

**HORACE KALLEN CONFRONTS AMERICA:
JEWISH IDENTITY IN DISCURSIVE FORMATION**

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Abstract

This study of the life and thought of American Jewish philosopher Horace Meyer Kallen (1882-1974) explores the discursive fields from which American Jewish modernity developed. Through a close analysis of Kallen's writings and relationships, of his engagement with print culture, and of his understanding of science and scientific culture, I describe one trajectory in the American Jewish community's discourses concerning science, religion, and secularism from the early twentieth century to mid-century. I trace how Kallen gained social capital through the popular press, and then used that capital to negotiate a new understanding of the place of Jews in America, becoming an architect of American Jewish ethnicity. I suggest that his importance as a theorist of ethnicity is located, in part, in his anticipation of current theoretical models. I contextualize Kallen within literary modernism, and suggest a new way to interpret his discursive interventions regarding America and democracy. I seek to recover Kallen's centrality to the social circulation of ideas concerning secularism and religion in America, and argue that his significance may be assessed by analyzing his deep and extended engagement with a number of prominent, public discourses. I contend that both the positive and negative responses to Kallen helped to establish the discursive frameworks in which Jewish ethnicity and its relationship to religion were debated. I conclude that Kallen's commitment to Jewish identity, seen as rooted in an evolving and diversified ethno-cultural process, is inextricably intertwined with the formative discourses of twentieth-century Jewish American life.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
INTRODUCTION	1
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	4
THE POLITICAL BACKDROP	7
THE MELTING POT AND ORCHESTRATION	10
ON KALLEN'S LEGACY	13
ON SCIENCE AND PRINT CULTURE.....	15
RESPONSE TO MODERNITY.....	17
CHAPTER 1 HORACE KALLEN IN THE AMERICAN JEWISH PRESS: ON RACE AND HEBRAISM	20
ON THE AMERICAN JEWISH PRESS.....	22
KALLEN ON RACE	28
THE JEWISH PRESS GIVES KALLEN A BOOST	39
THE SCIENTIFIC VINDICATION OF THE HEBRAIC WORLDVIEW	44
RACE SCIENCE AND THE AMERICAN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE JEWISH PRESS.....	48
PSYCHOPHYSICAL INHERITANCE	50
COMPETING FOR SOCIAL CAPITAL	59
CHAPTER 2 ETHNICITY AS NATIONALITY: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PSYCHOPHYSICAL INHERITANCE	61
THE MENORAH ASSOCIATION AND THE HEBRAIC PSYCHE	65
THE <i>MENORAH JOURNAL</i> : POPULAR DISCOURSE CONCERNING PSYCHIC INHERITANCE	71
KALLEN AND <i>DANIEL DERONDA</i>	75
RACE AND RELIGION: ENTER ANTHROPOLOGY	78
INVOKING NATIONALITY: JEWISH IDENTITY AS ETHNICITY	86
CONTESTING THE LIMITS OF ETHNICITY	98
REVISITING KALLEN'S MODEL OF ETHNICITY	105
CHAPTER 3 HORACE KALLEN AS A MODERNIST: A DISCONTENT OF HOPE	109
PHILOSOPHICAL DARWINISM.....	116
CULTIVATING A PUBLIC.....	121
THE SOCIAL APPLICATION OF NATURAL SELECTION	129
EVOLUTION AND RHETORIC	135
<i>On Population Pressure</i>	139
<i>On Sexual Selection</i>	141
A TIME OF TRANSITION	146
THE <i>NEW REPUBLIC</i> AND THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH	150

