Introduction

Nathan Abrams, Nir Cohen

➡ For additional information about this article

https://muse.jhu.edu/article/537263

Introduction

Nathan Abrams and Nir Cohen

Jewish film and television is a highly dynamic niche with its own specific histories, identities, agents, productions, production contexts, industries, and festivals. Reflecting this dynamism, university film and media courses and programs, adult education programs, and film festivals related to the field have rapidly expanded over the last few decades. There are many potential approaches to its systematic study that have not yet been explored, nurtured, or consolidated. In this introductory essay, we aim to provide a survey of the field to date and to suggest some future directions for research, for which this new journal aims to serve as a forum.

To date the field of Jewish film and television studies can be divided into two key areas: The first is the changing history and problematic nature of the representation of the Holocaust since the first documentary footage and films of the camps appeared, and continuing up to the present.[1] The second area is that of the "image" of "the Jew."[2] In the case of the latter, scholarship is primarily focused on the shifting formulation of U.S. cinematic and televisual Jewishness as a response to the ongoing crisis in the construction of Jewish-American identity during the twentieth century. Such studies are largely confined to the period before 1990. Two important and valuable works stand out in this respect: Lester D. Friedman's *Hollywood's Image of the Jew* (1982) and Patricia Erens's *The Jew in American Cinema* (1984).[3] Taking a diachronic and chronological approach, both books cover a vast range of cinematic representations of American Jews from the silent era to the early 1980s. However, their commendable breadth of coverage is undermined by

the lack of detail, so the analysis of each particular film is restricted. There have also been, among others, studies of the Jewish-American moguls, Hollywood and anti-Semitism, and Jewish-American directors.[4] Surveys of television have largely been restricted to the United States, with a particular emphasis on sitcoms.[5]

More recent books have built upon this pioneering work, and have also updated and expanded it. Nathan Abrams and David L. Reznik (whose books are reviewed in this issue) in particular focus on the "contemporary" period, which Abrams defines as commencing in 1990 and continuing to the present.[6] Unlike Reznik, who restricts himself to Hollywood and Jewish-American identity, Abrams takes a wider and more ambitious remit than simply "American cinema" to redress the curious lack of writing on how Jews have been depicted through cinema *as a whole*. Certainly the U.S. entertainment industries predominate in the production and distribution of films and television programs, particularly with regard to Jewish representations, but few studies have tended to encompass productions beyond the United States or beyond the Holocaust genre. Joel Rosenberg's superb overview of film production and the scholarly approach to it, for example, is marred only by its limitations to the United States, reflecting the dominant proportion of Jewish film produced there in comparison to the rest of the world.[7]

Lawrence Baron's 2011 anthology, *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema*, introduces a new approach.[8] Baron assembled an ambitious collection aiming to cover more than a century of cinematic representations of Jews, Jewishness, and Judaism dispersed over a wide geographical area. In addition to the twin Jewish filmmaking poles of the United States and Israel, films from the United Kingdom, Italy, Hungary, Mexico, and Argentina are considered. The fifty-four chapter book also spans the history of cinema from Yiddish silents through to *A Serious Man* (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2009). In so doing, Baron is to be congratulated for acknowledging that the world of Jewish cinema is in fact "global" and that there is indeed a *world* of cinema beyond the United States and Israel, one that is not based entirely on either anti-Semitism or the Holocaust. This global scope and context allows for comparative themes to emerge, showing how, for example, national cinemas have developed in contrast to one another, and by not suggesting a simplistic model in which the United States, as the paradigmatic cinema in Jewish terms, is copied across the world. Thus the collection allows readers to compare for the first time the specificities of different Jewish cinematic experiences, at varying points in the twentieth century, in one volume. It is this type of approach that we hope to build upon.

A series of political, sociological, and economic changes, which the aforementioned books cover, have led to the appearance of more Jews on global screens than ever before, as these new Jewish identities are increasingly mapped onto cinematic, televisual, and other representations. Wealthier, more middle class, better educated—both in secular and Jewish terms—and more integrated into their countries of birth, Jews increasingly feel confident and comfortable. They no longer see themselves as immigrants or as having had to fight for their rights, as they are increasingly appointed to high-level positions in many areas of public life. Few areas or professions are restricted anymore.

The growth of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism has encouraged Jews not only to maintain but also to exhibit pride in their ethnic identities. They have begun to define their Jewishness in ways different from those of their parents and grandparents, no longer feeling that they are "in the Diaspora" but rather that they are "at home."[9] They are increasingly "post-denominational," rejecting institutional and communal norms in favor of something more fluid, labile, and spiritually and intellectually fulfilling.

Changes in the entertainment industries and funding sources also helped to kick-start the careers of younger Jewish filmmakers in Europe. A growth of funding schemes and shorts competitions, along with the proliferation of film production courses, created a climate of newfound energy, confidence, and optimism in the 1990s. Jewish filmmakers obviously benefited from this environment and from the financial support offered by a complex network of funding bureaucracies, government film funds, television money, and private investment, particularly those offered within the European Union. The filmmakers' middle-class backgrounds, film-school training, and access to national and international financial support allowed them to innovate.

