

UNDERSTANDING HOLLYWOOD

PART I: HOLLYWOOD'S JEWISH IDENTITY

EDMUND CONNELLY

“Indeed, from the very beginnings of the industry until the present, it is impossible to ignore the influence of Jews on the movie business or to overlook the importance of a Jewish consciousness in American films.”

—Lester D. Friedman¹

“Regardless of a Jewish author’s past or present involvement with organized religion, current religious or cultural practices, and personal sense of group attachment or isolation, the underlying critical assumption is that the work of a Jewish writer must either overtly or covertly reflect a Jewish sensibility.”

—David Desser and Lester D. Friedman²

“The Jewish involvement in motion pictures is more than a success story; it is the basis of the disproportionate influence that Jews have had in shaping American popular culture.”

—Steven Silbiger³

“The way Steven Spielberg sees the world has become the way the world is communicated back to us every day.”

—Stephen Schiff⁴

¹ Lester D. Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1987), 13.

² David Desser and Lester D. Friedman, *American-Jewish Filmmakers: Traditions and Trends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 4-5.

³ Steven Silbiger, *The Jewish Phenomenon: Seven Keys to the Enduring Wealth of a People* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 2000), 108.

⁴ “Seriously Spielberg,” in *Steven Spielberg: Interviews*, ed. Lester D. Friedman and Brent Notbohm (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 171.

AN EMPIRE OF THEIR OWN

"Jews Run Hollywood." Thus declared the bold headlines of the August 1996 cover story of the Jewish magazine *Moment*. This story was in response to Marlon Brando's controversial claim on a talk show that Jews did, in fact, run Hollywood.⁵ As an intriguing follow-up to the bold assertion, the magazine in the subtitle asked its readers "So What?"

Neal Gabler set the bar for recognition of Jewish power in Hollywood with his 1988 book, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*. There Gabler celebrated the period of Hollywood's founding through the end of the studio and mogul era, an era covering the birth of the industry – from nickelodeons aimed at immigrants in America, to the founding of Hollywood and the studios, to Hollywood's Golden Era – a span of time covering roughly the first half of the twentieth century. *An Empire of Their Own* simplifies the task of demonstrating Jewish prominence in early Hollywood, as the opening epigraphs from his book make clear: "Russian-Jewish immigrants came from the *shtetls* and ghettos out to Hollywood. . . . In this magical place that had no relationship to any reality they had ever seen before in their lives, or that anyone else had ever seen, they decided to create their idea of an eastern aristocracy. . . . The American Dream – is a Jewish invention."⁶ Not only was it a "Jewish invention," it remains a heavily Jewish industry, as writer Steven Silbiger noted in his book *The Jewish Phenomenon*:

In addition to the corporate chieftains, a huge number of Jewish people participate in the entertainment industry. It has not been part of a grand scheme, but when an ethnic group becomes as heavily involved, and as successful, in a particular industry as Jewish people have been in movies, the group's influence, connections and power produce a vast ripple effect, and other Jewish actors, writers, editors, technicians, directors, and producers follow in their footsteps.

⁵ Among other things, Marlon Brando, appearing on *Larry King Live* (April 1996) said: "Hollywood is run by Jews; it is owned by Jews,"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marlon_brando#Accusations_of_Jewish_stereotyping.

⁶ In Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988), 1. The first quote is by Jill Robinson and the second by Hy Kraft.

Silbiger then described the \$5 billion dollar nest egg belonging to Dreamworks owners Steven Spielberg, David Geffen, and Jeffrey Katzenberg; the vast media holdings of Sumner Redstone (including Paramount Pictures); Michael Eisner's stewardship at Disney; the Bronfman family's ownership of Universal Studios; and Bob and Harvey Weinstein's Miramax (*The Crying Game*, *Pulp Fiction*), etc.⁷

Other studies confirm this heavy concentration of Jewish control. Charles Silberman quoted a respected survey which found that "more than three out of five members of the 'movie elite' are Jews."⁸ Rothman et al. have observed that, "Sixty percent of those in the movie elite sample were of Jewish background."⁹ David McClintick, in *Indecent Exposure: A True Story of Hollywood and Wall Street*, wrote, "Contrary to popular notions about bland financiers, most important executive positions in the entertainment business today are occupied by high-spirited, entrepreneurial Jews who emigrated to Hollywood from New York and other points in the East and Midwest. . . . And Yiddish remains the second language of Hollywood."¹⁰

British journalist William Cash drew attention to the Hollywood presence of Spielberg, Geffen, Katzenberg, Mike Ovitz, Lew Wasserman and Sidney Sheinberg, Barry Diller, Gerald Levin, Herbert Allen, et al., writing about the Dreamworks trio that "in one respect at least this particular combination of talents, or 'talent combo' in the local argot, will start out on the right foot. Like the old mogul founders of the early studios—and unlike most other failed build-your-own studio merchants—they are Jewish."¹¹

In *Jewtopia: The Chosen Book for the Chosen People*, based on the hit play by Bryan Fogel and Sam Wolfson, the authors confirm Jewish dominance in Hollywood, noting that of the ten major studios under discussion, nine were created by Jews (Walt Disney was a gentile),

⁷ Silbiger, *The Jewish Phenomenon*, 111. Of course, in the fast-changing world of entertainment, alliances and ownerships are constantly changing, too.

⁸ Charles Silberman, *A Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today* (New York: Summit Books, 1985), 147.

⁹ Stephen Powers, David J. Rothman, and Stanley Rothman, *Hollywood's America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 79.

¹⁰ David McClintick, *Indecent Exposure: A True Story of Hollywood and Wall Street* (New York: William Morrow, 1982), 54.

¹¹ William Cash, "Kings of the Deal," *The Spectator*, October 29, 1994, 14.

and as of 2006 all ten studios were run by Jews.¹² David Mamet confirms this: “For those who have not been paying attention, this group [Ashkenazi Jews] constitutes, and has constituted since its earliest days, the bulk of America’s movie directors and studio heads.”¹³

Why does this matter? In essence, it matters because it represents the loss of power of one group—Majority white Christians—to an outside group—Jews. Secondly, Jewish control of Hollywood has itself been a crucial means for dispossessing Majority whites of their place in the country they built, America. As some have argued, the twentieth century was “a Jewish century,” and much of this was because Jews controlled the image factory known as Hollywood. While inroads into ownership of important media had been made earlier, such as Adolph Ochs’s 1896 purchase of the *New York Times*, film was both a near-monopoly for Jewish moguls and a critical means for shaping culture in America.

Further, Jews as a group have not been neutral toward the mass of people they have been displacing. For complex reasons, they have generally had negative attitudes toward white Christians, both in Europe and in America. Because of the deep-seated Jewish hostility toward traditional Western culture, “the Judaization of the West means that the peoples who created the culture and traditions of the West have been made to feel deeply ashamed of their own history—surely the prelude to their demise as a culture and as a people.”¹⁴

The current essay is part of a longer series on Jewish control of Hollywood and the fare they created. I begin by describing the history of their West Coast empire-building and the Jewish themes that arose. I follow this with a survey of four decades of Jewish films, then expand on the theme of Jewish hostility toward the Americans among whom

¹² Studios discussed are: Columbia, Warner Bros., MGM, Universal, Paramount, Disney, Miramax, Dreamworks, New Line, and 20th Century Fox. See Bryan Fogel and Sam Wolfson, *Jewtopia: The Chosen Book for the Chosen People* (New York: Warner Books, 2006). Chapter 8, “Conspiracy Theories: Do Jews Control the World?” contains the information on Hollywood, television, print media, banking, etc. Their figures for television networks and print media are 75 percent and 70 percent, respectively.

¹³ David Mamet, *Bambi v. Godzilla: On the Nature, Purpose, and Practice of the Movie Business* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007), 19.

¹⁴ Kevin MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Bloomington, Ind.: 1st Books, 2002), lxix.

they lived. Finally, a sample of movies will more concretely acquaint the reader with the common Jewish themes and devices used in popular films. The goal is to equip the white gentile with the ability to see how his real disestablishment over the course of the twentieth century was both mirrored – and partially caused – by the very images of that dispossession.

HISTORY

The story of Hollywood begins with a representative struggle between the white gentile forces that had controlled America from its founding and the immigrant Jews who were aiming to displace them. Near the end of the nineteenth century, famed inventor Thomas Edison, a member of the WASP ruling class, played a key role in inventing the modern film but particularly in creating the larger entity known as the film industry. This included not only technical aspects of filmmaking but also the construction of a cartel that would make, distribute, control, and profit from this new industry. This cartel became known as the Edison Trust.¹⁵

In conscious opposition to Edison and American society more generally was a group of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Indeed, the original Hollywood moguls were a homogeneous group. Carl Laemmle was born in a small village in southwestern Germany. Adolph Zukor was born in Hungary, as was William Fox. Louis B. Mayer remembers that he was born somewhere in Russia, while Benjamin Warner, father of the Warner brothers, was from Poland. Lewis J. Selznick was a Ukrainian Jew.¹⁶ These men, "who peered mildly at the camera in photographs from the 1920s, hardly noticeable alongside visiting royalty or one of their stars," were the real power in Hollywood. "No one who feared or contested their power, however, would have been fooled by such diffident poses. Behind those affable masks . . . lurked ruthless calculating minds, vast ambitions and imperial lifestyles; palatial mansions, chauffeured limousines, private tennis courts, million-dollar incomes." With little disagreement, it is said

¹⁵ Robert Sklar, a pioneering scholar of the ethnic and religious aspects of the struggle for control of Hollywood, notes that before 1910 "the movies were as completely in the hands of respectable, established Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans as they were ever to be" (*Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* [New York: Vintage Books, 1975, 1994], 33).

