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Mensaje de las co-editoras / Message from the co-Editors



Apreciados miembros y amigos de LAJSA

We are very happy to announce some important revisions in format and content of our publication. The history of LAJS dates back to its first mimeographed version in August 1980 by our founding member Judith Laikin Elkin as she documents in her recently published history of the association,

entitled: *To Unite in Common* that you can find in our website <http://www.lajsa.org/lajsa-history/>

This is the first issue entirely devoted to book reviews, interviews, presentations and abstract dissertation by LAJSA members.

Please keep sending these materials to ahuberma@haverford.edu and nora.glickman@qc.cuny.edu

Looking forward to seeing you in our upcoming New York City LAJSA conference, to be held on May 26, 2016, to be held at the Graduate Center of CUNY, 365, Fifth Ave., New York.

Nora Glickman y Ariana Huberman,
Co-editoras

Mensaje de los Co-presidentes/Message from the Co-Presidents



Dear LAJSA Friends,

We are grateful for your continued support and we thank the rest of the LAJSA leadership team as well as all LAJSA members for all you do to assure that our association continues to grow and flourish.

The International Research Conference, LAJSA XVII was held at Florida International University (Biscayne Bay Campus) June 21-23, 2015. It was another intellectually stimulating and productive conference with the broadest representation of disciplines to date. It was exciting to see such a large gathering of our membership from all areas to share their research and creative activity. LAJSA is clearly expanding and evolving into a major research association.

Our sincere thanks to Valeria Cababié Schindler, Natasha Zaretsky, and all involved in organizing the conference and making it a success!

There are two regional LAJSA conferences being held in May, 2016. The New York regional conference is organized by Nora Glickman and Ronnie Perelis and will be held on May 26. The Tel Aviv regional conference is May 3, and is organized by Amalia Ran and Margalit Bejarano.

It is great to see both of these efforts to bring scholars together in the year when there is no international conference taking place.

We wish to remind everyone that LAJSA XVIII will take place at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City July 3-5, 2017. We are pleased that the international conference will be returning to a site in Latin America and we look forward to another great gathering in Mexico. The CFP and other information about the conference will be announced in the coming months.

At the last international conference the LAJSA Executive Board and Board of Directors voted to have a new website developed that would be independent of an institution.

We are happy to say that the new website [Lajsa.org] is up and running with a new format and greater accessibility. The web designer, Matthew Minten, will continue to be contracted by LAJSA as the site manager. Please send news and announcements, recent publications, professional acknowledgements to lockhart@unr.edu to be included in the website. These items and the financial report will from now on be incorporated into the website and will be periodically updated.

A change that came along with the new website is the nature of the online publication

LAJS, which now focuses solely on the scholarly endeavors of LAJSA members by publishing reviews, interviews, abstracts, and other academic notes. Our sincere thanks to Nora Glickman and Ariana Huberman who continue to serve as the LAJS editors and for the fine job that they do.

Our founding president, Judith Laiken Elkin, generously wrote a detailed history of the origins and early activities of LAJSA, which is now posted on the website for all to enjoy. Thank you, Judith, for this wonderful gift!

LAJSA's popularity and visibility on Facebook is rapidly increasing! Our thanks to Naomi Lindstrom and Alan Astro for maintaining the page. Naomi continues to manage the LAJSA list-serve, which is still the best way to disseminate information to the membership.

We urge you to continue to support the work and goals of LAJSA by keeping your membership current, and by promoting the association to potential new members. We are always willing and anxious to hear your ideas about how to make LAJSA even better and we encourage you to become involved in any way you can.

Un cordial saludo,
Adriana Brodsky and Darrell Lockhart
Co-presidents

Secretariado / Secretariat

Margalit Bejarano

Secretary
Institute of Contemporary Jewry
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Jerusalem 91905, Israel
Miembros del comité ejecutivo/ Executive

Board Members

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Co President
History
Kent Hall, Rm. 304
St. Mary's College of Maryland
18952 E. Fisher Rd.
St. Mary's City, MD 20686-3001, USA

Darrell B. Lockhart

Co-President
College of Liberal Arts
MS 0086
University of Nevada-Reno
Reno, NV 89557-0086, USA

Alan Astro

Treasurer
Modern Languages and Literature
Trinity University
1 Trinity Place #46
San Antonio, TX 78212-720

Nora Glickman

Editor (Ex-Officio)
Department of Hispanic Languages and
Literatures
Queens College and the Graduate Center
City University of New York
65-30 Kissena Boulevard
Flushing, NY 11367, USA

Ariana Huberman

Editor (Ex-Officio)
Department of Spanish
Haverford College
Hall Building
370 Lancaster Avenue
Haverford, PA 19041, USA

Naomi Lindstrom

LAJSA-list and Website Manager (Ex-Officio)
Department of Spanish and Portuguese/
Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies BEN
2.116
1 University Station B3700
Austin, TX 78712-1155, USA
Board of Directors

Judith Laikin Elkin

LAJSA Founding President
Frankel Center for Judaic Studies
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48105, USA

[Elisa Cohen de Chervonagura](#)

Universidad Nacional de Tucumán
San Lorenzo 814
4000
Tucumán, Argentina

[Ronnie Perelis](#)

Yeshiva University
Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish
Studies
500 West 185th St.
New York, NY 10033
USA

[Amalia Ran](#)

Tel Aviv University
Emek Dotan 39/5
Modin 71701
Israel

[Saúl Sosnowski](#)

Department of Spanish and Portuguese, SLLC
University of Maryland College Park, MD
20742
USA

[Stephen A. Sadow](#)

Department of Languages,
Literatures and Cultures
201 RP
Northeastern University
Boston, MA 02115-5000
USA

[Edna Aizenberg](#)

ex-co president
Department of Spanish
Marymount Manhattan College
221 East 71 St., NY, NY 10021, USA

[Raanan Rein](#)

ex-co president
Department of History
Tel Aviv University
Tel Aviv 69978, Israel

Reseñas / Book Reviews

Evelyn Dean-Olmsted, Review of Laikin Elkin, J. 2014. *The Jews of Latin America*. 3rd Edition. Boulder: Lynne Reiner Publishers

The Third Edition of Judith Laikin Elkin's classic *The Jews of Latin America* provides an encyclopedic view of Jewish life in the region from the colonial era into the 21st century. Remarkable in its geographic and topical scope, it has been updated to include several key works published in the 2000s and early 2010s. Like previous editions, it is a valuable reference for scholars and students in this burgeoning field.

