

Introduction: When Feminism and Antisemitism Collide

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Antisemitism and misogyny often go hand in hand.¹ Conservative defenders of the status quo who target Jews frequently oppose feminism as well. Jewish women cannot escape from the negative stereotypes also aimed at their male counterparts, and they contend with additional gendered stereotypes. Negotiation of these issues becomes even more complex when one considers how both Jewishness and gender identity are often perceived or assigned by the beholder, perhaps particularly in the context of antisemitism and misogyny. Karl Lueger, the influential mayor of Vienna from 1897 to 1910 who “legitimized antisemitism in Austrian politics,” famously declared “I decide who is a Jew” (Geehr 436). This line underscores the extent to which prejudices and opportunities can shift depending on political context and the whims of those in positions of power. Contemporary scholarship, literature, and popular culture address the intersection of these two forms of prejudice by interrogating the perniciousness of antisemitism and the pervasive nuances of misogyny.

Many Jewish women and feminist leaders in German-speaking lands have sought to combat both, sometimes encountering opposition from right-wing groups or from other German feminists who harbored a more covert form of antisemitism. Bertha Pappenheim, founder of the *Jüdischer Frauenbund* (League of Jewish Women), noted in 1934, “It is exceedingly demanding to be a German, a woman, and a Jew today. However, because these three duties are also three sources of spiritual strength, they do not cancel each other out. On the contrary, they strengthen and enrich one another” (Loentz 87–88). Although Pappenheim (discussed in Elizabeth Loentz’s

article in this issue) wrote these words at a particularly fraught moment for considering the interplay of feminism and antisemitism—indeed, at a time when hybrid German-Jewish-female identity was under direct attack—she was not alone in considering such concerns.

This special issue of *Feminist German Studies* investigates past and present-day tensions between feminist objectives and antisemitic sentiments. Our point of inquiry encompasses theoretical approaches to forms of antisemitism that specifically target women; historical, literary, and cultural responses to antisemitism, including how it interacts with misogyny; and issues related to scholarship in this field today. Although the term *antisemitism* (*Antisemitismus*) is a late-nineteenth-century invention that was shaped by ideas of race at the time, negative or otherizing attitudes toward Jews from earlier periods have carried into the present and have been crucial to how minority/minoritized groups and minority women have been portrayed in German culture. The broader impact of antisemitic characterizations on women's lives and cultural production is also of interest in this issue, as in the case of women and non-binary writers who have responded in their work to anti-Jewish and/or gender-based discrimination (for example, represented in this issue: Else Lasker-Schüler, Annette Eick, Adriana Altaras, Mirna Funk, Deborah Feldman, and Sasha Marianna Salzmann). In focusing primarily on women writers, the articles in this issue shift focus away from the male writers and so-called canonical works of intellectual history that often dominate conversations about German-Jewish literature.

Since at least the Middle Ages, representations of Jews have generally focused on Jewish men. Misogyny both within and outside of Jewish communities has placed men in the foreground. In many cases, Jewish women are simply absent or effaced from the record.² Indeed, Jewishness has usually been coded as male, with the exception of a few representations from earlier centuries, such as the supersessionist allegory of Synagoga as a blind woman (in contrast

to clear-sighted Ecclesia, the Holy Church, also depicted as a woman) that appears in medieval sites such as the Strasbourg cathedral (Lipton 5). This coding is in part due to the easy recognizability of Jewish male ritual garments and the so-called marked bodies beneath them.³ In her study of medieval anti-Jewish iconography, Sara Lipton notes that Jewish women were not visually distinguishable in high medieval art, in contrast to their male counterparts (203). Later generations of (primarily male) artists and writers were more likely to represent Jewish women as exoticized beauties, following Orientalist tropes, or to reproduce stereotypes of social-climbing, coarse-featured consumers.

It is worthwhile to reflect on how identifications of Jewish women focused more on their roles as women than as Jews from medieval contexts to the present. Writing about Jewish religious life in medieval European regions that are today in Germany and Northern France, Elisheva Baumgarten points out that gender is a category that serves to differentiate, but also fosters comparisons, between Jews and Christians: “gender can reveal divisions and commonalities, while it also exposes power struggles and ideological shifts, since women and their bodies frequently personified cultural borders and barriers” (14–15). She further contends that some researchers have been “far less hesitant to categorize Jewish and Christian women as a homogenous group” defined by their gender than they are with their respective male coreligionists (15). In other words, Jewish women were often considered less visible as Jews (Wallach, *Passing Illusions* 7), or their Jewishness was considered less of a social obstacle, particularly as conversion to Christianity became a popular option and, in the words of Heinrich Heine, “the entrance ticket to European culture” (Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans* 199).