¹⁶ Gabler, 3, 93.

that these men “were the moguls whose daily commands shaped the national consciousness.”¹⁷

Before they were able to effectively “shape the national consciousness,” however, they had to undermine Edison’s iron grip on the Trust. Essentially, the largely Jewish independent filmmakers accomplished this by using Edison’s patented machines surreptitiously. One consequence of this desire to avoid detection was that they moved beyond Edison’s East Coast reach by relocating to Arizona and California. From 1908–1912, Jewish filmmakers defeated vigorous attempts by the Trust to maintain its WASP monopoly, but the “Edison cabal” was ultimately defeated by a more clever, determined, and perhaps well-funded cabal of immigrants.¹⁸

In accounts of this ethnic struggle, there is evidence that Edison and his collaborators were only dimly aware of the scale of the ethnic competition in which they were engaged. These gentiles “never seemed to understand that they were engaged in much more than an economic battle to determine who would control the profits of the nascent film industry; their battle was also generational, cultural, philosophical, even, in some ways, religious.”¹⁹ The Jews involved in the battle, however, were exquisitely aware of their status as ethnic and religious outsiders and properly understood the nature of the competition.

Film scholar Robert Sklar was one of the first to write openly about the importance of Jewish identity in Hollywood. “Now for the first time power to influence the culture had been grasped by a group of men whose origins and whose means were different.” This issue was critical because:

In traditional American society the task of describing the world and communicating that vision to its members had belonged, with different emphasis at different times, to the clergy, political statesmen, educators, businessmen, essayists, poets, and novelists. There had never been a totally uniform cultural expression in the

¹⁷ Sklar, 141.

¹⁸ Gabler is not shy about employing the word “cabal,” using it to describe both Edison’s Trust (p. 59) but also a group of Jews working to build a horse racing track (p. 263).

¹⁹ Gabler, 59. Sklar, however, may be closer to the mark when he wrote: “The American elite classes, once they discovered [their loss of control of the film industry], recognized intuitively that this new medium threatened the liquidation of their heritage” (p. 122).

United States; there had always been schisms and struggles, alternatives and counterviews, but in general the combatants had come from similar ethnic and class backgrounds and had utilized the same means – the written and spoken word.²⁰

Gabler recognized the importance of this Jewish difference as well as the way in which it was embedded in an important struggle. Thus he couched his descriptions of the early contest for control of the film industry in terms of warfare. One of the first major Jewish producers, Carl Laemmle, relied upon ethnic outsiders in America, and "these would be his troops in the war that followed when the Jews would take over the movie industry for good." Laemmle and his cohorts were "put-upon in their economic and cultural warfare against a fat, entrenched establishment."

This sense of being outsiders among a hostile host population stayed with Hollywood Jews for the duration, though it always had to take account of gentile perceptions. From the beginning of Jewish control, many of these perceptions were that films created or backed by the moguls undermined traditional Christian mores, as captured by a Fitzgerald character in *The Last Tycoon*: Hollywood was "a Jewish holiday, a gentiles [sic] tragedy." On February 12 and 19, 1921, Henry Ford's *Dearborn Independent* published articles critical of Jewish filmmaking, though the arguments were surprisingly measured. "It is not that the producers of Semitic origin have deliberately set out to be bad according to their own standards, but they know their taste and temper are different from the prevailing standards of the American people. . . . Many of these producers don't know how filthy their stuff is – it is so natural to them."²¹

²⁰ Sklar, 195.

²¹ "The Jewish Aspect of the 'Movie' Problem," *Dearborn Independent*, Feb. 12, 1921, 118. Prior to World War II, American elites were open to discussion about rising Jewish power. As MacDonald notes:

This was a critical period, in which the modern taboo on discussing Jewish interests and influence was created. It was a period in which Jews had not yet attained the position and influence that they achieved in the postwar years. But they had secured a considerable degree of economic and political power, as well as media influence, and the pall of political correctness had not yet fallen over discussing Jewish issues.

Ten years later the Catholic-led Legion of Decency took the lead and worked with Irish-Catholic newsman Joseph Breen to implement a morality code. With the effects of the Depression to contend with, the moguls did not wish to risk a boycott threatened by up to eleven million Americans who signed a pledge to starve Hollywood of an audience if it did not comply with prevailing moral standards. "One reason why the Legion of Decency campaign proved so quickly effective in mobilizing support was that the general run of movies had never before been so clearly in opposition to traditional middle-class morality."²² In the end, however, mobilization of the gentile masses failed to staunch the oppositional content of so many Hollywood films.

HEGEMONY

Antonio Gramsci, the Marxist theoretician of hegemony, made an important distinction between "rule" and "hegemony," as one scholar explained:

"Rule" is expressed in directly political forms and in times of crisis by direct or effective coercion. But the more normal situation is a complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces, and "hegemony" . . . is either this or the active social and cultural forces which are its necessary elements. . . . It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. . . . It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a "culture," but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes.²³

Regarding the arguments made in *The Dearborn Independent*, MacDonald concludes that, "the great majority of its major claims about Jews are correct and have been corroborated by later scholarship." (Kevin MacDonald, *Cultural Insurrections: Essays on Western Civilization, Jewish Influence, and Anti-Semitism* [Atlanta: The Occidental Press, 2007], 6-7).

²² Sklar, 174.

²³ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 108-10.

Gramsci was particularly concerned with what came to be known as "cultural hegemony," which is the category applicable to film (and its offshoots such as television). This form of cultural hegemony privileges a group of people who "make movies that tell the stories that an elite group of insiders agree with and want told to the exclusion of almost all other stories and themes."²⁴ In *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media*, political scientist and media critic Michael Parenti described how this power achieves its objectives:

The existence of a common pool of culturally determined (systemic, nonconspiratorial) political values cannot be denied, but where did this common pool come from? Who or what determines the determining element in the culture itself? And can we reduce an entire culture . . . to a set of accumulated habituations and practices that simply build up over time? . . . A closer look reveals that the unconsciously shared "established" view . . . is not shared by everyone and is not in fact all that established. . . . In other words, it may be true that most media elites . . . share common views on these subjects, but much—and sometimes most—of the public does not. What we have then is an "established *establishment* view" which is given the highest media visibility, usually to the exclusion of views held by large dissident sectors of the populace. The "dominant shared values and beliefs" that are supposedly the natural accretions and expressions of our common political culture, are not shared by all or most . . . although they surely are dominant in that they tend to preempt the field of opinion visibility. . . . In sum, media owners—like other social groups—consciously pursue their self-interest and try to influence others in ways that are advantageous to themselves.²⁵

Since Edison and his Trust lost their film franchise in 1912, Parenti's "established *establishment* view" has been determined (at least in film) by the tight-knit group of East European Jews discussed above and remains in the hands of their descendants. Rothman et al. have detailed roles Jewish activists have played in the "revolts against

²⁴ James Jaeger, "Paul Haggis, Bigotry & CRASH," <http://www.mecfilms.com/universe/articles/crash.htm>, 4 March 2006.

²⁵ Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 241–42.

the 'establishment' in their professions," activism so widespread that that it has influenced the entire culture:

Of course, the role of Jews was not confined to academia. Radical and progressive Jews were also prominent among a wider group of intellectuals whose influence was rapidly increasing. Jews figured prominently in the leading liberal and radical journals of opinion, sometimes as editors or publishers, more often among the contributors to magazines like *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Ramparts*, and *The Progressive*. Perhaps the most important of these was the *New York Review of Books*, which turned decisively to the left in the mid-1960s. Since that time, the *New York Review of Books* was edited by Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein, and the bulk of its political contributions (especially articles on American politics) in the mid-1960s was written by Jews. By and large, then, as Tom Wolfe has pointed out, "radical chic" in New York was a heavily Jewish phenomenon, and the influence of such people spread well beyond their own circle.²⁶

In *Hollywood's America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures*, Rothman et al. situate this critique in Hollywood, pointing out that "Hollywood's creative leadership impacts the larger society even as it is influenced by that society." The authors, in noting the fact that "films are made by a relatively small number of people, who . . . tend to share a common outlook," argue that "over time, motion pictures have had an undeniable impact on the beliefs, lifestyles, and action of Americans."²⁷

²⁶ Stanley Rothman and S. Lichter, *Roots of Radicalism: Jews, Christians, and the Left* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 104-105.