The book consists of thirteen chapters, the first of which is dedicated to the colonial history of Latin America and the place of Jews (including *conversos*) within it. It begins with 14th century Iberia and continues through the first half of the 19th century. Chapter Two opens the first major section ("The Immigration Years"), covering the scant, mostly individualistic European Jewish migrations that occurred through the greater part of 19th century. Chapter Three treats the age of mass Jewish migration in the late 19th-early 20th centuries, while Chapter Four deals with the period preceding, during and after World War II. Throughout this section, Elkin provides critical information about intellectual, political, economic and religious currents in the receiving nations that shaped

the destinies of their Jewish immigrants. Chapter Five opens the next section, "At Home in America," beginning with Jewish life on the short-lived agricultural colonies (primarily but not exclusively in Argentina). Chapter Six is dedicated to the evolution of Jewish economic activity and socioeconomic status, beginning with peddling and other commerce, followed by a widespread move to manufacturing among Jewish entrepreneurs, and a move by some sectors into the professions. Newly included in this edition is recent scholarship on women's work (e.g. Deutsch 2010). In the conclusion, Elkin astutely summarizes that, lacking access to the "traditional dominant triumvirate of the church, the armed forces, and the landowning oligarchy,....Jews came to be defined almost totally by their economic function" (p 146); for better and for worse, as she discusses throughout the book. Chapter Seven is dedicated to Jewish communal institutions, elucidating the all-encompassing *kehillah* model common in Latin American communities throughout most of the 20th century, with a new section on soccer and Argentina's Club Atlanta, reflecting one of historian Ranaan Rein's recent works (Rein

2012). The section closes with Chapter Eight, dedicated to Jewish demography, including the trend toward population decline since the 1960s. The final section (“Jews and their Worlds”) begins with Chapter Nine on “The Role of Israel.” This includes both the centrality of Zionism as a unifying element of diverse Jewish communities, and the diplomatic and commercial relations between the State of Israel and Latin American nations, with their largely negative effects on the latter’s Jewish populations. Although writing about the late 1970s and early 1980s, Elkin’s observation that “The anti-Zionism that now became a rallying cry for Latin American leftists was increasingly couched in terms that were indistinguishable from anti-Semitism” seems all too pertinent to the current political climate, in Latin America and beyond. The remaining chapters are overviews (with some redundancies) of Argentina (Chapter Ten), Cuba and Brazil (Chapter Eleven), and Mexico, Chile and Venezuela (Chapter Twelve). Chapter Thirteen concludes the work with “Challenges for the 21st Century,” which Elkin identifies as 1) the increasingly contested role of Zionism; 2) competing liberal and conservative (i.e. *haredi*) religious ideologies; and 3) creating models of community to replace the “languishing kehillah mentality” (p. 307), which no longer serves the needs and interests of more assimilated populations.

Given the current tendency for scholars to specialize in ever narrower domains of research, the breadth of Elkin’s knowledge is all the more rare, and the book all the more valuable. It is especially so for those of us seeking to contextualize our country- or topic-specific work. The years she has invested in extensive, comparative research uniquely allow Elkin to identify patterns and articulate generalizations about the trajectories of Latin American Jewish communities. These include, for example, the interplay of internal factors (literacy and familiarity with commerce) and external factors (lack of consumer credit and availability of goods) across multiple Latin American contexts that facilitated the ubiquitous Jewish entry into peddling (p. 126); the correlation between the quality (esp. secularism) of national schools and the attraction of private Jewish education for immigrants and their descendants (pp. 159-60). While devoting due space to the countries with the largest Jewish populations – especially Argentina, but also Brazil and Mexico – she fluidly integrates discussions of lesser-studied contexts like Bolivia, Dominican Republic and Panama. She shows care in including Sephardi and Mizrahi populations without extending unwarranted generalizations based on the Ashkenazi experience, as is so often done in American Jewish Studies.

The work does have its weaker points, many of which are casualties of the compendium genre in an ever-diversifying field. Some of Elkin's generalizations seem less well-supported by research than those cited above: for example, that religion was largely unimportant as an organizing principle among Latin American Jewish immigrants (pp 164-168). In general, questions of religion and religiosity receive short shrift throughout the volume. I am also inclined to question the common equating of intermarriage with assimilation (e.g. p. 305) and would rather see more nuanced social science research examining beliefs and practices among intermarried individuals, their children and grandchildren. Overall, 20th-century historiography and demography dominate over literary, film, and ethnographic studies. While the updates include references to many key works produced in the early 21st century, others are missing, especially recent scholarship emanating from Latin America. The author admits that most of the new material is weighted toward the latter chapters (p ix). This is unfortunate, given that recent historiographical work on Jewish migration to Mexico, for example, has led to major revaluations of master narratives (e.g. Gleizer Salzman (2014; 2011)). In general, much of the data stops in the 1990s, and the book falls somewhat short in painting a portrait of contemporary Latin American

Jewish life. For these reasons, though the book provides a comprehensive bigger picture of 20th century Jewish Latin America, I would still be compelled to check recent scholarship (both historiography and contemporary social science) on individual countries for the latest data and theoretical perspectives.

Nonetheless, the book's accomplishments far outweigh its shortcomings. Especially given the dramatic growth of Latin American Jewish Studies in recent years—thanks to Elkin's own efforts - it would simply not be possible to include every corner of this increasingly diversified field in a mere 350-some pages. Perhaps the next daughter of *The Jews of Latin America* might well be in the form of a multi-author, digital or print handbook, with different geographic and topical chapters each penned by a different specialist. Certainly, however, no such endeavor could approximate nor substitute Elkin's uniquely panoptic erudition as displayed in this book. *The Jews of Latin America* remains a critical resource for studies of Jews and Judaism, Latin American and the Caribbean, and migration and diaspora more generally. I myself learned a great deal and came away with a better understanding of the broader processes at play in the communities I study (Mexico City and Puerto Rico). Those of us who seek to carry forth the legacy of Judith Laikin Elkin are indebted to her for this, and

indeed all of her work on the Jews of Latin

America.

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University of Puerto Rico

Lydia Gil. Isaac Goldemberg, *Remember the Scorpion*. Translated from the Spanish by Jonathan Tittler. Los Angeles: Unnamed Press, 2015.

La narrativa de Isaac Goldemberg tomó un giro radical con la publicación de *Acuérdate del escorpión* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, 2010) novela recientemente editada y traducida al inglés bajo el título *Remember the Scorpion* (Los Angeles: Unnamed Press, 2015). En lugar del gran formato de sus novelas anteriores, la contundencia de sus propuestas identitarias y su prosa híbrida y fragmentada, el texto se destaca por un innegable corte popular y melodramático. Recibida por la crítica como exponente ejemplar del género *noir*, la novela parece ajustarse mejor a las convenciones del

Centro de Estudios Históricos : Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Cuajimalpa.