Jewish women in literature, like women in general throughout world literature, have often been characterized by their sexual desirability and relationships to men. Female characters stand

in contrast to male Jewish characters—take, for example, such prominent examples as Nathan der Weise and Joseph Süß Oppenheimer (Gollance, “Dancing to the Court Jew’s Tune”)—who appear throughout German literature and drama as conflicted or tragic heroes whose choices reflect the perceived options for Jewish participation in non-Jewish society.⁴ Whereas Lessing’s Jewish men can be interpreted as sexually harmless because they do not have partners or biological offspring, Jewish women have often been represented using the Orientalized sexual stereotype of the *schöne Jüdin*, the vulnerable and sexually available beautiful Jewess (Helfer 5; Krobb). Yet although this figure recurs throughout German and European culture, the lived experiences of Jewish women complicated this stereotype. Rahel Levin Varnhagen, an elite Berlin salonnière around 1800, illustrates these complexities. While Varnhagen was a popular social figure who ultimately converted to Christianity and married a Christian man, she once characterized her position as a German-Jewish woman as that of a “schlemiel,” a Yiddish word for clumsy person that suggests the awkwardness of living between worlds (“Letter to David Veit” 58). Negotiating complex identities could open up possibilities for Jewish women outside their communities, including options for friendship or romance with non-Jews, yet Varnhagen’s characterization suggests an ungainliness that seems to repudiate the common gendered stereotype.⁵ Jewish women writers negotiated complex identities that contended with and defied the dominant modes of representation. And because they opposed gender norms, Jewish women were often accused of deviance or even of harming the Jewish people as a whole (Stögner, “Double Others” 100).

Jewish women’s participation in German literature, both as figures who were constructed and as agents who responded to these constructions, has been a subject of great interest in Jewish feminist circles and beyond. Several late-nineteenth-century volumes sought to catalog and

praise these contributions, viewing Jewish women's literary creation as a reflection of the achievements possible for both Jews and women. Although the essentialist tone of Meyer Kayserling's 1879 *Die jüdischen Frauen in der Geschichte, Literatur und Kunst* and Nahida Remy's 1891 *Das jüdische Weib* may seem outdated today, these works provide a fascinating window into the lives of many famous and forgotten Jewish women and how their roles as historical actors were contextualized in this period. Writing about Early Modern Jewish women, Remy notes, "in literature, at the writing-desk, as well as at the printing press, and among physicians, the Jewess gained an honored position. The predilection of Jewish women for these two professions was brought about by the very persecutions and dangers to which she and her kindred were exposed" (121). Jewish women negotiated feeling pride in their own culture with the very real constraints presented by anti-Jewish sentiment, issues that became particularly pronounced with the rise of nationalism and an increasingly domestic practice of Judaism (Baader 4–5). Fanny Neuda recognized and anticipated these concerns when she published her 1855 prayerbook for women, *Stunden der Andacht*, and she provides advice about raising the confidence of Jewish girls: "Our daughters should be aware that they would be devaluing themselves if they were ashamed of belonging to a people that is the equal of any in history—a people whose annals are rich with brilliant heroes, noble men, and courageous martyrs" (Berland 269). Although Neuda uses male figures as her historical examples of role models who could instill a sense of national pride in Jewish girls, her contemporaries and many others writing since have demonstrated the significance of German-Jewish women in combating antisemitism throughout history.

In discussions of Jewish women's contributions to German culture, certain figures loom large. Individuals such as seventeenth-century memoirist and merchant Glikl bas Judah Leib

(also known as Glückel of Hameln), salonnière Varnhagen, political radical Rosa Luxemburg, Expressionist Lasker-Schüler, and political theorist Hannah Arendt have understandably generated much scholarly interest on account of their biographies and notable writings. Recent scholarship has also drawn more explicit attention to the role of popular culture, multilingualism, sexuality studies, and migration in understanding the diversity of German-Jewish experiences. Such research interrogates “how changing structures and cultural shifts affect subjective experiences and [...] how individuals carved out a place for themselves in society” (Kaplan, *Jewish Daily Life* 3). As demonstrated in the work of such scholars as Marion Kaplan and Benjamin Maria Baader, studies of daily life, the family, and domestic religiosity necessarily foreground the experiences of women, and such scholarship further helps counterbalance the way German-Jewish Studies has long been dominated by intellectual history—and how such narratives often tend to center men.⁶ While some of the articles in this special issue consider such prominent and by now canonical figures as Pappenheim and Lasker-Schüler, others look to lesser-studied figures or examine the presence/absence of Jewish women in better-known works.