THE <i>DIAL</i>	153
MODERNISM AS LIFE: KALLEN AT THE INTERSECTION OF ART, SCIENCE, AND PUBLISHING.....	158
PRAGMATIC MODERNISM AND JEWISH IDENTITY.....	166
CHAPTER 4 ON SECULAR RELIGION: THE BOOK OF JOB AND DEMOCRACY	169
CREATION: KALLEN SECULARIZES JOB.....	172
REVELATION: PSYCHOLOGY RENARRATES RELIGION	180
<i>De-Christianizing and Psychologizing Religion</i>	182
<i>Functionalist Psychology Secularizes Religion</i>	188
<i>Engaging with Jewish Religious Humanism: Kallen and Cronbach</i>	194
REDEMPTION: ON SECULARISM AS RELIGION	202
REDEMPTION: ON JOB AND LIBERTY.....	214
CONCLUSION	220
THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY	221
THE NEW PHYSICS, ART, AND BECOMING.....	223
"THE PLAYING IS THE WRITING"	226
BIBLIOGRAPHY	227

Introduction

Men can do nothing without the make-believe of a beginning... No retrospect will take us to the true beginning.

—George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*

What is the place of the individual and of the ethnic group in the modern world of urbanism, industrialism, cosmopolitanism, and secularism? What is the relationship of science and scientific culture to self-understanding? How might religion function in a secular democracy? What role does print culture play in addressing these questions? These are the driving questions behind this intellectual biography of the immigrant American Jewish philosopher, Horace Meyer Kallen (1882-1974). Through a close analysis of his writings and relationships, of his engagement with print culture, and of his understanding of science and scientific culture, I describe one trajectory in the American Jewish community's discourses concerning science, religion, and secularism from the early twentieth century to mid-century.

I trace how Kallen gained social capital through the popular press, and then used that capital to negotiate a new understanding of the place of Jews in America, becoming an architect of American Jewish ethnicity. I suggest that his importance as a theorist of ethnicity is located, in part, in his anticipation of current theoretical models. I contextualize Kallen within literary modernism, and suggest a new way to interpret his discursive interventions regarding America and democracy. I seek to recover Kallen's centrality to the social

circulation of ideas concerning secularism and religion in America, and argue that his "religious" identification as a "secularist" rather than as a "Judaist," as he put it in his later years,¹ provides a thought-provoking entree into considering his significance as a "Jewish" thinker. I evaluate his influence by analyzing his deep and extended engagement with a plurality of prominent, public discourses. I contend that the responses (both positive and negative) that Kallen provoked in those with whom he engaged in discussion or debate helped to establish the discursive frameworks in which Jewish ethnicity and its relationship to religion were debated through the mid-twentieth century. I conclude that Kallen's commitment to Jewish identity, seen as rooted in an evolving and diversified ethno-cultural process, is inextricably intertwined with the formative discourses of twentieth century Jewish American life.²

Kallen's evolving self-understanding as a Jew is displayed, contested, and refined in the public arena of the American popular and Jewish presses. Over the course of some seven decades, Kallen worked through his relationship to Judaism, the Jewish people, and America, in hundreds of articles and over thirty books. As a non-practicing and non-believing Jew in any traditional sense, he acted out his Jewishness by writing about Jews, Judaism, and the relationship of ethnic groups (in general) to America. Writing about Jews and Judaism became a primary way in which he expressed and constructed his Jewish identity. In many ways Kallen was an emblematic Jew of his time. As was typical with second generation

¹ See chapter four.

² See Wodak and Meyer, "Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology," for more information on critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA attempts to analyze complex social phenomena using a multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological approach. Wodak and Meyer point out that discursive events, understood as social practice, are shaped by social actors and, in turn, shape them.

American Jews,³ he needed to work through what being American meant and what Jewishness signified in this new setting. In other ways, however, he was most unusual, especially in the ways he addressed these questions and in the thoroughness with which he articulated a coherent philosophy of life. He believed being Jewish and being American were mutually reinforcing identities. He worked out the conditions of his life through his writing, and became part of a larger public discourse concerning Jews and Jewish identity. His reading public became the testing ground for the general application of his ideas.