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subgénero neo-noir por la ironía y autodesconfianza que exhibe.

Acuérdate del escorpión tiene como protagonista al detective Simón Weiss, quien, a pesar de ser brillante en sus investigaciones y honesto en su cotidianidad, es también autodestructivo, depresivo y taciturno. El protagonista antiheroico no es la única característica del género *noir* presente en el texto, ya que también se evidencian las acciones abruptas y violentas, la preferencia por escenarios distópicos, las femmes fatales, el diálogo escueto y rápido, humor fatídico, pesimismo, reticencia e inconclusividad.

El subgénero "neo-noir" conserva muchas de estas características, incluidas la obsesión por lo grotesco, ansiedades sobre la masculinidad y un hastío existencial, pero al mismo tiempo que reelabora los códigos del noir, los parodia y desmitifica mediante un intenso uso del melodrama. Acentuado por las descripciones cinematográficas, cortes, iluminación, pasajes sentimentales e intervenciones musicales-- características presentes en el texto de Goldemberg--el melodrama cumple la importante función de destacar la ironía, lo cual a su vez problematiza la labor interpretativa, sobre todo en una novela que deshace sus aparentes propuestas. A diferencia del género policial o detectivesco, aquí no es la razón ni el intelecto lo que lleva a la resolución de los casos, sino el instinto y el azar.

La acción se desarrolla durante seis días --lo cual presenta posibles referencias bíblicas y políticas-- en junio de 1970, justo después del terrible terremoto que devastara el norte del país. A Weiss le han asignado investigar el caso de un japonés asesinado de modo aparentemente ritual en un billar del centro antiguo de la capital. Aunque Weiss insiste en trabajar solo, le imponen de compañero al joven teniente Kanashiro, quien, al igual que Weiss, pertenece a una de las minorías étnicas de Perú. Un segundo crimen complica la trama, esta vez un judío sobreviviente de la *Shoá* que se hospedaba precisamente en la

pensión de los padres adoptivos de Weiss. Las víctimas paralelan la herencia étnica de los investigadores, despertando la sospecha y monomanía en ambos. Los dos crímenes que, inicialmente parecían inconexos, comparten móviles que se remontan a crímenes contra la humanidad cometidos durante la segunda guerra mundial. Son estos sucesos los que, como temblores secundarios de un gran terremoto, continúan causando estragos entre generaciones subsiguientes a pesar del tiempo y la distancia. La trama también complica los conceptos de justicia y venganza, cuestionando tanto el significado como la pertinencia de ambos como respuesta a la atrocidad.

El neo-*noir*, a menudo poroso y difícil de definir, le permite a Goldemberg en este texto innovaciones temáticas que constituyen un nuevo giro en la producción cultural judeolatinoamericana, ya que la identidad-- tan central a los textos de su generación-- parece autodestruirse bajo la ironía característica del subgénero. En *Acuérdate del escorpión* más pesa el azar que el intelecto, la venganza que la justicia, y la desilusión que la esperanza, pesos que a su vez parecen disiparse bajo el manto del melodrama.

La edición en inglés cuenta con un prólogo de Saúl Sosnowki como breve introducción a la obra de Goldemberg y las preocupaciones temáticas que persisten en sus textos.

También aparece una nota del traductor, Jonathan Tittler, en la cual explica el proceso de la traducción y las negociaciones que implica. Hay algunos cambios y reiteraciones

en esta versión que clarifican elementos de la trama manteniendo, sin embargo, la integridad y el dinamismo del texto original.

University of Denver

Raanan Rein. Esther Cohen de Chervonagura, *Eschet Jail, un contrapunto discursivo entre dos mujeres judías*. (Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (Argentina) y Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) 2016)

Situada en un sector casi recóndito del cementerio judío de Tucumán, donde se entierra a los suicidas y a los casados con no judíos, la tumba de Malka Abraham llama la atención por tratarse de alguien que había sido prostituta en Buenos Aires antes de haberse mudado a Tucumán a principios del siglo XX, y por la imagen de prestamista avara que había adquirido en sus últimos años de vida. La presencia del mausoleo de Abraham inquieta y desconcierta a los más tradicionalistas dentro de la colectividad judía de esa provincia del noroeste argentino.

Dentro del perímetro del mismo camposanto, otra tumba, perteneciente a Malka Saltz, quien se había dedicado a preparar los cadáveres antes de su inhumación, destaca por otros motivos. Alrededor de la figura de Saltz comenzó a desarrollarse un culto popular que refleja influencias de formas de religiosidad popular de la región y el proceso

de formación de mestizajes e identidades híbridas.

Estas dos mujeres, estas dos «reinas» (en hebreo *malka* significa reina), que de un modo u otro desafiaban los modelos dominantes y nos obligan a recapacitar sobre ciertas suposiciones comunes, tabúes y prejuicios, son el eje temático principal del fascinante libro de Elisa B. Cohen de Chervonagura.

Mucho se ha escrito sobre la prostitución judía en el Cono Sur en general, y en la Argentina en particular. De hecho, dentro de la experiencia histórica de las mujeres judías en Argentina, es este el aspecto que ha recibido más atención por parte de la historiografía de este país. La prostitución, legal e institucionalizada en la Argentina durante ochenta años (1875-1955), fue un tema tratado intensamente y rayando casi en la obsesión por políticos, médicos, clérigos e intelectuales desde mediados del siglo XIX

hasta los años 30 del XX. En la década de los 30 las autoridades perdieron interés en la trata de blancas y en las redes de prostitución, apuntando en otra dirección: las amenazas que se cernían sobre el orden político y la institución de la familia, así como sobre la fortaleza del Estado. Estas nuevas amenazas provenían del movimiento obrero y los militantes de izquierda, quienes radicalizaban sus demandas sobre la redistribución de la riqueza nacional y la democratización del sistema político. El miedo al contagio de sífilis mutó en el miedo al virus bolchevique, que supuestamente podían portar los exiliados republicanos que habían perdido la guerra civil en España, o los emigrantes judíos que empezaban a huir de Europa por el ascenso del nazismo.