Recent scholarship on German-Jewish writing since 1990 has begun to explore public claims to Jewishness and Jewish authorship, with an emphasis on notable demographic shifts including Germany’s many Russian-speaking Jews and *Kontingentflüchtlinge* (quota refugees) from the former Soviet Union (Garloff; Garloff and Mueller, *German Jewish Literature*). Reflecting on the experience of writers such as Katja Petrowskaja, who was born in Kyiv, Andree Michaelis-König notes: “These authors share neither the history nor the language of their predecessors. Their backgrounds differ in that their families never participated in a German Jewish or Austrian Jewish culture, but came from a very different, pre-1989 Eastern European world” (147). Not only do contemporary writers frequently have different relationships to

German or Austrian identity than prior generations of Jews who wrote in German, but their relationships to Jewish identity can also be more complicated since they might not fit easily into the definition of Jewishness by matrilineal descent according to traditional Jewish law. Journalist and writer Mirna Funk (discussed in Rebekah Slodounik’s contribution) acknowledges that she initially felt insecure about identifying herself as a Jewish writer “as though I were just a counterfeit Jew or something,” though she eventually “realized that [patrilineal descent] is much less of an issue for my generation” and decided to no longer “allow my Jewishness to be discredited” (Garloff and Mueller, “Interview with Mirna Funk” 231). An author’s gender might also affect whether the author is perceived as a German-Jewish writer. Olga Grjasnowa notes that although she considers herself Jewish and was identified as Jewish on her Soviet birth certificate, Germans regard her a writer of migration literature rather than an explicitly Jewish writer—something that she suspects has to do with being a woman, suggesting that male writers are more readily perceived as Jewish (Garloff and Mueller, “Interview with Olga Grjasnowa” 226–27). Lena Gorelik, too, has written about being categorized as a migrant and a Jew and the need to self-identify as a (secular) Jewish woman in the face of antisemitic acts such as the terrorist attack in Halle on Yom Kippur 2019 (“Ich bin Jüdin”).⁷

In considering the historical experiences of Jewish women in or with connections to German-speaking lands, it is important to remember that twenty-first-century categories of gender, Jewishness, Germanness, and race cannot be assumed for earlier periods. While characters in contemporary German-Jewish fiction might feel conflicted about the extent to which they can “pass” as non-Jewish, Jews prior to World War II were seen as having their own, non-white/non-German racial category and a tenuous relationship to German cultural production. The nature of antisemitism, too, has changed significantly since the term was coined in 1879, and

German culture has long defined (and regularly continues to define) Jews as other, as foreigners. Many Jews have responded with attempts to assimilate or integrate into German culture, but others have called upon “forces of dissimulation” or “de-integration” to explain Jewish culture or move it forward (Volkov 256; Czollek). New strategies are needed to navigate the issues that arise today.

Confronting Antisemitism through a Feminist Lens

We live in an age of both rising antisemitism and constant attacks on women’s freedoms. The antisemitic terrorist attack at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue in 2018 was eye-opening for many people who believed antisemitism to exist mainly in the past or, for those in North America, in distant European countries. The synagogue shooting in Halle in 2019 was similarly shocking within Germany, a country that today prides itself on working to come to terms with its past, and where openly antisemitic acts are strictly prohibited. The taboo against open antisemitism is lifting, however, as collective memory of the Holocaust fades (Reuveni xvi). Yet before we can work to combat anti-Jewish or antisemitic attacks, prejudice, and discrimination, we must first be able to identify them, and this is not always such a simple matter. Antisemitism can take many forms, including hidden or subtle ones. Further, the blurring of antisemitism and anti-Zionism means that Jews are often targeted because of political views regarding Israel/Palestine, which adds another layer to how we think about antisemitism. This special issue underscores the importance and urgency of confronting antisemitism from a feminist perspective. It also considers the long and complex history of tensions relating to the fight for women’s rights and against antisemitism, which should be common goals for feminists.

In late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Germany, ethnonationalism and racism gained in popularity and were at times quite blatant. As discussed above, antisemitic imagery prior to World War II was highly gendered and even impacted internal Jewish gender debates (Schüler-Springorum 1218). Still, feminism and antisemitism clashed in a variety of ways already at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the Jüdischer Frauenbund generally considered the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (BDF; Federation of German Women's Associations) an ally in its fight against antisemitism, some BDF members harbored unease about Jewish distinctiveness as well as other forms of covert antisemitism. Jewish members of the BDF were at times expected to cover their Jewishness or tolerate such affronts as support for a ban on kosher butchering. Kaplan has argued that the Jüdischer Frauenbund provided a separatist alternative for Jewish women who sought independence from the German women's movement ("Sisterhood Under Siege" 256–59, 261).