²⁷ Powers et al., *Hollywood's America*, 287. Ben Stein writes about the connection between the identities of those creating film content and their subject matter. While at Yale Law School, this lawyer and game show host took a course in film from Stanley Kauffmann, the well-known critic. In the course, Kauffmann assigned Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler*, which was a famous study of films in Weimar Germany. "Kracauer talked about the relation of films to real life. He explained, in a convincing and analytical way, how the films of Weimar revealed the social and political thinking of a neurotic nation. The analyses were brilliant and thoroughly impressive. There, I thought, was the meat of film study" (Ben Stein, *The View From Sunset Boulevard: America as Brought to You by the People Who Make Television* [New York: Basic Books, 1979], ix).

This impact results from "the highest media visibility" discussed by Parenti, and it is achieved through repeatedly exhibiting targeted topics. Such repetition is necessary for conditioning an uncritical audience to the message at hand. As Rothman et al. note, "There is little reason to believe that a single film or even group of films significantly influences audiences' views over the long haul." If, however, a constant and unwavering message is broadcast repeatedly, "it is reasonable to believe that such presentations will affect audiences to a significant extent."²⁸

Theologian Margaret Miles, in examining Hollywood's portrayal of religion, agreed, writing that, "No one film has iconic power, but the recurrence of similar images *across* films weaves those images into the fabric of the common life of American society. . . . We get, at a subliminal and hence utterly effective level, not the narrative but the conventions of Hollywood film."²⁹ In essence, as two experts on propaganda conclude, "The media message should be homogeneous, with a consistency of purpose, for the propaganda to be effective."³⁰

CONTROLLING IMAGES OF JEWS

Another important aspect of owning the studios and controlling the filmmaking process was the fact that Jews were in charge of creating the image of their group appeared before the American public, as film expert Lester Friedman makes clear:

Unlike films about other American minorities, movies with Jews were often scrutinized by one segment of that minority group with the power to decide how the entire group would be presented to society as a whole. The resulting images of Jews in films constitute a rich and varied tapestry woven by several generations of moviemakers responding to the world around them. Their works dynamically depict both the Jews' profound impact on American society and that society's perception of the Jews within its midst. Some films are lamps that help extinguish the darkness of ignorance. Others simply mirror long-held preju-

²⁸ Powers et al., *Hollywood's America*, 10.

²⁹ Margaret R. Miles, *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 190-91.

³⁰ Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage Publications, 1999), 375.

dices. But whether they explain or exploit their Jewish characters, all these films either implicitly or explicitly show how Jews affect American life and how American life influences Jews; it is a two-way process inherent in the first Jewish-American movie as well as in the latest.³¹

With respect to Jewish images, Jews in Hollywood have varied the visibility of Jewish themes and characters over time. Prior to World War II, Jewish characters often appeared in the movies. In the first of three Jewish phases of Hollywood identified by one film expert, "ghetto films that characterized the silent era" addressed, among other things, adjustment to life in America and intermarriage. The series that followed the lives of the Cohens and the Kellys, for instance, along with less memorable movies about intermarriage, "epitomized such dreams of assimilation." *The Jazz Singer* (1927), in which Al Jolson courted and married a gentile, was another example. Also, comedies, "many of which lampooned the reputation clinging to Jews for their mercantile cleverness, for their adeptness in cutting corners as well as cloth," filled the silent screen.³²

One may note, however, the irony that the original moguls did not necessarily have to change their names, but those appearing on the screen did because the moguls were sensitive to the fact that gentiles often had a negative view of the Jewish presence in Hollywood. By anglicizing actors' names, the studios avoided "surplus visibility" with respect to their Jewish cast. According to David Zurawik, author of *The Jews of Prime Time*, the sociological concept of surplus visibility describes "the feeling among minority members and others that whatever members of that group say or do, it is too much and, moreover, they are being too conspicuous about it."³³

The result was that, "Bernard Schwartz became Tony Curtis, Issur Danielovich became Kirk Douglas, Julius Garfinkle became John Garfield, Laszlo Lowenstein became Peter Lorre, Jill Oppenheim became Jill St. John, Betty Joan Perske became Lauren Bacall, Muni Weisenfreund became Paul Muni, Theodosia Goodman turned into Theda

³¹ Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film*, 9.

³² Stephen J. Whitfield, *American Space, Jewish Time: Essays in Modern Culture and Politics* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), 153-54.

³³ David Zurawik, *The Jews of Prime Time* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2003), 6.

Bara, and Samile Diane Friessen was reborn as Dyan Cannon."³⁴

The middle part of the last century saw a different Hollywood, one in which the sons (and grandsons and granddaughters) of the Jewish moguls' fellow immigrants – as well as a good number of Jewish refugees from Europe – played prominent roles. Paradoxically, it was a period in which most explicit portrayals of the Jew in cinema vanished (important exceptions were *Gentleman's Agreement* and *Crossfire* – both 1947). This middle period was "a dormant period" for open portrayals of Jews. Jews "were disappearing from the screen . . . the endearing comic immigrants depicted in the silent era were replaced by crypto-Jews, or by 'non-Jewish Jews,' or by Jews who thought of themselves only as Americans, or by no Jews at all. . . . This phase, the Hollywood version of the Marrano, lasted until at least the end of the 1950s."³⁵

If explicit Jews appeared at all in films of the fifties, it was usually in minor roles. Studios resisted "problem" pictures that dealt with "racial and religious relations." Even in biographical films about Jewish characters such as *Houdini* or *The Benny Goodman Story*, screenwriters tended to "downplay the Jewish elements or to eliminate them altogether. In cases where dramas, plays, or novels with Jewish themes are adapted for the screen the same holds true. Jewish characters are de-Semitized or de-Judainized (sic)."³⁶ Thus, this was a period in which the Jewish milieu of Hollywood was not considered important.

That Jewish filmmakers felt the need to mask Jewish identity in post-war films is hardly a surprise. Christian/Protestant power was still strong, particularly at the level of the masses, and the movie industry was not yet a secure part of the larger American Establishment, as was seen during the McCarthy era when the House Committee on Un-American Activities spent years shining a bright and uncomfortable light on the ideologies of those who created culture in Hollywood. Jewish reticence here was echoed in other areas into which Jews were tentatively moving, among them the higher reaches of academia, government, and big business. Missteps at this point would not be helpful.³⁷

³⁴ Silberman, 60.

³⁵ Whitfield, *American Space Jewish Time*, 155.

³⁶ Patricia Erens, *The Jew in American Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 198.

³⁷ The anti-Communist spirit of the age – represented by Senator McCarthy and

Following the wild success of the 1960 film adaptation of Leon Uris's novel *Exodus* (which chronicled the birth of modern Israel), however, came a dizzying display of Jews in the spotlight. According to Brandeis University scholar Stephen Whitfield, this period saw

. . . an almost exultant revelation in the fortuitous fact of Jewishness, with sprinklings of minor characters and occasional phrases soon overwhelmed by whole movies devoted to the residual mysteries of modern Jewish identity. The stars, for example, began to preserve their names. In the second phase, Julius Garfunkel had become John Garfield; in the third phase, Art Garfunkel kept his name. In the second phase Emanuel Goldenberg became Edward G. Robinson. In the third phase Jeff Goldblum kept his name; and a gentile, Caryn Johnson, actually changed hers to Whoopi Goldberg. . . . In the third phase the Indians not only bore odd resemblances to Hollywood Jews, but even began speaking Yiddish, as in Elliot Silverstein's *Cat Ballou* (1965). . . .

In the second phase of self-representation in Hollywood, films could be made about Captain Dreyfus that fudged or ignored his Jewish birth. In the current phase, the actor Richard Dreyfuss could tell an interviewer: "In a sense, everything I do has to do with my being Jewish." Dreyfuss could portray a shady, pushy, sleazy entrepreneur in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1974); and his co-religionists felt so secure that not even the staff of the Anti-Defamation League was asked to put in overtime. In *The Big Fix* (1978), Dreyfuss could play a Jewish detective named Moses Wine. . . . Even after Gene Wilder played a sort-of Jewish cowboy in *The Frisco Kid* (1980), no one even bothered to give a decent burial to Leslie Fielder's claim, in a discussion of American fiction two decades earlier, that "the notion of the Jewish cowboy is utterly ridiculous, of a Jewish detective . . . nearly as anomalous." For if Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor could be Jews (by choice) off the screen, then Jews could be imagined as characters anywhere. When a black cabbie (in *Bye Bye*

the efforts of the HUAC—destroyed Hollywood's "radical, largely Communist backbone," resulting in the collapse of "progressivism" in Hollywood (Erens, 197). See also my discussion of a book about that era, *Red Star Over Hollywood: The Film Colony's Long Romance with the Left* (*The Occidental Quarterly*, 6.1 [Spring 2006], 93–106).