La mayor parte de la historiografía dedicada a la prostitución judía en la Argentina nos permite escuchar las voces de numerosos políticos, periodistas, policías o representantes de organizaciones que luchaban en contra de la trata de blancas, incluyendo a organizaciones judías que temían por la imagen de esta colectividad de inmigrantes, que aún no estaba totalmente integrada, y posibles reacciones antisemitas. El libro de Cohen de Chervonagura nos acerca sin embargo otras voces que habían sido silenciadas o menospreciadas y, por lo tanto, raras veces escuchadas en la mencionada historiografía.

La autora se basa no solamente en las notas publicadas en *La Gaceta de Tucumán* con su tendencia prejuiciosa, las actas comunitarias de la Sociedad Israelita, o el expediente penal preparado a raíz del asesinato de Malka Abraham en su propia casa en 1957, sino que además incluye también parte de su correspondencia personal con parientes, así como su testamento, en el que legaba su fortuna al colegio judío Barón Hirsh de la ciudad, lo que tuvo una gran relevancia para la colectividad. De esta manera podemos escuchar «el discurso privado más íntimo de un ser históricamente muy marginado».

Las cartas también evidencian la soledad y marginación en la que vivió esta ex prostituta reconvertida en prestamista en sus últimos años (de hecho, se transformó en la mujer más rica de Tucumán). Escritas, según, Cohen de Chervonagura, con una letra prolija y armónica en ídish o alemán culto que refleja su formación y educación, las cartas están fechadas el mismo día o el inmediato anterior a su muerte. Las mismas están redactadas con una franqueza conmovedora: «Cierro la carta que no está escrita con tinta sino con mi sangre y mis lágrimas y creo que esta va a ser la última».

Con su testamento y la donación del legado económico, que provocaron un cisma en los ámbitos comunitarios, Abraham intentó adquirir un prestigio que le había sido negado

en vida. El dilema de aceptar o no el dinero fracturó la dirigencia, entre los que resaltaban el valor de la redención y el perdón y así asegurar la donación y los que sentían que parte del capital simbólico de la comunidad estaba en peligro dado el origen indecente de los fondos. Esta polémica llevó a la renuncia del presidente. Así se dieron las cosas: una de las personas más marginales de la comunidad pudo derrocar de su puesto a una de las personas más respetadas.

Fallecida en Santiago del Estero en agosto de 1949 a los 67 años, el cuerpo de Malka Saltz fue trasladado a Tucumán para su inhumación, cuando se descubrió que su cadáver estaba intacto. Este «milagro» generó un culto de santidad alrededor de ella, reflejando la influencia entre algunos judíos – afiliados o no a las instituciones comunitarias – y no judíos de la religiosidad popular católica del Noroeste argentino. De esta manera, también Saltz, con su tumba llena de ofrendas, continúa dejando su huella después de su muerte en los tucumanos judíos, desafiando el culto religioso judío tradicional institucionalizado, así como formas identitarias más arraigadas. En el caso de Saltz no se conserva ningún material escrito sobre su persona y por lo tanto la autora ha debido recurrir a testimonios orales de los integrantes de la comunidad y de las acólitas a su culto.

La "santa" Saltz ofrece consuelo y da esperanza a quienes la siguen mediante un culto que implica desafiar la muerte. La historia de su canonización popular revela el grado de la permeabilidad social de la comunidad judía hacia las creencias locales, las circunstancias y el contexto social y cultural. Se trata de distintas expresiones de hibridación cultural que caracteriza al noroeste argentino. Cohen de Chervonagura se refiere, por ejemplo, a judíos tucumanos que veneran tanto santos judíos como católicos (San Cayetano, por ejemplo), sin considerar que están adoptando una práctica contradictoria. Cita al rabino Daniel Touitou que señalaba con cierto prejuicio hacia los judíos no askenazíes:

«En Tucumán he visto varias familias sefardíes que andan con las estampitas católicas en el bolsillo y cuando les hago notar me dicen ‘no hace mal a nadie’. I incluso fui una vez a ver a un enfermo judío que tenía un crucifijo al lado de la cama... el sefaradí es muy supersticioso y por eso toma cosas de otras religiones que no lo hace el askenazí».

Parece que efectivamente, el grupo sefaradí en Tucumán es el más proclive al culto «malkiano», a este sincretismo religioso entre el judaísmo y las costumbres católicas. Sin embargo, Malka tiene también fieles askenazíes, así como no judíos. Este es el caso de la esposa del guardián del cementerio que,

aunque de religión protestante, le reza a esta "santa" judía.

Como no se conocen a ciencia cierta los datos acerca de la vida de Malka Saltz, no existen tampoco días específicos de peregrinación a su última morada. Sin embargo, el culto a esta "snta" judía se observa sobre todo en la semana anterior al Día del Perdón, cuando la tumba se ve cubierta de flores, llaveros, anillos, relojes y adornos, además de pequeñas piedras, a veces colgados de la estrella de David en lo alto del monumento. Estas ofrendas se colocan cuando se va a hacer un pedido o cuando éste se cumplió.

Cada Malka ha representado un desafío particular al discurso masculino paternalista judío hegemónico, y Cohen de Chervonagura lo analiza con profundidad, sobre todo desde la perspectiva de los estudios sociolingüísticos y del análisis del discurso, moviéndose entre lo personal y cotidiano, lo social y lo histórico. La imagen de una comunidad homogénea o armónica se desvanece. El libro se aleja de este universo maniqueísta de mujeres «buenas» y «malas» y, en palabras de la autora, supone «un intento de re-territorializar partes de una historia común que muestra incluso, cómo el estudio de estas figuras resistentes aspira a destacar lo singular dentro de lo homogéneo».

Este libro representa un aporte en muchos sentidos. Su análisis multidisciplinario, desde los estudios históricos, sociológicos, lingüísticos y de género, abre una ventana adicional para acercarnos a la historia social argentina, poniendo énfasis en la integración de distintos grupos de inmigrantes.

La historiografía sobre la experiencia judía en América Latina ha mostrado la tendencia a centrarse en las comunidades más grandes (Argentina, Brasil y México) y ha prestado relativamente poca atención a las colectividades en otros países. El mismo fenómeno que da prioridad a la Argentina al precio de casi ignorar la experiencia judía en Perú o Venezuela, se repite con relación a la colectividad judía capitalina frente a las comunidades judías del interior del país. Esto se nota tanto en las políticas internas, como en la bibliografía. En su libro anterior, *La comunidad judía de Tucumán: hombres y mujeres, historias y discursos, 1910-2010*, Cohen de Chervonagura cita el testimonio de Simón Litvak, nacido en la provincia de Sante Fe y ex presidente de la *la Kehilá* de Tucumán: «Más adelante logramos la vicepresidencia de *Vaad Hakehilot* con un muchacho de Bahía Blanca con el que nos apoyábamos mutuamente frente a las posturas de los porteños, y teníamos un amigo dentro de la AMIA que nos informaba sobre todos los movimientos de la gente de Buenos Aires

para poder seguir pidiendo cosas para el interior. Es terrible, no entienden que Argentina no es solo Buenos Aires» (p. 291).

