

“The J-Factor in American Studies”
by
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The presentation was occasioned by the retirement of AS Editor and Prof. David Katzman.

Let me begin by adding my voice to the long list of others who have for many years treasured toiling in the field of American Studies with David Katzman. I only regret how little time we have to duly honor or even list his many, varied contributions to our personal and professional lives. I gather that David wouldn't want us to do that, anyway. Besides, I can only claim to have witnessed a corner of the legacy that he has so generously entrusted to us. But I know that we are all better for it and for him.

My association with David began before we actually met, in his influence more than his presence, when I was just another fan of his writings. I particularly remember reading *Seven Days a Week* back in the late 1970s and assigning it in my classes.¹ (Note: subsequent years span most of the fifty under discussion.) I was still a freshly minted Ph.D. when the book was hot off the press. At the time I had some training and great enthusiasm for the then-“new” social history, but noticed a shortfall from promise to delivery. David, on the other hand, delivered. On his own, he proved a master of approaches that our cabal at Penn vainly imagined itself inventing. In so doing, he helped lead a larger movement to extend democratic and populist impulses that, I argue, have always been central to American Studies.

Our intellectual forbearers started with neglected belletrists and popular artists, connecting them to more pervasive disaffections and the citizens (chiefly Euro-American men but also women and minorities) who championed democratic movements. A scant couple of

decades after this “first and second generation” of interdisciplinary Americanists set out, Katzman help blaze a yet bolder trail for the likes of me – for us – toward a more prominent place for ever more “plain” folks in the Americas that we study and teach.² Thank you, David!

David is also the one who got me over-involved in MAASA’s journal, *American Studies*. I reluctantly volunteered only because of his personal promise to lead it. Given other, more glorious opportunities that we all knew he had, it was a very generous offer, and in my opinion, it was to great effect. The journal became a gem not only because of the quality of its content but also because of the unusual decency with which contributors are treated. Again, thank you, David!

I am tempted at this point to add some caveats that David would certainly recommend, not only because he is humble but also because in fact, the success of the MAASA journal is also due to many years of effort of many other people. They are due recognition for achievements that go well beyond David’s influence. Although I am inadequate to that challenge, too, I cannot miss this opportunity to single out three individuals whose share in the *American Studies* sector of David’s mission has been, I think, particularly large.

- Stuart Levine: The journal, *American Studies*, was basically his offspring, his baby for 30 years (1959-1989). If the history of MAASA (or for that matter ASA and the *American Quarterly*) is ever detailed, it had better include acknowledging a debt to Stuart.
- Kathleen Wells-Morgan: Insofar as MAASA is a legitimate, ongoing enterprise, with neither journal editors nor officers under indictment, it owes as much to Kathleen as to anyone. She has volunteered for the unpaid and essential job of Executive Director, basically keeping all operations afloat, for more than twenty-five years. If nothing else, I want to hereby establish that her position is not thankless. We thank you, Kathleen.

- Norm Yetman: It is hard to imagine any of these activities (including David's) without Norm at least riding shotgun on weekdays and doing all the driving on Shabbat. I know that he wishes he were here.

At this point, I am tempted to segue from talking about David and his allies to a long and now, I fear, too predictable rant about how the latest round of Americanist upstarts are squandering such gifts. I remain convinced that much of the what passes for "new" American Studies is, in fact, neither new nor a substantial improvement. Self-promotion to the contrary, new and old have many virtues and flaws in common.

The fashionable center of the field has, in my estimation, becoming yet less interdisciplinary. Its highest-fallutin incarnations (such as meetings of the ASA) barely stray beyond specialized, multi-media forays that have been conventional in individual arts and humanities disciplines for decades. There are few scholarly connections to the history of national institutions or international affairs (at least as Ph.D.s in those specialties understand the relevant scholarship) and none to the sciences (mainstream, quantitative social sciences or any of the natural or applied sciences). Since 2002, when I moved from an academic to more applied vocation, I have been increasingly convinced that prestige within American Studies is distributed in inverse proportion to scholars' ability to find their feet with a random sample of U.S. residents, to understand much less participate in workaday life outside of academia. Given that sense of where the legacy is headed, when Norm asked me to speak today, I warned him that I was apt to whine. He answered, "Yes, I know. What else would I expect?"