Braverman) and a Japanese career woman (in *Walk, Don't Run*) speak Yiddish, when Jewishness is introduced no matter how irrelevant the context, even moviegoers deprived of seeing Jewish roles for three decades earlier might have echoed the sentiment of the passenger who was standing at the liquor bar of the *Titanic*, just as the liner collided with fate: "I did ask for ice, but this is too much."³⁸

When discussing these openly Jewish movies, it must be kept in mind that most of these Jewish films were "written or scripted by Jewish writers and produced by Jewish businessmen and actors [which] classifies them as a form of self-examination."³⁹ The list of explicitly Jewish participants is long, including "many young actors who rose to stardom playing Jewish characters types (George Segal, Elliott Gould, Barbra Streisand, Woody Allen, Richard Benjamin). In the seventies more would be added to this rooster: Richard Dreyfuss, Dustin Hoffman, Jeannie Berlin, Gene Wilder, and Mel Brooks."⁴⁰

To give a taste of this explosion of films with Jewish themes and/or Jewish casts, consider this list chronologically, beginning in the 1960s: *Exodus*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *King of the Roaring Twenties: The Story of Arnold Rothstein*, *The Pawnbroker*, *Cast a Giant Shadow*, *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, *Bye Bye Braverman*, *The Fixer*, *The Producers*, *Funny Girl*, *Me Natalie*, and *Goodbye Columbus*. Of all genres, comedies were the most overtly Jewish, beginning with *A Majority of One* (1961), *Act One* (1963), and *Come Blow Your Horn* (1963). Later came Carl Reiner's autobiographical *Enter Laughing* (1967), followed by *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas!*, *The Night They Raided Minsky's*, and *Take the Money and Run*.⁴¹

One could also note that the British film *Oliver!* (1968) turned Dickens's Fagin into a "likeable, sympathetic character." This favorable, de-Semitized version resulted in the dissolution of the Jewish Film Advisory Committee. As the last director of the committee concluded, "Our job was done."⁴² Indeed, it seemed that Hollywood Jews were now able to address any Jewish theme they liked, as the 1970s showed.

³⁸ Whitfield, *American Space*, *Jewish Time*, 164–66.

³⁹ Erens, 257.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁴¹ Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film*, 161.

⁴² Quoted in Erens, 296–300.

THE SEVENTIES

The 1970s saw an explosion of Jewish movies. Some of the major ones were *Where's Poppa?*, *Portnoy's Complaint*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Heartbreak Kid*, *The Way We Were*, *The Long Goodbye*, *Lepke*, *Hester Street*, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, *Man in the Glass Booth*, *Marathon Man*, *Boys From Brazil*, *Next Stop Greenwich Village*, *Annie Hall*, *The Big Fix*, *Boardwalk*, *The Frisco Kid*, and *Norma Rae*.

The animated film *Fritz the Cat* (1972) portrays a counter-culture hero as a cat. Seeking refuge, Fritz enters a synagogue, where he hears that the US government has pledged its support for Israel in the Six-Day War. A further announcement notes that the Zionists plan to "return the cities of New York and Los Angeles to the United States." Summing up Jewish images of the 1970s, film critic Patricia Erens writes:

And so the 1970s came to a close, bringing the largest number of films with Jewish subjects to appear since the 1920s. The dominant mode of these works is comedy, reflecting the large numbers of Jewish comedic writers, directors, and performers in Hollywood and what Jesse Bier, author of *The Rise and Fall of American Humor*, calls "the Yiddishization of national mirth." The emergence of a new ethnicity in America is evident in many of these, as well as the nostalgic works like *Hester Street* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. . . .

But it is in the area of minor characters that the wealth of the period is evident. Sometimes they are recognizable only to those who know the telltale signs. In other cases their Jewishness is stated and integral to the plot. The arbitrariness of some assignments, wherein any character can be Jewish, has begun to subvert the old stereotypes and thus opens the way for new roles for Jewish characters in the eighties.⁴³

THE EIGHTIES

Kathryn Bernheimer, author of *The 50 Greatest Jewish Movies*, nominated the 1981 film *The Chosen* as the best Jewish film of all time. Two years later, Barbra Streisand starred in her feminist fantasy *Yentl*, and two years after that, the Holocaust was featured in Claude

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 366.

Lanzmann's *Shoah*, an eight-and-a-half-hour examination of the murder of six million Jews. They were far from the only Jewish movies of the 1980s. Sergio Leone chronicled the lower echelons of Jewish life in New York in *Once Upon a Time in America* (1983), while Paul Masursky directed a largely Jewish cast in the quirky *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, starring Richard Dreyfuss and Bette Midler as an upper-middle class couple living in Hollywood. Patrick Swayze played a none-too-bright gentile dance instructor wooed by a wealthy Jewish idealist in *Dirty Dancing*, while Neil Simon's second of a trilogy, *Biloxi Blues*, starred half-Jewish Matthew Broderick. Finally, the end of the decade saw Jessica Tandy playing a cranky old Jewish woman in *Driving Miss Daisy*.

The 1980s saw further portrayals of Jewish characters in unlikely roles. In *Fort Apache, The Bronx* (1981), for instance, a group of multi-ethnic cops were lectured by an Orthodox sergeant, and in *An American Werewolf in London* (also 1981), a young American Jew traveling in England was bitten by a werewolf. The *Porky's* series (1982, 1984, 1985) featured a Jewish high school student, and, with respect to the *Rocky* franchise, "Rocky Balboa's seemingly Irish trainer and friend, Mickey (Burgess Meredith), turns out to be Jewish in *Rocky III* (1982)."⁴⁴

THE NINETIES

Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) remains among the most prominent Jewish movies. The decade opened, however, with Barry Levinson's semi-autobiographical *Avalon*, which he followed up with *Bugsy*, the story of Jewish gangster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, who built Las Vegas. The Jewish mobster theme was popular during the decade, with two other Bugsy Siegel films popping up in 1991—*Mobsters* and *The Marrying Man*. Dustin Hoffman did his part by portraying mobster Dutch Schultz (born Arthur Flegenheimer) in *Billy Bathgate*. *Casino* (1995), Martin Scorsese's rendition of the life of gambling czar Lefty Rosenthal, shared with the Bugsy Siegel films a subtheme of the quest for the beautiful gentile woman. At the other end of the legal spectrum came detective Bobby Gold in David Mamet's *Homicide*, in which the theme of a return to Jewish roots and identity coincided with "an increasing number of Jews today who have reconnected with their

⁴⁴ Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film*, 86–90.

cultural or religious roots.”⁴⁵

Ron Silver played the “controversial, emotionally engaged, and ethical defense lawyer” Alan Dershowitz (this was before Dershowitz represented O. J. Simpson and boxer Mike Tyson) in *Reversal of Fortune*. This film presented “the very worst side of the WASP world and nothing but the best of Jewish values and character.”⁴⁶ A surprise hit of 1996 was *Shine*, the story of a gifted young Jewish pianist tortured by his Holocaust-survivor father’s own demons. Finally, Woody Allen, despite some well-publicized problems in his private life, continued movies with Jewish themes, including *Husbands and Wives* (1992) and *Deconstructing Harry* (1997). Thus, for over four decades Hollywood has been producing a cornucopia of movies with overt Jewish themes and characters.

JEWISH THEMES: THE HOLOCAUST, ASSIMILATION, AND THE SHIKSA

Beginning in 1982, scholars began to write openly about Jewish issues and images in film. Lester Friedman and Patricia Erens pioneered the field, and Friedman in particular has done much to advance it.⁴⁷ As seen above, Jewish themes include the Holocaust, assimilation, and longing for the *shiksa*, or gentile woman. Other themes could be addressed, such as humor, social justice, or life-style trends, but it is the Holocaust, assimilation, and the *shiksa* that stand out. Historian Peter Novick explains why the Holocaust has become not only a central Jewish theme but a universally American one since the end of the 1960s:

There are many reasons why concern with the Holocaust among the 2 or 3 percent of the American population that is Jewish came to pervade American society. I will mention one important reason here, if only because it is often nervously avoided. We are not just “the people of the book,” but the people of the Hollywood film and the television mini-series, of the magazine article and the newspaper column, of the comic book and the academic

⁴⁵ Kathryn Bernheimer, *The 50 Greatest Jewish Movies: A Critic’s Ranking of the Very Best* (Secaucus, N.J.: Birch Lane Press, 1998), 114.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁴⁷ In addition to the four works mentioned in these notes, Friedman has also written Lester D. Friedman, *Hollywood’s Image of the Jew* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1982) and *Citizen Spielberg* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

symposium. When a high level of concern with the Holocaust became widespread in American Jewry, it was, given the important role that Jews play in American media and opinion-making elites, not only natural, but virtually inevitable that it would spread throughout the culture at large.⁴⁸

While Spielberg's *Schindler's List* was to become the most famous example of public portrayals of the Holocaust, it was far from the first or only one. For example, in 1978 Republic Pictures aired the made-for-TV *Holocaust*, which was given immense promotion by Jewish groups (the Anti-Defamation League distributed ten million copies of its sixteen-page tabloid *The Record* to promote the drama, for example). As film critic Bernheimer similarly notes of the miniseries, "The object of the most advance advertising of any television program in history, it sparked international debate in newspapers and magazines, on radio and TV talk shows, in churches and synagogues, on lecture tours, in classrooms, and, perhaps most importantly, in homes around the world."⁴⁹ That the miniseries was seen by perhaps 120 million viewers (including 15 million West Germans) is testimony to the skill with which it was produced and promoted.