De la misma manera, la historiografía en su mayoría otorgó poca representación social a la mujer judía y también en este sentido este libro llena, por lo menos en parte, este vacío. La historia de las dos Malkas nos muestra otras formas de ser mujer judía (y por lo tanto doblemente estigmatizada y marginada). Ambas están reconocidas y recordadas desde la manera en que su propio cuerpo ha vivido o ha fallecido, ofreciéndose así una variedad de interpretaciones culturales. Sus experiencias complejas y contradictorias alteran los esquemas de análisis acerca de la historia judía reciente, no solamente en la Argentina, y revelan cuán vacío es el discurso oficial institucional.

El uso de la historia oral, siendo la autora perfectamente consciente de que la memoria es resultado también de elaboraciones basadas en creencias, actitudes y valores, logra recuperar múltiples significados. Y el análisis del escenario físico, el cementerio de la comunidad donde convergen el pasado y el presente, y donde los sujetos expresan su actitud ante la vida y la muerte, es fascinante. Cohen muestra cómo se conforma en el recinto funerario un conjunto de

representaciones, ritos y creencias «que lo transforman en un lugar simbólico polisémico de alta complejidad». Uno no puede elegir donde nacer, pero a menudo – salvo en casos de exclusión social, religiosa o étnica -- sí puede elegir el lugar de su descanso final. En el caso de las comunidades judías, el espacio amurallado del cementerio asegura una tierra consagrada ritualmente para mantener la cohesión comunitaria y preservar la identidad judía, así como también preservar la frontera entre «nosotros» y los «otros».

Así es que *Eshet Jail* es una contribución adicional que Cohen de Chervonagura nos ofrece para una mejor comprensión de las experiencias judías en Tucumán; y éstas a su vez nos ayudan a comprender mejor la historia social tucumana y la integración cultural y social de distintos grupos de inmigrantes en esta provincia norteña por un lado, y la historia judía en la Argentina por otro. El ámbito funerario sirve como un lente para entender el ideario e imaginario social de una comunidad, y como depósito de la memoria social, un espacio material y simbólico que representa un campo de fuerzas donde los actores sociales expresan unas identidades que a veces se complementan y otras veces entran en conflicto.

Ariana Huberman Edna Aizenberg, *Parricide On The Pampa? A New Study and Translation of Alberto Gerchunoff's Los gauchos judíos*. 2nd Ed. Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana. Vervuert, 2015.

The newly revised *Parricide On The Pampa?* consists of an in-depth study of Gerchunoff's vignettes and a translation of the original version of the groundbreaking text published in 1910 (the previous translations were based on the 1936 version). The title of the text refers to the well-known negative response to the stories by Jewish Argentine intellectuals in the 1970's who Aizenberg is referring to when she questions if their criticism was an act of intellectual parricide.

In the new introduction to the second edition of *Parricide in the Pampa?* Aizenberg details how her comparative analysis has inspired a series of new approaches to Gerchunoff's text with a deeper understanding of the author's political, linguistic, historical, and cultural evolution as it is evident in his writing.

Parricide On the Pampa? Successfully shows *Los gauchos judíos'* complexities, and successfully proves that Gerchunoff's text was not a simple hymn to assimilation, as the Jewish intellectuals in the seventies claimed. It also brings to the fore the rest of Gerchunoff's prolific and diverse writing that

included short stories staged in the city, novels, essays and short stories influenced by Cervantes, and his strong stance against fascism in his articles published in the *Argentina Libre* newspaper in the forties. The second edition also introduces Aizenberg's finding in the "Alberto Gerchunoff Archive" at the Emilio Ravignani Institute at the University of Buenos Aires, of an unedited text by Gerchunoff. The text is titled *La estrella de David* and it compiles his writings about the atrocities committed in the Shoah and his active and stern support of the establishment of the State of Israel.

Aizenberg invites us to read this unedited text *vis à vis Los gauchos judíos* in the context of Holocaust Studies.

The original introduction explores the historical context for the canonization of the stories, and for the continuous debate that followed. She explores thoroughly the key aspects of the text's reception and debate in the last century and into this one. She then identifies three versions of the author, the good one (his reception during the centenary,

official rhetoric), the bad one (his critics in the seventies claiming naivete and silencing) and the complex version (the more accurate enquiry of the text since then (translation theory, “a kaleidoscopic work”), making a very strong case for the last one. []). The style of the essay contains a good share of Aizenberg’s trademark provocative statements. This is what makes her one of the prominent academics keeping the field of Latin American Jewish studies current.

In this introduction, Aizenberg compares the first edition of *Los gauchos judíos* from 1910 to the 1936 more “ethnic” and culturally complex version. The 1910 version includes a few words in Yiddish, more words in Hebrew—both languages are translated in footnotes—references to religious texts, mentions and translations of Yiddish folk songs, literary repertory and expressions and, finally, the Hebrew spelling of biblical names. The omission of these elements in the second edition of *Los gauchos judíos* makes the text accessible to a broader audience. It also means the loss of a more accurate portrayal of the immigrants’ culture and speech. The use of language indicates this work’s alignment with the Argentine literary establishment.

Haverford College

But as Aizenberg points out, the inclusion of archaic Castilian vocabulary and grammar as the Jewish immigrants’ language, and the paraphrasing of Cervantes at the end of the tale “Las bodas de Camacho” prove Gerchunoff’s intention to connect the Eastern European Jewish Immigrants to the Sephardic Jewish tradition of medieval Spain. The goal was to give them a “discursive authenticity” that would allow them to fit into the Argentine tradition that had originated in Spain. Aizenberg gives as an example Gerchunoff’s choice for the word “Rabí,” used to refer to a rabbi in medieval Spain. He uses Rabí in order “to render the Yiddish Reb, or míster, traditionally prefixed to a man’s first name. ‘Reb’ derives from the Hebrew ‘rab,’ teacher or rabbi, but it does not have that meaning; rabí, on the other hand does” (Aizenberg, “Introduction” 23). Historically, the Eastern European immigrants that he is portraying would have used the word *Reb*; Gerchunoff’s choice of the term *Rabí* connects them to Spain, the Argentine Motherland. The second edition of *Parricide on the Pampa?* proves how Gerchunoff’s original text withstands the passage of time and continues to be relevant for current critical analysis and teaching.

