

der roles but also built paradoxically on political visions associated with those roles (125).

Scott then points to a fundamental shift after the collapse of Communist regimes. After 1989, the discourse of secularism remerged, as Islam replaced Communism as the primary ideological and political enemy. New forms of secularism merged with Christianity, as the modern international system was increasingly imagined as both democratic and Christian. In the process, sexual freedom emerged as a basic tenet of democracy. This entailed a re-writing of history so that gender equality appeared intrinsic to Western democracies and so that “sexual citizenship” became a marker distinguishing them from other supposedly less-developed nations (147).

The last chapter confronts the meanings of “sexual emancipation.” Scott claims that in many contemporary invocations, the fulfillment of sexual desire has come to be seen as a universal right, even “the most important element of human freedom” (157). She suggests that this emphasis, often at the expense of social and economic rights, has been used to paint religion, especially Islam, as not only hostile to women but opposed to freedom and democracy. Unpacking the power of this construct helps explain apparently bewildering combinations, like how public support for gay rights can coexist with Islamophobia.

Sex and Secularism is deliberately provocative, ambitious, and elusive; Scott draws on a dazzling body of scholarship and creatively juxtaposes historical examples and theoretical approaches. The result is both brilliant and slippery. It can sometimes be challenging to identify which specific models of secularism Scott has in mind at different moments, how widely they applied, who mobilized them, and what alternatives there might have been. Scott attempts to defuse such critiques in advance, noting that while some readers will want more contextualization, the book is not intended to be definitive. It certainly succeeds in her goal of opening conversation.

There are, however, costs to this approach. Some individuals, like Jules Michelet and Max Weber, play important cameos in her story—as creators, exemplars, or analysts of social and political power—and Scott presents moments when groups clearly used forms of secularism for their own purposes. But the “discourse of secularism” is often the primary actor of this book. As Scott intends, this highlights power relations and suggests structural evolutions, but it can also obscure questions of agency and intentionality.

Some readers may see *Sex and Secularism* as a call to abandon secularism as a tool for feminist emancipation, and indeed, religion itself is an undertheorized presence in the book. Scott’s aims, however, appear quite different: as with much of her writing, she seeks to promote gender equality by showing that what seems natural is historically contingent.

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CHAD ALAN GOLDBERG. *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. Pp. xiii, 226. Cloth \$105.00, paper \$35.00, e-book \$35.00.

Chad Alan Goldberg’s *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought* is a compelling study of Jews not as producers but as objects of social thought. His central thesis is that the very idea of “the Jews” played a decisive role in the sociological figuration of modernity, functioning always in complex and often ambiguous ways “as a major point of orientation and reference in debates about what it meant to be modern and what it meant to be French, German, or American” (1). Sensitive to these separate national contexts, he demonstrates, in finely wrought and differentiated analyses, that within the French, German, and American sociological traditions, Jews, not incidentally, acted as charged—often negative, sometimes positive—touchstones, intermediaries, and foils for thinking through the vexed issues and variegated problems facing these different modernizing societies.

Thus, he argues, in France the key questions and anxieties of modernity revolved around the French Revolution. There the battle lines were paradoxically contradictory—the Right depicting the Jews as agents of revolutionary subversion, and the Left depicting them as counterrevolutionary reactionaries. (Goldberg offers a subtle and exemplary analysis of both Émile Durkheim’s sociology and Durkheim’s ambivalences and oppositional responses to antisemitism.) Goldberg asserts that the key metaphor for modernity in Germany was capitalism, and through the varying sociologies of Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Werner Sombart, and Max Weber, he argues that their conceptions attribute an usually decisive Jewish role in capitalism’s genesis, disposition, injustices, possibilities, and future. In America, on the other hand, it was the city that represented the main filter through which modernity, its putative distortions and novel merits, was represented. In the sociological works of the Chicago School (W. I. Thomas, Robert E. Park, Louis Wirth, and Everett Verner Stonequist), Goldberg argues, it was the Jews—in their guise as immigrants and outsiders, and as the quintessentially “marginal”—who became the charged filter through which questions of assimilation, integration, and pathology within the formation of a democratic public were thought through.