In Eastern and Central Europe, as a result of the collapse of Communism and the breakup of the Soviet Union, films from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Russia reflected on Jewish life in an unprecedented way. In Western Europe—especially France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—films explored working-class Jewish identity, Jewish history and culture, interfaith relationships, and the struggle to "pass," without always referencing the traditional themes of prejudice, anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust. Beyond the United States and Europe, new Jewish films and television programs also appeared in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, and Mexico, providing a broader palette beyond the usual strokes of Anglophone Ashkenazi

"white" Jewishness (a tendency Baron's aforementioned edited volume explores). These developments have been the subject of various studies.[10]

In Israel bolder films and television programs—in comparison to earlier Israeli productions—have emerged as well. These have tackled topics such as homosexuality in the military, Palestinian-Jewish relationships, suicide bombings, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and the lives of returning prisoners of war. The warm critical and commercial international reception of such recent films attests to the growing interest foreign audiences have in learning what Israelis (both Jewish and non-Jewish) think of the political, social, and cultural issues that shape their lives and those of the Palestinians living under Israeli military occupation.[11] Alongside feature films, there have been a growing number of documentary films made in recent years that explore such sensitive issues within contemporary Israeli society as the memory of the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[12] These developments have been the subject of growing scholarly inquiry over the past three decades. Indeed, Ella Shohat produced the first comprehensive scholarly study of Israeli cinema in 1989 (a revised version of which came out in 2010), and a series of further essays and books published in the last two decades has widened and elaborated on her pioneering work.[13]

It is also worth singling out Israeli television here. Israel's TV industry is currently so successful in producing dramas (among other shows) that their formats are now exported and adapted into U.S. Anglophone versions—a topic that should be explored in greater depth.[14]

Yet despite the strides that are being made in non-Anglophone, non-Israeli, non-American film and television studies, there is still more work to be done to open up the field of study to the *global* Jewish experience, especially in trans-historical and transnational terms. The parameters of Jewish film and television studies have been geographically limited, tending to focus on individual countries. Consequently, transnational, global, and comparative perspectives have not yet been studied to any great extent. A comparative approach would not only enable us to trace similar themes and concerns but also, and perhaps more important, allow us to focus on the differences, and to explore in greater depth why such differences did and continue to arise. Comparing the United Kingdom to France, for example, would open up valuable areas for consideration, not least why French Jewish films are typically bolder and more commercially successful than their British counterparts, an obvious example being Mathieu Kassovitz's 1995 film *La Haine*.

What Is Jewish Film and Television?

In addition to the lack of global studies of Jewish television and film, the field has also been slow to open itself to mainstream theory and methodology more generally. A promising sign, however, is that more work is beginning to incorporate the growing field of cultural theory, including the contributions of Homi K. Bhabha, Jean-Paul Sartre, Frantz Fanon, Sigmund Freud, and Jean-Francois Lyotard, as well as the expanding body of Jewish Cultural Studies scholarship, such as that of Sander Gilman and Daniel Boyarin.

While the incorporation of a broader theoretical framework into Jewish film and television studies is an important development, it may also present scholars with a set of new problems. The continuing tendency toward psychoanalytic film theory, with a particular preference for the likes of Laura Mulvey, Julia Kristeva, and Gilles Deleuze, for example, elides the historical specificity of many films, overlooking why and how films were produced by searching instead for such ahistorical cultural referents such as "the phallus," "the abject," or "the gaze." To date, for example, the majority of studies devoted to the British film *The Governess* (Sandra Goldbacher, 1998) ignores the UK context in which it was made in favor of an almost purely textual approach that considers little of the world beyond the film's diegesis. The lack of studies exploring the historical context, as well as the plethora of studies oriented toward psychoanalytic film theory, however, should not preclude the consideration of the specific conditions under which individual films were made.

Furthermore, to date only a few scholars outside Jewish studies have taken into account the Jewish backgrounds of so many producers, directors, and actors, or the relationship between their work and the presence (or absence) of Jewish themes in their films. As with many aspects of Jewish history and culture, issues regarding their visual representation on screen are often subsumed under the general rubric of ethnicity and film. In fact, if a scholar of Jewish studies wishes a wider market for his or her work, then using the tag "ethnic" rather than "Jewish" is a means of achieving that. Perhaps the reason for this is that many media scholars perceive Jewishness as simply "white," and/or empowered, rather than marginal, and therefore do not consider Jewish perspectives as important as other areas of study. To take but one example: the current subfield of analyzing neoliberalism with reference to homosocial genres, as pioneered by Jewish director Judd Apatow and his self-styled "Jew Tang Clan" ensemble of actors (Seth Rogen, Jason Segel, Jonah Hill, Paul Rudd, James Franco, and Jason Schwartzman), variously

called "bromances," "brom-coms," "homme-coms," and even "dick flicks," is a case in point, as few scholars consider the meshing between Jewishness and the masculinities on display in such films and why they may appeal to Jewish actors and their audiences.