Early Zionists faced other challenges in finding outlets for their feminism, including inner-Jewish tensions. Liberal Jews who regarded themselves as German Citizens of the Jewish Faith did not always see eye to eye with Zionists. Rahel Straus, a pioneering woman physician, described in her memoirs how she founded a Jewish National Women's Group (*jüdisch-nationale Frauengruppe*) in Munich around 1905 despite having met with resistance from Jewish women who feared that aligning themselves with Zionism might cause others to perceive them as less patriotic or *undeutsch*, un-German (149, 79). Many others, too, hesitated to take a public stance in favor of Zionism for fear of backlash. This situation changed in the 1930s, when Zionist support for immigration to Palestine provided a practical response to Nazi antisemitism. Many Jewish writers, artists, and photographers found refuge in mandatory Palestine after

fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe; to name just a few: Lasker-Schüler, Leah Goldberg, Lea Grundig, and Liselotte Grschebina.

But after 1945 it was no longer *salonfähig* (in today's parlance: kosher) to express antisemitic views, and antisemitism began to take on new forms, many of which were coded or more difficult to detect. Ironically, the very subtlety of postwar antisemitism made it more difficult to combat and helped it to take root in many aspects of daily life. The well-known Hollywood film *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) tackled such antisemitic phenomena as country clubs that restricted their memberships to Christians only and discriminatory hiring practices that led many American Jews to change their names. Gender, too, played a role in name-changing decisions. Perhaps because women were expected to change their last names after marriage, many women (both single and married) initiated petitions for name changes on behalf of themselves and their families (Fermaglich 9, 34–38). In postwar Germany, the concept of antisemitism became hotly contested as Germans sought to make sense of their own past with respect to the Nazi genocide. In her forthcoming book, *The Postwar Antisemite*, Lisa Silverman builds on her important theory of “Jewish difference” as an analytic category akin to gender or class to argue compellingly that “a figural Antisemite allowed Germans and Austrians to imagine themselves not simply as individuals who did not hate Jews, but as individuals operating outside the entire framework of social constructions that made antisemitism against Jews possible.”⁸ Those who did not see themselves as Nazi villains (perpetrators) did not believe they were capable of antisemitism and evaded coming to terms with their complicity in the Holocaust. The category of the *bystander* is thus highly problematic. As Silverman suggests, widespread antisemitism became systemic, making it all the more difficult to eradicate.

Even when *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) entered the German mainstream in the 1980s, activist projects and scholarly conversations still often excluded Jewish women. Scholars working within and adjacent to German-Jewish Studies have long noted the conspicuous absence of Jewish women from feminist projects. In the 2004 twentieth anniversary retrospective on their edited volume, *When Biology Became Destiny*, Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Kaplan point to inspirational work by the collective Frauengruppe Faschismusforschung (Women's Group for Fascism Research) that, despite its pioneering efforts, notably omitted articles on Jewish women and the Holocaust (603). In fact, the first scholarly book about women and the Holocaust did not appear in print until 1998: Ofer and Weitzman's *Women in the Holocaust*. One notable exception is Ika Hügel-Marshall's edited collection *Entfernte Verbindungen: Rassismus, Antisemitismus, Klassenunterdrückung* (1993), which noted the general absence and invisibility of Jewish women in West Berlin feminist and lesbian circles (82). In tandem with a new focus on Jewish women's history and the emergence of Jewish cultural studies, Jewish gender studies finally entered the mainstream in the late 1990s, paving the way for more work on Jewish women, gender, and antisemitism (Hyman; Wallach, "Jews and Gender" 210; Wallach and Elyada 4).

In the last few decades, the growing field of Jewish women's and gender studies has offered many new approaches to thinking through parallels and intersections between antisemitism and misogyny.⁹ These conversations have coincided with discussions of sexuality, migration, multilingualism, and growing interest in conceiving of German culture as multicultural and multifaceted. Recent scholarship has pointed to the need to move away from essentialist models of Jewishness. Jewish cultural studies relies on the notion of a culturally constructed Jewishness that, like gender, can be performed, marking a shift from the centrality of

Jewish identity to a more complex understanding of how Jewishness has played a role throughout history (Lerner 45; Auslander).

Theories of intersectionality allow scholars to critically examine connections and overlap between categories such as race and gender that are similar to Jewishness. Intersectional work, regardless of what it is called, involves the “adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power” (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 795). This approach involves examining the interconnectedness of gender, sexuality, class, race, ethnicity, nation, and other (fluid, changing) categories pertaining to inequality—a critical part of feminist analysis today, and a central part of the mission statement of *Women in German*. As discussed in Loentz’s article in this special issue, Jewish women have long contended and grappled with the categories of gender and Jewishness, among others. Current academic discourse provides us with comparative frameworks for considering these identity categories and their intersections, which further allow us to consider how these categories brush up against the lived experiences of other minoritized groups. But Jewishness is unfortunately sometimes omitted from the categories considered by those invested in intersectionality; we hope both to call attention to this tendency and to counteract this trend with our special issue.

