war memorial books (*Yizkor* books) produced to commemorate the ravaged Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe. He also sought out ephemeral booklets in Yiddish and Spanish issued by Jewish communal bodies in Latin America: titles that would have otherwise been ignored by mainstream scholarship, but which are of increasing interest today. Singerman’s unusual collecting activities likewise focused on Jewish community and scholarly newsletters from around the world which he believed were “laden with information not readily found elsewhere” (Report, 1983).

Upon his retirement in 2006, Singerman could proudly announce that the Price Library of Judaica held in excess of 85,000 fully catalogued items covering every aspect of Jewish social, political, and community history, Hebrew and Yiddish linguistics and literature, Palestinography and modern Israel, Judaism and rabbinics. But for this consummate bibliographer, the Price Library of Judaica was not a mere book repository, but rather something akin to Noah’s Ark where a representative of every type of printed matter in the field of Jewish studies would be saved for future generations of readers and researchers.

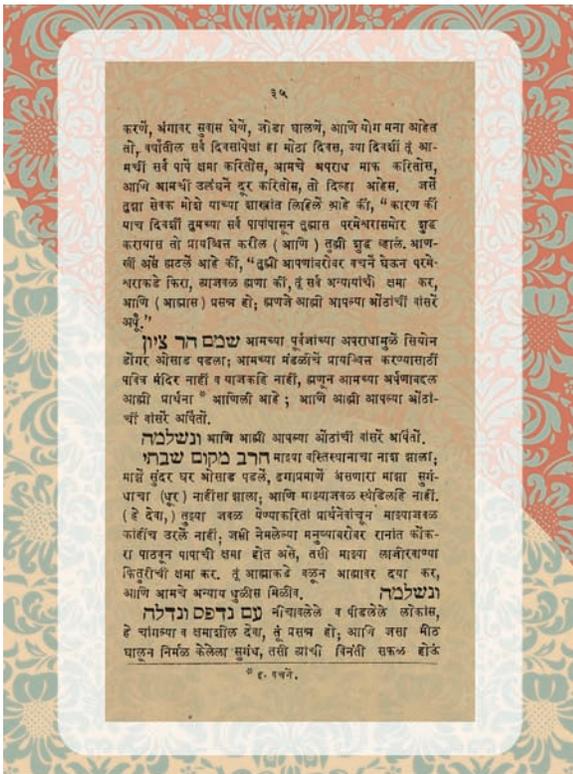
Subsequent custodians of the Price Library have continued this philosophy, recently purchasing such miscellanies as Joseph Ezekiel Rajpurkar’s sermon “A True Aspect of Judaism” delivered in the Old Synagogue, Bombay and published in India in 1879 (owned by just five other US university libraries), and Solomon Schechter’s *Die Chassidim* published in Berlin in 1902 by the famous Jüdischer Verlag publishing house which was destroyed by the Nazis in 1938. Our edition (of which there are only 30 copies worldwide) also contains the bookplate of Harry Friedenwald, a renowned historian of Jewish medicine and prolific book collector.

Unfortunately, many of the items that have been gathered on our “Ark” now require a good deal of attention. A number of books are in desperate need of repair, titles like M. Broderzon’s *Tehies Hameysim*, Lodz, 1920: an edition of just 500 copies, only three of which are held in the American libraries. The number of brittle books – a problem with many 19th and 20th-century imprints – is large and a solution for preserving their contents

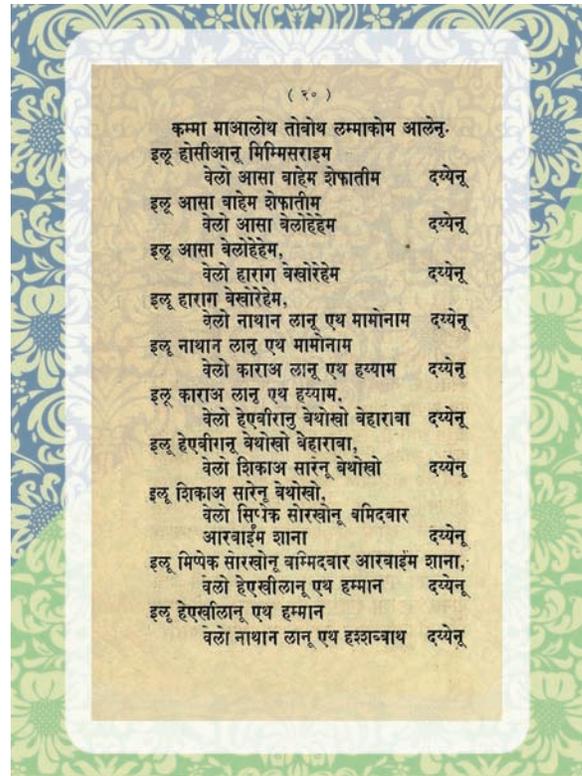
and dealing with the artifact will have to be found; certainly many of these materials will be ideal candidates for digitization and mounting on the Internet Archive or some other digital repository.

The Library's latest purchases have been aimed at supporting the Center for Jewish Studies' teaching program and, to this end, have included over a hundred titles on the subject of the Holocaust. More than half of these are sought after publications in German from the Hamburg Institute of Social Research. The Price Library has also acquired the substantial online database Post-war Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement, 1945-1950, which provides access for researchers and students to a huge range of primary materials on post-war Jewish history from the Wiener Library and the British National Archive collections. This database is currently hosted by just nine other US university libraries.

Two sets of microfilm reels of primary material dealing with the Holocaust and Nazi history have also been ordered for the Library: The Holocaust and Records of the Concentration Camp Trials and The Ukrainian Archives and the Files of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg Kiev. The first set is an



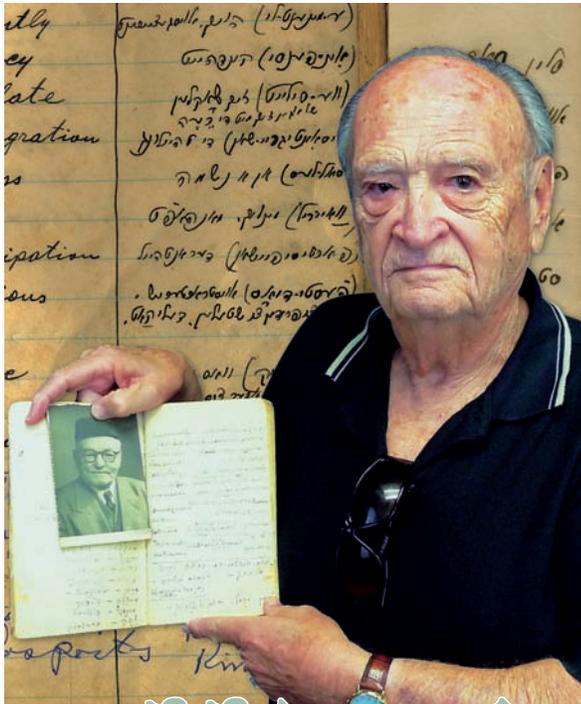
"The Prayers of the Day of Atonement: translated from Hebrew into Marathi by Joseph Ezekiel Rajpurker" (Bombay, 1867).



"Haggadah" (Bombay, 1911); translated into Marathi; this page of the Passover song "Dayenu" is transliterated into the Devangari script.

essential source for research into the latter stages of the Holocaust and the second set of reels provide key information about the German cultural plunder in Europe. The Price Library of Judaica is now just one out of ten libraries in the entire country to hold both of these vital resources; their purchase places the University of Florida in the top league of institutions catering for research on the Holocaust and its aftermath.

With a field as wide, varied and vibrant as Jewish Studies, the Price Library of Judaica continues to compile a healthy list of desiderata. One hope is that it will be able to develop its notable Yiddish collection by acquiring copies of the major Yiddish newspaper *Forverts* on microfilm. This popular newspaper, first published in New York in 1897, read by over 250,000 people in 1929 and still going today, is a first-rate resource for the social, political and literary outpourings of American Jews. Another hope is to acquire more primary, documentary material, particularly of the sort relating to Land of Israel Studies. Yet whatever path current research trends will take, the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica will endeavor to map them; it will also strive to be a place of refuge for ephemeral Judaica, safe in the knowledge that what may be disregarded today will be considered priceless tomorrow. 🕯



Rabbi Safer - Collection -

Edwin Safer of Jacksonville, deposited Reverend Benjamin Safer's collection of sermonettes, memorabilia, recorded liturgical songs and photos into the Price Library. Included is material from a family trip to his grandfather's birthplace in Birzia, Lithuania in 1994. Benjamin Safer was born in 1872 and died Sept. 19, 1959 in New York on his way back from Israel where he had settled in 1956.

Benjamin Safer was self learned and lacked rabbinical ordination. He was hired by B'nai Israel in Jacksonville in 1902 and functioned as its rabbi, *shoykhet*, cantor and *mohel* (his surgical tools are now in the collection of the Jewish Museum of Florida). He was reappointed on and off again over the years. In 1923 he was hired as cantor and reverend. His contract stipulated a payment of 10% of all dues collected from current members and 15% from new members. Safer wrote in Yiddish, Hebrew and English and made use of his own hand-written dictionary for more complex words. His English sermons were written in Yiddish transliteration.

Benjamin Safer's son was a kosher butcher in Jacksonville. His grandson Edwin graduated UF and is a retired veterinarian. 🐾

Student Awards

• Alexander Grass Essay Award •

1st Prize | David Byron (Hasak Lowy) - "Deconstruction, Destabilization, and the Return of the Repressed in Mr. Mani"

2nd Prize | Manda Mindlin (Wald) - "A Comparative Analysis of the Relationship between the State, Religious Interests, and Lesbians' Access to Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) in the United States and Israel"

3rd Prize | Danielle Grundt (Hart) - "Exploring Judaism in Medieval Spain with Particular Focus on Kosher Laws and Anti-Semitism"

• University Scholars •

Danielle Feinstein (Wald)

"The Political Socialization of Israeli University Students"

Sara Reynolds (Freifeld)

"The Patriotic Mask: Nationalist Propaganda in the Anti-Semitic Press during the Dreyfus Affair"

Frederick Rosenbluth (Goda)

"The Eichmann Trial"

Russ Levine (Ben-Horin)

"The Sacred and the Secular in Modern Jewish Literature: Ginsberg and Hoffmann"

• Honors •

Emily Schwimmer (Wald)

OUTSTANDING SENIOR THESIS AWARD, DEPT. OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
"Development of the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities in Memphis between the Civil War and the Second World War"

Dan Widboom (Wald)

BEST UNDERGRADUATE PAPER AWARD, DEPT. OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
"Judicial Review and National Security: The Supreme Court of Israel"

Reading Jewish Literature: Workshop with Dan Miron

Michal Ben-Horin



MICHAL BEN-HORIN is Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies and Languages, Literatures and Cultures. She does comparative work on modern German and Hebrew literatures.

The question of Jewish literature is as old and complex as the literature itself. And yet in light of the last decade’s public and academic attempts to critically examine and redefine the historical, cultural and political aspects of secularism, works of modern Jewish literature provide a fascinating medium of inquiry and investigation. Indeed, looking at works of literature can teach us a great deal about processes of self understanding and collective identification as the literary texts written in Jewish languages since the late 18th century convey and testify to tensions between tradition and innovation, sacralization and secularization, homeland and exile, foreign and national cultures, Europe and Eretz-Israel.

An experimental one-day workshop on Jewish literature with Prof. Dan Miron that took place in October 2008 and November 2009 under the auspices of the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Florida demonstrates the productivity of such inquiry. The two workshops brought together junior and senior scholars and professors from different North-American universities including Columbia, Berkeley, George Washing-

ton, Duke, Vanderbilt, Wisconsin-Madison, Texas at Austin, Brandeis, Emory as well as faculty of UF Jewish Studies to discuss the conditions and characteristics of Jewish literature. A close reading of a variety of texts in Yiddish, Hebrew and German opened intriguing discussions on a range of issues including historical and cultural aspects of Jewish life in the European diasporas and in Israel; questions of unity and pluralism; translation and bilingualism; the genesis of new genres; the public sphere and literary institutions; reception and the nature of readerships; as well as issues of teaching and pedagogy.

The 2008 workshop was devoted to the Yiddish monologues “Burned Out,” and “Advice” by Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916) – in the first session; and to the works of two Israeli women writers – in the second: the stories “Low, Close to the Floor,” and “A Story with no Address” by Yehudit Hendel (1926) and the poems “Around Jerusalem,” “A Dress of Fire,” and “Clockwork Doll” by Dalia Ravikovitz (1936-2005). The workshop ended with an off-campus lecture by Dan Miron titled “Who Wants to Listen to Tevye the Dairyman? – the Tevye-Sholem-Aleichem Symbiosis and its Ramifications.”