Rather than circumscribe Jewish identity within specific boundaries of beliefs or observances, or of communal or institutional affiliations, Kallen's unique contribution was to locate Jewish identity within a process of cultivating difference. This becomes clear in the ethno-racial discourse in which he participated, and in the varying positions he staked out in print. He never formulated a bounded Jewish identity, either for the Jewish group or for individual Jews. He envisioned an indeterminate dynamism fluctuating between voluntary and involuntary association, between individuals, between groups, and between past and present. What is important and what is lived, he believed, is the continual diversification, the differentiation of one person from another, and of one group-personality from another. This is expressed in his philosophical application of Darwinism, first articulated by William James and Henri Bergson, but which Kallen translated into an American and Jewish context. His construction of Jewish modernity suggests that a stable definition of Jewish identity is not possible, given that it is formed through an ongoing process of self-differentiation.

³ Kallen was an immigrant, having arrived in America at age five. But, given his young age, the fact that his sensibilities were those typical of the second generation of American Jews, and the fact that his Jewish social circles were second generation American Jews, I treat him as part of that second generation. In this assignment, I follow the lead of historian John Higham, who likewise considers Kallen as part of the second generation experience (see below, n. 4).

A Biographical Sketch

Horace Meyer Kallen was born in 1882 in Bernstadt, Germany, to Rabbi Jacob and Esther Kallen, the eldest of their eight children. His father assumed the pulpit of an orthodox congregation in Boston and brought his family to America in 1887. Kallen grew estranged from his authoritarian father, and, although they achieved some reconciliation at his father's deathbed in 1917, Kallen remained alienated from his father's religious practice. He rebelled and at times ran away from home. During some of his "truancies from the duties of scholarship," he later recalled, he would "go down to the Tea Wharf to see where the tea had been poured," and "up to Bunker Hill to fight that battle for myself."⁴ He learned through textbooks to see the Puritans as American heroes. "By the time I reached puberty the heroic America of the textbook legends had gotten woven into the warp and woof of my inward life," he later wrote. It was a "consolation for my sorrows, freedom from my disabilities, promise to my hopes."⁵ In many respects, historian John Higham observes, Kallen's story was typical of second-generation Jews during the 1890s, in that he experienced a "loss of religion and an uncritical enthusiasm for America."⁶

Kallen entered Harvard on a scholarship in 1900, and received his B.A. *magna cum laude* after three years. He then taught English at Princeton for two years, but was dismissed once it was discovered that he was a Jew: "Looking back, I see that I underwent in Princeton what among Presbyterians and Baptists and Methodists would be called a conversion," Kallen reflected. "But it was a negative, not a positive, conversion. After two years, the God-fearing authorities refused any longer to harbor me and my Jewish heresies, which they said

⁴ Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶ Higham, *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*, 206.

were debauching the youth."⁷ He returned to Harvard in 1906 to pursue graduate studies, but with his idealization of America now in tatters: "I had seen how the very Americans themselves, the 'true' Americans for whom the tradition of liberty was an inheritance and not a choice, were occupied in confuting principles by practices, falsifying ideals by facts, and cheating and defeating the promises of the schools by the performances of the market-place, the altar and the forum."⁸

The antisemitism that he experienced at Princeton, however, was not new to him. It had also negatively impacted his sense of self growing up in Boston: "Non-Jews were troubling my days and nights because, through no fault of my own, I happened to be different from them. My difference diminished me, shackled me, deprived me of liberty and subjected me to injustice," he wrote.⁹ By the time he entered Harvard in 1900, he had come to see his Jewish difference as an unnecessary liability: "I could 'pass,'" he wrote. "What then was the point of not-passing, of suffering the lameness that not-passing entailed?"¹⁰

Among the influences that pushed him towards a positive association with his Jewish identity were his teachers, Barrett Wendell and William James. In his sophomore year, he took a course in American literary history with Wendell, who taught him that American political and literary thought were grounded in Hebraic teaching. Thereafter, he "began consciously and conscientiously to reclaim, and to identify himself with, his Jewish inheritance, Jewish culture, and the Jewish community."¹¹ James, meanwhile, provided him with the philosophical framework to appreciate the intrinsic value of his Jewish difference.

⁷ Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, 10; see also Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration," 17.

⁸ Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, 11.

⁹ Kallen, "How I Bet My Life," 197.