In an effort to be a bit less predictable and preserve, I hope, some of the joy in this occasion, please allow me to initiate a different path, approaching our panel theme ("American Studies and *American Studies*") from a less obvious, more amusing, maybe even encouraging angle. As my title suggests, I am pulled by the initial observation that the two most important figures in the fifty years of the journal share at least one important piece of biography. Both the founder Stuart Levine and his successor David Katzman are Jews, in fact, New York Jews

transplanted to the Plains. I want to encourage some thought about what, if anything, should be made of that fact.

A nicely twisted vantage on both our subject and the occasion can be engaged through a contribution of yet another Jewish New Yorker, Jules Feiffer: His play, which premiered in 1967, titled *Little Murders*.³ Although staged in its present (“the Sixties”) rather than ours, *Little Murders* conjures a dystopian future that is still easily imagined today, maybe especially if you find some kinship with the expectations (rightly and wrongly) associated with Jews and American Studies, the journal and the field. So, I urge you to join me in comparing the play’s moment to ours. I am particularly drawn to parallels between my role here and the one that the playwright made for a minister, Pastor Henry Dupas (played by a bearded Donald Sutherland in the film translation). At the end of Act One, he presides over the wedding of his odd-couple protagonists.

Everyone knows – and I hope you agree – that rituals, like a wedding or this tribute to journal and its retiring editor, depend less on a cleric or master of ceremonies (Henry in the play; the panel here today) than the throng who have assembled (you/us). As we participate and bear witness, meaning is made. If we don’t, it won’t. (“Objections, anyone? Then forever hold your peace.”)

The process is supposed to be a bit magical, unifying, uplifting, albeit among people whose expectations of that process are apt to be both intense in quality and conflicted in substance. That is among the reasons objections are only welcome after the minister has discouraged them. At the outset, people share only a hope for transformation or transition but they don’t share much understanding of how to proceed. That combination – a passion to get somewhere, somehow but from points, to points, and by routes unknown – can present a problem for the likes of Pastor Dupas and for me, for us.⁴

In *Little Murders*, the pastor (apparently on Quaaludes or LSD) faces an obvious rift among those assembled. On one side is the family of the bride, Patsy. With just one flaming

exception (her brother), Patsy's clan is arrow-straight, upbeat, church-going, '50s all-American. Read the stereotype: fertile, perky, Prairie, Protestant. On the other side is the groom, Alfred, who drifts in without family, as if he were just hatched upstream. Insofar as he admits to feeling anything, Alfred aims for numb. He is an aimless misfit, determined to remain a victim of modernity and self-doubt, while ever questioning the value of his own endurance. Read the stereotype: intellectual, New York, Jew.

What is a minister/panelist to do? How do we make a feast from such a *tsimmes*?⁵

Within the confines of the play (and here), theological resources are slim. Patsy's family is at best in radical denial of, let us say, frayed seams in their Christian faith. Feiffer signals the pastor's bent by placing his ordination in the "First Existential Church" in Greenwich Village. Patsy's family cannot be thrilled with the choice. Alfred, of course, is never thrilled with anything, but his evasion of faith might find some solace in the Kierkegaardian liturgy of the First Existential Church. The bounds of worship would have to be pretty porous.

Just before the ceremony, as family and friends settle into the pews, Henry approaches Alfred to discuss just one concrete part of the predicament:

Dupas: *Your [soon-to-be] father-in-law wants me to sneak the Deity into the ceremony.*

Alfred: *What did you tell him?*

Dupas: *He's offered me a lot of money. I told him I'd make my decision in a few minutes If it's all right with you, I'd like to take the money and **not** mention the Deity. First Existential can use the money. . . .*

Alfred: *I don't know what to tell you, Henry –*

Dupas: *Well, we'll see –*

So, Pastor Dupas is going to wing it. He summons something like a priestly or professorial demeanor before the bride and groom and the motley but pewed, solemnly assembled, awaiting ceremonial transformation, a feast of *tsimmes*. Henry begins, sitting cross-legged on the floor by the pulpit, shepherding his flock, First-Existential style:

*You all know why we're here. There is often so much sham about this business of marriage. Everyone accepts it. Ritual. That's why I was so heartened when Alfred asked me to perform this ceremony. He has certain beliefs that I assume you all know. He is an atheist, which is perfectly all right. Really it is. I happen not to be, but inasmuch as this ceremony connotes an abandonment of ritual in the search for truth, I agree to perform it. First, let me state frankly to you, Alfred, and to you, Patricia, that of the two hundred marriages I have performed, all but seven have failed. So the odds are not good. We don't like to admit it, especially at the wedding ceremony, but it's in the back of all our minds, isn't it? How long will it last? We all think that. Don't we? Well, I say, why not bring it out in the open? **Why** does one decide to marry? Social pressure? Boredom? Loneliness? Sexual appeasement? Um, love? I do not put any of these reasons down. Each in its own way is adequate, each is all right. I married a musician last year who wanted to get married in order to stop masturbating. (guests stir) Please, don't be startled, I'm not putting him down. That marriage did not work. But the man tried. He is now separated, still masturbating – but he is at peace with himself because he tried society's way. So, you see, it was not a mistake, it turned out all right. Last month I married a painter to a novelist with everyone at the wedding under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs. . . . It took two days to perform the ceremony. . . . **That** marriage should last. Still, if it does not, – well that will be all right. For, don't you see, **any** step one takes is useful.*

*Is positive, **has** to positive, because it's part of life. And negation of the previously taken step is positive. It, too, is part of life. And in this light and **only** in this light, should marriage be regarded. As a small, single step. If it works . . . fine! If it fails . . . fine! Look elsewhere for satisfaction. Perhaps to more marriages. As many as one likes . . . fine! To drug addiction. . . I won't put it down. Each of these is an **answer** for **somebody**. For Alfred, today's answer is Patsy. For Patsy, today's answer is Alfred. I won't put them down for that. . . . Failing ones partner does **not** matter. Sexual disappointment does **not** matter. Sexual betrayal does **not** matter. . . . Nothing can destroy us unless we see it as destructive. It's all part of life.*⁶

You can imagine, then, how Henry rendered the vows themselves which, Henry lamented, were required by the State of New York: "Do you, Alfred, and do you, Patricia, solemnly swear. . . ?" He problematizes every key word: "love," "honor," "obey," "forsaking all others." For example:

- Love – "*Whatever **that** means can't we more wisely say: communicate?*"
- Honor – "*Meaning, I suppose, you won't cut his balls off; yet some men like that . . . Is not dishonor, in a sense, a **form** of honor?*"
- Obey – Better to come up with alternatives in the thesaurus that "*are general enough, I would think, and still leave plenty of room to dominate.*"
- Forsaking all others – "*Rephrase that to more sensibly say: if you **choose** to have affairs, you won't feel guilty about them – as long as you both shall live – or as long as you're not bored of one another? . . . and the rest of that gobbledygook . . . ?*"

Everyone waits for what seems like an eternity till Patsy and Alfred, dumb-struck and numb-struck, realize that they need to reply. Eventually, Patsy offers a tearful, “I do [, I think].”

With the legalities complete, Pastor Henry shifts to commentary on loose ends that, he preaches, everyone should hereby join him in judging “all right”: Despite accepting a bribe, he hasn’t and won’t mention the Deity; the father of the bride will be perturbed; Patsy’s brother won’t mind being yanked out of the closet by a bribe-taking, bilking, stoned, existential minister on the day of his sister’s wedding

As you might expect, the assembled find these things far short of “all right.”

A riot breaks out.

End of Act One.

I trust that we won’t follow the parallels too strictly here. But I do want to pivot off some of them.

First, I want to acknowledge that MAASA is paying me at least enough money to cover the cost of my coming here. Thank you!

Second, insofar as there was something specific I was supposed to mention in return for the money, I may not, but only because I’m not sure what it is. (I do not think it is the deity. In fact, I might be getting into trouble by even gesturing in that direction.) There was some discussion – fortunately vague – about potential topics, but too many to cover in any depth:

- to acknowledge David’s professional service,
- to assess fifty years of the MAASA journal,
- to contextualize the journal and David’s career within the broader history of our field,
and
- to say something a bit original of my own.

All in twenty minutes? Impossible. Not going to happen. But that’s all right, yes?