A year later in a following workshop we returned to a few “crossroads” by exploring the political implications, the conflicts and tensions around the emergence and formation of a Jewish literature. We read the story “The Master of Prayer” by Reb Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1810) along with “Revealer of Secrets,” which is also known as the first Hebrew novel, by Joseph Perl (1773-1839). In the second session we moved on to the poem “Jehuda ben Halevy” by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) that was followed by the poem “R. Yehudah Halevi” by Micah Joseph Lebensohn (1828-1852). Miron’s public lecture on “The Three Impossibilities – Franz Kafka’s ‘Theory’ of Jewish Literatures” ended the workshop.

Prof. Miron, a major literary critic and a most prolific scholar of Yiddish and modern Hebrew literature tells the audience a story about the “impossibilities” of a Jewish literature. Like a good storyteller and a brilliant presenter Miron invites his audience to participate in the worlds of the literary characters and writers he discusses. In interweaving poetic analysis and deep cultural and historical perspectives he offers a moving and even amusing reading of Kafka. And yet his talk goes beyond Kafka since the very impossibility of a Jewish literature – the failure of writing or the poetics of failure that is bound to complexities of language, place and identity – rather reveals that which a Jewish literature is: A literature that uncompromisingly testifies to its limits and proposes an ongoing and fascinating challenge to readers. 🌸



Reflections

on Robert Alter's recent visit
to the University of Florida

ROBERT KAWASHIMA is Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Center for Jewish Studies. He is the author of *Biblical Narrative and the Death of the Rhapsode* and is currently working on *The Archaeology of Ancient Israelite Knowledge*, an analysis of Israel's religious traditions informed by Foucault's investigations into the history of systems of thought.

This March, the Center for Jewish Studies, thanks to a grant from the Posen Foundation, invited renowned literary critic, Robert Alter, to the University of Florida to lead a one-day seminar for faculty and graduate students. The Center hosted additional scholars with specializations ranging from Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism to Modern Jewish Thought: Mara Benjamin, Dexter Callender, Matthew Goff, Rachel Havrelock, Eric Larson, Stephen Russell, and Seth Sanders.

The seminar was devoted to Biblical translation, and consisted of a morning session "Translating Biblical Prose" and an afternoon session "Translating Biblical Poetry." Participants read: prose selections from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel and Qohelet, and selected poems from Exodus, Psalms, Proverbs and Job, in both the Hebrew original and Alter's own translations (some as yet unpublished). The day concluded with a public lecture, "Qohelet: Philosophy through Metaphor." Reading from his forthcoming translation and commentary, *The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes*, Alter demonstrated how the Book of Ecclesiastes, though lacking the philosophical idiom (specifically the abstract terms) that one finds, e.g., in the contemporary literature of ancient Greece, could exploit the concreteness of biblical Hebrew, refracted through metaphor, in order to construct its strikingly philosophical vision of life, the sole instance of such a discourse within the biblical canon. The entire event was designed to take advantage of his ongoing and highly celebrated series of translations of the Hebrew Bible.

Why biblical translation? We have long heard the cliché that: Every translation is an interpretation. The converse is equally true: Every interpretation entails translation. That is, the interpreter bases his or her reading on philological and linguistic decisions

regarding the precise meaning of a word, the correct grammatical construal of a phrase, and so forth. These decisions are, in effect, so many translations of words, phrases, and sentences. For this reason, Alter encourages his graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley, to translate critical passages of foreign-language works as an exercise in literary interpretation. In fact, this principle has led him in the last several years to offer a graduate seminar on literary translation, in order to work through the practical and theoretical issues involved in the act of translation-interpretation — precisely what we did in our seminar at the University of Florida. Looking back recently at *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, published nearly thirty years ago, I was struck by the fact that translation has always played a crucial role within Alter's literary approach to the Bible. To borrow the language of philosophers, if his interpretive

remarks can be seen as attempts to communicate a “knowledge by description” of the biblical text, his English translations actually attempt to transmit to the general reader a direct “knowledge by acquaintance” of it, by recreating the aesthetic experience of reading the texts in the original. In retrospect, I find it difficult not to see here already the seeds of his current translation project, which now appears to me to be the logical and inevitable culmination of his remarkable career in biblical studies.

Also, it is worth noting that the year 2011 will mark the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Bible. As has frequently been noted, few English translations since have managed to be literary works as well as works of philology. The ideal translator, then, must not only be philologist and interpreter, but consummate stylist as well. For literary translation finally involves aesthetic choices in the target language, by which one might ultimately hit upon a precise semantic equivalent for the original that is a literary stylistic equivalent as well. This would seem to require a rather unlikely combination of skills; as Plato’s Socrates might have observed, however, true “knowledge” of literature should enable one to write well, and not just read well. In the case of major English translations, mostly produced in the second half of the twentieth century, the task of translating the Bible has been further complicated (arguably impeded, at least in certain respects) by the fact that they were undertaken by committees. (The King James Version, it should be noted, is not so much the collective work of a committee as the distributive work of individuals).

As if in response to that trend, various individuals have recently undertaken translations of parts of the Hebrew Bible: not only Robert Alter, but Everett Fox and Richard Elliott Friedman, to name a few. Similarly, Richmond Lattimore, famed translator of Homer, produced his own rendering of the New Testament. Be that as it may, the King James Bible endures as a monumental work of English literature, partly for the reason that it simply was and is the Bible for numerous major English authors – which Alter in fact partly addresses in his most recent book, *Pen of Iron: American Prose and the King James Bible*. Unfortunately, this most venerable translation, already conceived of and perceived as archaic in its own time, is little read these days, at least in American universities. The good news is that Norton is publishing an annotated edition of the Authorized Version, which will make it more accessible to contemporary students of literature and hopefully strengthen its position in the curriculum of the modern university.

Apropos of the Bible’s place in the modern university, I would finally like to consider its relation to secularism. It was, after all, a Posen grant that funded Robert Alter’s recent visit to the Uni-

versity of Florida. Here, one does well to recall that philology, the modern study of texts, which underlies all the textual disciplines – history, literature, philosophy, etc. – constitutes the very core of secularism. It was the first philological efforts of early Renaissance scholars that gave birth to modern secularism, precisely by making it possible to analyze texts without consideration for their possibly sacred status – one need only call to mind Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. The literary approach to the Bible, by providing a viable alternative to theologically motivated sectarian exegesis, thus stands in and, in fact, epitomizes this venerable intellectual tradition. Literary translations of the Bible arguably bring this process to its logical conclusion. While most modern translations were commissioned by one or another ecclesiastical body, translations such as Alter’s finally make possible a reading of this ancient sacred text that is a secular aesthetic experience. 🍷



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Upon receipt of your pledge of \$1,000/year for 7 years, you will receive the Tree of Life pictured here and each year when your gift is made you will be able to add another pomegranate to your tree. Contact: Zoe Seale at zseale@uff.ufl.edu or (352) 392-7758.

Judith W. Page



JUDITH W. PAGE is Professor, Department of English and Waldo W. Neikirk Term Professor of Arts and Sciences and Interim Director of the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research. She is co-author with art historian Elise L. Smith of the soon to be published *Disciples of Flora: Women and the Domesticated Landscape of England, 1780–1870* and author of *Imperfect Sympathies: Jews and Judaism in British Romantic Literature and Culture*.

This course, which I taught this past spring, focused on the influence of Shakespeare's "Shylock" on literature and culture, primarily in Britain in the 19th-century but also in earlier and later periods. In 19th-century Britain, *The Merchant of Venice* was also a key text in discussions of nationality and emancipation. We considered Shylock as both a literary character and as a negative archetype that develops a life of its own in other works of literature, art, theatre, and film.

Shylock influences and infiltrates British literature and culture in the 18th century and continues a vibrant and often disturbing presence in contemporary popular culture, where, for instance, on *The Sopranos* he is abbreviated to a "shy" or common loan shark.

The course followed a roughly chronological organization from the medieval period when several related stereotypes or myths associated with Jews gain currency (such as the Blood Libel, the Wandering Jew) to the 16th century when the play was written and first performed and then the 18th century when it was revived on stage after an absence of over a century. Students studied the play closely and carefully, and read relevant biblical, historical, and philosophical material, as well as texts on the performance history of the play. This unit of the course culminated with a comparison of Michael Radford's recent film, Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (a vibrantly colored film set in 16th-century Venice) with Trevor Nunn's interpretation of the play (with monochromatic colors and set in Weimar Germany).

After considering performances and performance history, we returned to the 19th century to study various fictional texts that re-imagine the character of Shylock or in some way present themselves as interconnected with *The Merchant of Venice*. Even when authors do not explicitly set their texts up in relation to Shylock or Shakespeare, Shylock often haunts the story by his absence or in Dickens's *Oliver Twist* by

the similarity of the unnamed Shylock with Fagin. With a controversial revival of the musical version *Oliver Twist*, of *Oliver!* now at Drury Lane, we discussed the way that characters like Shylock and Fagin continue to influence debates in the UK and beyond. In the Victorian period, Shylock pervades the political discourse surrounding Benjamin Disraeli's various roles in public life, as well as the continuing debates over emancipation and nationality. Various cartoons from the period attest to the connection between the converted Jew Disraeli and the persistent Shylock.

In addition to exams, student developed research projects for the semester, some of which involved work with documents such as letters, theatre reviews, and journal articles from the 18th and 19th century that will help provide a context for what Michael Ragussis has called "the work of cultural recovery" necessary for understanding Shylock and the "Jewish Question" more fully. 🌐

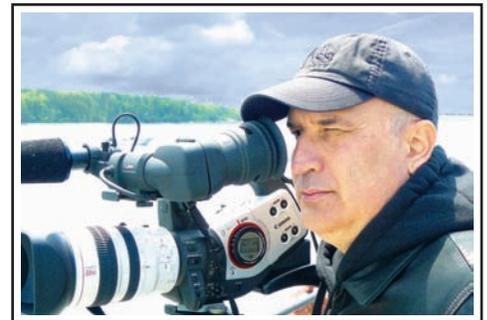
THE SORROW AND THE PITY



Dragan Kujundzic

The Sorrow and the Pity (*Le Chagrin et la pitié*), a documentary film by Marcel Ophüls, concerns the French Resistance and collaboration with the Vichy government and Nazi Germany during World War II. Filmed in 1969, this film used interviews of a German officer, collaborators, and resistance fighters from Clermont-Ferrand. They comment on the nature and various reasons for collaboration like anti-Semitism or nationalism.

On November 23, 2009, a symposium about this film was held at the Center for Jewish Studies. The four presentations, by Sylvie Blum, Maureen Turim, Brigitte Weltman-Aron and Eric Kligerman, edited by Dragan Kujundzic, are published in their entirety at University of Florida's Center for Jewish Studies website. The following is a synopsis of the presentations.



IN HER PAPER ON MARCEL OPHÜLS'S *The Sorrow and the Pity*, Sylvie Blum (Associate Professor of French, Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures), analyzes the role that music, in particular the performances of a very popular *chansonnier*, Maurice Chevalier, has played in ushering in the collaborationist propaganda in the Vichy France. From the very opening of the film, the title sequence scrolls over a non-dated performance of a bubbly Maurice Chevalier “*Et tout ça ça fait d'excellents Français*” singing to cheering French troops while the title appears: *The Collapse*. The lyrics marshal the spirit of French soldiers as “excellent Frenchmen,” thereby reinforcing the irony of the moment, and solidifying the filmmaker’s point of view on the material. The Chevalier segment solidifies the implicit message of the film and its tone that is unequivocally ironic, and sarcastic. Yet it leaves room for questioning. Cheva-

lier (1888–1972) was one of the few performers (actors and musicians) who crossed over to Hollywood before World War II, and signed up with MGM in 1935. He had a career in the US mostly in musical films. His hit-song “*Ca fait d'excellents Français*” – the first one to play in *Le Chagrin et la pitié* – was released in 1939 on the eve of the war. During the war, Chevalier continued to perform in Parisian cabarets, and went to Berlin, a well-known fact that appears also in *Chantons sous l'occupation*, André Halimi’s 1976 documentary. Chevalier was subsequently tried for his collaborationist activities, which consisted in going to Germany, and singing in a prisoner-of-war camp.