¹⁰ Kallen, "The Promise of the Menorah Idea," 10.

¹¹ Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration," 17.

James started him "toward a cure" from the "blindness" that prevented him from seeing that difference was a fundamental fact of nature.¹² He came to understand that the statement in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" did not signify homogeneity. It meant "equal *as different*"; it affirms the parity of the different; it recognizes that their equality does not abolish their diverse natures but preserves and liberates them."¹³ This became the guiding principle for his life's work. It undergirded his major philosophical contribution to American social and political thought—"cultural pluralism," a theory of democratic cooperative discourse that affirmed the inclusion of different immigrant ethnicities as distinct but equal participants in American democracy.

In 1908, he completed a PhD under the supervision of William James. During his time as a graduate student, he also studied under George Santayana, Josiah Royce and Edwin Holt at Harvard, and under F.C.S. Schiller at Oxford. As well, he attended the lectures of Henri Bergson in Paris. These were the years in which the seeds of his intellectual and spiritual growth were planted. He taught logic at Clark University from 1909-10, and then philosophy and psychology at the University of Wisconsin from 1911-18. He helped to found the New School for Social Research in New York in 1919, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Kallen's intellectual debt to Wendell, James, Santayana, Royce, and others is widely acknowledged.¹⁴ While these points of connection are important, the points of disconnection are equally important. Kallen was in many respects an alienated individual. He was alienated from his parents, from the religious orthodoxy of his father, from mainstream academia, and

¹² Kallen, "How I Bet My Life," 195.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹⁴ See, for example, Konvitz, "Horace M. Kallen"; Toll, "Horace M. Kallen: Pluralism and American Jewish Identity"; Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Pluralism."

from hegemonic Anglo-Saxon culture. His discontent with the status quo resulted in a tendency to take a rather pugilistic stance as he set forth his opinions in a wide variety of journals. His alienation also served him as a source of inspiration, spurring him to consider cures for the problem of the alienation of America from her democratic heritage, and of the Jewish community from participation in the fullness of American life. His lifelong commitment to the "American Idea" as a prescription for the problems of society reveals the essential optimism that guided his thinking throughout his life. The remove at which Kallen found himself from the Jewish mainstream, the academic mainstream, and the American political mainstream afforded him a perspective from which he could comment creatively and urge change.

The Political Backdrop

The influx of millions of immigrants to the U.S. in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries spurred a national debate concerning whether and how they might be assimilated. "The significance of ethno-racial groups for American society," historian David Hollinger writes, "was [at the time] radically unresolved."¹⁵ The image of the "melting pot," a metaphor popularized by Israel Zangwill's 1908 play of the same name, became an important symbol in the debate over the impact of immigration.¹⁶ Zangwill did not invent the term. It had been around since the earliest years of the Republic, but the recent massive immigration increased its currency. "This problematic figure of speech was used primarily to address the prospects for the incorporation of...immigrants and their descendants...as individuals who would as a matter of course intermarry with the British and other Northwestern European

¹⁵ Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, 92.

¹⁶ Zangwill, *The Melting-Pot: Drama in Four Acts*.

stocks," Hollinger explains. "Was the idea to melt down the immigrants and to then pour the resulting, formless liquid into preexisting cultural and social molds modeled on Anglo-Protestants like Henry Ford and Woodrow Wilson, or was the idea instead that everyone, Mayflower descendants and Sicilians and Irish and Ashkenazi and Slovaks, would act chemically upon each other so that all would be changed, and a new compound would emerge?"¹⁷ The main participants in this debate implicitly agreed that America should be culturally homogenous. The terms of that homogeneity were what was being debated. One side (predominantly Anglo-Protestant) wished that immigrants would blend into Anglo-Protestant culture, while the other side (which included assimilated American Jews) envisioned the birth of a new American culture from the union of all the different cultural groups.