Interviews

Entrevista con Luisa Futoransky, de Nora Glickman

Luisa Futoransky nació en Buenos Aires en 1939. Residió en Buenos Aires, donde se graduó como abogada. Luego de haber pasado largas temporadas en España, China, Japón e Israel, en 1981 se radicó en Francia, más precisamente en París, donde actualmente trabaja y escribe. En 1971 participó en el International Writing Program de la Universidad de IOWA. En 1990 fue nombrada Chevalier des Arts et Lettres; recibió la beca Guggenheim en 1991 y becas del Centre National des Lettres en 1987, 1993 y 2010. Entre sus últimas publicaciones de poesía figuran *Ortigas* (2011) y *Prender de gajo* (2008); de novela, *El Formosa* (2010) y *Partir, digo* (2008).

N.G. Tu poesía así como tus novelas, hacen referencia constante al exilio. ¿Dirías que éste es un tema central en tu escritura?

L.F. No lo sé; desde que empecé a escribir me he rodeado de escenarios para poder expresarme. El viaje es un escenario. Nunca tuve la sensación de arraigo; de ser extranjera, sí. Una siempre es extranjera. Pertencí a un grupo minoritario en la

Argentina, en Francia. También la edad te excluye en muchas cosas. Exilios de la tierra, del cuerpo, de la edad... hay muchos exilios. Y quien dice exilio, dice expulsiones, desiertos, travesías arduas. El amor y el desamor son también travesías. El exilio es multiforme; se metamorfosea a medida que avanzas por la vida.

N.G. Cuando se refieren los críticos a tu estilo, hablan de ironía, de humor negro, y al mismo tiempo observan un tono enternecedor en tus escritos. ¿Cómo conjugas sentimientos tan contradictorios?

L.F. Para mí no son contradictorios. Para nada. Humor negro hay poco. Ironía sí hay. De mis novelas me dicen que yo hago "autoficción". Yo siempre pensé que si no me tomaba a mí misma en serio, ¿por qué tomar en serio a los demás? La gente me inspira ternura. Afortunadamente yo no he conocido grandes tragedias: no viví la dictadura en mi país, ni la Shoah, pero me afectan profundamente las tragedias; ya sean catástrofes naturales o construidas por la bestialidad del hombre.

N.G. ¿Qué aspectos de tu obra son autobiográficos? ¿Cómo le das cohesión a una novela en gran parte fragmentaria como *El Formosa*?

L.F. *El Formosa* tiene que ver con la inmigración de mi familia, a comienzos del siglo XX. Era el barco que trajo a mis padres y a mis abuelos del otro lado del Atlántico. Hay una escuela francesa que trabaja con mis novelas de autoficción, que tienen que ver con uno, y al mismo tiempo no tienen que ver con uno. La ficción se cuele en mis historias tanto en mi prosa como en mi poesía. Mis traspies pueden ser comunes a otros traspies.

N.G. La presencia de la muerte figura casi desde el comienzo de tus escritos. ¿Cómo y cuándo aparece? ¿Se trata de una obsesión que va en aumento, como las aflicciones del cuerpo, que empeoran con los años?

L.F. La muerte es una certidumbre. Siempre supe que lo del más allá era uno de esos cuentos chinos. Nadie nos contó cómo es del otro lado. No existe. Si no, ya lo sabríamos. No le tengo especial temor a la muerte. Puedo vislumbrar un poco de gozo en cada día. Así me lo propongo. La enfermedad tampoco es

un capítulo obsesionante, ni en mi vida ni en mi obra. La muerte sí. T.S. Elliot, en *The Wasteland* lo dice: "Cuando caminaba ...no pensé que era la muerte que caminaba conmigo."

N.G. El tema del Holocausto aparece tanto en tu escritura consciente como en tus sueños y pesadillas. ¿Cómo lo elaboras al convertirlo en literatura?

L. F. No solo los judíos tenemos esa losa en nuestro consciente y en nuestro inconsciente. No sé cómo escribir sobre todo eso. La barbarie llega a tal punto que sobrepasa el entendimiento. No hay ninguna filosofía que pueda entender la Shoa. Algunos han podido hacerlo. Yo no he abordado ese tema.

N. G. ¿Cómo figura la kabala en tus escritos?

Me gustaría saber más de lo que sé sobre la kabala. No sé lo suficiente. Aflora cuando quiere. Es una búsqueda inherente al ser humano. Hay momentos en que uno lo puede vislumbrar. Da cohesión a las partes fragmentarias. No puedo escribir 400 páginas bien recortadas. Creo que la cotidianidad del hecho irrumpe en tu propio trabajo, en el

texto mismo. Yo estaba escribiendo sobre la kabala y Rabi Akiba, cuando pasó lo de Bélgica. La escritura es muy frágil. Ya lo decía

la novelista policial Patricia Highsmith en El arte del suspenso.

Resúmenes de presentaciones y selección de artículos de miembros de LAJSA members/ Abstracts of presentations by LAJSA members at the LAJSA International Research Conference XVII at Florida International University in June 2015,

Mirna Vohnsen, "The Wandering Child: Resisting Invisibility in Marcos Carnevale's *Anita*."

The effects of the last military dictatorship that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983 loom large in post dictatorial Argentine cinema, and *Anita* (Marcos Carnevale 2009) is no exception. The film revolves around a female protagonist – an ambivalently conceived young woman with a child-like presence – who wanders the streets of Buenos Aires as a result of the AMIA bombing – an attack targeted against Argentina's most important Jewish community center in July 1994. Informed by cultural memory, this essay argues that although *Anita* is a fictionalised memory narrative of the AMIA bombing, the film revisits the search for the disappeared under the repressive governmental regime in Argentina from the child protagonist's perspective. To further this argument two related issues are explored: the child's

wandering in search of her missing mother, and her own status as one of the disappeared. While the child protagonist embarks on a journey that echoes the search undertaken by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo for their own missing offspring, her brother searches for her. Facing adversity, displacement and exclusion, the child embodies the memory of the victims of both atrocities and their resistance to invisibility. Furthermore, mindful of the image of the AMIA bombing as a solely Jewish problem, the essay aims to demonstrate that by strategically revisiting the plight of Argentine society of the 70s and 80s through the eyes of an innocent child, the film makes the AMIA bombing a national experience and ultimately a constitutive part of the nation's cultural memory.

University College Dublin

Valeria Schindler and Ariella Siegel, "Latin American Jewry in Miami: How Institutions are Adapting."