In addition to *Holocaust*, there was *Shoah*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *Playing for Time*, *Escape From Sobibor*, and *The Murderers Among Us: The Simon Wiesenthal Story*, and *Skokie*, a movie about American neo-Nazis. Such public portrayals of Jewish suffering had real-world effects. *Holocaust*, for instance, "led to the creation of the Carter Commission, which called for a national Holocaust memorial and museum as well as an annual day of remembrance." It also "dramatically increased public support for Israel."⁵⁰ Since *Schindler's List*, the Holocaust has continued to be the theme of a wide variety of films, including Italian writer Roberto Benini's *Life Is Beautiful* and the Robin Williams' film *Jakob the Liar*.

A revealing scene about assimilation comes in Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983). In the scene, New York Intellectual Irving Howe explains how the character Zelig, who can change himself into any character he so desires, "represents the ultimate assimilated Jew."⁵¹ As the son of a

⁴⁸ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 12.

⁴⁹ Bernheimer, 156.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 156-57.

⁵¹ Erens, 386.

Yiddish actor, Zelig “metamorphosizes into everything from a black trumpeter, to an opera singer, to a baseball player, to an American Indian, to a Nazi. . . . In terms of its Jewish content, *Zelig* represents the most devastating film about Jewish assimilation ever produced.”⁵² While this may be true, a softer, more representative treatment of Jewish assimilation can be found in *Once Around* (1991), in which Richard Dreyfuss plays the role of the Jew as outsider, hoping to be accepted by insiders.

Dreyfuss is one of those actors who essentially plays the same role in every movie in which he appears because he inevitably plays himself. Since he is so full of *Yiddishkeit*, or Jewish spirit, his movie roles are also full of unadulterated *Yiddishkeit*, whether the character he is playing is specifically Jewish or not.⁵³ As we saw, he played a sleazy entrepreneur in *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1974), then an Israeli soldier in *Victory at Entebbe* (1976), a Jewish private eye named Moses Wine in *The Big Fix* (1978), and a lawyer named Levinsky in *Nuts* (1987). In 1993 Dreyfuss starred in Neil Simon’s semiautobiographical *Lost in Yonkers*, playing the role of Uncle Louie, a crook on the run, and more recently, the Jewish gangster Meyer Lansky in Home Box Office’s *Lansky* (1999).

In other movies, Dreyfuss’s characters may not be specifically Jewish or they may be veiled to varying degrees. In *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* (1986), for example, he seems to be playing (together with Bette Midler) a Jewish Hollywood type in the Paul Mazursky-directed and produced satire of the neurotic lives of the Hollywood rich and famous.⁵⁴ In his much more famous roles in *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, his high-energy persona can easily be seen as an extension of his *Yiddishkeit*. “I am,” Dreyfuss states, “immensely proud of being Jewish, to the point of bigotry. . . . I was raised in Bayside which is ninety percent Jewish. I went every week to Temple Emanuel from the time I was nine until I was sixteen. . . . In a sense,” he claims, “everything I do has to do with my being Jewish.”⁵⁵

Next, the *shiksa* theme deserves attention. Patricia Erens points to

⁵² Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film*, 230.

⁵³ As Bernheimer writes, Dreyfuss is an actor “who has consistently applied his distinctly Jewish persona to a wide variety of roles” (Bernheimer, 67).

⁵⁴ Director of *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* Paul Mazursky makes films that “almost always deal with Jewish themes and characters” (Bernheimer, 67).

⁵⁵ Quoted in Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film*, 222.

the 1963 *Come Blow Your Horn* as a typical example of Jewish men's yearning for the *shiksa*, or, in Erens's words, "the Jewish male's search for sexual fulfillment, especially among large-breasted flighty gentile women." In this movie, "Alan and Buddy seek a carnal experience which they associate with the *shiksa*. For them this provides a measure of independence, as well as acceptance in non-Jewish society." This culminates, Erens notes, in *Portnoy's Complaint* (1972).⁵⁶

The *shiksa* theme can be viewed from a variety of angles. Within an exclusively Jewish setting, it can be seen as a discourse on the limits Jewish culture sets for its adherents, for it is taboo for males to go outside the group for sex or for mating. It can also be seen in some ways as a negative commentary on the value of Jewish women.⁵⁷

Perhaps more than anyone else, Woody Allen make the *shiksa* theme central in many of his films. For example, in *Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Sex* (*but Were Afraid to Ask)* (1972) one scene features a rabbi "whose secret fantasy is to be whipped by a statuesque *shiksa* while his wife eats pork."⁵⁸ Clearly two distinct boundaries in Jewish culture are being satirized. In *Annie Hall* (1977), the relationship between

neurotic *nebbish* Alvy and all-American *shiksa* Annie provided Allen with the perfect opportunity to mine his favorite themes, chief among them the difference between Jews and gentiles. . . . Alvy is a typical Jewish, intellectual, neurotic New Yorker . . . caustic, cerebral, and cynical, given to exaggeration, often hostile, and usually contemptuous. Annie is open, naive, intuitive, unsophisticated, and unassertive, unsure of her own intellect, and eager for approval.⁵⁹

This ethnic encounter is not exclusively one of Jew meets gentile, however. In one respect, according to sociologist John Murray Cud-

⁵⁶ Erens, 260.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Alina Sivorinovsky, "Images of Modern Jews on Television," *Midstream*, December 1, 1995, 39-40. In an article in *The Forward*, writer and lawyer Susan Kaplan echoes this lament that "there are virtually no female Jewish characters on television. Almost without exception, the wives and significant others of these Sons of Israel are not Jewish" ("From 'Seinfeld' to 'Chicago Hope': Jewish Men Are Everywhere," November 29, 1996).

⁵⁸ Desser and Friedman, *American-Jewish Filmmakers*, 48.

⁵⁹ Bernheimer, 29.

dihy, it represents an internal Jewish drama: the lure of the gentile women is always threatening to tear the Jewish male away from his own tribe:

In Freud, the deepest taboo of Judaism, the taboo against inter-marriage, the forbidden lust of the Jew for the gentile *shiksa*, for the *shiksa* as “the promise of fulfillment,” is rationalized, psychologized, and reinterpreted as the desire for the *mother*, which desire is held taboo by everyone, of course, not just by Jews. The particularist, ritual taboo of the *Jewish* subculture—inter-marriage, *connubium*—is reconceptualized (and psychologized) as the universalist, “scientific,” anthropological taboo on incest.⁶⁰

In addition to the *shiksa* theme can be found the “light unto the nations” theme, or *tikkun olam*, which carries with it a theme of superior Jewish morality and intellectual abilities. This urge to “heal the world” gives rise to activism, which in practice means political radicalism. Thus, Stephen Whitfield, like Charles Liebman and other social scientists, drew attention to the much higher likelihood that a sixties’ radical in America was Jewish more than anything else.⁶¹

Barbra Streisand starred as an early version of such a radical in *The Way We Were* (1973), playing Katie Morosky, who “serves as president of the Young Communist League, waits tables, and works two nights a week on a linotype machine. . . . In English class she meets Hubbell,” her “gorgeous *goyisher* (gentile) guy.” Hubbell is played by Robert Redford in another version of his all-American WASP character (a year earlier, he had played arch-WASP Bill McKay in *The Candidate*). The differences between a Jewish communist sympathizer and a WASP war veteran who just wants to get along soon show themselves. “At parties Katie insists upon serious political discussions,” while Hubbell tells her, “You push too hard. You expect too much.”⁶²

⁶⁰ John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 62–63.

⁶¹ Whitfield, *American Space, Jewish Time*, 115–17.

⁶² Erens, 323. Streisand has tended to make what are considered “Jewish” films. A list of such movies would include *Funny Girl* (1968) and *Funny Lady* (1975); *A Star is Born* (1976), the story of a struggling singer named Esther Hoffman; *The Main Event* (1979), about a Beverly Hills business executive; *Yentl* (1983), the story of the passionate yeshiva student; and *The Prince of Tides* (1991), in which Streisand plays a psychoanalyst, Dr. Susan Lowenstein.