Assimilation was an issue that involved many more groups than just Jews, of course, but what made the Jewish case unique was the lack of connection to their nation of origin. Jews who immigrated from Russia, for example, were not considered to be simply Russian. They were viewed as Jews who hailed from Russia. The Jewish case defied easy categorization. If the Jews were not to be identified with a nation-state, then how should these immigrants be classified? As a race? A religion? This was an open question fraught with political implications. Cultural historian Sander Gilman writes that "the Jews were seen as a test case for the potential of cultural integration."¹⁸ Moreover, as historian Philip Gleason observes, as the symbol of the melting pot quickly became the symbol for the nation, the fact that it came from a play by a Jew and entirely about Jews signaled that the Jews were

¹⁷ Hollinger, "Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States," 1366.

¹⁸ Gilman, *Multiculturalism and the Jews*, 58.

perceived as prominent protagonists in the American drama of nationality.¹⁹ Into this political environment, Kallen injected an alternative view of nationality, or ethnicity, that was radically different. Although it sparked much discussion, his rhetoric inspired only a limited following. Still, sympathizers included an impressive array of thinkers such as John Dewey, Louis Brandeis, Jane Addams, and, in particular, Randolph Bourne, who was so inspired by his thinking that it served as the basis for his famous 1916 essay, "Trans-National America."²⁰

Kallen argued that American democracy would thrive if it were to foster the independence of its constituent ethno-racial groups, who, encouraged by an unfettered freedom of association, would then harmoniously cooperate in the federative unity of the United States. His rhetoric regarding the problems of America and of Jewish life in America attracted attention from Jewish and non-Jewish sources. The periodical press was the main arena in which these public discourses took place, although he later also wrote books that sparked responses. In the scholarly literature, he is best remembered for contributing the concept of cultural pluralism to American social philosophical discourse. It was first laid out in an article entitled "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," published in the *Nation* in 1915.²¹ Cultural pluralism was eclipsed by the rise of multiculturalism in the 1970s, a shift intended to correct the perceived failure of cultural pluralism to adequately address civil rights issues. Nevertheless, as Hollinger points out, Kallen was the first to articulate what became

¹⁹ Gleason, *Speaking of Diversity: Language and Ethnicity in Twentieth-Century America*, 8–11.

²⁰ Bourne, "Trans-National America."

²¹ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915; Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915.

American doctrine by the 1990s, which is that the United States "ought to sustain rather than diminish a great variety of distinctive cultures carried by ethno-racial groups."²²

The Melting Pot and Orchestration

Shortly before his ninetieth birthday in 1973, Kallen reflected that the loss of family and friends silences "a note in the orchestration of our selfhood."²³ It is particularly noteworthy that he referred to "orchestration." The metaphor of an orchestra was very significant to him. He used it here in reference to a person's selfhood, but decades earlier, he had used it as a way to describe the functioning of a pluralistic society. It was a metaphor, then, with personal and political overtones, the original inspiration for which undoubtedly came from Zangwill's use of it in *The Melting-Pot*. There, the protagonist, a musician named David Quixano, composes an "American Symphony" symbolizing the beneficent effect of the American cultural melting pot. According to historian Stephen Whitfield, however, Zangwill did not intend for that metaphor to sustain the thesis of pluralism. Rather, he argues, "Zangwill's protagonist wished to compose a New World symphony that would merge the music of the past into something novel."²⁴ Gilman adds that Zangwill's legacy "is not only the melting pot but also the metaphor of a musical high culture as testing place for the role of the Jews in modernity."²⁵ The musical metaphor served Zangwill as a way to describe cultural hybridity, Gilman writes, and it implied the evolution of Jewish culture from the ghetto to high culture.²⁶

²² Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, 101.

²³ Kallen, *Creativity, Imagination, Logic: Meditations for the Eleventh Hour*, 198.

²⁴ Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, xix.

²⁵ Gilman, *Multiculturalism and the Jews*, 82.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 74, 77.