One of the barriers to the crossover between more Jewish-focused study and the more general discussion of ethnicity is the tendency of Jewish studies to isolate itself from the mainstream through the possibly fruitless, yet frustratingly ongoing, discussion of what constitutes Jewishness in terms of Jewish film and television. Baron attempts a brief answer to that perennial question, "What is Jewish cinema?" He suggests: "Jewish cinema consists of films whose plots revolve around events or cultural, economic, gendered, political, personal, religious, or social complications that arise because their antagonists or protagonists are Jews."[15] Though helpfully succinct, this is a rather narrow definition. One of this journal's aims is to demonstrate how the definition of Jewish film reaches beyond the mere presence of overt Jewish characters, practices, or rituals—religious or otherwise—on the film's surface.

Indeed, until now Jewish film and television studies scholars have taken as their primary task "the locating, describing and analyzing of films in which identifiably Jewish characters appear or those in which Jewish issues figure into the plot," restricting themselves to "*explicit* content, assuming that Jews and their life, society and culture are being discussed or referred to *only* when they appear directly on screen."[16] In this way, scholars have taken on a very limited definition restricted to *visible* ethnicity and often restrict themselves to only Jewish practitioners or artists.

A new possible approach would be to embrace subsurface, implicit, symbolic, textually submerged, or conceptual Jewishness and Judaism—that is, where Jews, both ethnically and religiously defined, are conceptually rather than explicitly represented, and what this might mean for Jewish film, television, and new media studies. Jon Stratton has argued that in cinema and television there are many "Jewish moments"[17] in which the viewer is given the possibility of "reading Jewish," albeit not with certainty, by "employing a largely unconscious complex of codes that cross-check each other,"[18] of which the Jewish identities of actors or actresses are a key but by no means only part. The "real-life" status of the actor or actress behind the depiction can provide the viewer with a clue to reading Jewish in the conflation of the on-screen role or persona with off-screen real life. As Joel Rosenberg points out, "In theory, the ethnicity of an actor or

actress should be irrelevant to the role—acting, after all, is just that: acting—but broader ideological factors influence casting decisions, and these in turn become relevant to the film depiction of ethnic experience."[19] Furthermore, reading Jewish relies on locating identifiably Jewish characteristics, behaviors, beliefs, or other tics either explicitly or by a range of other signifiers, including looks, intellect, behavior, professions, names, physiognomy, foods, verbal and body language, phenotypes, religious practices, historical and cultural references, genre, speech patterns, accents, hairstyles, anxieties, neuroses, conflicts, traditions, and modernity, all of which require a prerequisite knowledge allowing individual viewers to decode them.[20]

Here we could follow the lead of Ella Shohat, who suggested that ethnicity inheres in many films, and not only in those where ethnic issues appear on the "epidermic" surface of the text.[21] Such an approach was undertaken to some extent by Leslie Kane with regard to the films (and plays) of David Mamet, revealing a rich Judaic reasoning for many of the significant choices Mamet made, for example, when he wrote the screenplay for the film *The Edge* (Lee Tamahori, 1997); the film is seemingly devoid of any reference to Judaism, but Kane reveals it to be otherwise.[22] Abrams undertook a similar analysis of Stanley Kubrick's horror masterpiece *The Shining* (1980) to argue that the biblical story of the binding of Isaac may lie at its heart.[23] Similarly, Geoffrey Cocks offers an exploration of the Holocaust in the films of Kubrick—the most extensive single study, to date, of how a secular, agnostic Jew like Kubrick, who rarely referred to or invoked his Jewishness in his films, used his background and upbringing in textually submerged ways. Cocks argued that although Kubrick intended to but never did make a film about the Holocaust, the film he ended up making on the subject, albeit obliquely, was *The Shining*. He attempted to prove—somewhat controversially it must be stated—that the auteur's use of color, music, theme, framing, and so on betrayed an obsession with World War II and the Shoah. Cocks did not confine himself to the study of *The Shining* alone but looked for similar markers in Kubrick's entire oeuvre.[24]

In addition to the objectives we've already outlined, this journal seeks to provide a forum for the many new and potential approaches to the study of Jewish screen media. It aims to locate the study of Jewish film, television, and new media in a global and comparative setting, seeking to negotiate but also to productively exploit the tension between a more multicultural Jewish studies and the impetus to explore the Jewish screen experience with increasing theoretical

and methodological complexity. Certainly, greater strides could be made in considering the theoretical, methodological, or ontological nature of the media themselves and how this consideration intersects with Jewish studies. Numerous and recent developments in Jewish studies invite new foci and directions for this field in that they move beyond a focus on the Jewish auteur (Woody Allen being a particular favorite) or actor/actress and consider wider developments that affect Jews in the many places where they live.[25] These topics include diasporic and transnational cinemas; the normalization of Jewish difference in multicultural societies; the redefinition or renewal of Jewishness in Europe; colonialism and post-colonialism; post-Zionism; postmodern Jewish popular culture; the renewal of Yiddish and *haredi*[26] culture; feminist and queer Jewish studies; trauma studies; and postmemory as well as prosthetic and multidirectional memory. We welcome articles—or whole issues—that embrace these topics, and some works are already in the planning.