Antisemitism, Israel, and Intersectionality

In recent decades, surges of European antisemitism have been closely linked to escalations in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Anti-Israel movements and anti-Zionism often feed into or stoke antisemitism. While this conflict in the Middle East might seem a bit far afield from *Feminist German Studies*, it cannot remain the elephant in the room in feminist conversations. We believe it is necessary to address the ways this political issue divides feminist scholars, resulting in

tensions around how Jews and Jewishness fit into (or are excluded from) applications of intersectionality. Further, we maintain that it is not possible to study or teach about Jews in postwar Germany without careful attention to how perceptions of Israel and Palestine impact both Jewish communities worldwide and the reception of German-Jewish writers, artists, filmmakers, and other cultural producers. In some instances, Israeli culture or work by Israeli scholars is directly relevant for studying German-Jewish history and antisemitism, especially in light of the large population of Israelis currently living and working in Germany. We would be remiss to overlook their impact.

Two recent definitions of antisemitism reflect the centrality of Israel/Palestine in this discussion. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), an intergovernmental group, publicized its definition online in 2016: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” The definition was followed by a list of examples of antisemitism, many of which reference Israel. It came under fire for its lack of clarity, which generated confusion and controversy, although many welcomed even an imperfect, working definition as a tool to help identify the presence of antisemitism. Numerous polities and other representative bodies have since used or adopted the IHRA definition at times, including the United Nations; the European Union; the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations; and the official bodies representing Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jewry in the United States.

Over 200 scholars responded to the IHRA definition with the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism in March 2021. The Jerusalem Declaration puts forth the following concise definition: “Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews

(or Jewish institutions as Jewish).” It further elaborates that antisemitism often borrows from racist essentialism and conspiracy theories including Holocaust denial, and can be manifested in direct or indirect words, images, and deeds. One of the stated aims of the Jerusalem Declaration is to “protect a space for an open debate about the vexed question of the future of Israel/Palestine,” including differentiating between examples relating to Israel/Palestine that are antisemitic and those that are not. (According to the Jerusalem Declaration, supporting the Palestinian demand for justice is *not* antisemitic; requiring people, because they are Jewish, publicly to condemn Israel or Zionism *is* antisemitic.)¹⁰ In November 2022, a group of 128 scholars (including many signatories of the Jerusalem Declaration) published an open letter in *EUobserver* urging the UN not to adopt the IHRA definition, which they argued could be used to silence legitimate criticism of Israel’s policies (Rettman).

As this open debate takes place, movements such as Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS)—as well as other important movements including Black Lives Matter, which aligns itself with BDS—continue to attract widespread support from activists and scholars of feminist, gender, and sexuality studies alike. The National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA) endorsed BDS in 2015, making it increasingly difficult for scholars who collaborate with colleagues in Israel or who work on Israel (or on topics in Jewish studies or other disciplines that relate to Israel, or who rely on materials in Israeli archives) to position themselves as women’s studies scholars. This tension in turn leads to strained relations between colleagues in women’s and gender studies and Jewish studies programs in academic circles and on university campuses. Many prominent scholars raise their voices against Israeli oppression of Palestinians; only occasionally do these same scholars write about the need for antisemitism to be included in intersectional models that have not always proved inclusive enough.¹¹

Intersectionality's shortcomings become apparent when those who otherwise support standing against all forms of oppression turn a blind eye to the complexity of antisemitism and its histories. For example, some activists hold that embracing anti-Zionism is a prerequisite for participating in other forms of feminist and queer activism. Several organizers of the 2017 Women's March deemed feminism and Zionism incompatible. Rainbow pride flags adorned with the Star of David have since been banned at Dyke marches in Chicago and Washington, D.C.¹² Sociologist Karin Stögner has written extensively about these and other examples of the troubled relationship between antisemitism and intersectionality. In Stögner's estimation, the categories of race, class, and gender cannot neatly encompass "the particular experience of Jews with antisemitism" ("Antisemitism and Intersectional Feminism" 77). Stögner further notes that the term "intersectionality" has come to symbolize connections between specific issues (for example, between Ferguson and Palestine) that exclude Jews on the basis of anti-Zionism ("New Challenges in Feminism" 103–07).

Despite the controversial nature of this politicized term, other scholars have underscored the need to use intersectional approaches, and some continue to call for "intersectionality" with respect to the study of Jews and antisemitism. Historian Deborah Hertz has suggested that a "vulgar adaptation of linkage intersectionality is deeply flawed," noting that contemporary activists often exclude histories of Jewish persecution because they erroneously conflate Jews with Israeli oppression or fall short of a nuanced understanding of Jewish history. As Hertz has pointed out, it makes no sense to deny that Zionism once flourished as a practical response to widespread antisemitism ("Intersectionality and the Jews"). Several other scholars have called for an "entangled history" of antisemitism that uses intersectionality not to represent Jews as privileged, preventing their inclusion in anti-racist work, but rather as a tool to draw on a history

of interlaced pasts (Judaken 1124–25). Gender Studies scholar and political theorist Marla Brettschneider has argued that “Jewishly identified experiences” must be included within intersectionality, and that an antiracist agenda is likewise crucial for Jewish feminism (5). The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism suggests simply that fighting against antisemitism “is inseparable from the overall fight against all forms of racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and gender discrimination.”