A third connection, I think, is the covert centrality of what I am calling, with apologies to George Pierson, the “**J-Factor** in American Studies.”⁷ In case it’s not obvious, “J” stands for “Jew” (or, if you prefer, “Judaic” or “Jewish”). As when Henry gave a shout out to that masturbating groom, I suspect that this reference will make some of us (possibly including David) uncomfortable. If so, I apologize. That’s not (or at least not chiefly) what I’m after.

So let me instantly retreat a bit – praying with Henry that it will be “all right” – by distancing myself from the common, ugly applications of these “J” words. Anti-Semites often use “Jew” as a pejorative, as when explaining what Madoff and Abramoff or Kissinger and Wolfowitz have in common: “What more would you expect from a Jew?” In other words, calling something “Jewish” is finding fault, deficiency or impropriety in the worst sense: immoral, materialistic, narcissistic, cheap, clannish, cloying, conniving. Obviously, this is not what I have in mind. I am aiming to salvage some neutral or better implications.

Likewise, truth be told, the corresponding term among Semites – “non-Jew,” a.k.a. “Goy” in ordinary Yiddish – can be about as disparaging as the “k-word” or “n-word” in cracker English. For example, the common Yiddish expression “*Goyisha kop*” (literally, non-Jewish head) is used to mean roughly “stupid,” like Jedd Clampett, but with a quality of stupidity that is different, in some ways worse or at least more pitiful than the quality that plagues a mentally challenged Jew: say, a *shlub*, *klutz*, *nar*, *nebbish*, *meshugeneh/er*, *shmegegi*, *schlemiel*, or *schlimazel*.⁸ (Even American *goyem* now know some of these terms, thanks to reruns of *Laverne & Shirley*.)⁹ In *Born to Kvetch*, Michael Wax explains:

Goyisher kop means ‘simpleton,’ ‘idiot’ as in the old joke about the Jewish convert to Christianity who gets up on the morning after his baptism, puts on tallis and tefillin, and starts to daven [to pray like a Jew]. ‘Moyshe,’ says his wife, Host zikh nekhtn opgeshmat, You converted to Christianity yesterday.’ Moshe stops praying, gives himself a slap in the forehead, and cries out, ‘Goyisher kop!’

In Yiddishkeit, *goyem* are airheads. At best, their aim in life (what occupies their *kop*) is contentment, getting things settled and right, a feeling that Jews more often suppose results from a sort of (that is, presumably Christian) attention deficiency disorder. Since for most of their history, American universities have been run for and by Christians, people like me grew up thinking of them as centers for the advancement of *goyisha kop*.

Jews, on the other hand, are supposedly taught to be more suspicious about the advancement of anything. You should recognize that every glass, even when well more than half full, is still significantly, at least a little bit empty. In light of just the first two of the Ten Commandments, you'd better remember that, under G-d, every human perception is ultimately fallible. If you are confident that something is advancing (or for that matter, regressing), you'd better think twice. In every circumstance, until the moment of death – in a sense, to prove that you are still alive, subject to G-d's power – everyone with a functioning *kop* (i.e., every *mensch*, every decent human being) should be expected to summon at least a smidge of disaffection and nagging doubt anytime, anywhere . . . that is, unless plagued with *goyisha kop*.¹⁰

Granted, none of this is well rooted in fact. Actual Jews and non-Jews come in all shapes and sizes. They have wildly variable notions of themselves and each other. Jews are as contentious about their own identity as anything else. Even Israeli law still struggles to settle qualification for “Jewish” citizenship, much less “Jewish” *kop*.

For that matter, although they popularized the terms *schlemiel* and *schlimazel*, chanting them at the opening of *Laverne & Shirley* every week on primetime TV, neither Laverne nor Shirley were “really” Jewish, nor were Penny Marshall or Cindy Williams who played them. Reminder: this show was about Irish- and Italian-American roommates (Laverne DeFazio and Shirley Feeney) in Wisconsin. Fans may counter: Well, Marshall (who played Laverne) was born in the Bronx (“very” New York) and she married and divorced Rob Reiner (“very” Jewish). And she did chant that Yidglish hopscotch rhyme every episode. So, should we think of