Jewishness vs. Judaism

Although Jewish contributions to film and television both in front of and behind the camera have been extensively analyzed, comparatively little work has been done on Judaism as a system of beliefs, values, ethics, and practices; it frequently has been overshadowed by the tendency to focus either on "the image" of the ethnically defined Jew or Jewess or on the Holocaust in film. As a consequence it is possible to read entire books on these subjects that have almost no references to Judaism. This is the case because, in the past, scholarship has largely focused on ethnicity (Jewishness) as an analytic category for the study of Jewish representations and industry participation, as specifically religious Jewish traditions and practices were often absent from the films studied.

However, this situation is gradually changing as there are increasing numbers of films, television programs, and video games (as we shall see in what follows) in which Jews are defined religiously rather than solely ethnically. Greater exploration of the religious factor (Judaism) in contemporary screen media, therefore, is required. Such studies must start from the premise that there is a clear distinction between the racial, ethnic, political, and cultural identities of Jewishness on the one hand, and Judaism as a religion and set of beliefs, behaviors, and values on the other. Elliot Gertel began to map these representations, but his criticism of what he saw as their distortions of Judaism clouded what was an otherwise useful

survey.[27] But to Gertel can be added the useful work of others.[28] Taken together, these approaches look for signs in films in which Jews are treated explicitly as adherents to some sort of Judaic creed, whether Reform, Conservative, or *haredi*. They have discovered a new spectrum between the previous poles of secular and *haredi* which is being populated with different varieties of Judaism that have not been seen on screen before. "New" forms of religion, in screen terms, are being articulated in film. Furthermore, it is not just a question of the "representation" of religion: as more *haredi* adherents begin to make films about their lives from the inside, they are developing increasingly new ways by which religion shapes film at an aesthetic and epistemological level. Scholarship has yet to consider this relatively recent phenomenon to any great extent, however.

Jew vs. Jewess

Despite the steady growth of women's and gender studies, relatively little has been written about Jewish female representation in cinema, especially when compared with studies of Jewish women in television.[29] Perhaps this is explained by the fact that the Jewess on film suffered from consistent underrepresentation, being relegated to a limited number of secondary roles. Consequently, studies of the cinematic Jewess have generally been subsumed within studies of "the Jew in cinema": "the appellation 'Jew' assuming a study of the Jewish man as representative of the Jewish community."[30] If this scholarship tends to concentrate on "the Jew" (who is implicitly assumed to be male), it is because he drowns out by sheer force of numbers the Jewess who, for the most part, is defined by her absence. When she does appear, she rarely exists in her own right (although there are notable exceptions): she is defined largely by the viewpoint of and her relationship to the Jew. As late as 2006, one critic could title her article about Jewish women in film "Invisible in Hollywood."[31] The study of the cinematic Jewess is further hindered by the theoretical trends within the wider field of Jewish studies of which it is a part. Explorations of the feminization of the Jew (such as the work of Daniel Boyarin) further render invisible the Jewess and prevent the examination of her representation.[32] As Ann Pelligrini stated, "*All Jews are womanly, but no women are Jews.*"[33]

Studies have also been confined to examining a limited range of women and works, in particular Barbra Streisand and the aforementioned film *The Governess*. Although the Jewess is reduced to secondary roles and appears less frequently

than her male counterpart, this cannot justify the relative lack of scholarship devoted to her; accordingly, we seek articles that rectify this imbalance and build on existing and new scholarship.[34]

Jewish New Media

The limitations that apply to film and television are exacerbated when applied to the nascent field of Jewish new media. Jewish studies cannot be blamed for this reality, however, as new media scholarship and pedagogy is just taking off in general. (We get the sense that it is still a discipline in flux—that is, still in the process of working out its paradigms and boundaries.) The apparent "slow" pace of Jewish studies must be contextualized in light of the overall slow pace of scholarly and institutional adaptation to the digital humanities that is completely shaking up higher education around the globe.