An analysis of the song “*Ca fait d'excellents Français*” or “This Makes for Excellent Frenchmen” reveals a tongue-in-cheek critique of the French army. Based on the lyrics, written by Jean Boyer and Georges Van Parys, a standard film music composer,

for such filmmakers as René Clair, Renoir and Max Ophüls, French soldiers stand out as an odd make-shift of indigenous people whose heterogeneous civilian occupations and ailments rather downplay the fabric and excellent state of the French army.

Ophüls and his assistant have relied heavily on a singer, and his songs as the designated icon for a collaborationist artist. This narrow focalization leaves out countless other artists who also performed for Germans, either in Paris or in Germany, during the war on a regular basis. What spectators knew of Chevalier and of French history may elude some spectators today, concludes professor Blum, especially in our classrooms unless a detailed analysis is performed, relying on culture, history and film analysis.

Maureen Turim, Professor of Film and Media Studies (English Department), begins her argument with a simple question. What is the relationship of the interviews with Resistance fighters to those interviews of all others in *Le Chagrin et la pitié* – Nazis, Petainists, other collaborators, and passive observers? In finding answers to this question, she offers a structural analysis of the film's discourse, a discourse built gradually and patiently, through a process that encourages the viewer's own deductions. Central to the film's strategy is the notion that alternatives to collaboration existed, alternatives that while dangerous, were undertaken by ordinary French citizens. Thus the role of those who chose to resist the Nazis is central to the implied argument of this film. Surrounding each revelation of capitulation and collaboration, the film consistently presents the testimony of resistance to keep enforcing the idea that choices were always there to be made. In key instances the testimony of resistance specifically rebuts the testimony of the right-wing apologists. Calling the second half of the film *The Choice* makes explicit how the representatives of the Resistance play this structural role in the film. We should pay particular attention to the dates and circumstances under which the interviewees began resisting, as well as their social economic background, and in two important instances, their Jewishness. Resistance highlights by means of contrast what collaboration really entailed.

ONE EMINENT FIGURE OF JEWISH RESISTANCE AND WITNESS IS CLAUDE LÉVY.

Lévy's story of the *Vel d'hiv rafle* emphasizes how Jewish children were handed over by zealous French authorities to the German SS in mid 1942. The four thousand children Lévy is referring to were part of the July 16, 1942 *Belleville rafle* (round-up), when over ten thousand Jews were rounded up to be sent to concentration, and eventually death camps. The roundup by July 21 accounted for more than a quarter of the 42,000 Jews sent from France to Auschwitz in 1942, of whom only 811 came home at the end of the war. Lévy lists the concentrations camps' located in France; his is

the testimony that marks the direct collaboration of the Vichy Government, the police and many other French citizens with the Nazi's plan to murder the Jews and eliminate the Left. Lévy's testimony naming the concentration camps in France, claims Turim, establishes how massive this physical evidence of the collaboration was.

Brigitte Weltman-Aron, Associate Professor of French (Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures), points out how the film starts with the recollection of the German victory and invasion of France on the part of different protagonists, and the first mention of the Jews occurs through a German newsreel of 1940 reporting that the civil population flees the German troops toward the south of France "because of Jewish warmongers." It proceeds to recall acts of collaboration with the Germans as well as resistance to the Occupation and the Vichy Government. Not only are the answers Ophüls and other interviewers elicit instructive historically, as testimonies about France during the Occupation, they also shed light on France in the

Clockwise:

Sylvie Blum, Maureen Turim, Eric Kligerman and Brigitte Weltman-Aron





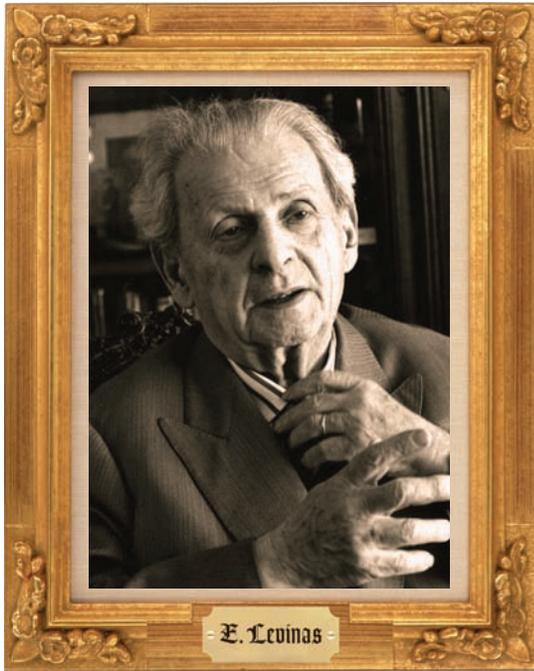
late sixties, and allow the viewer to assess whether, some twenty-five years after the Liberation (the film was shot in 1969), the interpretation of that former period has remained static or has undergone a change. The film was generally well received by the public, but it was controversial from the start, including among those who had undergone persecution in occupied France. For example, in his recently published autobiography, *Le Lièvre de Patagonie*, Claude Lanzmann, the director of *Shoah* (1985), who had, as a young student, been a member of a Resistance network in Clermont-Ferrand, argues that Ophüls's *The Sorrow and the Pity* is not fair to resistance in Auvergne, and accuses the film of unfairly representing Clermont-Ferrand as a symbol of collaboration. Simone Weil, a stateswoman whose moral authority in France as a survivor of the Holocaust and because of her political activity is considerable, recalls in a recent autobiography called *A Life*, her opposition as a member of the board of the ORTF (then France's television network) to the purchase of *The Sorrow and the Pity* on the grounds of its representation of the French during the Occupation.

It is true, argues Weltman-Aron, that Ophüls's treatment of the Occupation, while it equally brings to the fore acts of collaboration and acts of resistance, has the effect of putting into question not the Resistance itself, but the unidirectional unity of its goals. In fact, Ophüls's admiration for the courage of resisters is evident, but the film dwells on individual, at times anarchic motives for entering the Resistance, that do not always coalesce into a single-mindedness of purpose. In addition, far from downplaying the differences between the strategies of Gaullist and Communist resistances, the film emphasizes them. Weil's point about the depiction of the French in general is also well taken if one considers that the most pervasive and devastating effect of the film may be that it shows a "widespread mediocrity and passivity" cutting across a large spectrum of the French witnesses and actors of that period interviewed by Harris and Ophüls. To the extent that Ophüls's documentary shows the witnesses' (by definition) selective work of memory, but in the case of difficult years such as those of the Occupation all the more so, to the point of testimonies being distorted, or even mendacious, it also puts into question the "mimetic promise" of images and contributes to an ongoing reflection on the "demand for evidence" in the face of historical traumatic events and on the conditions that would make it possible to respond to that demand.

Eric Kligerman, Associate Professor of Germanic Studies (Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures), discusses how Ophüls's film serves as a point of departure and intertext for two contemporary American filmmakers, Woody Allen and Quentin Tarantino.

In Allen's *Annie Hall*, Alvy Singer (played by Woody Allen) compels repeatedly his gentile girlfriend (Diane Keaton) to watch *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Alvy, the paranoid Jew who detects anti-Semitism in the sound of a sneeze (achoo), turns *The Sorrow and the Pity* into a tool of revenge. In Allen's appropriation of Ophüls, the theme of Jewish resistance becomes humorous like in Lubitch's *To Be Or Not to Be* and Chaplin's *The Great Dictator*. Although by the end of the film Alvy is no longer with her, Annie now takes her new friend to see Ophüls's film, thus passing on the guilt.

Kligerman's interest is not only in how film becomes an object of resistance but also how directors occupy the films of others. While Allen turns to Ophüls, Ophüls takes possession of German and French film to probe the Occupation. Kligerman's use of the term Occupation derives from its German connotations: *Besetzung*, the word for military occupation, is also Freud's term for cathexis: the process of investing psychic energy in a person, object or idea. The concept is central to the subject's identity construction. Ophüls's film exemplifies a counter-cathexis; he attempts to break French attachment to the one-dimensional historical narrative of a heroic French resistance to National Socialism. Turning to Alvy Singer's legacy, the iconic image of the weak (albeit existentially triumphant) Jew, Kligerman points out that thirty years after *Annie Hall* there has also been a re-occupation of another narrative archetype, where new representations of Jewish resistance have arisen, including serious films like *Munich or Defiance*, and comedic ones like *Don't Mess with the Zohan*. In Paul Feig's comedy *Knocked Up* Seth Rogen tells his Jewish friends at a bar, "Every movie with Jews, we're the ones getting killed." Most recently, Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*, "flips on its ear" not simply the narrative of Jewish victimization but history itself. To borrow Alvy's words, "Boy if life were only like this." While we could place the film next to contemporary depictions of Jewish resistance, Kligerman is interested in the continuities between *Inglourious Basterds* and *The Sorrow and the Pity* including themes of occupation, resistance, anti-Semitism, film within a film structure and the introspective gesture of cinema's power as seen in the function of propaganda. 🍿



BEING JEWISH IN PHILOSOPHY

DRAGAN KUJUNDZIC is Professor of Slavic, film and Jewish studies. His most recent book is the edited volume *Who or What—Jacques Derrida*.

Emmanuel Levinas is one of the greatest figures in Jewish Philosophy. Born in Lithuania, in 1906, he went on to get his education in Strasbourg, France, and later on in Freiburg, Germany. He was naturalized as a French citizen in 1939, and in 1940, as a soldier in the French army, captured by the Nazis, imprisoned in a labor camp for officers, and thus survived the war. His Lithuanian family was murdered. He spent his academic career as a Professor at the Sorbonne. His colloquia titled *Colloque des intellectuels juifs de langue française* educated generations of French, and not only French intellectuals attending these public seminars held in Paris after World War II. Emmanuel Levinas passed away in 1995, leaving a legacy that consists of lines, as Jacques Derrida once observed, each worthy of years of patient Talmudic reading. Among his books are *Totality and Infinity* (1961), *Nine Talmudic Readings* (1968) *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, (1974), *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (1982), *God Death and Time* (1993).

Emmanuel Levinas's early career is marked by his work in

phenomenology, which resulted in his doctoral dissertation, *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*, in French, published in 1930. His early years are marked by the translation into French and introduction of the work of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger, with whom, after Heidegger's allegiance to the Nazi party, Levinas parted ways. Emmanuel Levinas was one of the first Jewish European intellectuals to warn of the upcoming threat posed by the rise of National Socialism in Germany, in his work, published in 1934, *Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism*, and his subsequent career may be seen as a relentless criticism of Heidegger's notion of Being.

On November 18, 2008, a symposium was held at the University of Florida, to celebrate the sixty year anniversary of the publication of two texts by Emmanuel Levinas: a short but very important essay titled "Being Jewish," and his seminal book *Time and the Other*. The participants from the University of Florida included the members of the ongoing Posen Seminar in Secular Judaism, organized and conducted by Nina Caputo and Galili Shahar.

The symposium guest speaker, Professor Jonathan Judaken from the University of Memphis, opened the discussion by offering an overview of Levinas's intellectual history, as well as his influence on French intellectuals such as Jean Paul Sartre, Benny Lévy, Arnold Mendel, among others.

"Being Jewish," and *Time and the Other* are marked by Levinas's turn away from phenomenology, towards an ethics, or, as Judaken pointed out, "the ethics of ethics." After the experience of the Holocaust, Levinas introduced into philosophy an ethical element closely related to his sense of being Jewish. Judaken was particularly attentive to those elements in Levinas's thought where Levinas formulates the responsibility that befalls the Jews, and that makes Judaism the source of profound inspiration for the entire philosophical enterprise. Judaken spoke of Levinas's call for an authentic Judaism which implies "accepting the burden and privilege of Jewish identity." Levinas wrote in 1986: "To be Jewish, not the pride or the vanity of being Jewish. That is worth nothing. But an awareness of the extraordinary privilege of undoing the banality of existence, of belonging to a people who are human before humanity." Levinas's Judaism thus entails a profound sense of responsibility. Judaken quoted Levinas's comments recorded at the first *Colloque des intellectuels juifs de langue française* in 1957: "Judaism is not a religion — the word does not exist in Hebrew — it is much more than that, it is a comprehension of Being. . . the Jew has the feeling that his obligations with respect to the other come before his obligations to God, or more precisely that the other is the voice of high places, even of the sa-

cred. Ethics is an optics vis-à-vis God. The only voice of respect vis-à-vis God is that of respect toward one's fellow human being."