The Way We Were "also serves as one of the few Hollywood films to portray Jewish social commitment" (the socialist movement of the thirties and the protests of the 1950s). When, for example, the US Congress steps up its HUAC investigations into Hollywood communists, "Katie is morally outraged and goes to Washington to protest." This represents, Erens argues, "the cultural differences that separate the Jewish community from the larger gentile world. Here we see the Jew's passion for social justice and change."⁶³

This representation of Jewish social commitment is tied in with a sense of Jewish moral superiority. Such a theme can be seen in other films. For example, in Neil Simon's autobiographical *Biloxi Blues*, the explicitly Jewish character Arnold Epstein is played off Eugene Morris Jerome, who "wears his Jewishness lightly." Arnold, in contrast, "has no desire to fit in, and he flaunts his difference." He is "a Jew first and foremost." As one critic observed, Arnold is "the Jew as moral exemplar and crank." This "incorruptible defender of justice" fittingly becomes the district attorney of Brooklyn.⁶⁴

Jewish moral and intellectual superiority has been a staple of modern American film. For example, *Reversal of Fortune* features the "Jewish savior and the gentile he rescues." Such a theme is so common that Bernheimer dubs it the "Jews to the Rescue" genre, one that includes "numerous memorable movies, such as a Jewish lawyer (José Ferrer) who "wins justice and then holds his clients to a higher code of morality" in *The Caine Mutiny*, Judd Hirsch as a Jewish psychiatrist "who comes to the rescue of an uptight WASP family" in *Ordinary People*, Ron Liebman as a Jewish labor organizer among needy Southern gentiles in *Norma Rae*, and "brainy Jew" Jeff Goldblum as a savior of the world in *Independence Day*.⁶⁵

Woody Allen often portrays the gentile as less than a genius. For example, in perhaps his most successful movie, *Annie Hall*, he inserts a scene where the Jewish Alvy, who "may be overly sensitive to suffering, analytical, and self-absorbed," openly scorns a "handsome, happy, and obviously WASP couple to ask the secret of their relationship. 'I'm shallow, empty, with no ideas and nothing interesting to say,' the woman replies. 'And I'm the same way,' her strapping mate

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Bernheimer, 168-69.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 125-26.

adds cheerfully."⁶⁶

Allen pairs the *shiksa* motif with the inferior gentile theme in *Annie Hall*. Bernheimer notes that "*shiksa* lust as disastrous and self-destructive" is hardly an original Woody Allen theme (it had, for instance, been the theme of the 1972 Jewish comedy *The Heartbreak Kid*, in which the Jewish man, having gotten his *shiksa* prize, is left isolated in the gentile heartland of America). In *Annie Hall*, this destructive behavior features the usual range of negative gentile characters:

The difference between Annie's background and Alvy's upbringing is brought into sharp relief in this short but memorable scene juxtaposing a dinner with Annie's family and a meal *chez* Singer. The split-screen scene illustrates the huge gulf between the two cultures, both of which are ridiculed. Allen's comic condemnation of both exaggerated extremes pits the stifling, superficial Halls, who quietly speak about swap meets as they pick at their skimpy meal and sip cocktails, against the vulgar, emotional Singers, who gobble a vast dinner as they argue loudly. Although Alvy may be embarrassed by his uncouth family, he shows even greater disdain of the cold, repressed, bigoted Hall clan. Annie's brother Duane, played by Christopher Walken, is actually psychotic, and a mean-faced Grammy Hall is blithely described by Annie as "a real Jew hater."⁶⁷

Allen's air of Jewish superiority did not go unnoticed by critics. Discussing the "insistently moral" protagonist of *Broadway Danny Rose* (1984), magazine critic David Denby complained about Allen's "high Jewish self-regard," noting that Allen's "Jews are more moral than other people sentiments get a little sticky here."⁶⁸

DEEPER READINGS OF FILMS WITH JEWISH THEMES

While the above critics who focused on Jewish films—Friedman, Erens, Bernheimer, et al.—offer background and insight into hundreds of movies, they all share a serious blind spot: the inability to consider how the image of the *gentile* has been constructed in a Hollywood characterized by Jewish hegemony. The following readings

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Quoted in *ibid.*, 137.

will highlight that theme, along with the more common themes cited above.

Quiz Show (1994)

Quiz Show reproduces the actual 1950s television quiz show scandal in which a prominent young WASP, a Columbia University professor, was unfairly given answers to questions before the show. The previous champion was an intelligent young Jew from New York, and his scripted loss to the WASP enraged him to the extent that he went to Washington to reveal the scandal to a Congressional subcommittee. The narratives in the film and in real life are broadly parallel: Jews, through hard work and intelligence, challenge WASP cultural hegemony in America, but since WASPs still have unfair advantages, they win at the expense of others, including Jews. With Ivy League quotas and other slights still fresh in mind, Jews are ready to finally stand up for their rights.

In *Quiz Show*, "Jews are everywhere . . . as they were in the actual imbroglio that in 1959 was compared to the Black Sox scandal of 1919." For Stephen Whitfield, *Quiz Show* is presented as "a morality tale in which Jews are perpetrators and victims of television fraud . . . Jews are shown wearing black hats and white hats, because they were indeed sucked into the vortex of a scandal that mixed duplicity with unchecked avarice and ambition." Lower middle-class resident of Queens, Herb Stempel (John Turturro), plays the Jewish "*schmuck*" who, for the sake of dramatic interest, "must be the fall guy. He must lose to a fresh face, a more interesting champion—someone who can appear not only smart enough to triumph on *Twenty-One* but suave enough to 'get a table at 21'."⁶⁹

Those behind the scenes who engineer the fall are also Jews—"cunning Jews," no less. They fix the show in order to boost ratings, thereby generating more profits for the show's sponsor. The head of this company, portrayed in *Quiz Show* by impeccably dressed Martin Scorsese, is "probably drawn from Charles Revson, whose cosmetics company sponsored (and fixed) a rival program, *The \$64,000 Question*, on CBS."⁷⁰

While such unflattering public portrayals of Jewish characters

⁶⁹ Stephen Whitfield, "Quiz Show: A Film Review," *American Jewish History*, 1996, 131.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

might “generate concern at the Anti-Defamation League,” it does not in this case because the negative characters are balanced by the appearance of the true hero of the story, a Jewish lawyer who has risen through the educational, political, and social ranks to rival the staid power of WASPs such as Charles Van Doren. Rob Morrow plays Richard Goodwin, the Harvard-educated government lawyer who catches on to the goings-on in the New York television game show world. Making his entrance in the movie’s opening, Goodwin’s ethnicity is hinted at by the car showroom salesman’s slip of the tongue in saying Goodwin’s name; he confuses it with “Goodman,” which is plausibly Jewish enough. (Later, a receptionist makes a more blatant assumption when she tweaks his name — “Goldwyn.”)

As *Quiz Show* progresses and the tension between the Jewish and WASP cheaters rises, Goodwin reveals his ethnic origins to Stempel when he assures Stempel that he knows what a certain Jewish delicacy is. Later, in the rarified air of the Athenaeum club, Goodwin has lunch with the Van Dorens — father and son. Ordering a Reuben sandwich, Goodwin caustically notes that while the sandwich he is eating might be named “Reuben,” there are precious few “Rubins” in attendance at the club. At that time in the 1950s, successful Jews were knocking on the doors of the most prestigious clubs and corporations in America, so the issue was clearly in the air.

While some, such as Whitfield, argue that Goodwin is genuinely torn between the desire to do what is right and the desire to spare Van Doren in order to enter the very social class from which Van Doren hails, his real motives may have been more combative, as testimony from a previous generation of Jews suggests. Literary critic Leslie Fiedler, for instance, described how urban Jewish students “were in some ways like a class in an occupied country, a group of Alsatians or Czechs, say, under a German master.” “We were forbidden Yiddishisms as we were forbidden slang; and though we had our censors outnumbered, our ignorance and shame kept us powerless.” Thus were urban Jews force-fed a language “whose shape was determined by antiquated rules of etiquette (usually called ‘grammar’) . . . a language capable of uttering only the most correctly tepid Protestant banalities no matter what stirred in our alien innards.” Cuddihy argued that Fiedler was part of a *Kulturkampf* being fought between Jews and gentiles; Fiedler’s sentiments toward literature may mirror those in film as well: “I would know, what I wrote against as well as for:

against their taste as well as for our own."⁷¹

Novelist Philip Roth, writing later, shared these sentiments. Playing off the actual *Quiz Show* scandal, he inserted a scene into *Portnoy's Complaint* that portrayed a more naked anti-gentile animus than is shown in the film:

I was on the staff of the House subcommittee investigating the television scandals. . . . and then of course that extra bonus, Charlatan Van Doren. Such character, such brains and breeding, that candor and schoolboyish charm—the ur-WASP, wouldn't you say? And turns out he's a fake. Well, what do you know about that, gentile America? Supergoy, a *gonif!* Steals money. Covets money. Wants money, will do anything for it. Goodness gracious me, almost as bad as Jews—you sanctimonious WASPs!

Yes, I was one happy yiddel down there in Washington, a little Stern gang of my own, busily exploding Charlie's honor and integrity, while simultaneously becoming lover to that aristocratic Yankee beauty whose forebears arrived on these shores in the seventeenth century. Phenomenon known as Hating Your Goy and Eating One Too.⁷²

To emphasize the dual nature of this phenomenon, Portnoy reveals more about his motives not only for skewering quiz show cheat Van Doren, but for bedding his WASP of the moment: "What I'm saying, Doctor, is that I don't seem to stick my dick up these girls, as much as I stick it up their backgrounds—as though through fucking I will discover America. *Conquer* America—maybe that's more like it."⁷³

This parable of Jewish-gentile competition and struggle can be seen as an authentic portrayal of the fall of WASP hegemony in the late fifties or early sixties and the impending "rise of the Jews."⁷⁴ Just as the "ur-WASP" professor had been exposed as a fraud and the Jew vindicated, real-life Jews after WWII broke out of the constraints imposed

⁷¹ Cuddihy, 185.