Significant work on Jews, Judaism, and new media has begun to surface only recently. Existing Jewish studies scholarship on new media has tended to focus on what happens online, exploring such issues as Judaism and Second Life, the relationship between religion and interactive technology, and how young people engage with Judaism virtually. The Modiya Project and the Jewish New Media Innovation Fund, for example, are extending research and practical projects into such new media tools as digital video.[35] But, as might be expected, while research into online Judaism has been growing, it is restricted both geographically and denominationally in that it is largely confined to the United States and Israel and *haredim*; by its very nature, such research has limited use in generalizing overall patterns to fit non-*haredi* Jews. Moreover, little of this research has explicitly explored the *visual* dimension of new media. Consequently, still less has been written about video art and how Jews use digital technologies, although there are some existing studies.[36]

Finally, images of Jews in video games have yet to be fully explored. This is in part because, in general, representations of race and ethnicity in video games are relatively unexplored and thus under-theorized.[37] Furthermore, although there has been some research into religion in games, at the time of this writing very little indeed has been written on the portrayal of Judaism in games, especially in games that deal with epistemological questions on the nature of religion itself.[38]

This is not because of an absence of material for study. Although little commented upon, Jews in various guises appear in a series of popular entertainment

and educational video games, some of which are adaptations of mainstream films that often perpetuate long-held stereotypes. This does not even include the range of subsurface, implicit, symbolic, textually submerged, or conceptually Jewish representations; for example, the depiction of goblins in the game versions of *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, or other adaptations which, it could be argued, tap into longstanding anti-Semitic stereotypes of the Jew. However, to date there has been no systematic academic study of this phenomenon, although a forthcoming book chapter offers a model of how to explore Judaism in video games through a specific case study.[39]

Video games are a potentially fascinating area for further study. They are worthy of consideration in that, while they replicate the stereotypical discourses of anti-Semitic propaganda, they are by their very nature innovative: they create something that is qualitatively different by producing a less passive relationship between the consumer and text. Arguably, the game format allows for an unlimited and unlimitable range of representations to be produced, in contrast to other media where notions of photorealism or greater censorship might apply. Potentially, the only limiting factors are within the terms of the game itself, which is boosted by games' relative lack of the censorship that governs other media.[40] Yet, given this context, it is interesting to note that, in a genre that allows for almost unlimited and infinite variety of possibilities, and in which the boundaries of censorship and classification are neither fixed nor rigid, age-old stereotyped images of Jews—as criminals, as *haredim*, as victims (in particular Holocaust victims), and as uncommonly smart, devious, and calculating—are perpetuated. They seem to exploit stereotypes in a more apparent manner than other forms of media. Perhaps this is attributable to the newness of the games industry, and that what we are looking at is comparable to the early film studios which, during their nascent and silent period, tended to restrict themselves to overtly racialized portraits of Jews. Maybe video games are often neglected, despite their strong popular appeal and economic relevance, because they are considered to be less relevant in cultural discourse and thus less subject to media critique.

The relationship between the game and the gamer is more complex than that between consumers and other media. The notion of agency here is the key, as the video-game player is doing more than just responding to stimuli provided by the game. Often games involve highly complex processes that require manipulation and exploration of the virtual environment. The online gaming character becomes the "surrogate" for the offline player: there is a melding of the characters' goals

and game-world values with the player who must attempt to inhabit the world of the game to succeed.

Do video games merely reinforce and intensify received cultural stereotypes, or do they contain the potential to challenge and undermine them? While the nexus between video games and gamer is complex, perhaps more so than in other media, games can be used to convey persuasive ideological messages, since they are about taking on an identity, inhabiting a player, and making choices. Thus video games have the potential to challenge existing stereotypes or to strongly reinforce them. Since the relationship between the gamer and the character is less passive, less one-way, in that the player "occupies" or makes decisions for the character, the relationship between the gamer and the stereotype needs to be considered. Until research is done on the impact on gamers—which has yet to happen—we will not know if they are inclined to challenge stereotypes or to reinforce them.

Significantly, although there are Jews working in the games and new media industries, video games have not yet been seen as a ripe area for exploitation of Jewish themes, unlike the case for film, television, literature, and many other forms of popular culture. Perhaps this will change, and the nature or number of games featuring Jewish characters will alter along with them. In a world of horizontal integration and cross-media ownership, the impact of games on film and television may yet well be huge. As cultural and technological artifacts, video games are part of the increasing convergence that is taking place among different media such as film, television, and the internet. To this end, methodologies and critiques from a variety of disciplines will offer contributions when applied together with the relatively new approaches of game studies.

Our Aims and Goals

An underlying concern with all research in these areas is the potential impact of the images and representations depicted on-screen, even if they are not explored as such. (Jewish film, television, and new media studies are seemingly little concerned with actual reception, preferring to consider the potential or possible effects.) As film and television mutate into digital, and new media play an increasingly prominent role in our lives, the relationship between audiences and what they are consuming will change in unexpected ways. The potential challenge that lies ahead, therefore, is to develop and explore not just new ways of looking at older

media but also the new ways in which we interact with those media. Games, digital art, and digital video explicitly foreground these issues, but they are just as applicable to film and television as well.