Galili Shahar's reflections on Levinas's "Being Jewish," and the question of paternity, pointed out that Levinas's essay on the "Jewish question" knows, first and foremost, its own present, Europe and the year, 1947: The aftermath of the Holocaust in which the Nazi enterprise sought a final solution for the "Jewish question." "The recourse of Hitlerian anti-Semitism," Levinas writes in his essay "Being Jewish," "reminded the Jew of the irremissibility of his being." The Jew bears the experience of "not to be able to flee one's condition." The Jew, in other words, embodies the origin that cannot be denied. For Levinas, however, this experience should be understood in ontological terms. The "Jewish question" returns as the question of *conditio humana*, "for in this the human soul is perhaps naturally Jewish." The Jewish experience of the origin is the secret of the human being. Levinas addresses thus the question of being as a recall of the victims.

It is in the second part of his presentation that Shahar engaged Levinas's thought on the figure of the origin and mystery of the father. Many of his insights on Judaism, Shahar claimed, can be read as a long meditation on the experience of paternity, as it is told in Genesis 22, in the scene of the *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac. To be a father, in this context, means, to be able to say, *hineni*, (in Hebrew), "here I am" – the way Abraham answers God and later the call of his son Isaac. *Hineni*, "here I am," announces a commitment without precondition, to be here for the absolute other. The experience of Abraham cannot be expressed but in this Hebrew call – the call that according to Kierkegaard we cannot understand. For Kierkegaard the biblical scene of the *Akedah* is "silent"; it bears no word, no logic and has no "meaning." Abraham's deed requires the suspension of reason, language and representation and leads therefore to the "teleological suspension of the Ethical." Abraham's faith, his absolute duty to God, has, in Kierkegaard's view, no moral meaning. His faith is not rational, it does not claim the form of a law and has no universal meaning and thus cannot be justified, nor explained. Abraham's movement of faith that cannot be universalized but remains a riddle that challenges our institutions of interpretation, bears the secret of Jewish Being.

Abraham's movement to Moriah, "the movement of faith," is thus a paradox – a singular deed that embodies an absurd, awful faith, which is yet, Kierkegaard argues, the greatest, admirable act of man. Levinas rejects Kierkegaard's reading, who, in his view, failed to recognize the real ethical essence of Abraham's movement and reduced the movement of faith into hermetic, non-discursive gesture. God's voice, the call that forbids Abraham to carry out the

human sacrifice, Levinas argues, brings the biblical scene back to its essential ethical realm.

In the conclusion, Dragan Kujundzic presented a paper dwelling on the questions of "Being Jewish" in light of its more recent readings in the work of Franco-Jewish philosophers Jacques Derrida and Helene Cixous. In "Being Jewish," Kujundzic pointed out, the question of being is put in relation of heterogeneity to its own Greek origin. What does it mean to be Jewish? What does it mean to be, when there is Jewish Being, and there are Jewish Beings? What does the attribute "jewish," in "Being Jewish" do to the notion of being after it has gone through this graft, through or by this inscription of the Other? Is it even compatible, appropriate, asked Kujundzic, to think the Jewish being via the notion of Being; is it not already an appropriative assimilation of the Jewish Other for the Greek onto-teleology? "But to be Jewish," says Levinas, "is not only to seek a refuge in the world but to feel for oneself a place in the economy of being." Kujundzic reminded that "Being Jewish" was written as a critical response to Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*. The conclusion of "Being Jewish" condenses Levinas's polemical argument:

In a new sense, to be created and to be son is to be free. To exist as a creature is not to be crushed beneath adult responsibility. It is to refer in one's very facticity to someone who bears existence for you, who bears sin, who can forgive. Jewish existence is thus the fulfillment of the human condition as fact, personhood and freedom. And its entire originality consists in simply breaking with a word that is without origin and simply present. It is situated from the very start in a dimension that Sartre cannot comprehend. It is not situated there for theological reasons, but for reasons of experience. Its theology explicates its facticity.

The thought of Emmanuel Levinas, Kujundzic concluded, thus offers a way to think of identity differently, and opens a possibility of existence to be otherwise, and to be otherwise than being.

The papers were followed by a lively discussion of all Posen seminar participants, recognizing the profound, shattering experience that the work of Emmanuel Levinas presented to the tradition of Western Philosophy. Levinas's thought re-oriented the entire tradition of Western thinking towards the ethical and ethics, by re-thinking the Jewish condition in philosophy and in the world. 🌸

APPROACHING "PROTO-ZIONISM AND THE LAND"



By Mika Turim-Nygren

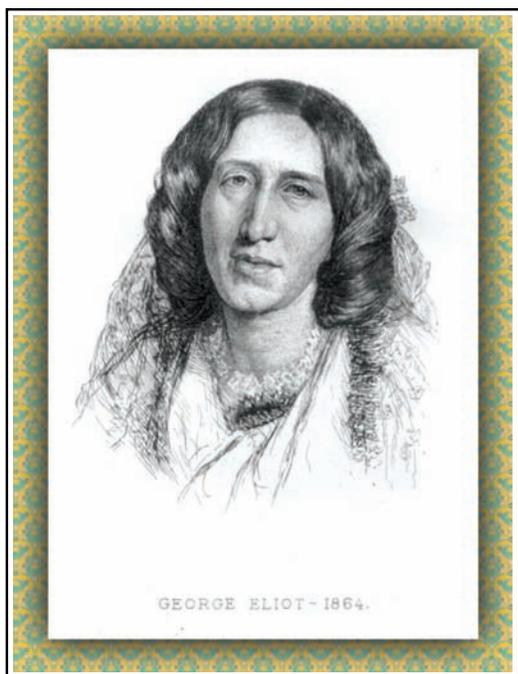
MIKA TURIM-NYGREN (UF '09) is a recent graduate of an interdisciplinary Masters program at the University of Chicago, where she studied Jewish-American literature, focusing on trans-generational cultural trauma and ritualized spaces. She currently teaches English composition at Roosevelt University, and hopes to pursue a doctoral degree.



My senior honors thesis concerned how certain 19th-century novelists were able to shape conceptions of the land that would become Israel. In particular, I discussed George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred*, the poems of Emma Lazarus, and Mendele's *The Travels of Benjamin III*. It is true that only some of these writers can accurately be called proto-Zionist, as others took a more cynical or hesitant position; however, all influenced the evolution of early Zionist thought in critical ways.

It may seem strange that as a graduating English major, I chose a thesis subject that appears, on the surface at least, to have more in common with my Jewish Studies minor. Indeed, my initial thesis proposal was rejected: "This doesn't look like something out of our department," said the English Undergraduate Coordinator. I ended up excluding many of the East European authors I had hoped to discuss, those who pioneered Hebrew and Yiddish as literary languages, in order to focus on American and British authors instead. I also agreed to highlight post-colonial theoretical readings, including Orientalist criticism. This particular theoretical lens was ultimately very useful to me, as it allowed me to nuance my discussion by including the contributions of Palestinian theorist Edward Said. It also helped me note how often proto-Zionist discussions of the land of Palestine followed the pattern of depictions of other European colonial spaces, presuming, among other things, a lack of existing inhabitants.

My initial motivation for choosing this topic was twofold. First, it dovetailed nicely with what I considered, at the time, to be my academic and career goals. I had applied for a Fulbright grant to Israel to study, through modern Hebrew literature, the role of the land in determining Jewish identity. I was interested in the competition between religious and nationalist visions of Jewish identity, and how evocations of physical landscape contributed to the latter. I intended my thesis to be a sort of historical prelude to my Fulbright study. I had also recently applied to a series of programs in Comparative Literature, and my thesis topic seemed like a good subject to carry into graduate study in that field. Unfortunately, I didn't receive the Fulbright grant, and my plans



George Eliot

for graduate study at the University of Chicago centered more on English literature. Yet, in a way, these changes offered a certain opportunity. Instead of regarding my thesis as a means to an end, I could delve into my material on its own merits, drawing new and unexpected conclusions.

The second reason for choosing my subject relates to the impact Jewish Studies courses at UF have had on me, under professors such as Dr. Leah Hochman, Dr. Kenneth Wald, and Dr. Gwynn Kessler. My classes in Jewish Studies have, without a doubt, been among the most challenging and most rewarding that I have enjoyed in my undergraduate career. Through courses on Midrash, Talmud, Jewish ethics, Jewish politics, Jewish literature, and more, I became fascinated with the evolution of modern Jewish identity politics, including Judaism's elastic possibilities as both a religious and a non-religious identity, as well as the land of Israel's often transformative power to affect this identification. Dr. Hasak-Lowy, from Jewish Studies, was an invaluable resource for my research, in addition to Dr. Judith Page and Dr. Stephanie Smith, my readers within the English department.

Ultimately, blending the disciplines of Jewish Studies and English allowed me not only to pursue a subject that genuinely interested me, but also to write about literature in a way that emphasizes its political consequences.

I discovered that although many have written about the connections between British proto-Zionist writers, and although a similar number have discussed Hebrew and Yiddish authors from Eastern Europe writing about the land of Palestine, few efforts have been made to compare the two realms. As the development of early Zionism involved British and European politicians, Jewish intellectual leaders, and early Jewish settlers, I feel that separating authors into camps of East and West is misleading. My approach, while by no means comprehensive, did incorporate authors from England, America, and Russia, including two non-Jews and two Jews, two men and two women, to present a variety of voices.

The writers I studied from Great Britain and America, whether Jewish or non-Jewish (Benjamin Disraeli falls curiously in between the two categories), shared one thing in common: none saw immigration to Palestine as even a remote possibility for themselves, only for their characters. Their proto-Zionist tendencies were often heavily tied to their political goals, but they seem determined to separate Palestine from the realm of personal possibility.

George Eliot's support for proto-Zionism arose late in her career; not until *Daniel Deronda*, her final novel, does she make an overt case for the immigration of British Jews to Palestine. Although herself a Christian, Eliot took on the rather remarkable task of counteracting through her writing the anti-Semitism she



Emma Lazarus



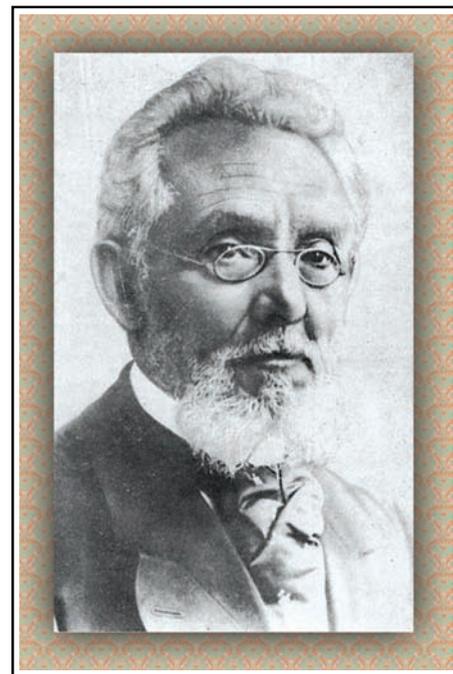
Benjamin Disraeli

witnessed. *Daniel Deronda* represents a sympathetic portrayal of Jewish characters by a mainstream author, which was nearly unprecedented. As might be imagined, the early reception history of the work shows bewilderment and hostility from non-Jewish audiences, and intense gratitude from Jewish ones. However, both groups, to Eliot's disappointment, attempted to divorce the British and Jewish "halves" of the narrative. My examination of Eliot focuses on her veiled class antagonism – frequently she seems to imply that the problem among Jews is not Judaism, but working-class status, and to present the land of Palestine as the needed force to ennoble the Jewish community – and on her troubling portrayal of the suppression of key female characters, which to me hints at her doubts over the true efficacy of the proto-Zionist scheme.

Emma Lazarus, an American poet best known for "The New Colossus," the poem adorning the Statue of Liberty, actually cited George Eliot as a major influence. An assimilated, secular Jew who nevertheless focused on Jewish themes in her most successful poems, Lazarus volunteered to aid incoming masses of poor, Jewish, East European immigrants to America. Her dedication to proto-Zionism is linked to her conviction that such refugees needed a safe haven, be it in America or Palestine. Lazarus helps establish the possibility that wealthy, assimilated Jews can support Jewish nationalism from afar.

Benjamin Disraeli presents a special case, as a Christian convert who held onto his Jewish heritage. When he became Prime Minister, he never concealed his Jewishness despite anti-Semitic attacks; however, neither did he disguise his view that Christianity represented "perfected" Judaism. His interest in Jews seems overwhelmingly to revert back to self-interest, whether that means claiming a personal sense of superiority from his Jewish history, or whether that means supporting the creation of a Jewish state for overtly colonial reasons. While his novel *Tancred* delves deeply into the land of Palestine, portraying a variety of Jewish, Muslim Arab, and other ethnic and religious characters, in the end much of this apparent tolerance gives way to the dominion of the Christian hero.