Just as intersectionality must find a way to include Jews, so too must Jewish feminists and Jewish Studies scholars take up anti-racist practices. Since the 1980s, there have been limited collaborations between Jewish feminists and feminists of color in the United States.¹³ In recent years, motivated in part by the Black Lives Matter movement, scholars in Jewish Studies have been reckoning with the role of race and racism in Jewish contexts and communities.¹⁴ Much of this scholarship deals with Jews and race in North American and Israeli contexts.¹⁵ Conversations about ethnic diversity in Jewish contexts grapple with such topics as the presence and erasure of Jews of color, whiteness (and concerns about tenuous claims to this category or passing as white), Jewish involvement in the struggles of other groups, as well as specific issues related to Jewish ethnicities. Some have criticized what they see as “Ashkenormativity” or presumptions that Jews share a monolithic background that is European and white. Others take issue with this claim, arguing that mainstream American Jewish culture undermines Jewish ethnic cultures (not just Sephardic and Mizrahi, but also deeper knowledge of Ashkenazi cultural diversity such as Yiddish) (Kafritsen). There is doubtless still room for improvement on several levels with respect to incorporating race into Jewish Studies discussions and adopting anti-racist platforms and practices.

Within the context of German Studies, feminist scholars who research and write about different forms of oppression must find a way to include antisemitism. To do this effectively, they cannot exclude the category of Jewishness nor Jewish positions and perspectives. To be anti-racist is to be anti-antisemitic. To be in solidarity with anti-racist activists should mean standing against antisemitism, regardless of one's personal politics vis-à-vis Israel/Palestine. Our bottom line is that much of the scholarship on Jewish women and on antisemitism and gender takes an intersectional approach on some level whether or not one uses this term. Because the term *intersectionality* is often deployed in support of Palestine (and in sweeping opposition to all aspects of Israel), it is not always perceived as politically neutral—but there is nothing to be gained by insisting that students or scholars employ the term *intersectionality* if it symbolizes something to which they object or from which they feel excluded. Still, scholars working in feminist, gender, and queer (German) studies have much to learn from scholars of German-Jewish, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust studies, and vice versa. We gain far more by focusing on our common causes and approaches than by excluding scholars, activists, organizations, or historical or contemporary figures because of their positions on Israel or Zionism.

Recentering the Marginal, Including the Excluded: Feminist Scholarship on Jewish Women and Antisemitism

The articles in this special issue address the interconnectedness of Jewishness, femaleness, and Germanness/Austrianness in the modern era, focusing largely on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Analyzing topics such as intersectionality, philanthropy, interethnic relationships, queer voices, popular fiction, transgenerational trauma, film, and periodicals, these studies encourage us to think about the ways that well-known and less familiar cultural figures

negotiated the different facets of their identities—and the ways they were perceived and identified—in the face of changing historical realities. The first four articles focus on complex questions of Jewish identity/identification, Jewish visibility, and responses to antisemitism, sexism, and heteronormativity in the early twentieth century; the final articles consider these and other complex questions in contemporary German-language writing.

All of these articles work to write women/non-binary individuals back into the conversation about Jews in literature, film, and other aspects of German culture. Several engage with works by transnational writers with connections to numerous national and linguistic traditions. Especially with respect to (German-)Jewish studies, which goes beyond national borders in several eras, this focus helps recenter writing often relegated to the margins, including German-language writing by writers not based in German-speaking countries or seen as being from Germany, such as Barbara Honigmann, Ruth Klüger, or, in the case of this special issue, Altaras, Feldman, and Salzman. This perspective is in keeping with Leslie Morris’s suggestion that we expand the parameters of what constitutes (German-)Jewish writing, borrowing from the work of German/Jewish/Algerian/French feminist writer Hélène Cixous “to think about the multidirectionality and the polysemy between Jewish and non-Jewish spaces and texts” (5). It also builds on the idea that Jewish culture created in Germany should be considered within a German-Jewish paradigm regardless of the national origin or citizenship of the creator (Wallach, “Art without Borders” 150).