⁷² Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (New York: Random House, 1969), 232–33. Roth mined this incident more thoroughly in his 1981 novel, *Zuckerman Unbound* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux), 33–40.

⁷³ Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint*, 235.

⁷⁴ Albert Lindemann, *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15.

on them by a WASP cultural hegemony and began building their own power base in the intellectual, cultural, political, economic, and—as the Goodwin character shows—moral spheres of modern American life.⁷⁵

DUSTIN HOFFMAN: HIS JEWISH PERSONA

Bernheimer writes that Dustin Hoffman “rarely plays explicitly Jewish characters (his performance as comic Lenny Bruce in Bob Fosse’s *Lenny* was an exception), but many of his roles carry strong Jewish undercurrents.”⁷⁶ Indeed, Hoffman’s roles can be used as a model for the emergence of Jewish themes and identities in modern Hollywood.

Characteristic of many American Jews, Hoffman is only loosely attached to formal Judaism. Whitfield writes that

Dustin Hoffman’s second wife has also encouraged him “to do what I’ve been wanting to do for many years, which is to become more observant and pass that on to my kids. There are a few things that I really want to do before it’s too late,” the actor added. “I want to learn Hebrew. And I would love to be *bar mitzvahed*.”⁷⁷

While these formal symbols of Jewish identity lay in Hoffman’s future, his ethnic concerns are discernible back to the late sixties in *The Graduate*, continue into the seventies with *Marathon Man*, into the eighties with his Broadway performance in *Death of a Salesman*,⁷⁸ and even into the nineties with *Outbreak*.

Marathon Man (1976)

Writing about the Holocaust, Bernheimer notes that the “post-traumatic terror and dread that scarred the culture’s psyche was also vividly manifested in a series of fictional films of the 1970s focusing

⁷⁵ For more on the rise of Jewish influence in the moral sphere, see my review of *Jews and the American Soul* in *The Occidental Quarterly* 7 (Spring 2007).

⁷⁶ Bernheimer, 145.

⁷⁷ Whitfield, 167.

⁷⁸ For insights into the Jewish nature of the play (pro and con), see Stephen J. Whitfield, *In Search of American Jewish Culture* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 118–23.

on ongoing Nazi activity."⁷⁹ *Marathon Man* is one such film that represents a standard post-Holocaust theme where Jew confronts Nazi and prevails, giving vicarious victory over those who had killed so many fellow Jews during the war. In this film, Hoffman plays an explicitly Jewish character (Babe Levy) who encounters Nazi dentist Christian Szell, "a character clearly modeled on [Nazi sadist, Doctor Josef] Mengele." Szell "engages in a battle of wits and will" with the Jewish graduate student, Babe. The setting is New York City, home to many American Jews, and the story begins with one of intense concern to the Jewish community: "the harrowing point that the Nazi menace still stalks our world."⁸⁰

In the opening sequence, Szell's brother Klaus removes from a safety deposit box diamonds stolen from Jewish concentration camp prisoners and gives them to an unknown confidant. Returning home, Klaus's German-made Mercedes breaks down, blocking the road, and a fight ensues with a loud-mouthed New York driver who happens to be Jewish. The Jewish driver opens the ethnic hostilities by gratuitously calling Klaus a "kraut meathead." From there, the conflict descends into "Jude-Nazi" name calling, then escalates into inner-city car combat. Ignoring traffic signals and racing through crowded New York City streets, both drivers crash into a fuel oil truck and die in the ensuing inferno, as a congregation of Jews look on in horror.

Jogging through Central Park, Babe briefly pauses to observe the conflagration, but quickly resumes his training. As further establishment of the "Jew vs. Aryan" motif of the film, a tall *goyische* runner passes Babe, taunting him. Incensed, Babe does all in his power to overtake the Aryan, but fails. (In an ironic reversal on a concentration camp scene, a large German Shepard nips at the Aryan jogger's heel.) Babe's weakness and character here are "linked to his background. Babe is nervous, compulsive, and competitive. Anxious and eager, he is also tenacious." Returning home after his run, though, he is powerless to ward off the taunts of a group of Puerto Rican youths outside his apartment.

In addition to being a Columbia University graduate student (in-

⁷⁹ Bernheimer, 143. Erens gives a partial list of movies employing this theme: *The Man in the Glass Booth*, *The Hiding Place*, *Voyage of the Damned*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *The Odessa File*, and *The Boys From Brazil* (Ehrens, 345–47).

⁸⁰ Bernheimer, 143. Here Bernheimer also discusses *The Boys From Brazil*, a movie similar to *Marathon Man* in which a character based on Mengele reappears.

dicative of high intelligence), Babe is haunted by the suicide of his famous historian father. His father had been “hounded by McCarthyites,” which is but a thinly-disguised reference to the heavily Jewish group of Communists and “fellow travelers” investigated by HUAC.⁸¹

Searching for his brother’s lost diamonds, former death camp dentist Christian Szell resorts to torturing Babe by drilling sensitive points in his teeth without the use of anesthesia. Here, Szell is resorting to his old Nazi practices, but Babe finds the inner strength to resist and, in the end, prevail. Summing up the meaning of the story, Bernheimer writes

Marathon Man, in which Mengele serves as a symbol of demonic evil, evokes the horrors of the past. It warns of the ongoing threat of anti-Semitic fanaticism while allowing the Jew vicarious revenge and a cathartic victory. Like a number of fantasies of the era, *Marathon Man* seeks to redress the wrongs of history by symbolically restoring power to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust who suffered terribly but, unlike Babe, were not able to defeat their enemy.⁸²

Of note here is the conflation of actual Nazis with gentiles in general, as in Dr. Szell’s first name: Christian. This tendency among Jews to conflate disparate groups of gentiles is common. In academic writing, for example, there is a tendency to group Nazis with all Germans. And blame for the Holocaust is often spread beyond Germans to other Europeans, and even Americans as well.⁸³ More broadly, among post-

⁸¹ For a brief summary (with sources), see Kevin B. MacDonald, *Separation and Its Discontents: Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Anti-Semitism* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 52–54. For three personal accounts of how individual Jews and their families were pursued, see *Red Diapers: Growing Up in the Communist Left*, ed. Judy Kaplan and Linn Shapiro (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 54–60, 176–83; and David Horowitz, *Radical Son: A Generational Odyssey* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 65–72.

⁸² Bernheimer, 145. Here, she also notes that director John Schlesinger is an English Jew.

⁸³ See Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). Criticism of Goldhagen’s views has been extensive, particularly among professional historians. See, for instance, Lindemann, *Esau’s Tears*, ix–xiv; and Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn, *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998). For American guilt, see David S. Wyman *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust* (New York:

war cultural artifacts can be found many instances of conflation of Nazi war criminals (and other blatant anti-Semites) with gentiles in general.

Lenny (1974)

One might say that *Marathon Man* is lightly tinged with hostility toward gentiles. In contrast, *Lenny* proffers a far more virulent dose of hostility. In the beginning of the film, however, an opposite form of emotion is shown: love for the female gentile. Dustin Hoffman's Lenny Bruce meets a stripper, and by way of introduction she asks about his name, prompting Bruce to explain that his original name, Leonard Schneider, was "too Jewish." Soon, physical romance ensues, with Bruce buying a roomful of flowers for his new love interest. When he arrives to meet her, he sees her posed naked on the bed among the flowers. "Oh yeah. Oh yeah. It's a *shiksa* goddess."

Bruce is quite candid about his Jewish background and the relationship between Jews and gentiles. In a nightclub rendition of one of his most well-known routines, he turns his cutting humor toward Christians:

You and I know what a Jew is—*One Who Killed Our Lord*. I don't know if we got much press on that in Illinois—we did this about two thousand years ago. . . .

Alright, I'll clear the air once and for all, and confess. Yes, we did it. I did it, my family. I found a note in my basement. It said: "We killed him . . . signed, Morty." And a lot of people say to me, "Why did you kill Christ?" "I dunno . . . We killed him because he didn't want to become a doctor, that's why we killed him."⁸⁴

While Bruce makes many cracks about the Pope and Christians in general, he says nothing negative about Judaism. In fact, he has a warm relationship with his mother and aunt throughout.

The New Press, 1998). For explicit criticism of Wyman's thesis, see William D. Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the democracies could not have saved more Jews from the Nazis* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁸⁴ Whitfield, *American Space, Jewish Time*, 72.

The Graduate (1967)

While Hoffman played Jewish characters in the seventies films discussed above, few observers felt that the existentially pained protagonist in *The Graduate* was Jewish. Erens, for one, fails to include this movie or any of its characters or themes in her exhaustive study *The Jew in American Cinema*. In contrast, Bernheimer takes it for granted that Hoffman plays a "Jewish hero": "Apathetic, ambivalent, and indecisive . . . his character finds that 'Love is the (apparent) answer'." Bernheimer explicitly compares Hoffman's character to that of Neil Klugman, the Jewish protagonist in the film adaptation of Philip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus*.⁸⁵

Read properly, I believe that Hoffman's character Ben can be seen as playing out one of the most pointed Jewish dramas in modern film. Though the movie uses WASP characters and settings throughout the movie to mask Jewish undercurrents, the final scene reveals the strong sense of estrangement from and hostility toward gentile society in general. It also highlights the Jewish man's longing for the "*shiksa* goddess." By sleeping with both mother and daughter from an arch-WASP family, Ben succeeds in carrying out his fantasy of cuckolding a WASP husband, a theme consonant with the above-noted phrase "Hating Your Goy and Eating One Too."