Interestingly, all three of these western authors published, in addition to their fiction, philosophical or political tracts to more clearly outline their position vis-à-vis the Jewish people and the land of Palestine. George Eliot wrote, in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, "The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!", a moderately sarcastic take on the injustice of anti-Semitism and the justifications for Jewish nationalism. Emma Lazarus published a variety of essays defending Jews and Judaism, many of which appear in her collection *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Disraeli even allegedly wrote a pamphlet called, "The Jewish Question in the Oriental Question," although the authorship is disputed. Regardless, what speaks to me about the significance of these authors in terms of the inter-



Mendele Mokher Sforim

section of literature and politics is their need to clarify, expound, and promulgate their ideas both inside and outside of their fiction.

Mendele Mokher Sforim, on the other hand, takes a markedly different route in discussing the land of Palestine. *The Travels of Benjamin III* shows a mixture of irreverence, hyperbole, and mockery that at times borders uncomfortably on Jewish self-hatred. His main characters, intensely poor victims of Russian anti-Semitic violence, set off on a quest for the Holy Land that amounts to little more than wandering in circles through various shtetls. Many eastern novel-

ists like Mendele showed a deeper cynicism and doubt than their western counterparts when it came to the promises of Jewish nationalism – perhaps because they came from the poor populations that other proto-Zionists seemed so determined to uplift, or perhaps because working in the new literary languages of Yiddish and Hebrew allowed them a uniquely insider audience. Mendele, unlike Eliot, Lazarus, and Disraeli, does not have to justify his Judaism to an anti-Semitic culture; his sarcasm is reserved exclusively for other Jews. In any case, Mendele undermines the ebullient idealism of Eliot and Lazarus, as well as the political confidence of Disraeli, to provide what may be a more realistic take on the development of proto-Zionism. 🌐



I have always had a strong connection and love for the land and people of Israel. In 3rd grade I joined Young Judaea, the Zionist youth group sponsored by Hadassah. I attended Young Judaea summer camps in North Carolina and New York. The summer after 11th grade I spent in Israel on a six week Young Judaea program and I spent a gap year after high school on Young Judaea's Year Course Program. During Year Course I lived primarily in Jerusalem but also on a kibbutz in the Negev.

I received college credits while on Year Course which primarily filled spots in the Jewish Studies curriculum, so when I

became a Political Science major at UF, I was able to have a dual major. Some of the Middle East Studies courses counted towards both majors. I received the special Israel Studies Certificate for the courses I took in Judaism and everything relating to Israel.

The military has always been an interest of mine, and I had planned on becoming an officer in the United States Army, and for almost two years participated in ROTC at the University of Florida. However, because of the war in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah, I thought that I might be of more use to Israel and felt a strong desire to do my part for the Jewish State. After graduating from UF in

the summer of 2008, I moved to Israel to join the Israel Defense Forces and make Aliyah (a Hebrew word that translates to moving up to the Holy Land or Israel).

I live on Kibbutz Shamir, in Northern Israel and was accepted into the Israeli 101st Airborne. I say accepted because the Airborne is unique in that everyone must pass a two-day try out to test both physical and mental character. I am currently a sharpshooter in a platoon responsible for a specialized and very unique anti-tank rocket. My two-year service in the IDF is coming to an end and in October I plan on continuing my education at Tel Aviv University in a Masters Degree Program in Security and Diplomacy Studies. 🌐



The Ice Rink and the Museum

Paths of Assimilation in Late-Nineteenth-Century Hungary

KATALIN FRANCISKA RAC is a Ph.D. student of modern European and Jewish history in the Department of History and recipient of a Gerson Fellowship as well as the Alexander Grass Graduate Fellowship in Jewish History. She is interested in the cultural products of national, religious, and professional identity formation of Hungarian Jewry and plans to write a dissertation on four generations of Hungarian orientalist of Jewish origin.

Summer of 2008 was all about sports. The season opened with the European Football Championship, and later, Europeans were chained to their television sets as their teams competed at the Beijing Olympic Games. While flying across the Atlantic Ocean armed with letters of recommendation to exchange for other letters that might allow me to enter Hungarian archives, as usual I skipped the sport section of the paper and thought about my research on Marie Freudenberg. By marrying the son of the world-famous Hungarian orientalist Ignaz Goldziher, Freudenberg, a young Hungarian female Egyptologist, entered the competitive world of male scholars at the age of twenty three. She was warmly received into the Goldziher family, but made Goldziher the elder, who had previously been serving as the secretary of the Neolog Jewish Congregation of Pest for thirty years, rethink his seemingly solid ideas on Jewish emancipation and assimilation. Goldziher was an advocate of a democratic system based on ethical principles, and he believed that the wealthy Jewish bourgeoisie, and especially the female members blinded by the material might of their class, would threaten these values. Marie died too young to either refute or justify her father-in-law's prejudices. Yet, her friendship with Lili Kronberger, the world-champion figure skater revealed how subjective Goldziher's sociological categories were,

and that the paths of the Jewish assimilation in Hungary should be studied also outside the academy, culture, economics, and politics. I was soon made to realize that sports were in no way confined to the daily news; they also infiltrated the lives of the Goldzihers, whose documents are carefully guarded in the Budapest City Archives and the National Jewish Museum and Archives in Budapest.

Despite my enthusiasm, as well as the interest that experienced historians demonstrated toward my project, and the assistance I received from various archivists, Marie Freudenberg's mysterious life proved enduringly resistant to research. I could not find any trace of her private

papers, or a photograph of her. Boxes with documents related to her husband's family were also missing. The only possible lead to Freudenberg appeared to be her friend, Elza Lili Kronberger (1890-1974), figure skater and Hungary's first world-champion athlete. As we can learn from the editorial Introduction of her posthumous published book, after Freudenberg's death Kronberger collected her friend's notes and urged Freudenberg's husband, the younger Goldziher, and his friend Heller (the elder Goldziher's pupil and eventually the editor) to publish them. Soon I found myself sitting in the office of Lajos Szabó, the director of the Hungarian Sportmuseum, taking notes of our conversation in the course of which a fascinating story about Hungarian Jewish athletes, both male and female, unfolded. Kronberger was among the Jewish champions of Hungarian first-class sports whose Jewish background was hardly ever talked about. She and others are remembered as Hungarian athletes exclusively. And that was probably in accord with their own will.

At the turn of the century Hungarian Jews did not follow their native Max Nordau's idea (the same Max Nordau, who was Ignaz Goldziher's classmate, as well) of *muskeldjudentum* (muscle Jews) and the formation of Zionist sports groups. Instead, they allied themselves with the Hungarian sporting nobility who imported sports like football and tennis to Hungary from the West and integrated them into the aristocratic lifestyle. Jewish athletes joined those sports dominated by the nobility, and as the bourgeoisie's social base grew – of which stratum Jews formed a considerable portion – they demanded more space for their participation in all spheres of the country's life, including sports. I learned from Szabó that in contrast to the practice in the successor states, where the Maccabi clubs, or groups with Hebrew names like Hagibor, Hakoach, or Bar-kochba appeared one after the other, Jews in

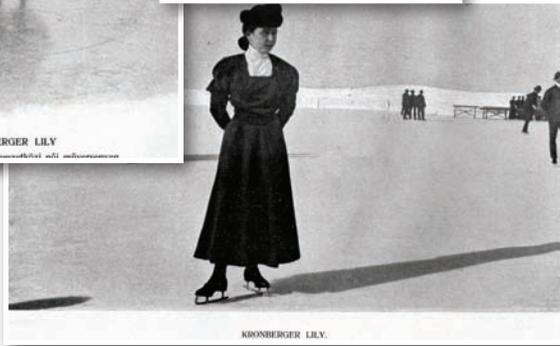
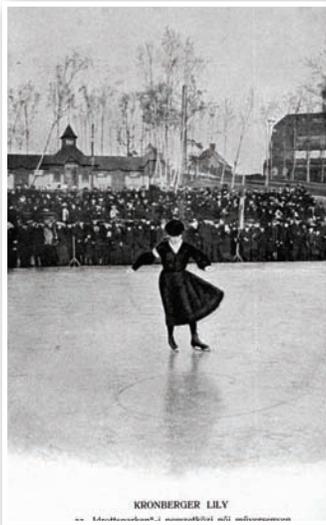
Hungary continued to train in the Hungarian clubs. They desired to be equals also in sports and to play and train in common clubs; yet they also wished to demonstrate their Jewish identity, though on a lesser scale than the Maccabi groups' members. Although they did not give names identified with Zionist ideals to the clubs they frequented, nevertheless the first club founded at the end of the nineteenth century with substantial Jewish interest, the Magyar Testgyakorlók Köre (Circle of the Hungarian Body Trainers) did choose blue and white as its colors. The most

important Jewish sport club, Vívó és Atlétikai Club (Hungarian Fencing and Athletic Club), did not use a Jewish name either, yet the membership was Jewish and participated in the international Maccabi games.

As I was listening to Szabó explain how sports became a frequent channel of assimilation for minorities, I also understood that the kind of sport chosen by individual minorities reflected their ideal of assimilation. The Jewish champions

developed both physical endurance and technical skills, and most importantly chose sports in which they did not come into physical contact with their rivals. They competed in sports that were associated with upper-class social practices and where achievement could be measured objectively

in points. Figure skating incorporated both the beauty of the noble bearing of the body and the progressiveness of the engineers' precision. Unlike today, at the turn of the twentieth century figure skating meant drawing figures on ice. After each contestant completed his or her routine, the judges would go onto the rink and scrutinize the lines the skater had left on the ice. Points were given based on the performance and the precision of the skates' traces. Kronberger's story is as much about figure skating as Jewish assimilation in Hungary, moreover her sport career seems to reflect the ideal of the nobility-emulating assimilated Jew.



An ice rink and the national championships were established by the Hungarian Skaters' Association, which was founded mostly by Hungarian nobles in one of the Budapest café houses in 1869. Like tennis, figure skating was one of those elegant sports practiced by the upper class, which included the growing bourgeoisie and the nobility. Before the ice rink, skaters used tennis courts covered with ice during the winter months. After its establishment in 1870, on Sunday mornings the skating rink was frequented by the wealthy citizens who could afford the relatively high entrance fee and knew the social dances that were performed while wearing skates. An orchestra provided waltz music and other dance tunes for the public. Also the competing skaters performed their routines to music. Kronberger preferred Kodaly's music, which incorporated Hungarian and non-Hungarian folk melodies, over Western salon dance music. Kodaly himself occasionally visited the rink and played his flute for the skaters.

Kronberger, the daughter of a Jewish wood merchant, was a pupil at the first high school in Budapest that was opened for girls exclusively – regardless of their religion – and there she met her life-time friend, Marie Freudenberg, the future Egyptologist, three days her junior. When she was seven, she was already practicing on the skating rink in Budapest. After fifth grade in high school (at the age of fifteen) she became a private student, whereas her friend Marie stopped attending that school and did not take the matriculation exam there either. Kronberger, in contrast, a well-known sport star by then, matriculated in the same high school at the age of eighteen, just like other students.

In the 1906 world championship, at the age of sixteen, Kronberger received the bronze medal. Two years later she became world champion and she held this



**FRL. LILLY KRONBERGER,
BUDAPEST.**
Winner World's Championship for
Ladies, 1908, 1909, 1910, 1911.

title for four consecutive years, until 1911, when she announced her marriage to Imre Szent-Gyorgyi. A distant relative of the Noble-prize winning researcher Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, Imre Szent-Gyorgyi was twenty-four years her senior, a nobleman, and from its establishment he served as the vice-president and executive of the Hungarian Skaters' Association. Because success in figure skating is based on points awarded by a panel of judges, and Kronberger's husband was involved in the Hungarian Skaters' Association, continuing her career after their marriage could have resulted in a conflict of interest for her husband, and she chose to retire. However, she did continue skating and closely watched the next generations of Hungarian skaters until she reached the age of sixty. She died in 1974, thirty years after her husband; she survived World War II seemingly untouched by the anti-Jewish laws. Although she is buried next to her husband, her tomb is unmarked.