Jewish Film & New Media: An International Journal aims, therefore, to remedy these gaps by providing, for the first time, a dedicated platform for those already within the field, those new to it, and those publishing under this specific rubric. It intends to provide an outlet for research into all aspects of Jewish film, television, and new/digital media, moving beyond the traditional trends in Jewish film and television studies (namely the representation of the Holocaust and the image of the ethnically defined "Jew," who is implicitly assumed to be male) and, as its subtitle suggests, the U.S. and Israeli contexts.

While the journal aims to be inclusive of audio and visual arts or digital media, this material should be discussed in relation to film and television so as to retain the journal's unique scope and focus. *Jewish Film & New Media* is unique in its interdisciplinary nature, exploring rich and diverse cultural heritages across the globe. The journal is distinctive in its bringing together a range of national cinemas and television, films, TV programs, and other media in one volume, and in its positioning of the discussions within a range of contexts—cultural, historical, textual, and many others.

The journal has an international dimension and an inclusive editorial policy. By bringing together scholars in a variety of disciplines located in a number of countries, and working from a range of theoretical approaches and methodologies, it will widen the parameters of Jewish film, television, and new media studies. Its contents will not be limited to a single region but will welcome contributions about any geographical region, relevant historical period, single film, genre, director, or country. It should be noted that many members of our editorial board, a blend of more established and junior proactive scholars, are based in—or conduct research on and publish in—non-Anglophone countries and work in various languages (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian, and Hebrew, to name just a few). We hope that, in light of the expansion of university film and media courses and programs, the journal will facilitate discussion relating to Jewish film, television, and new media, and will provide a key resource for academic study and research, as well as for informed lay readers and film festival attendees and organizers.

The First Issue

This first issue is by no means comprehensive in its offerings but aims to point the way to the sort of submissions we would like to encourage. Vincent Brook opens with a consideration of Sidney Lumet, a sometimes overlooked Jewish director who worked within the Hollywood system. Taking an auteurist approach, Brook explores Lumet's longstanding concern with *tikkun olam*, or social justice, seeking to uncover both the overt and subtextual Jewish thematic in his oeuvre. Nir Cohen considers a British-produced, English-language television series set in Israel. Such a single text–focused study is of particular interest for at least two reasons: First, despite the number of British-produced films and television programs with Jewish themes, the UK—which has a history of Jewish participation both in front of and behind the camera from the very inception of those media, and whose Jewish community is the second largest in Western Europe—has historically been understudied when it comes to Jewish film and television. Second, Britain is often considered to be the global capital of the "new" anti-Semitism, which seeks to delegitimize Israel through an overwhelmingly anti-Zionist discourse; a left-wing Jewish text that emerges from this context may shed interesting light on both the production and the reception of such issues. Finally, Yaron Peleg explores a significant shift in values in Israel—from secular and liberal values to more fundamentalist religious ones—as it is portrayed in the film *God's Neighbors* (Menny Ya'ish, 2012). The film, argues Peleg, relegitimizes Jewish religiosity and declares it as the new Israeli hegemony. This development stands in sharp contrast to the secular nature of classic Zionism on which Israel was based. This essay, and the film it analyzes, are further evidence of the central role Israeli cinema has in portraying and responding to social, cultural, and political concerns in contemporary Israeli society.

We have also published a short report by Andrew Spicer on the British-Jewish mogul Michael Klinger, which contains information on a valuable resource that may be of interest to our readers in their own scholarship. This article is followed by several book reviews; however, we welcome suggestions for reviews of not just books but also films, film festivals, DVDs, websites, games, and any other resources of use and interest to those studying Jewish film, television, and new media. We look forward to receiving your suggestions.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Nathan Abrams is a senior lecturer in film studies at Bangor University in Wales. He has published extensively on Jewish film and new media, including most recently *The New Jew in Film: Exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema* (Rutgers University Press, 2012). He is currently working on two book-length projects: the first explores the ethnicity in the films of Stanley Kubrick, while the second is titled *The Hidden Presence of Jews in British Film and Television* (contracted to Northwestern University Press). n.abrams@bangor.ac.uk

Nir Cohen teaches film studies and Israel studies at Penn State University. He is the author of *Soldiers, Rebels, and Drifters: Gay Representation in Israeli Cinema* (Wayne State University Press, 2012). nuc14@psu.edu

Notes

1. The scholarship here is voluminous, but a few representative monographs include Ilan Avisar, *Screening the Holocaust: Cinema's Images of the Unimaginable* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Lawrence Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Omer Bartov, *The "Jew" in American Cinema: From the Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Judith E. Doneson, *The Holocaust in American Film* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1987); Joshua F. Hirsch, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Giacomo Lichtner, *Film and the Shoah in France and Italy* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008); Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

2. Lester D. Friedman, *Hollywood's Image of the Jew* (New York: Ungar, 1982); Patricia Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); J. Hoberman and Jeffrey Shandler, *Entertaining America: Jews, Movies, and Broadcasting* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Michael Taub, *Films About Jewish Life and Culture* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edward Mellen, 2005).

3. Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema*; Friedman, *Hollywood's Image of the Jew*.

4. Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (London: W. H. Allen, 1988); Steven Carr, *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism: A Cultural History*

up to World War II (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); David Desser and Lester D. Friedman, *American-Jewish Filmmakers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Sarah Blacher Cohen, ed., *From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983); Hoberman and Shandler, eds., *Entertaining America: Jews, Movies, and Broadcasting*; Taub, *Films About Jewish Life and Culture*.

5. See, for example, Jeffrey Shandler, "Is There a Jewish Way to Watch Television? Notes from a Tuned-In Ethnographer," *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* 16:1 (1994), 19–22; Jonathan Pearl and Judith Pearl, *The Chosen Image: Television's Portrayal of Jewish Themes and Characters* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1999); Neal Gabler, Frank Rich, and Joyce Antler, eds., *Television's Changing Image of American Jews* (Los Angeles: American Jewish Committee, 2000); Vincent Brook, *Something Ain't Kosher Here: The Rise of the Jewish Sitcom* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003); David Zurawik, *The Jews of Prime Time* (Lebanon, N.H.: Brandeis University Press/ University Press of New England, 2003); Elliot B. Gertel, *Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2003); Rosalin Krieger, "'Does He Actually Say the Word Jewish?'—Jewish Representations in *Seinfeld*," *Journal for Cultural Research* 7:4 (2003), 387–404.

6. Nathan Abrams, *The New Jew in Film: Exploring Jewishness and Judaism in Contemporary Cinema* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2012); David L. Reznik, *New Jews?: Race and American Jewish Identity in 21st-Century Film* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm, 2012).

7. Joel Rosenberg, "Jewish Experience on Film—An American Overview," in *American Jewish Year Book, 1996* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1996), 3–50.

8. Lawrence Baron, *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2011).

9. Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

10. See Baron, *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema*; Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, "'Reelizing' Arab and Jewish Ethnicity in Mexican Film," *The Americas* 63:2 (2006), 261–280; Carolina Rocha, "Jewish Cinematic Self-Representations in Contemporary Argentine and Brazilian Films," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 9:1 (2010), 37–48; Lutz Koepnick, "Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and Holocaust in the 1990s," *New German Critique* (special issue on Postwall Cinema) 87 (2002), 47–82; "Jews in British Cinema," *Journal of European Popular Culture* (special issue) 3:2 (October

2012); Valérie Pozner and Natacha Laurent, eds., *Kinojudaica: L'image des juifs dans le cinéma russe et soviétique* (Toulouse: La Cinémathèque de Toulouse, 2012).

11. *Ajami* (Scandar Copti and Yaron Shani, 2009); *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008); *Beaufort* (Joseph Cedar, 2007); *Lebanon* (Samuel Maoz, 2009); and *To Fill the Void* (Rama Burshtein, 2012).

12. Recent examples are *The Gatekeepers* (Dror Moreh, 2012); *5 Broken Cameras* (co-directed by Palestinian Emad Burnat and Israeli Guy Davidi, 2011); and *A Film Unfinished* (Yael Hersonski, 2010).

13. Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema East/West and the Politics of Representation*, 2d ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010); *Fictive Looks: On Israeli Cinema* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Open University, 1998), ed. Nurit Gertz, Orly Lubin, and Judd Ne'eman; Yosefa Loshitzky, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); Raz Yosef, *Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Nurit Gertz, *Holocaust Survivors, Aliens and Others in Israeli Cinema and Literature* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved [Ofakim], Open University, 2004); Nir Cohen, *Soldiers, Rebels, and Drifters: Gay Representation in Israeli Cinema* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012); and *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion*, ed. Miri Talmon and Yaron Peleg (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

14. *Hatufim* (Prisoners of War), created by Gideon Raff, has inspired the award-winning American show *Homeland*; *BeTipul*, created by Hagai Levi, is the basis of the American show *In Treatment*; and the sitcom *Ramzor*, created by Adir Miller, was adapted into a (short-lived) American version, *Traffic Light*.

15. Baron, *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema*, 4.

16. Sonya Michel, "Jews, Gender, American Cinema," in *Feminist Perspectives on Jewish Studies*, ed. Lynn Davidman and Shelly Tenenbaum (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 248, 249; emphasis in the original.

17. Jon Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish: Constructing Ambivalent Identities* (London: Routledge, 2000), 300.

18. Henry Bial, *Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage and Screen* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 70.

19. Rosenberg, "Jewish Experience on Film," 26.

20. See Krieger, "'Does He Actually Say the Word Jewish?'" and Bial, *Acting Jewish*.

21. Ella Shohat, "Ethnicities-in-Relation: Toward a Multicultural Reading of American Cinema," in *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema*, ed. Lester D. Friedman (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 215.