Our paper presents an historical overview of the immigration/migration process that led to the institutional establishment of a vibrant Jewish community in Miami, Florida. The Jewish population of Miami was established throughout three waves of migration and immigration. The first wave was from the 1920s until the 1950s and was comprised primarily of Northeastern Jewish migrants that needed to establish Jewish Institutions. The second wave, from the 1960s until the 1970s, was comprised of Cuban-Jewish immigrants. This wave experienced at the beginning a slight discrimination from the already established institutions by the first **Florida International University**

Adriana Hernández Gómez de Molina, "Inserción de la inmigración hebrea en el contexto económico cubano de las décadas del 30 y del 40; un análisis de documentos."

En la primera mitad del pasado siglo se produjeron las más importantes oleadas migratorias de judíos a Cuba. La entrada masiva de ashkenazis después de la Primera Guerra Mundial, continuada por la oleada de refugiados del nazi fascismo de 1933 a 1948, continuó un progresivo proceso de inserción de la comunidad hebrea en contexto económico nacional que influyó positivamente en el panorama económico cubano. Es durante el albor de la última

wave immigrants, so it had to establish separate institutions. By the end, they were accepted by those already in existence. The third wave began in the 1970s and continues until today. It is comprised of Latin American Jewish immigrants. In this last wave we noted a shift because new migrants not only had no need to create their own institutions, but existing institutions are now adapting to cater to their needs-- a sharp contrast from past waves. In our paper we explore the reasons behind this shift in the third wave, and look at how Latin American Jewry has influenced the change in the institutional Judaism of Miami.

corriente migratoria de refugiados que nace "Almanaque Hebreo Vida Habanera" con el objetivo dar a conocer los aspectos más representativos de la vida de la colonia judía en la isla. El estudio de muchos de sus artículos nos permite comprender cómo influyó la migración hebrea en el panorama económico cubano de las décadas del 30 y del 40 y cómo se llevó a cabo este proceso de inserción.

Karen Ann Faulk. *Truth and Meaning-Making in Liminal Politics: Unraveling the Death of Argentine Prosecutor Alberto Nisman*

“Everything has to do with everything.” CFK

On January 18th, 2015, Argentine media reported that federal prosecutor Alberto Nisman had been found dead in his Buenos Aires apartment. News of his death, coming one day before he was due to appear in the National Congress to explain his recently-announced formal denunciation of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, unleashed a storm of accusations and counter-accusations, political speculation, rumors, and legal wranglings. This “complex saga of mind-boggling intrigue,” as “The Guardian” newspaper described the situation, was a pivotal moment, rapidly seized on by an overwhelming diversity of voices and interests. A whirlwind of media communication ensued, with very different analyses and interpretations offered by government-sponsored and government-friendly sources, on the one hand, and the major media conglomerate and arch-opposition “Grupo Clarín”, on the other. Local independent media and international coverage reflected numerous additional opinions and angles on a case about which everyone seemed to have something to say.

This presentation does three things. One, it tries to explain some of the nuances and complexities of what I uncomfortably call “the Nisman case.”¹ That is, I explain, not the ‘truth’ of what happened and why, but the key aspects and controversies that surround this death. Secondly, it aims to show the multiple importances that the case has and will continue to have for Argentina and beyond; in other words, why it matters, so much. For, I argue, this case can be seen as an example of an epic crime (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Goldstein 2012), where the death of one person comes to represent and illuminate the beleaguered social body.

¹ By ‘case’ I mean not, or not just, a legal case working its way through the investigative and legal institutions in Argentina, but rather, in the Sherlock Holmesian sense of a mystery with all its attendant aspects and intrigues, and the deductive process of unraveling its secrets. In this instance, the ‘secrets’ I hope to reveal are not the ‘facts’ of the case, but the intricacies of the production of such facts. As Grimson noted, unlike Holmes, here is not a neatly rational universe, where everything comes together. Instead, there are always and will always be loose ends in this post-modern drama. And yet, importantly and in spite of this, “We thr[ew] ourselves into discussing the Nisman case, always completely sure of it” (Grimson 2015).

However, in this case, rather than “evok[ing] and intensify[ing] a sense of citizenship in communities of identity” (Comaroff and Comaroff 206:235), this epic crime, the death of Nisman, provoked a “crisis of interpretation” (Grimson 2015), one that engendered more social division than imagined community. My third objective is, by focusing on these divisions, to explore the construction of authoritative knowledge and the production of truth(s), particularly in liminal circumstances. I consider how moments of rupture or surprise, like Nisman’s untimely death, open up multiple avenues for considering how narratives of truth are created, recreated, and circulate. Ultimately, I argue that debates over what constitutes authoritative knowledge structure the possibilities for creating ‘truth’ out of the unexpected.

In considering the processes of truth-making, I refer to the methods, mechanisms, and forms of interpretation that lead people to believe what they believe.² The Nisman case

invites us to explore truth-making not just at the institutional level as part of broader regimes or paradigms of truth (Foucault 2007; Reyna and Schiller 1998), nor through the technologies of truth (Merry and Coutin 2013), nor even exclusively mediated representations of truth (Goldstein 2012; Waisbord 2000), though all of these mattered and had their place. Rather, the case demands that we focus on the cacophony of produced truths, and their relationship to the desire to make sense out of eruptive, liminal events. As Alejandro Grimson has argued, “[Argentina] is going through a cultural crisis: the irruption of an act of great significance has affected our interpretive frameworks” and unleashed “a hermeneutic war,” one in which “to the pain and distress that Nisman’s death produced in us, we must add the distress of once again realizing that Argentina is a country that suffers from the cultural incapacity to share liminal experiences”³

² The information and my interpretations in this article are based on two kinds of data collection. First, I have closely followed journalistic coverage of the Nisman case, both in Argentine and foreign media, as well as holding numerous conversations, by phone, email, and social media, with close informants, friends, and contacts in Argentina. These people, drawn from the multiple sectors of my previous research, span the political and social spectrum. Second, I draw on my ethnographic understanding of the wider context and background for this death. I have been following the AMIA cases and doing research on the political and legal spheres in Argentina since 2000. I have published a

dissertation, a book, and several articles that discuss and analyze the AMIA bombing and the search for justice by the family members of victims. As part of this research, I had the opportunity to meet and interview Dr. Nisman soon after his appointment as head of the UFI-AMIA. I draw on my intimacy with cultural constructions of legality and legitimacy to analyze the social currency of forms of knowledge production.