Laverne as “sort of” a New York Jew, as if her *kop* was less *goyisha* than Shirley’s? Or than the Brady Bunch? Or were they both *shiksies* (again, a disparaging term for non-Jewish women)? When taken too seriously, the whole Jew/Not-a-Jew line of reasoning quickly becomes vapid or offensive.¹¹

At most, what I am portraying as “Jewish” (J-Factor) is not a blood line or a geography but a tone or sensibility. It belongs less to a people than a culture. Furthermore, it is characteristic not of “Jews” but at most *Yiddishkeit* with an American edge. (Maybe I should have called it the Y-factor?) The sensibility may, in fact, have been strong only among one subset of Yiddish-speaking people, turn-of-the-century Ashkenazic immigrants to America, who just so happen to be the ancestors of the leadership of the MAASA journal and of me. And the sensibility survives in diverse remnants, not all of them born Jewish. They/we are related to those immigrants more by affiliation, memory, choice, imagination or happenstance than destiny and certainly not conspiracy. There is probably no mentality or even theology that is uniform among Jews, or for that matter, non-Jews. Each of us rightly counts “some of my best friends” among the other. (Admission: insisting on this caveat may itself be considered an example of the same *Yiddishkeit* tick or the J-Factor that I am here extracting.)

To be honest, though, I still think that this factor – the self-conscious (self-righteous while self-effacing) urge to bare imperfection, to *kvetch* in an arguably “Jewish” way – has been central to American Studies – the field and the journal – for most of its history in the U.S. (radically less so, almost everywhere else in the world). It is distinguishable from the more general, fault-hunting quest of other sorts of humanist criticism in the U.S. (e.g., mainstream art history, literary criticism) in that it has a stronger measure of self-doubt, humility before life’s complexity and uncertainty, before G-d, if you will. It is less smug or stately, less simply satisfied with finding fault in others, with “arriving at” (vs. struggling toward) a better interpretation or the “right” side of history.

So, we (that is, those of us with less *goyisha kop*) hedge bets. We ask:

- Maybe the worst of times weren't all that bad?
- Or maybe the good old days sucked?
- Maybe the subalterns/victims actually got what they deserved?
- Or maybe the hegemonies/victimizers got the comeuppance that they deserved?
- Or maybe I feel sure about which was which, only because I'm similarly bamboozled?
- Or maybe we're all dancing to music that would only be obvious to someone else altogether?

I take these questions to be somehow associated with Jewry. In making this point I am suggesting that there is something subtly "Jewish" about the methods of American Studies or at least its ethos for the past fifty years. (I earlier hinted at this in a MAASA venue before, trying to draw connection between cultural studies and *kvetching*.¹²)

I say all this a bit tongue in cheek. At a minimum, the caveats deserve emphasis. Insofar as it exists and is worth considering, the J-Factor is more spiritual or figurative than literal. I am not talking about anything strictly "Jewish" – not a gene pool or theology among leaders of the field, a conspiracy, or even a cohort of immigrants. If pressed to find a common source of the J-Factor, I am inclined to look, less at something **in** people (say, the leaders of American Studies) than in their **relationship** with a Christian establishment at the time and places they struggled to be heard.¹³ The J-Factor may, for example, have been more significant for me or even Shirley than for David Katzman. But, whatever the origin, I suggest considering the possibility that their/our legacy includes a distinctive way of doing American Studies that is worth recognizing, naming, freshly evaluating, and maybe even preserving.

Maybe not.

In the meantime, would it hurt to give it a *bissel* thought?

¹ David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

² David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973); *Three Generations in Twentieth Century America: Family, Community, and Nation* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1977); *Plain Folk: The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

³ Jules Feiffer, *Little Murders* (New York: Random House, 1968). Feiffer also wrote the screenplay for the film translation, which was directed by Alan Arkin, produced and distributed by Twentieth Century Fox Film Company in 1971. The wedding scene from the film, with Donald Sutherland as the Rev. Henry Dupas, is on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kCrrjp2epY&NR=1>.