By recognizing the marked differences of emphasis between these national traditions of social thought, Goldberg offers readers a welcome departure from the current, almost obligatory demand for so-called transnational history. Yet, at the same time, Goldberg insists upon a layered, long-term cross-national, cross-temporal continuity—“the reproduction of enduring habits of thought across multiple social and historical contexts” (112)—a continuity that, he contends, still

has resonance. To be sure, this applies specifically to the “Western” experience; Jews in, say, Chinese or Indian civilization are not necessarily imputed with the same charged functions and associations. Goldberg, of course, is not the first to stress the volatile, symbolic ability of “the Jews” to act as a foil, or a means, to grasp the nature of—and threats to—one’s own society. Already in his 1964 *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, George L. Mosse demonstrated the neat fit of the stereotype of the rootless, predatorily merchant, mobile Jew to the requirements of an anti-capitalist, anti-urban, anti-liberal ideology that developed in the face of an uprooting, rapid German industrialization after 1870. Shulamit Volkov later argued that antisemitism really functioned as a kind of cultural code—a mode of conceptualizing the broader discontents and fears of a society undergoing change (see Volkov, “Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 23, no.1 [January 1978]: 25–46). Most recently, in his compendious volume *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (2013), David Nirenberg massively extends the scope and cumulative accretion of such evolving anti-Judaic conceptions to the entirety of the historical Western experience (not just the Christian West’s experience, but also the West’s Egyptian, pagan, Greek, and Roman variations.)

In a certain sense Goldberg (who acknowledges these works) belongs to this line of thought. His contribution lies not only in his original interrogation of these currents within sociological theory, but more topically (and perhaps controversially) in his intervention in contested contemporary political discourse. Although his analyses are always nuanced and differentiated, pointing at times to the positive role attributed to the Jews, in his treatment most representations are, if not decidedly negative, then certainly treated as extraordinary, special, or unique. This remains true for both his historical and current comparisons with other minority or outsider groups, such as Protestants, women, colonial subjects, and Muslims.

The explanations for this ongoing resonance—that is, the metaphorical usefulness of these imputed roles—are, of course, varied and much debated. Goldberg convincingly argues that the underlying reason can be traced to the enduring force of Christian theology and its later various secular transfigurations (shrewdly he demonstrates how the Christian notion of “judaizing” became integrated into Marxist theory, and how the traditional idea of supersession was transmuted into the process whereby Christian capitalists overtake Jews as modes of production and exchange developed [46–47]). “The ambiguities and tensions in the relationship between Jews and Christians,” Goldberg writes, “made it an equivocal code that allowed the Jews to be associated with both premodernity and modernity” (118).

Of course, there is much more to say on this topic. Because—certainly in the modern age—“the Jews” lack a definite structure, which is identifiable but complex, it is especially easy to project contradictory interpretive images onto them: tribal *and* cosmopolitan, capitalist *and* communist, atheist *and* fanatically religious, or occidental *and* oriental.

Goldberg’s subtle exposition does not claim that all these representations are simply “antisemitic”; rather they form part of a more complex code in which comparative figurations of modernity and premodernity are worked out. Nevertheless, he insists upon the unique role Jews still contemporaneously occupy even when compared to what he calls “other others” (see 119–127). Much of this is convincing. The fashionable, passive “Orientalist” paradigm, he argues, does not fit them because while regarded as “foreign,” they very much figured as active agents of social change (123). He also persuasively refutes the notion that as an alien, stigmatized, religious minority, Muslims have become “the new Jews” (129). The historical, structural, and cultural differences that he outlines far outweigh the commonalities, and although Goldberg acknowledges that today Muslims have become a touchstone in their own right, he claims that Muslims have not displaced Jews, who remain at the core of the Western imaginary: “The Jews—and now the Jewish state—continue to serve as a touchstone for defining the meaning of European or American modernity in the twenty-first century” (132). Despite the historical upheavals wrought by the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel, there still remain older, deeply problematic, and often pernicious perceptions. Jews continue to be placed at the sacred center of society, yet, as he points out, they “are neither responsible for the problems of modernity nor have they resolved them. Yet by conferring symbolic centrality upon Jews, social thinkers encourage these perceptions” and “[render] them prime targets” (136–137). Even if this position can be overstated (since currently Jews are targeted but are not necessarily the foremost targets of the Western populist revival), it is a point well worth making. Somehow the multiple tropes of a charged, symbolic exceptionality—a kind of inherited “chosenness”—continues to inspire, haunt, and distort both the Jewish and Western imagination.

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JOSEPH A. AMATO. *Everyday Life: How the Ordinary Became Extraordinary*. London: Reaktion Books, 2016. Pp. 256. Cloth £18.00.

Joseph A. Amato’s *Everyday Life: How the Ordinary Became Extraordinary* is an ambitious book by an unusually wide-ranging and prolific scholar. Trained in modern European history, Amato has published in that