Regardless of whether or not Whitfield's and Gilman's interpretations accurately reflect Zangwill's intention, they do not address the fact that orchestras are made up of different instruments and sections, playing different parts and notes. This was a point that Kallen stressed in his application of the orchestra metaphor. In this, Kallen followed the lead of Reform rabbi Judah Magnes, who, in his 1909 critique of Zangwill's play, used the metaphor to support the idea of difference and pluralism: "The symphony of America must be written by the various nationalities which keep their individual and characteristic note, and which sound this note in harmony with their sister nationalities."²⁷ Using similar language, Kallen, in his well-known 1915 *Democracy vs. The Melting-Pot*, wrote that society is like an orchestra composed of "every type of instrument," each with "its specific timbre and tonality." The "instruments" are the ethnic groups, and the "melody" is the spirit and culture of the society. The "harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization."²⁸

Hollinger, as noted above, identifies two sides to the debate over how America should be unified through cultural homogeneity. One side wished "to melt down the immigrants and to then pour the resulting, formless liquid into preexisting cultural and social molds." The other side believed that the encounters between the different peoples "would act chemically upon each other so that all would be changed, and a new compound would emerge."²⁹ These two perspectives are expressed, respectively, in Zangwill's two metaphors, the "melting pot" and the "American symphony." Kallen, however, did not accept either of these options.

²⁷ Goren, *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes*, 106.

²⁸ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915, 220.

²⁹ Hollinger, "Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States," 1366.

Rather, like Magnes, he used the orchestra metaphor to argue for the preservation of difference and distinctiveness, even as cooperation and harmony are achieved.

The orchestra metaphor, Konvitz observes, may also be applied to Kallen's biography. He writes that Kallen orchestrated "a multiplicity of diverse interests," including "adult education, worker education, Jewish education, general education, consumerism, the labor movement, the cooperative movement, Zionism, art and aesthetics, censorship and civil liberties, the philosophy of secular Judaism, the Book of Job, the League of Nations and the United Nations, civil rights, pragmatism, the philosophy of pluralism, the philosophy of individualism, the nature of comedy, the State of Israel, and the whole of Western, especially American, culture and civilization."³⁰ I build upon Konvitz's observation that Kallen's life may be construed as a self-orchestration of diverse interests and I seek to demonstrate that science and print culture connect his varied interests.

Kallen's unifying impulses and creativity are seen in his exposition of the philosophy of science, in his understanding of humanism and Hebraism, and in the way he understood freedom and democracy. Considering him as a unique musical instrument, as it were, with its own qualities, we are in a better position to put into concrete terms what historian of science Bernard Lightman urged in another context in 2001, when he suggested that we consider the various different Victorian scientists and intellectuals as playing a strange symphony, all with their own distinctive instruments, creating a discordant harmony.³¹ Kallen's contribution to the discordant harmonies of early twentieth century racial and religious discourses may best be appreciated by understanding the scientific context in which he wrote and the role that print culture played.

³⁰ Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration," 19.

³¹ Lightman, "Victorian Sciences and Religions: Discordant Harmonies."

On Kallen's Legacy

Scholars in Jewish studies have asserted Kallen's importance as a subject of study in that academic area for different reasons. Professor of Law Milton Konvitz, for example, focuses upon Kallen's philosophy and academic record.³² He argues that Kallen should be of interest to Jewish studies because of his unique standing and pioneering role:

Horace Kallen will occupy a unique and significant place in the history of American Jewry, for he was the first Jewish scholar in a non-Jewish college or university, teaching non-Jewish subjects, who yet wrote and lectured on Judaism and Jewish interests, and identified himself with and worked for Jewish causes; and for some years he was not only the first but the only one who stood forth in the academic world as a Jew, and in the Jewish world as someone from the strange world of American academia.³³

Historians Sarah Schmidt and Noam Pianko highlight his importance in the creation of a distinctly American Zionism in the 1910s.³⁴ Schmidt argues that Brandeis's American Zionism was made possible because of Kallen's influence. Historian Daniel Greene notes his importance in establishing the Menorah Society, an association for Jewish university students that pre-dated Hillel.³⁵

Higham's important analysis of the legacy of Kallen's thesis of cultural pluralism set the tone for a number of later post-modernist critics like literary critic Werner Sollors, who suggest that multiculturalism eclipsed cultural pluralism because of the latter's purportedly insurmountable shortcomings. These critics feel that cultural pluralism did not take into

³² Konvitz, *The Legacy of Horace M. Kallen*; Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration"; Konvitz, "Horace M. Kallen"; Milton R. Konvitz, "H. M. Kallen and the Hebraic Idea."