Despite the difference between their careers, Freudenberg and Kronberger seem to have pursued the same Hungarian Jewish "noble dream." They became experts in fields that were open only to people of means and provided a quasi-aristocratic lifestyle. Freudenberg visited the great European museums to study their Egyptian collections and thus she was trained to become an associate of wealthy collectors. Kronberger danced on ice embodying the aristocratic ideal of beauty and the modern spirit of sport. Their stories encapsulate an optimistic period and, according to many, they ignored the real limitations on the possibilities of assimilation into the conservative nobility-dominated Hungary at the beginning of the twentieth century. Freudenberg is remembered for her contribution to the Egyptian collection of the Hungarian National Museum. Kronberger's legacy is that of the Hungarian skater pure and simple, and not the Hungarian Jewish sportswoman. 🌸

WELCOME TO MY LIFE

BY SARAH KAISER-CROSS



SARAH KAISER-CROSS is a senior at the University of Florida majoring in Political Science with minors in Jewish Studies and Arabic. She recently finished an independent study abroad program on Kibbutz Na'an. She hopes to work in Israel or in the Middle East after graduation and teach English while working with a Non-Governmental Organizations to facilitate open communication in the region.

I am an anomaly. I am not Jewish or Muslim. I am not of Middle Eastern descent. I have no family ties to the region. All these things aside, I have a deep love and passion for the Middle East. I love the people, the languages, the food, and the culture of Middle Eastern nations. I am always the only non-Jew in my Israeli programs and definitely a minority in the Arab states of the Middle East. People always ask me why? Why do you study Arabic and Hebrew? Why do you want to work in a region riddled with conflict? I hope after reading my journal from the last months, things will become clearer.

KIBBUTZ NA'AN

So Kibbutz Na'an is a beautiful chunk of landscape located next to the city of Rehovot south of Tel Aviv. Driving up, I had no clue what to expect. I was instantly blown away by the never-ending rows of lush green fields, flowers and lines of houses in this quaint kibbutz. Also noticing industrial equipment, my mind wandered to my eventual job placement here on the kibbutz. Was I to be working in a factory?

My taxi dropped me off at the entrance to the ulpan center where I immediately met some nice *ulpan* kids. There are people here from all over the world: Mexico, Britain, Australia, Hungary, France, the US, Germany, Russia, and more. There are only 30 of us and the guy-to-girl ratio is quite off. I think there are only 10 girls. We hung out, smoked, and talked with each other, regaling our different adventures. Most of us are

very well-traveled, and were exchanging trips and stories about where we've been or where we are dying to go.

I woke up this morning, after "home-ying" my room and went for a run. Two other guys were supposed to come running with me but they slept through it. The run was nice, and the kibbutz is so big, I ran for 30 minutes and hadn't seen hardly any of it. There are fields upon fields of eggplant, corn and some other unidentifiable vegetable. Gorgeous rows of flowers and even stables with horses, peacocks, pigs and goats surround our ulpan dorm area.

The general way of life here is just drastically different. The communal feeling is evident. People greet everyone as they walk by, the locals are happy to meet us and show us around. Even the dining halls, where everyone eats, felt like one big camp atmosphere — everyone here knows and loves each other. Women walk

around with stroller like objects – or at least purposefully so, but actually are cribs with wheels with a baby in them. I find it kind of cute, they stroll their baby’s crib along to the grocery store. When you grow up in a kibbutz, at age 16, you get your own apartment, separate from your family. Also, they have a communal grocery store, swimming pool, playgrounds, gardens, and even 2 pubs. I think I could get used to living this way. Everything is so calm and peaceful.

WORK

So this morning we had quite an early start to our day. We woke up at 8 a.m. for our testing into classes. We stood outside waiting for our teachers to call us in and test us for the correct Hebrew class. I tested into beginning Hebrew. I got my job as well, what I will be doing for my work part of the work-study program here; I am a gardener. I have to be at work at 6:00 a.m., 6:00 flipping a.m.! I almost died when I found out. I woke up and am working with 3 other boys. Yes, I am the only girl. We met the other kibbutzniks who assigned us our jobs. Two of the boys went and chopped down a tree. This guy from Argentina, named Mattie, and I were assigned to the gardens. I weeded and tilled the soil for 5 hours this morning. It was 45 degrees this morning and still dark when we woke up. The sun rose about 5 past 6:00 in the morning and was beautiful rose colored, slowly rising over the mountains. The hours went by pretty quickly. Once you get into the work funk, digging, shoveling, turning the soil, it becomes a rhythm, a way of relaxing into your mind. I am very rarely reflective, and I’ve found this time really requires me to focus on my thoughts. Lunch is good, always decent. The vegetables (hot

and cold) are pretty good – fresh from the kibbutz. There are always varieties of meat, mousaka, schnitzel (the favorite Israeli chicken dish) and vegan stuff.

The families and co-workers all sit together in the dining hall, animatedly talking about the day’s work, gossip among the families and daily life. I love watching the dynamics between people here – the old ladies sitting together, pushing around vegetables, clearly the best of friends. The old men who eat in silence, teeth absent, and reading the newspaper. There is such a communal feeling in this place. For example, this morning, I was working with one of the guys in the garden. I asked him about the rotation schedule on the kibbutz. I was curious whether people switched jobs often. What if you hated cooking and you were stuck in the kitchen? Apparently, the people on the kibbutz pretty much stay permanently in their jobs. They don’t switch around unless absolutely necessary. The guy I was speaking with had been working in the garden for 13 years. But in the last few years, lots of people have been utilizing their specializations and are working off of the kibbutz. Na’an is the second richest kibbutz in Israel and one of the largest in terms of size. It isn’t religious though, very few people attend services regularly, and the only services are on Shabbat and the holy days.

JERUSALEM

Last night I ventured out into Jerusalem, in search of WiFi. I ended up at CaféCafé while it poured buckets of water on my head. A Palestinian friend came to meet me – we learned about each other’s beliefs: religions, families and jobs, switching constantly between Arabic, English and Hebrew. I’m coming to



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SHABBAT

a place where it's really exciting for me because I can have a decent conversation in either language. He took me to East Jerusalem, to a hookah café. It's funny to note the immediate differences you see when you drive three blocks from West to East Jerusalem — signs all in Arabic, men and women in *kafiyas*, *burqas* and *hijabs*. The buildings, plants and streets are not as well kept; crusty paint, crumbled chip bags, fewer lights and an aura of simplicity. Everyone is with families, working, or smoking nargila. Like Cairo, I was once again the only woman in the entire café. We smoked and talked politics. I had to mentally change my brain to Arabic. Typical of the Arab cafés — all men, a soccer game playing in the background, and men mumbling words back and forth between puffs. He explained his views of Israel to me. "The Jews took our land, kill our people. We fight with rocks to defend our homes that the settlers take and then shoot with guns." He also told me the Holocaust didn't happen — that the numbers were exaggerated to a ridiculous degree and that Hitler had the right idea. It's sad, but I have gotten used to hearing this from the other side. I obviously do not agree — I believe if anything, the Holocaust was covered up way more than we know. He later told me he had Jewish friends but absolutely hated the settlers. Not surprising.

It is midday. Everyone is scrambling from one stand to the next. Most women trail behind them metal wheely carts in which to deposit their purchased items. Bargaining is the game. These strawberries? How much? The freshest and the best is what everyone is searching for in this madness called the shuk on these bustling Friday afternoons. Eggs, challah, cheese, vegetables are all being sold. All of it must be the very best to serve your family. You can always tell where to go. . . the stands with the most Israelis and the least amount of food left. Fresh white cheeses stacked on top of each other, bins full of juicy olives of every color, the fresh vegetables plucked from the surrounding fields; bright purple eggplants, sun yellow, melony-orange and forest-green peppers all thrown in cardboard boxes displayed for all the customers to see. Today is shabbat. *Shabbat shalom*. My favorite day of the week. Around 3:00 p.m., the magic of Israel happens. The whole country, simultaneously, slows down. Stores begin to close, people cram on their last bus home, soldiers are in transport from their base to see their family. Slowly the silence sets in. The sun sets and everyone is home. Soon shabbat begins.

I am lucky enough to spend my shabbat with Reut's family who have become my family here in Israel. They always welcome me into their home — her mother with lots of hugs and family

time on the couch. We relaxed together, getting formalities of how the week went out of the way. Sitting down to dinner, Reut's father and brother, who is 12 ½ and about to be barmitzvahed recited the prayers from the prayer books. We ate all the usual shabbat salads, breads, and ended with grilled fish. Throughout dinner, Reut's family encouraged me to practice my Hebrew, so I ended up telling her family my little stories. I felt like a 2nd grader writing a mini essay and probably sounded like one, too. Sometimes it is really frustrating speaking another language. While I can usually communicate what I need, it is another thing entirely to communicate jokes, or a high level of expression. I couldn't talk about philosophy or the current political situation, at least not to the extent I would like to participate. So, I listened and learned a slew of new words.

While letting our food settle, we tried on our dresses for her brother's bar mitzvah in April and then got ready to go out to Tel Aviv. Picking up Ali, we proceeded to get embarrassingly lost in Tel Aviv. One thing worth noting, in Israel the road signs are completely unhelpful. Next to the pedestrian crossings and tiny – it is impossible to read them while driving. Trying to find parking was interesting in and of itself. Never ever try to find parking in Tel Aviv on the weekend. Throughout this driving disaster, we began talking about Israeli politics and the Israeli view of outsiders, specifically of non-Jews. My friend says to me, "When people ask you if you are Jewish, it's because they want to know if they can trust you." So immediately I question her: "Wait, when people ask me if I am Jewish and I say no, they automatically trust me less?" She answers, "Well, yes. It sounds bad but that's how it is." Rather off put by that comment, I have

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to admit, it is what I expected. Kind of unfortunate I am viewed that way. I suppose I understand the mentality. Most people are surprised I am here doing what I'm doing, and are even more intrigued when they find out I'm not Jewish. An anomaly here, I love what I love and that's it. Generally speaking, the underlying feeling here is that if you aren't Jewish, you cannot truly understand the draw that brings Jews to Israel. You cannot possibly comprehend the feeling of safety, security and draw to the homeland that people feel when they choose to be here. I obviously am not Jewish and while I may not understand because of my religious upbringing, I like to think I empathize.



Monday night I went over to the Zuerkel family's house bearing a bottle of French Reisling wrapped in lavender wrapping tied with a beautiful purple flower which I purchased from an organic market in Ramat Aviv. It was warmly received, of course. Myself, Reut, her two sisters, brother and parents made our way over to Reut's uncle's house on the other side of the city. The roads were packed with cars like sardines in a can all in a hurry so as not to be the last to arrive.

Gathering before the whole clan had arrived, we exchanged kisses, hugs and formalities. In Hebrew, I explained to everyone who walked in the door (and there were about 30 people) that I was Reut's friend and we had been roommates in Haifa. All this was in Hebrew. For those of you who know me, you know I am rarely reserved or shy. I felt so out of my element surrounded by Hebrew speakers in an intimate family setting on a Jewish holiday. . . all things which I love but at the same time stressed me out a bit. I just sat back and observed more than I usually do.

Reut's father led the Pesah seder with every family member reading different sections of the story of Passover. The men sat wearing *kipot* (yarmulkes) all in a line. Reut's father headed the table, leading the dynamic that set in for the whole evening. Raising your voice for your opinion to be heard was the norm. Even the reserved family members had learned throughout their lives in Israel that it is an absolute necessity to speak up, and loudly in order to be heard at all. Politeness is dismissed. If you want to speak, just continue speaking until everyone else gives up. Hands are decoration. No good story is complete without flying hands, exaggerated facial expressions and maybe even an uprising from the table! Meals with Israelis are anything but dull. The dynamics among the family members are amazing to watch. Grandpa and Grandma sit at the end of the table mooshing their food around

with the teeth they have left. The son and his Russian girlfriend hold hands and snuggle while engaging in conversation with the rest of the family. The women of the family are constantly moving, refilling the bowls with various salads – eggplant and garlic, lettuce, carrots with pecans, liver, radish, every salad you could think of. They check on the children, refill the table with napkins, drinks, and of course more wine. The kids scream in protest of the vegetables and joy when they receive their presents.

The men huddled together on one side of the table, murmuring the blessings for the seder. One began and another would follow, finishing his sentence. We leaned to the left to drink the wine with our right hands, sang all the seder songs and “ameyned” when appropriate. The food was a blend of Turkish and Moroccan cuisine because her family is half from Morocco and half from Turkey. At the end, we sang a special seder song in Hebrew and then again in a dialect of Turkish with Ladino influence. Passover dinner is always quite lengthy so the teenagers became a bit restless. Jokingly, the men reciting the seder began throwing wine corks at the kids who were talking, in a half-serious attempt to make the seder more decorous. By that time, everyone was enjoying the company, the food and the general atmosphere. Huge failure. Giggles ensued every time the men would miss a throw, especially when they landed in various household objects. Throughout the course of Passover dinner, each adult consumes four glasses of wine. Add the wine with the typical conversation style of Israelis and what is produced is an amusing evening. The cousins all got a little tipsy from the wine and then desserts came. Everything is brought to the table: desserts without yeast, coconut cakes, tea with mint from the garden, even pictures from grandma’s fashion show.