The articles in this special issue divide neatly into three pairs. The first two explore the visibility of Jewish women and notions of how they should act in the early twentieth century. Elizabeth Loentz’s article, “Jewish Women and Intersectional Feminism: The Case of Bertha Pappenheim” examines contributions of German-Jewish feminist Bertha Pappenheim, arguably

the most famous German-Jewish woman of her time, through the framework of intersectionality. This article considers the relevance of a theoretical perspective that was developed by Black feminists in the United States in the twentieth century for understanding the activism of (German-)Jewish women. Pappenheim recognized that Jewish women had experiences and concerns that differed from those of Jewish men and of Christian women, one of the motivating factors for her founding of the Jüdischer Frauenbund. Pappenheim was involved in an impressive array of philanthropic, political, and translation projects, many of which were dedicated to improving the recognition and material circumstances of Jewish women. Yet at the same time, her attitudes toward birth control and motherhood can seem challenging to us today. In examining how Pappenheim was both of and ahead of her time, Loentz negotiates the ways that a prominent historical figure can speak to our current moment from her own context and also reveal how far the conversation has progressed in the previous century. These questions regarding how to think about the social role of Jewish women and the delicate balancing act between identities they frequently performed can help us think through the stakes of the other articles in this issue.

In “Stadt mit Jüdinnen: Antisemitism and Misogyny in Hans Karl Breslauer’s Recently Restored Film *Die Stadt ohne Juden* (1924),” Silverman analyzes the newly restored version of Breslauer’s film *Die Stadt ohne Juden* to show how misogyny and antisemitism often overlapped. Even interwar critiques of antisemitism reinforced stereotypical representations of Jewish women. Silverman’s analysis reveals that eliminated or shortened scenes from the previously discovered version of the film reproduce stereotypes about Jewish women and emphasize economic misery in addition to antisemitism. This version features synagogue scenes showing women in the balcony, seated separately from the men, anonymous to the viewer. In a

scene showing the Havdalah (end of Sabbath) ritual, women are coded as Jewish through fashionable and conspicuous clothing and jewelry. As Silverman demonstrates, Jewish women are mostly depicted together with Jewish men and rarely speak. Only as luxury consumers in the Jewish-coded fashion salon do Jewish women stand on their own, but here they are subjected to both antisemitism (they have just been notified of the impending expulsion of Jews from Vienna) and misogyny (Jewish women as sexualized objects and materialistic consumers). Gendered concerns about the ability of Jews to pass as non-Jews, to become indistinguishable from their non-Jewish counterparts, further reflect anxieties about how visibility fed into antisemitism.

The second set of articles addresses queer topics, including works by gender non-conforming and queer-identified writers. Both articles address literature from the 1910s and 1920s, and one demonstrates how themes and identities from the early twentieth century resonate in texts from the twenty-first century. Meghan Paradis's article "Shame, Desire, and Queer Jewish Girlhood in Annette Eick's Semiautobiographical Fiction, 1929–1930" examines two novellas serialized in the lesbian periodical *Die Frauenliebe* that focus on young queer Jewish women. Paradis argues that participating in the lesbian public sphere required Jewish writers to grapple with feelings of shame related to sexuality and bourgeois notions of respectability as well as antisemitic stereotypes. The characters Eick creates are coded as Jewish to some extent, inviting an analysis of Jewish visibility alongside a more explicit discussion of lesbian/queer visibility. Located at the intersection of queer and Jewish studies, Paradis's article takes an innovative approach to studying Jewish participation and representation in the Weimar lesbian press.

In "Intimate Associations: Reading Community in Sasha Marianna Salzmann and Else Lasker-Schüler," Rafael Balling places Salzmann's 2017 novel *Außer sich* in conversation with

Lasker-Schüler's 1919 experimental prose work *Der Malik*. Although written nearly a century apart, these two pieces both envision utopian alternatives to antisemitism and strict regulation of gender. In other words, the personal becomes starkly political through the ways these two writers who defy gender conventions build communities that take vulnerability and outsider status as sources of strength. By claiming Lasker-Schüler as a predecessor to Salzmann, Balling builds a new—and convincing—form of queer lineage in German-Jewish feminist literary studies. Balling's analysis of Salzmann's *Außer sich* further opens up questions about the extent to which identities can be bounded by nation.

The final two articles focus on migration and transnational approaches, themes that appear frequently in works from the twenty-first century. Narrative and memory feature prominently in Lea Greenberg's article, "Between Remembering and Forgetting in Adriana Altaras's *Titos Brille* (2011)." In contrast to several other articles in this issue, which focus on the experiences of Ashkenazi Jews—whether of German, Austrian, East European, or American descent—Altaras's memoir examines the experiences and transgenerational trauma of Croatian Jews (both Sephardic and Ashkenazi), including with respect to Holocaust memory. The article begins with Altaras's aunt Jelka, who has experienced Croatian, German, and Italian fascism, tragic circumstances that also help set up the international perspective of the memoir as a whole. Altaras pieces together and questions the memories of her cosmopolitan family, inviting us to consider how these efforts to craft a coherent narrative overlap with national memory projects, and why this memory work (identified with the *dybbuk* figure from Jewish folklore) might be viewed as the domain of Jewish daughters in particular. Greenberg's analysis helps us expand discussions of Jewish historical trauma in the twentieth century beyond the Holocaust and to consider the nuances of memory politics today.