³³ Milton R. Konvitz, "H. M. Kallen and the Hebraic Idea," 225.

³⁴ Schmidt, *Horace M. Kallen*; Schmidt, "Horace M. Kallen and the 'Americanization' of Zionism - In Memoriam"; Pianko, "'The True Liberalism of Zionism': Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism."

³⁵ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*.

account American racial issues or power struggles.³⁶ Higham observes that for Kallen, ethnicity was "somehow rooted" in the diversities inherent in the natural order. Rather than viewing human society as the locus of a vicious struggle for survival, Kallen, according to Higham, idealized a realm where diversity and harmony coexisted. Higham's central critique of Kallen is that he did not appreciate power relations between groups, and "never admitted that cultural differences might flow from or reinforce social inequities."³⁷ More recently, however, historian William Toll has pointed out that the criticisms of Sollors, Hollinger, and sociologist Orlando Patterson do not take into account the full breadth of Kallen's writing.³⁸ He argues that Kallen answered most of their criticisms in his later writing, and that they therefore fail to assess properly his place as a critic of America and of the American Jewish community. Gilman and Hollinger note cultural pluralism's role in placing Jews into the ethnic and cultural categories that later became constitutive of multiculturalism.³⁹

Political scientist Victoria Hattam, in her analysis of the discursive formations that frame the terms ethnicity and race, writes that American race politics was forged by the race-ethnicity distinction, but that this distinction "is not as robust as it once was."⁴⁰ At least in popular parlance, the terms race and ethnicity are often interchangeable and unstable. "Ethnicity," although it is less politically charged than the term "race" and appears to be liberated from the chains of prejudice, has not in fact succeeded in severing the connection to biological and hereditary claims. The valorization of the term "ethnicity" over the term "race" in the final quarter of the twentieth century suggests political correctness rather than

³⁶ Higham, *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*; Sollors, "A Critique of Pure Pluralism."

³⁷ Higham, *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*, 210.

³⁸ Toll, "Horace M. Kallen: Pluralism and American Jewish Identity."

³⁹ Gilman, *Multiculturalism and the Jews*; Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*.

⁴⁰ Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 158.

scientific precision. She notes that early twentieth century Jewish intellectuals like Kallen coined the term ethnicity in order to resolve questions of group loyalty and national belonging that were being imposed by assimilationists and racists.⁴¹ Race and ethnicity were in many respects interchangeable terms that reflected each other, transcended the realm of biology, and entered into the realm of values, thoughts, and familial associations. I locate Kallen in the discourse on the limits of race and of ethnicity.

On Science and Print Culture

In *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*, historian of science John Hedley Brooke articulates what has become popularly known as the "complexity thesis."⁴² He argues that the terms "science" and "religion" are protean terms dependent upon time, place, and circumstance. Just as what is meant by the term science and what is meant by the term religion are subjective constructions that have shifting meanings, so, too, what is meant by American and what is meant by Judaism shifts. These shifts in meaning are caused by the discourses about them. I highlight Kallen's intervention in Jewish and non-Jewish debates concerning the question of American and Jewish identity. Kallen's life project was to work out the meaning of who is a Jew, and who is an American. In the periodical press and in his books, he attempted to reconstruct these terms of identity, and, in the process, engaged in discourse with many other social actors. Even as Kallen developed his thinking through his involvement with scientific and print culture, he also helped to shape the discourses that give meaning to these terms of identity.

⁴¹ See Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*; Korelitz, "The Menorah Idea: From Religion to Culture, from Race to Ethnicity." They highlight Kallen's role in the invention of ethnicity.

⁴² Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*.