⁴ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. Translated from the 1909 French edition (Paris: É. Nourry, 1909) by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee with an introduction by Solon T. Kimball (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

⁵ A *tsimmes* is a stew, sometimes served in holiday celebrations, but generally composed of whatever fruits and vegetables happen to be around and inexpensive. The ingredients and outcome are unpredictable, at best, especially as haphazardly prepared in different parts of the Yiddish world. The metaphorical uses of the term, then, includes a reminder: don't to expect much. "Makyn a tsimmes, 'to make a tsimmes' is a very common idiom meaning to make a fuss, a to-do, a big deal out of something that doesn't deserve it." Michael Wax, *Born to Kvetch: Yiddish Language and Culture in All Its Moods*, (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 2005), pp. 191-192.

⁶ *Little Murders* (1968), Act 1, pp. 38-39.

⁷ Homage here to George W. Pierson "The M-Factor in American History," originally published in *American Quarterly* 14:2 (Summer, 1962), pp. 275-289. The article was frequently cited and taught for many years thereafter, especially as a reprint in multiple editions of the definitive anthology *The Character of Americans: A Book of Readings*, ed. Michael McGiffert (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1970), pp. 118-130.

⁸ I assume readers will have heard at least some of these terms, albeit bizarrely decontextualized, from the hopscotch rhyme that opened episodes of *Laverne and Shirley* (1976-1983). For serviceable definitions it may be useful to consult *The Gantseh Megillah Yiddish Glossary of Words and Expressions* <<http://www.pass.to/glossary/Default.htm>> as well as Wax, *Born To Kvetch* (2005) and *Just Say Nu: Yiddish For Every Occasion (When English Just Won't Do)* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007). Note that the term *goy* also has a restricted, neutral sense (literally, people or nation) but ordinarily denotes the surrounding, non-Jewish population and draws attention to a stereotype of corresponding spiritual cluelessness.

⁹ *Laverne & Shirley* (ABC), 1976-1983.

¹⁰ Wax, *Born to Kvetch* (2005), pp. 66-67. Wax emphasizes the semantic proximity of *goy* (non-Jew) and *poeyer* (peasant), "the type of goy with whom Jews had much of their contact. . . . Not every goy was a *poeyer* but every *poeyer* was a goy, and to the Yiddish speaker they were all Jedd Clampett. On the great chain of Yiddish being, gentiles fall somewhere between Francis the Talking Mule and Bigfoot, and goy is almost always as much as to say uneducated, uncouth, uncircumcised – not necessarily good, not necessarily bad things, but never anything like one of us. To the Jews, whose behavior was hedged in at every turn, goyim seemed creatures of pure instinct, masses of appetite bent on gratification. There was not Torah to stand between them and their desires, no system of fences to hinder or defer their satisfaction."

¹¹ The "Jew; Not a Jew" parody game show appeared in a popular episode of NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, hosted by Tom Hanks on October 8, 1988. B'nai B'rith charged that the sketch was anti-Semitic, even though it was written by Al Franken, who remembered his Jewish family (like mine) playing a version of the game at home as they watched TV together.

¹² Richard P. Horwitz, "To Kvetch and Define a Field." in "American Studies: From Culture Concept to Cultural Studies?," ed. Norman R. Yetman, special issue of *American Studies* 38:2, (Summer 1997), pp. 49-68. The article begins with a faux definition: "**kvetch** (kvech or k'vech) vi. [ModYid] to

complain obsessively about trivial or unalterable conditions, thereby showing that you are not yet brain-dead. See *mishigas*.”

¹³ For examples of this approach applied in other arenas, see David A. Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) or Mark Krupnik, *Jewish Writing and Deep Places in the Imagination*, eds. Jean K. Carney and Mark Shechner (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005) or – more frightening, in my opinion – Kevin MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport, CT: Authorhouse 1998). These works can be contrasted with more strictly cohort- or ethnic-centered approaches of Steven Cassedy, *To the Other Shore: The Russian Jewish Intellectuals Who Came to America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997) or Carole S. Kessner, *The ‘Other’ New York Jewish Intellectuals* (New York: NYU Press, 1994). For a list of “Jewish Contributions” in fields other than American Studies, see <<http://www.jinfo.org/>>. And all of these interpretations (with the potential exception of Krupnik) can be contrasted with more conspiracy-conjuring, anti-Semitic rants about Zionists and neo-conservatives that dominate the blogosphere. Arguable warrants for considering something like the “J-Factor” more broadly Diasporic, Semitic or even Western rather than distinctly Jewish can be found in Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994).