22. Leslie Kane, *Weasels and Wisemen: Ethics and Ethnicity in the Work of David Mamet* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

23. Nathan Abrams, "'A double set of glasses': Stanley Kubrick and the Midrashic Mode of Interpretation," in *De-Westernizing Film Studies*, ed. Saer Maty Ba and Will Higbee (London: Routledge, 2012), 141–151.

24. Geoffrey Cocks, *The Wolf at the Door: Stanley Kubrick, History, and the Holocaust* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

25. There are numerous studies of Allen's work, including a new volume currently in preparation, to which Abrams has contributed, titled *Woody on Rye: Jewishness in the Films and Plays of Woody Allen*, ed. Vincent Brook and Marat Grinberg (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2013).

26. *Haredi* (plural: *haredim*) literally means "one who trembles," deriving from Isaiah 66:5, in which the prophet admonishes his people, "Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble [*haredim*] at His word." It is often confused with the much more common term—in American English at least—*Hasidic*. *Haredi* is frequently translated as "ultra-Orthodox," a definition that does not do justice to an extensive and nuanced term that covers a range of Jews who fall into this category but not all of whom are "Orthodox" in the strictest definition of that term.

27. Gertel, *Over the Top Judaism*.

28. Margaret R. Miles, *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996); Pearl and Pearl, *The Chosen Image*; Melanie J. Wright, *Religion and Film: An Introduction* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006); Melanie J. Wright, "Judaism," in *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film*, ed. John Lyden (London: Routledge, 2009), 91–108; Allison Smith, "Judaism and Jewishness in Film," in *The Continuum Companion to Religion and Film*, ed. William L. Blizek (London: Continuum, 2009), 167–176; Abrams, *The New Jew in Film*, esp. chap. 6.

29. Joyce Antler, ed., *Talking Back: Images of Jewish Women in American Popular Culture* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 1998); Sylvia Barack Fishman, *I of the Beholder: Jews and Gender in Film and Popular Culture* (Boston: Hadassah Research Institute on Jewish Women, 1998); Joyce Antler, "Jewish Women on Television: Too Jewish or Not Enough?" in *Talking Back*, ed. Joyce Antler, 242–252.

30. Judith Lewin, "The Sublimity of the Jewish Type: Balzac's *belle Juive* as Virgin Magdalene aux camelias," in *Jewish Cultural Studies: Expression, Identity, and Representation*, ed. Simon J. Bronner (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), 239.

31. Gail Dines, "Invisible in Hollywood: Jewish Women," *Boston Globe*, January 16, 2006, www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2006/01/16/ invisible_in_hollywood_jewish_women/, last accessed May 2010.

32. Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

33. Ann Pellegrini, "Whiteface Performances: 'Race,' Gender, and Jewish Bodies," in *Jews and Other Differences: The New Jewish Cultural Studies*, edited by Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 109; emphasis in the original.

34. Michele Byers, "The Pariah Princess: Agency, Representation, and Neoliberal Jewish Girlhood," *Girlhood Studies* 2:2 (2009), 33–54; idem, "Jewish Girls in British Cinema," *Journal of European Popular Culture* 3:2 (2012), 169–180.

35. See http://modiya.nyu.edu and www.jewishnewmedia.org/2011-2012-award-recipients/.

36. Margaret Olin, "Graven Images on Video? The Second Commandment and Jewish Identity," *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 22:1 (2000), 7–30; Lisa E. Bloom, *Jewish Identities in American Feminist Art: Ghosts of Ethnicity* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Norman L. Kleeblatt, ed., *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Juliet Steyn, ed., *Other Than Identity: The Subject, Politics and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); idem., *The Jew: Assumptions of Identity* (London: Cassell, 1999); Rachel Garfield, "Acting Out and the Archive: Negotiating Jewish Subjectivity in Contemporary Lens Based Art," in *Routledge Handbook to Modern Jewish Cultures*, ed. Nadia Valman and Laurence Roth (New York: Routledge, forthcoming).

37. Vit Sisler, "Digital Arabs: Representation in Video Games," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11:2 (2008), 203–220.

38. See, for example, Mark Cameron Love, "Not-So-Sacred Quests: Religion, Intertextuality, and Ethics in Video Games," *Religious Studies and Theology* 29:2 (2010), 191–213; Anna Piskorowski-Adams, "Films, Frames and Videogames: Religious Insights into Media," *Religious Studies and Theology* 29:2 (2010), 139–142.

39. Nathan Abrams and Isamar Carrillo Masso, "The Pixelated Jew/ess: Exploring Judaism in Video Games," in *Finding Religion in Digital Gaming*, ed. Heidi Campbell and Greg Grieve (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

40. Typically, it is the responsibility of the game distributor or developer to decide whether a game requires statutory classification, but in the United States games fall under the umbrella of the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech. Games that are modified by the gamers in ways the developers did not intend fly under the radar.