A CHEF HAT?

That’s right lovely ladies and gentlemen, yours truly is now a chef. Not just any chef, a top chef. Okay, maybe not a top chef, but I am a kitchen assistant now at my kibbutz and enjoy it much more than my other job. The days are much longer, harder and messier, but I get to work with my hands (which are now red and sore). Today, for two hours, I rocked out around 200 peppers. Wash, slice and dice! Boo-yah! We do a little of everything – from cooking, to cleaning, to preparing food, to getting yelled at; all very real elements of any kitchen setting. Salads are my specialty – I handle a lot of vegetables. Then there are the meats that get butchered, cleaned, and then either breaded, fried or baked. Oh, and we get free breakfast and lunch. Not a bad gig if you ask me. I hope I get to start doing more and more actual cooking.

When I was working in the kitchen, getting introduced to everyone, one of my old people friends said to me, “You know there are Arabs right. In the kitchen, I mean. Only Samea is Jewish. Just so you know to be politically correct when you say things.” He knows I speak Arabic so introduced me to them prefacing with my language ability. So while I work in the kitchen, I am yelled at in three languages. I find this interesting because many people here forget I am not Jewish, or assume that I am and make political and social comments thinking as such.

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At the Western Wall in Jerusalem, on Pesah, I asked a woman if I could borrow the prayer book sitting next to her on the little plastic chairs they provide. Speaking in Hebrew for a while, she readily handed me the book and engaged me in a conversation about what brought me to Jerusalem. The inevitable question came up, “are you Jewish?” I responded yes, not in the mood to answer questions, merely attempting to say a prayer for peace in my favorite city, Jerusalem.

SILLY NOTHINGS

I have this weird habit. I take a lot of language classes and have developed this nerdy habit while in class. I write down awkward/funny/interesting things people say in the margins of my notes in an effort to remind myself of a. silly experiences and b. the fact that I’m not the only one who lets really stupid things spill out every once in a while. For example, my teacher, Khedva, who was raised as an Orthodox Jew always enlightens us with tidbits about Judaism while learning in class. There are 70 names for Jerusalem in the Torah along with 613 *mitzvot* (commandments), but in modern times interpreted more as good deeds). In addi-

tion, we were discussing the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews and this kid in my class asked, “Where does the word Sephardi come from?” His friend next to him responded quickly, “Safari. . . duh (like Africa).”

One of the funniest things about Israel is the bluntness that reigns. In Israel, anyone with red hair gets a new name. My friend Dave, a redhead, on the first day of class was immediately labeled “gingi” by the teacher. In America, it is obviously quite rude to call someone that, especially someone you don’t know. Here, it’s endearing, and quite common. In Jerusalem, Dave and I walked through the markets and the vendors would yell things like “Hey gingi! Gingi, your wife is nice!” It always makes me laugh. Israeli’s are notoriously blunt. The language barrier probably doesn’t help with being politically correct either. Introverts, extroverts, old and young – when an Israeli has an opinion, you will know it.

Right now we are doing skits in class. Can I tell you how awkward they are? The two Argentineans stand at the front of the room, speaking in Hebrew the dialogue they just wrote. Full of mistakes (like all of ours are) they are explaining the meaning of what they are saying every minute. Giggling, embarrassed and staring at the paper, confused with what they wrote, they finish the dialogue. Next group. Our topics are things you say to your husband, what a mother-in-law says to her daughter-in-law and what *Arsim* (Israeli equivalent of Guidos) say to a girl they are trying to pick up. My group was what a mother-in-law says to her daughter-in-law: we made the mother hate her daughter-in-law,

and teach her how to make her husband happy. All trying to hold back laughter, we sit painfully through the skits that are both awkward and awful. The great part is that we are all awful.

Learning a language is never easy. Some people are better at it than others. While I love learning these languages, at times I want to pull my hair out. For about a year now, I have been conversing with people in English whose first language is not English, or speaking in Arabic, Hebrew or Italian. The frustrating part is not looking like an idiot, which I have hopelessly resigned myself to. The most frustrating part is the lack of intellectual communication. All you can use are the words you know accompanied with dramatic hand gestures to get your point across. I can speak about my life, what I like, where I come from, what I want to do and contribute to general conversation topics. But, when it comes to actually conversing about what is going on in the world, politics, religion, or any topic with vocabulary way beyond my skill, I am forced to listen and attempt to understand the new words as they pour out of peoples’ mouths. Generally what I am thinking is this: “Okay, she just said that word – which has the same root as this other verb I know, so which verb grouping can I put that in? I suppose I would conjugate that in the past tense, first person as this and think of other words I know with the same basic root.” Then maybe, I may have some general meaning as to what the verb she just used was. Then after thinking all of these things, I join back in the conversation which probably has just taken a turn to something completely different. And then the process repeats itself. Welcome to my life. 🌍



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A LETTER FROM HAIFA



DANIELLE FEINSTEIN is 21 years old and was born and raised in Plantation, Florida. When she was 11, her family moved to Daytona Beach and has been living there since. She is double majoring in Political Science and Jewish Studies along with pursuing a minor in Hebrew and a certificate in International Relations. Danielle was determined to study in Israel in order to improve her Hebrew, experience Israeli culture first hand, and to conduct research on her senior thesis regarding political attitudes of Israeli university students towards the Arab-Israeli peace process.

I have had an exciting first two weeks in Haifa and have already seen so much. The university campus is on the mountain and overlooks all of Haifa. On a clear day, it is possible to see Lebanon. Considering there are only about 12,000 students enrolled at the university, the campus is significantly smaller than UF's. (I can actually walk to class from my dorm in less than five minutes). The campus has a Mediterranean look to it and the buildings are built of a pretty light yellow stone. The first couple days of my stay were quite hectic because I arrived the night before the Winter Ulpan entry level exam. There are six levels and I tested into the highest! Although I am one of the strongest in the class in grammar and reading, I feel like I'm the worst when it comes to speaking. Just about everyone has at least one Israeli parent and grew up speaking Hebrew at home or in Jewish day school. Fortunately, my professor understands my situation and helps me when I'm lost. The 17 students in the class come from very different backgrounds. Most are from

the US, one is from Denmark and one from Austria. Two other students made aliyah, which means they moved to Israel. About 12 of them are undergraduate students like me. There are several students, some in their twenties and two in their late forties, who are here just for ulpan in order to perfect their Hebrew.

Ulpan classes take place Sunday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. We read stories by authors such as Amos Oz and Yosel Bernstein. I specifically remember one of Oz's short stories that we read, titled "Jerusalem of Above and Jerusalem of Below." It focused on the many opposites evident in Jerusalem pertaining to religion, culture, and socioeconomic status. Oz portrays the city struggling between materialistic and spiritual values. He denounces the political struggle and violence that stems from fanatic nationalism. I have an especially difficult time reading Oz's work on account of his use of sophisticated Hebrew and figurative language. Many times I may understand the literal translation but it may either make no sense to me or the underly-

ing themes may go right over my head. When we read these texts in class, my professor has us discuss what we think the author is trying to say and we eventually either figure it out ourselves or she explains it to us. Besides reading we also discuss current events, such as the outcome of the recent Israeli election and our views of the peace process and human rights.

For at least an hour everyday, we review grammar, which I enjoy because this is my strong point while everyone else has to struggle. I am already familiar with all the grammar, including the difference between active and passive, and the present participle. When going over grammar, my professor would usually explain it to us and write some conjugations on the board and have us write sentences using the particular conjugation discussed. Other times she would ask us to identify which tense and conjugation is in the sentence. One thing I did not really learn at UF were *milot sibah* (words of cause) and *milot totzahah* (words of consequence), which are words like English's "because" and "therefore." In Hebrew, there are at least 15 words for because. However, some can only be used when preceding a sentence and the others can only be used when they precede a noun. For example, there would be a different word for because in the sentences "I missed my flight because of the bad weather"— here because is *bglal* — and "I missed my flight because I lost my passport" — because in this case is *mpney she*.

Once a week, a guest speaker comes. The first was a professor from Haifa University who lectured on gender inequalities in Israel and the barriers and limitations restricting women from equal opportunities with men. I am almost positive everyone in my class thought the lecture was too one-sided and didn't mention social reform and improvements that have helped women throughout the past decade. Nevertheless, I was just happy I was able to understand the lecture since it was completely in Hebrew. We also have language lab once a week where we listen to Israeli news broadcasts and then are tested on comprehension. I never noticed how fast news broadcasters speak until the first language lab! Our professor gives us part of the broadcast in print with words missing and we have to fill in the blanks. I think I have to listen to the recording at least fifteen times to complete each section. Even then, I am not completely sure about the correct answers. The other sections can be even harder, asking true or false questions pertaining to the broadcast.

My professor teaches completely in Hebrew, therefore, I don't understand half of what she says. I don't know what I would do in class without two friends who sit next to me and help me out. Although the class is difficult and sometimes frustrating, I can already tell my speaking and comprehension skills have improved. Overall, I am glad I stayed in the highest level rather than going

down to the next level as students often do during the first week. I am never really bored from the class and it is broken up with two breaks. These are the times when we socialize with friends in the other class levels.

Some of the international students have already been here for a semester and have been extremely helpful in showing us around the campus and the city, and by taking us to several parts of town to shop, eat, and socialize. They have been especially helpful showing us how to use public transportation. Israel has a great and inexpensive public transportation system. One of the students I became friends with knows that I like to run, so she showed me a trail that starts on campus and goes up the mountain and ends up at an amazing lookout on the city. The trail is called *Derekh Dor*, which means Generational Trail. Throughout the trail there are rock formations and granaries from ancient times and the route is supposed to symbolize the different generations of Israel.

There are also a number of students who studied abroad in places other than Israel — including India, England, Brazil, and France. The international students have already become a close-knit group and we tend to travel in packs. It is quite a scene when at least twenty of us get on a bus or sit down at a restaurant or pub! Last Friday we had a huge potluck Shabbat dinner at my friend's dorm. Although I was never really religious at home, it is nice to participate in events like these with a large group of my Jewish friends. (There are also some non-Jewish students who came to our Shabbat dinner and they, too, had a good time). I have been craving falafel and shwarma since I got here and I finally had some in Nazareth. My first meal out on the town with my new friends in Haifa was a very kosher cheeseburger and fries.

One night, my classmates and I met our professor at the Haifa theatre in Hadar to see the play, *Sipur pashut* (*A Simple Story*). The day before the performance, our professor briefly summarized the play for us so we would be able to follow along during the presentation. The setting of the play took place in Europe and focused on a young man named Hershel who got married to a young woman named Mina. He realized he was still in love with his very distant relative, Bluma, who moved in to his house when he was younger because both of her parents died. The play portrays his struggles and his emotions during this time. He seems to be going crazy over his situation. However, some interpret this as pretending to be crazy to avoid serving in the army. I probably wouldn't have understood much of the play if my professor hadn't summarized it before we arrived.

I haven't been to many restaurants in Haifa because I am trying to save money and we often just cook in the dorms. Before the play, we met for dinner in Hadar. The only place that seemed



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to follow along during the presentation. The setting
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open was a restaurant on the side of a hotel. They would only serve us breakfast, eggs or toast. One thing I've learned about food here is that "toast" is not American toast. Toast in Israel actually refers to a panini-type sandwich, usually filled with various vegetables, meats and cheeses. After class, the popular hang out is the cafeteria on campus which we call 20 Shekel Plate. This is because they charge only \$5 to stuff as much food on your plate as you can. It is buffet style and includes various meats, mostly grilled chicken, schnitzel, and beef, pastas, vegetables, breads, and more. We love 20 Shekel Plate and go there at least twice a week. Coming from a university that has three Starbucks, I was surprised that there are more coffee shops and cafeterias on this proportionally smaller campus than on UF. The food on campus is much cheaper than food on campus in Florida. Also, they sell 12-inch subs with meat and vegetables for 8 shekels, which is about \$2.

My mother's friend, whom I stayed with when I first arrived lives about five minutes away from campus and I never realized how comforting it would be to have a sense of family so close by. She has two daughters, whom I hadn't seen since I was four

years old. I spent a Shabbat and many other nights with her family and have had interesting conversations with them about life in Israel and their opinions about the recent election. She has shown me around and took me to the market in Hadar, where the British Mandate headquarters was located. She showed me what used to be the dividing line between the Jewish and Arab sectors of the city during that period. The Hadar market is really something. I have never seen so many fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, fish, and meat all in one area. The market was crowded with all sorts of people, old and young, religious and secular, Arabs and Jews. The workers were all yelling over each other trying to win over customers with the best bargains, several shouting: "Ekhad b'shekel! Ekhad b'shekel!" which means one head of lettuce, parsley, or other leafy vegetable for one shekel (about \$0.25). I have noticed the stark contrast between American food groceries and Israeli food stores and markets. Nearly all the produce and breads in Israel are laid out in the open air, allowing you to touch and smell them before you purchase. In America people are so worried about germs and disease that almost everything is pre-packaged.