Finally, Rebekah Slodounik's article on Mirna Funk's novel *Winternähe* (2015) and Deborah Feldman's autobiography *Überbitten* (2017) focuses on the impact of antisemitism tinged with misogyny in contemporary Germany and elsewhere across the globe, including in the United States. Building on Brettschneider's work, Slodounik's article "German, Jewish, and Female: Encounters with Antisemitism in Mirna Funk's *Winternähe* and Deborah Feldman's *Überbitten*," makes the case for using intersectionality not in an additive way, but to explore mutually constitutive German, Jewish, and female identities. Whereas Funk was raised in Berlin and currently divides her time between Berlin and Tel Aviv, Feldman (also the author of *Unorthodox*) is a native Yiddish speaker from a Hasidic Satmar community in Brooklyn who now lives in Berlin. The protagonists in works by these two authors react as feminists to intruder figures that represent a new wave of antisemitism spurred on by the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, age-old stereotypes about Jewish greed, and far-right political parties. Slodounik underscores the matter of language, noting that authors who choose German to address the problems of antisemitism and misogyny are both limiting and designating their target audience.

Collectively these contributions help us think through the many ways that questions of representation, identity, prejudice, and language have developed over the course of the German-Jewish experience and continue to resonate today. They all use feminist analysis to investigate questions relating to the exclusion and persecution of Jews along antisemitic lines, urging us to expand our thinking about the voices that speak for German, Jewish, and German-Jewish collectives. Literary and filmic treatments of Jews as outsiders, Jewish relationships to trauma, and German-Jewishness in and beyond Germany serve as through lines. Several essays foreground the participation of and responses by Jewish women and non-binary individuals to mainstream German feminism and antisemitism. By closely examining texts that open up

discussions about Jews, women, gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, these articles aim to start new conversations about the interconnectedness of misogyny and antisemitism.

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¹ This affinity is perhaps most notoriously evident in the work of Otto Weininger (see, for instance 423; see also Pelligrini 18–19).

² See Buerkle; Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*.

³ Describing the role of circumcision in discussions of Jewish masculinity, Sander L. Gilman notes: “The centrality of the act of circumcision in defining what a Jew is made the very term ‘Jew’ in the nineteenth century come to mean male Jew” (*Freud, Race, and Gender* 49). See also

Gilman's *Jewish Self-Hatred* and *The Jew's Body*. Gilman notably discusses Jewish women in more depth in "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess."

⁴ Jonathan Hess makes a case for understanding the protagonist of Salomon Hermann Mosenthal's melodrama *Deborah* as a Jewish figure to rival the influence of male characters like Nathan der Weise and shows why her romantic troubles resonated with Jewish and Christian audiences (*Deborah and Her Sisters*).

⁵ On gendered stereotypes of Jewish grace and deportment, see Gollance, *It Could Lead to Dancing* 50–55; 62–3.

⁶ The salons around 1800 provide an exception to this rule. See, for example, Cypess and Sinkoff's study of Sara Levy's salon, as well as the work of Barbara Hahn, Deborah Hertz, Natalie Naimark-Goldberg, and Liliane Weissberg. For an example of Weissberg's work, see Arendt. See also translations of Jewish women's writings from this period in Blackwell and Zantop's edited volume, *Bitter Healing*.

⁷ See also Gorelik, "Sie können aber gut Deutsch!".

⁸ On Jewish difference, see Silverman, *Becoming Austrians*, 7.

⁹ See especially the volumes on gender and (German-)Jewish history edited by Kaplan and Dash Moore; and by Heinsohn and Schüler-Springorum.

¹⁰ The full text of both the IHRA definition and the Jerusalem Declaration can be found online: holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism and jerusalemdeclaration.org/.

¹¹ See, for example, Judith Butler's incisive review of Bari Weiss's *How to Fight Anti-Semitism*.

¹² The Women's March platform called for a broad intersectional coalition of women to join in protest, referring to many identity categories that have historically been marginalized, but the

only religious category mentioned was “Muslim women” (Littler and Rottenberg 879). This framing suggests that the organizers of the Women’s March did not view Jewish women as a religious minority in need of particular support.

¹³ One example is the 1984 book *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, by Bulkin, Bruce Pratt, and Smith. See the discussion of this and other collaborations between Jewish and Black women in Antler, *Jewish Radical Feminism* 310–12.

¹⁴ See, for example, Crane; Haynes; Leibman; Mehta; Roby.

¹⁵ Sonia Gollance's article, "Dancing at the Hotel Adlon: Queer, Black and Jewish Characters in Contemporary German Television," forthcoming at the time of writing this introduction, is an exception to this trend because it focuses on a German context.

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