The Graduate appeared in the same year as Roth's novel *Portnoy's Complaint*, and the parallel sentiments toward the *shiksa* are worth exploring. In this, his most famous book, Roth added his unapologetic account of the *shiksa* theme. A lengthy quotation imparts the deeply held sentiment Roth obviously meant to share:

Shiksas! In winter, when the polio germs are hibernating and I can bank upon surviving outside of an iron lung until the end of the school year, I ice-skate on the lake in Irvington Park. . . . I skate round and round in circles behind the *shiksas* who live in Irvington . . . But the *shiksas*, ah, the *shiksas* are something else again. Between the smell of damp sawdust and wet wool in the overheated boathouse, and the sight of their fresh cold blond hair spilling out of their kerchiefs and caps, I am ecstatic. Amidst these flushed and giggling girls, I lace up my skates with weak, trembling fingers, and then out into the cold and after them I

⁸⁵ Bernheimer, 90.

move, down the wooden gangplank on my toes and off onto the ice behind a fluttering covey of them—a nosegay of *shiksés*, a garland of gentile girls. I am so awed that I am in a state of desire *beyond a hard-on*. My circumcised little dong is simply shriveled up with veneration. . . . How do they get so gorgeous, so healthy, so *blond*? My contempt for what they believe in is more than neutralized by my adoration of the way they look, the way they move and laugh and speak—the lives they must lead behind those *goyische* curtains! Maybe a pride of *shiksés* is more like it . . .

So: dusk on the frozen lake of a city park, skating behind the puffy red earmuffs and the fluttering yellow ringlet of a strange *shikse* teaches me the meaning of the word *longing*. It is almost more than an angry thirteen-year-old little Jewish Momma's Boy can bear. Forgive the luxuriating, but these are probably the most poignant hours of my life I'm talking about—I learn the meaning of the word *longing*, I learn the meaning of the word *pang*. There go the darling things dashing up the embankment, clattering along the shoveled walk between the evergreens . . . I want Jane Powell too, God damn it! And Corliss and Veronica. I too want to be the boyfriend of Debbie Reynolds—it's the Eddie Fisher in me coming out, that's all, the *longing* in all us swarthy Jewboys for those bland blond exotics called *shiksés* . . .⁸⁶

The early action in *The Graduate* (directed by Jewish Mike Nichols, "an immigrant from Danzig, who had stepped off the *Bremen* right before World War II,"⁸⁷ gives little clue to the film's Jewish significance.

⁸⁶ Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint*, 142–52.

⁸⁷ Whitfield, 60. A more recent account deepens the level of Jewish identification in the film, as director Nichols found that "the deeper he got into the shoot and the more intensely he pushed Hoffman past what the actor thought he could withstand, the more Nichols realized that something painful and personal was at stake, and always had been, in his attraction to the story. 'My unconscious was making this movie,' he says. 'It took me years before I got what I had been doing all along—that I had been turning Benjamin into a Jew. I didn't get it until I saw this hilarious issue of MAD magazine after the movie came out, in which the caricature of Dustin says to the caricature of Elizabeth Wilson, 'Mom, how come I'm Jewish and you and Dad aren't?' And I asked myself the same question, and the answer was fairly embarrassing and fairly obvious'" (Mark Harris, "Book Excerpt: Inside the Making of 'The Graduate,'" *Entertainment Weekly*, <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,20176758,00.html>).

Not until the church scene at the end, where Ben races to the church to break up his true love's marriage to a blond *goy*, does the strong Jewish undercurrent of the movie reveal itself. In a scene powerful for its symbolism, Ben arrives at the church too late; his love has just pronounced her "I do" and is kissing her new husband. Climbing into the second-floor choir loft, Ben screams out her name: "Elaine! Elaine!" Turning to him, Elaine realizes that Ben is the better choice, and she abandons both altar and new husband to be with him.

Before getting away, however, Ben faces a furious group of gentiles, including Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, and stocky young gentile men. First comes Mr. Robinson, whom Ben has cuckolded. Grappling at the foot of the church stairs, Ben delivers a blow to the gut, and Mr. Robinson falls. Next, Ben faces the swarm of blond-haired young men, sparkling white teeth flashing in the crystal light of the church. To defeat them, he grabs a gilded five-foot cross and swings wildly into the seething flock of *goyim*. Thus keeping them momentarily at bay, he takes Elaine outside the church and bars the doors with the cross, completing his escape. This scene starkly combines the Jewish male's yearning for the *shiksa* with revenge against gentile society.

Outbreak (1995)

Reading *Outbreak* as a "Jewish" movie is productive because it provides a chance to explore subtexts and join them together to find the repetition of common Jewish themes, in this case in a film in which no explicit Jewish characters exist. *Outbreak* can be seen as offering Walter Mitty-esque fantasies of the dominant group in Hollywood. In this film, Hoffman plays an eccentric scientist who agrees to save society from a mad military man bent on controlling America through biological warfare. The theme is heroic outsider scientist saves society from corrupt and malevolent insider elite. The interpretation of this text is familiar: Jewish outsider saves society from gentile elite (Bernheimer's "Jews to the Rescue" motif).⁸⁸

For starters, Hoffman plays a brilliant scientist (a "smart Jew"), a plausible role, given the high percentage of American Nobel Prize winners in science and medicine who are Jewish.⁸⁹ In addition, Hoff-

⁸⁸ Bernheimer, xi.

⁸⁹ Raphael Patai explores Jewish intelligence in Part III, "Journey Into the Jewish Mind," of *The Jewish Mind* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 287-342. He adds figures on Jewish Nobel Prize winners in his Postscript 1996, 547-50. Mac-

man's character is married to a beautiful blonde (the *shiksa* theme). From Hoffman's elevated vantage point, he can see what is good and bad for society, and the gentile elite – represented by the military (the Cossack or Nazi menace) – are a "them" who must be confronted. Major General McClintock, the evil mastermind behind the plan to blow up a small American town, is chillingly portrayed by Donald Sutherland, who has white hair and piercing blue eyes, a suitable Aryan.

Hoffman appeals to the masses to follow his lead to save themselves from imminent destruction at the hands of the corrupt elite. After some unconvincing heroics, such as jumping from a helicopter onto the fog-enshrouded deck of a ship at sea, Hoffman succeeds. Not only does he succeed in defeating the corrupt general, he finds the cure for the lethal "outbreak," thus saving his dying estranged wife's life and getting her love back in the end. Like other movies discussed here, *Outbreak* successfully pairs the winning of the gentile woman with the defeat of the corrupt gentile elite.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the heavy Jewish presence in Hollywood has been a constant for over a century, and it has been a presence that has made a difference, a minority that has, in Stephen Whitfield's words, "left its skid marks," for American Jews have "exerted an extraordinary impact upon the character of the United States."⁹⁰ As Gabler wrote:

[T]he American film industry . . . was founded by Jews who themselves seemed to be anything *but* the quintessence of America. The much-vaunted "studio system" . . . was supervised by a second generation of Jews, many of whom also regarded themselves as marginal men trying to punch into the American mainstream. The storefront theaters of the late teens were transformed into the movie palaces of the twenties by Jewish exhibitors. And

Donald also explores superior Jewish intelligence in *A People That Shall Dwell Alone: Judaism as a Group Evolutionary Strategy* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994), 188–91; *Separation and Its Discontents*; and *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998). A strong dissent against the idea of superior Jewish intelligence can be found in Sander L. Gilman, *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Superior Jewish Intelligence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

⁹⁰ Whitfield, *American Space*, *Jewish Time*, 20.

when sound movies commandeered the industry, Hollywood was invaded by a battalion of Jewish writers, mostly from the East. The most powerful talent agencies were run by Jews. Jewish lawyers transacted most of the industry's business and Jewish doctors ministered to the industry's sick. Above all, Jews produced the movies."⁹¹

Let the reader go away from this essay with the sense—and the confidence to repeat it—that Hollywood is indeed run by Jews. Just as Jacob Heilbrunn insisted when writing about another group of energetic Jews—"It is anything but an anti-Semitic canard to label neoconservatism a largely Jewish phenomenon"⁹²—gentiles should feel free to join select Jews in saying, "It is anything but an anti-Semitic canard to label Hollywood a largely Jewish phenomenon." And not just a phenomenon but an empire; an "empire of their own."

*Edmund Connelly is an academic film and television scholar and a frequent contributor to **The Occidental Quarterly** and **The Occidental Observer** (www.theoccidentalobserver.com).*

⁹¹ Gabler, 1-2.

⁹² Jacob Heilbrunn, quoted in Evan R. Goldstein, "Fight Makes Right," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 18, 2008.