The *madrikhim* (counselors) have been great – helping us get accustomed and taking us on trips. The first was to the Ghetto Fighters' Museum at Kibbutz Lokhamei HaGetaot. This was the first Holocaust museum anywhere. The exhibit explains the Holocaust in a way that children can relate to without showing pictures and images that would frighten them.

Last week, we went on a hike to the Siakh (Bush) Creek, which is a lovely green spot in the middle of the city and the trail led us to the special mosque of the neighborhood of Kabbabir. One of the heads of the mosque showed us around and told us about their sect of Islam which believes that nothing should be solved with violence. Last weekend we visited the archaeological site of Tzippori, which has a rich and diverse historical and architectural legacy, including a Roman theatre, Crusader fortress and impressive mosaics. After Tzippori, we went to Nazareth, which was once a small hidden village in the Galilee and is now one of the most renowned cities in the western world. We learned about the importance of Tzippori to the Jewish people and the life and journey of Jesus. Unlike most Jews at the time, the inhabitants of Tzippori did not join the resistance against Roman rule in the First Jewish Revolt of 66-70 C.E. They signed a pact with the Roman army not to rebel. Consequently, they were rewarded by being spared the destruction suffered by many other Jewish cities, including Jerusalem. Several decades later, Rabbi Hanasi, one of the compilers of the Mishnah, moved to Tzippori and documented the history of the Jewish people and the story of Tzippori. At Tzippori someone took a picture of me and my friend Neri Stein, also from UF, doing the Gator chomp. 🐊



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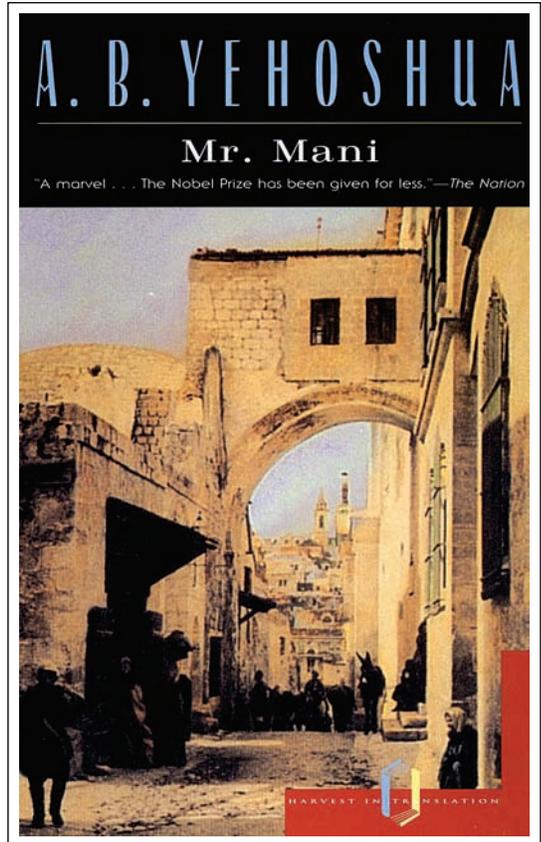
2009 winner of the Alexander Grass Award for best undergraduate essay written by a University of Florida student on a subject in Jewish studies.

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DECONSTRUCTION, DESTABILIZATION, AND THE RETURN OF THE REPPRESSED IN MR. MANI

▼ ● ▼ ● ▼

by David Byron



A.B. Yehoshua's novel *Mr. Mani* is a sprawling, densely layered historical text. Structured as a series of five incomplete conversations which are encountered in reverse chronological order, it is a novel which is concerned not only with the story being told, but more importantly, the process of the telling itself. Yehoshua's text requires the reader to examine history not as objective fact, but as a narrative which is consciously shaped and formed; it asks us to regard history not as a series of linear and connected movements along a timeline, but rather as a series of events which are "unearthed," layered one upon the other, without a set, determined connection. The definitive act of history, then, is the fabrication of that connection.

Throughout, Yehoshua examines the construction of identity and ideology through these conscious and unconscious layerings and revisions, and in doing so brings to light the constitutive process of constructing official narratives of self and country, and of individual and collective memory. The purpose of my essay, "Deconstruction, Destabilization, and the Return of the Repressed in *Mr. Mani*," is to examine the myriad layerings and revisions in Yehoshua's text, both in the individual con-

versations of the characters and in the historical periods they represent, an emphasis which posits the creation of historical narratives as a palimpsest, a continual process of revision and over-inscription which appropriates and disavows events in the historical past in the creation of individual and, more importantly, nationalist ideologies.

From the first conversation, set during the controversial 1982 Lebanon War, to the novel's conclusion and its allusion to the Biblical story of the *akedah* (the binding of Isaac), *Mr. Mani* examines the act and effect of constructing national narratives in Israel from its conception to the modern era, a strikingly dense examination of Israeli culture throughout history. In my analysis, I argue that the Yehoshua's critique of this act of historical construction follows the psychoanalytic pattern of repression and neurosis, in that each repression/revision inevitably leaves behind a residue of its existence, a lingering trace which cannot be completely overwritten, and which provokes neurosis from its place of historical inaccessibility, exemplified in Yehoshua's text through the dysfunctional behavior of the eponymous, Israel-bound Mani family.

08-09
Events
 08-08

Made possible through these endowments and gifts:

- June Baumgardner Gelbart Foundation
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“Secularization, Judaism and the Political: Posen-Faculty Seminar at the Center for Jewish Studies,” (Faculty Seminar) Tuesday, April 15, 2008

FERZINA BANAJI (US Holocaust Memorial Museum), “Representing the ‘Un-Representable’: Film and the Holocaust,” Thursday, June 19, 2008

SHIFT 2008: Holocaust Educators Workshop, June 16-20, 2008

NORA ALTER, “Acoustic Bridges: Listening to Eisler,” (Faculty Seminar) Wednesday, October 15, 2008

TODD HASAK-LOWY (University of Florida), “Todd Hasak-Lowy Reads,” Thursday October 16, 2008

“Reading Jewish Literature: A Workshop with Dan Miron,” Sunday, October 19, 2008

DAVID NIRENBERG (University of Chicago), “Sibling Rivalries: Judaism, Christianity, Islam,” Wednesday, November 12, 2008

“An Evening of Yiddish Song: Wolf Krakowski with the Lonesome Brothers and Friends,” Saturday, November 15, 2008

JONATHAN JUDAKEN (University of Memphis), “Theorizing Anti-Semitism,” Monday, November 17, 2008

“Being Jewish in Philosophy.” Symposium to celebrate sixty years of “Being Jewish” and Time and the Other by Emmanuel Levinas. Invited guest participants: Professor Jonathan Judaken (University of Memphis). Organized by Dragan Kujundzic. Tuesday, November 18, 2008

DAVID RUDERMAN (University of Pennsylvania), “The People and the Book: The Invention of Print and the Transformation of Jewish Culture,” Monday, December 1, 2008

TODD HASAK-LOWY, “Beaufort: Lebanon, Closure, and the Unending State of Emergency,” (Faculty Seminar) Wednesday, December 3, 2008

SUSANNAH HESCHEL (Dartmouth College), “Scholars and Converts: European Jews Embrace Islam,” February 16, 2009

ROBERT KAWASHIMA, “You Shall Love the Lord Your God”: On the Interpellation of the Ancient Israelite Subject” (Faculty Seminar) Wednesday, February 18, 2009

GAIL HAREVEN, “Reading from her new novel,” March 4, 2009

RICHARD BURT, “Secularization, Sacrilege, and Reversing the Renaissance Image and Text” (Faculty Seminar) Wednesday, March 18, 2009

JONATHAN JUDAKEN (University of Memphis), “Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust” Tuesday, March 31, 2009

SHULAMIT VOLKOV (Tel Aviv University), “German Jewry and the Invention of Secularism” Thursday, April 2, 2009

DIRK RUPNOW (University of Innsbruck), “Annihilating - Preserving - Remembering: The ‘Aryanization’ of Jewish History and Memory during the Holocaust” Monday, April 13, 2009

NORMAN J. W. GODA (Ohio University), “Czeraniakow’s Playground: The Struggle for Humanity in the Warsaw Ghetto” Thursday, April 16, 2009



09-10 Events 02-10

“Reading Jewish Literature: An Advanced Workshop with Professor Dan Miron (Columbia University),” Sunday November 1, 2009

“The Animal in the Synagogue: Kafka’s Jewish Story” Dan Miron (Columbia University), November 1, 2009

“Tsuker-zis: Jewish Holiday Music,” Frank London, Lorin Sklamberg, and Robert Schwimmer in concert. Wednesday, November 4, 2009

ANTHONY GRAFTON (Princeton University), “Jewish Books and Christian Readers in Early Modern Europe” Monday, November 9, 2009

“No. 4 Street of Our Lady,” a screening and discussion with producer Judy Maltz (Penn State University), Thursday, November 19, 2009

Marcel Ophüls, “*The Sorrow and the Pity*” Monday, November 23, 2009
Symposium organized by Dragan Kujundzic with presentations by: Sylvie Blum, Eric Kligerman, Maureen Turim and Brigitte Weltman-Aron.

KEREN WEINSHALL MARGEL (Hebrew University/Harvard), “Fighting Terror in the Israeli High Court of Justice: Overt and Covert Aspects” Tuesday, January 19, 2010

YOSSI CHAJES (Haifa University), “It’s Good to See the King: The Nature & Function of Kabbalistic Divinity Maps,” Thursday, February 4, 2010

MERON BENVENISTI, “Israel/Palestine: The Meaning of the Geo-Political ‘Status Quo’” Thursday, February 11, 2010

MERON BENVENISTI, “Processes of Fragmentation and Integration in Israel/Palestine” (Faculty Seminar) Friday, February 12, 2010

SAMMY SMOOHA (Haifa University), “Is Israel Western?” Thursday, February 18, 2010

SAMMY SMOOHA (Haifa University), “Israel’s Ethnic Democracy in a Comparative Perspective” (Faculty Seminar), Friday, February 19, 2010

SAMUEL WEBER (Northwestern University), “Guilt, Debt and the Turn Toward the Future: Walter Benjamin and Hermann Levin Goldschmidt (A Foray into Economic Theology)” Thursday, February 25, 2010

Open public workshop seminar on Walter Benjamin with Professor Samuel Weber. (Posen Reading Group) Friday, February 26, 2010

“Convergences and Conversions: *The Merchant of Venice* into the 21st Century” a conference. Monday evening, March 1 & all day March 2, 2010

“*Arab Labor*,” a screening and discussion with Sayed Kashua (*Haaretz*) Thursday, March 4, 2010

“Translating the Hebrew Bible: an Advanced Workshop with Robert Alter” (UC-Berkeley), Sunday, March 14, 2010

ROBERT ALTER, “Qohelet: Philosophy Through Metaphor” Sunday, March 14, 2010

Yair Dalal and Dror Sinai in Concert, Thursday, April 15, 2010. A concert of Iraqi and Iraqi Israeli music.

For the latest in events:
jst.ufl.edu/events



READING JEWISH LITERATURE:

AN ADVANCED WORKSHOP WITH DAN MIRON SUNDAY April 10, 2011

The Two Phases of Yiddish/Hebrew Modernism

10:00-12:00: U.N. Gnessin, Mani Leyb, Dovid Bergelson

2:00-4:00: The Hebrew and Yiddish of U.Z.Greenberg of the 1920s.

5:30: Public Lecture: "Hebrew and Yiddish Modernisms -Some Comparative Notes"

The morning and afternoon workshops are by invitation only.

For more information contact:
Jack Kugelma, Director
Center for Jewish Studies
jkugelma@ufl.edu



ON SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2011,

the Center for Jewish Studies will welcome Professor Saul Friedländer of the University of California at Los Angeles for a one-day symposium followed by a public lecture.

Professor Friedländer is the author of over a dozen books on the Holocaust and one of the world's leading authorities on the subject. His most recent work is his two volume *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, which has garnered several awards including the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction.

The symposium is for invited faculty.
For more information, please contact
Professor Norman Goda.
Email: Goda@ufl.edu

Saul Friedländer

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