³ *“Al dolor y la conmoción que nos produjo la muerte de Nisman, le sumamos la conmoción de volver a reconocer que Argentina es un país que padece la incapacidad cultural de compartir experiencias límites.”*

(Grimson 2015).⁴ In this paper, I explore the multifold processes of truth-making around this shocking event that seemed both to come out of nowhere and yet carry within it an interminable but seemingly familiar rabbit hole of interlinked conspiracy and secrecy, ultimately reinforcing a sense of ‘business as usual’. I explore how the many interpretations built on located and localized perspectives, that, for each, created the truth they so whole-heartedly believe.

In a 2006 article on the production and use of crime statistics in South Africa, Jean and John Comaroff delineate three dimensions of the ways in which the counting of crime “produce[s] the stuff of politics,” with politics understood as “the capacity to contrive or reproduce meaningful social categories” [Comaroff and Comaroff 2006:223-224]. The production of these meaningful social categories or accepted truths has an epistemic dimension, a strategic dimension, and a constitutive dimension. On an epistemic level, for those confronted with an unexpected event, the “truth” is ultimately unknowable, and thus we can and must choose from within a field of facts produced by different actors. The strategic dimension

⁴ I thank Leticia Barrera for pointing out this source to me.

involves marshalling the selected ‘evidence’ to advance, prove, or confirm your interpretation, to yourself and/or to others. In the constitutive dimension, adopting an interpretation makes the disorder that has been produced by the rupture of the known into something concrete and knowable. The new truth becomes a trope of interpersonal interaction, a vital idiom of public culture [Comaroff and Comaroff 2006:225]. In this “vernacular realism,” the inexplicable is explained and sense made [Comaroff and Comaroff 2006:215]. And yet in Argentina, the crisis of interpretation set loose by this liminal event has precluded the shared construction of a narrative, even a contested one. In the Nisman case, each of these dimensions operate in producing, not a unified or unifying new understanding, but multiple and conflicting interpretations within a swirling sphere of political turmoil.⁵

Carnegie Mellon University

⁵ Here, I use the word ‘political’ to denote both the “Politics” of interested public governance and the “politics” of producing meaningful social categories, a distinction described by the Comaroff and Comaroff in the cited article.

Blajberg, Israel , "Alguns Soldados e Marinheiros Judeus que se destacaram no Brasil Colônia e Império (1500-1889)."

Os primeiros homens do mar judeus do Brasil chegaram com a frota do descobrimento, comandada pelo Almirante Pedro Alvares Cabral, como Mestre João, médico particular da Coroa Portuguesa e astrônomo; e Gaspar da Gama, intérprete e comandante da nau que trazia mantimentos.

Destacaram-se nas lutas terrestres do século XVII os cristãos-novos MESTRE DE CAMPO ANTONIO RAPOSO TAVARES, O BANDEIRANTE (1598-1650) e Pedro Teixeira, Capitão-Mor do Grão-Pará, símbolo da luta pela soberania brasileira na Amazônia, conquistou o Rio das Amazonas e descobriu o Negro.

No Império Leão Amzalak era Oficial de Marinha. Filho de Isaac Amzalak, da Bahia, e irmão das três beldades - Simy, Esther e Mary Roberta - que Castro Alves immortalizou.

FRANCISCO LEÃO COHN em 1842 era Major e Ajudante de Ordens do Comandante da Guarda Nacional. Quando irrompeu a guerra com o Paraguai a Guarda foi convocada e o Tenente-coronel Cohn designado Comandante do primeiro contingente do Rio de Janeiro.

Livo publicado em 2015

Estrela de David no Cruzeiro do Sul (Blajberg, Israel)

Dissertation Abstracts

Yitzhak Lewis, Writing the Margin: Rabbi Nachman of Braslav, Jorge Luis Borges and the Question of Jewish Writing

The present project draws a comparison between the literature and thought of Hasidic Rabbi Nachman of Braslav (1772–1810) and Argentine writer and public intellectual Jorge

Luis Borges (1899–1986). It is organized around two components of their writing—a discursive selfpositioning at “the edge” of tradition and a “cabbalistic” stylization of

their narratives. The dissertation contextualizes these components within late eighteenth century Enlightenment ideology and emancipation policies, and mid-twentieth century political ideologies of Nazism and Fascism, respectively. The dissertation is bookended by a close comparative reading of their stories. It finds that each in his moment is greatly implicated in questions of resituating Jews and Judaism within broader society, and argues that the effort to aesthetically represent the changing social location of Jews is linked to their understanding of their respective literary projects more broadly. Finally, the study illuminates their shared conceptualization of modern Judaism as a

Columbia University/ the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research

Mirna Vohnsen. Rethinking *Argentinidad*: Portrayals of Jews in Contemporary Argentine Cinema

The dissertation focuses on the representation of the Jews of Argentina in contemporary Argentine cinema. In order to demonstrate that Jewishness and *argentinidad* are compatible identities, various films produced by Jewish and non-Jewish Argentine directors are scrutinized, approaching the films as cinematic representations of culture. The study argues that cinema negotiates the *argentinidad* of Jewish Argentines, thereby adding to the mosaic that is the imagined community of

literary model. The dissertation's broader intervention in the field of early modern and modern literature relates to the dynamic of rupture and continuity that is so central to categorizations of modern writing. It demonstrates that the fault lines of the rupture from tradition, vis-à-vis which modern literature has been constructed, was already present—poetically and discursively—in the “tradition” from which it purportedly departs. By combining the study of diverse geographies, histories, languages, cultures and genres, the present study articulates a comparative frame that challenges conventional categorizations of modern writing.

Argentina. With the exception of the first chapter, which is a historical exposition of Jewish presence in Argentina, national cinema and *argentinidad*, the subsequent four chapters are thematically organized: Chapter Two deals with rural immigration and the figure of the Jewish *gaucho*; Chapter Three concerns itself with the cultural memory of the traumatic AMIA bombing; Chapter Four centres on the Jewish family, drawing particular attention to the father-son relationship; and Chapter Five attends to

another familial issue, namely the intermarriage between a Jew and a Gentile. The investigation claims that in contemporary Argentine cinema the Jews of Argentina have moved from the margins to the centre of filmic narratives. This shift has entailed not only more rounded depictions of Jewish Argentines but also a reassessment of the imagined community of Argentina and thereby *argentinidad*. Thus, cinema becomes

an arena of identity negotiation in which films portraying Argentina's Jews mirror the cultural multiplicity of everyday Jewish life in the country and revisit the fluid boundaries of national and ethnic identities. Ultimately, contesting upheld views of the Jew as Other, the cinematic portrayals of Jews convey the idea that they are indeed *argentinos de verdad*.

University College Dublin