I use the tools of print and book cultural historians to contextualize Kallen's identity construction. Print culture, which refers to the cultural product of the print environment, is a fruitful place to investigate him because, as book historian Leslie Howsam writes, it exposes "the connecting tissue between readers and writers," and asks "questions about relationships."⁴³ Kallen's construction of American and Jewish identity was part of a network of relationships that converged in, and were established through, print culture. The periodical press served as an arena in which understandings of Judaism and Americanism were contested, creating a "public imaginary," a social construct of what it means to be American and Jewish. I hope to contribute a fresh perspective on Jewish identity construction in the United States by exploring Kallen's presence within print culture and asking questions about the relationship between the contingent categories of American and Jewish identity, science and culture, and secularism and religion. In analyzing these relationships through the agency of one person, I seek to illuminate a larger backdrop of relationships that extend outward to the Jewish community as a whole.

Anthropologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu argues that an agent acts in the delimited field of concrete social situations—the "habitus." Interpreting this in economic terms, he contends that the ability of the agent to wield influence in that field depends in part upon the amount of "capital" that the agent is able to accumulate.⁴⁴ Bourdieu's "habitus," the "structuring structure" in which Kallen worked towards accumulating "capital," was primarily the Jewish and non-Jewish periodical press and books. Kallen's lifelong engagement with print culture reflects his drive to accumulate and spend his capital. As well, it represents the application of the pragmatic philosophical outlook in which he was trained

⁴³ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 4.

⁴⁴ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*.

by his mentor, William James. In fact, as rhetoric scholar Robert Danisch has argued, pragmatism itself urges rhetorical engagement, taking a public stance to create change.⁴⁵ Book historian Carol Polsgrove observes that magazine and book publishers, designated "the publishing industry," "participated jointly in the creation of authors."⁴⁶ Writers often first "honed their craft" by writing for magazines, and afterwards published books.⁴⁷ Kallen's engagement with print culture extends beyond being an author. He actively cultivated relationships with editors and was involved in decision-making in the publishing business. His intimate involvement in multiple levels of the publishing industry makes understanding Kallen's engagement with print culture of paramount importance in order to contextualize properly and interpret his developing sense of self as a Jew and as an American, and to appraise his impact as an author.⁴⁸

Response to Modernity

Kallen appeared at the juncture of the creation of a new American modernity. He navigated the new realities, conceived, as he argued, as a response to humanism, industrialization, democracy, and science. He articulated a conception of Jewish ethnicity based upon post-Darwinian scientific discourse, and at the same time carved out space for Jews in a non-Jewish environment. His evangelizing zeal made him a significant node on a social network that bridged Jewish and non-Jewish America. Markedly distinct from Reform

⁴⁵ Danisch, *Pragmatism, Democracy, and the Necessity of Rhetoric*.

⁴⁶ Polsgrove, "Magazines and the Making of Authors," 256.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 38. The social microcosm of print culture is imagined by Darnton as a "communications circuit," and by Adams and Barker as a "map" of relationships.

Judaism's vision, his vision of modernity was conceived in a post-Darwinian, urbanized, university-educated, and secular context.

Over the course of four chapters, I analyze how Kallen used science in the service of his pluralistic, democratic, and secular vision for Jews and for America, and I assess his effectiveness by paying close attention to the print context in which he wrote. I follow a chronological sequence, tracing the changes in his life and thought in the larger cultural context. I analyze discourses on race in chapter one, on ethnicity in chapter two, on aesthetics and modernism in chapter three, and on secularism and religion in chapter four. These various discourses together offer us a window into Kallen's self-orchestration of identity. Although these particular discourses do not comprise a comprehensive list of all the possible relevant discourses that give rise to identity, they are sufficiently representative to demonstrate how, from out of multiple discursive events, identity emerges and is continually modified.

Chapter one examines English-language, American-Jewish periodicals in which he had a significant presence during the first two decades of the twentieth century, with particular attention paid to the foremost Jewish periodical of the day, the *American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*. I investigate how he positioned himself in the public square of the Jewish periodical press and how he was received. I argue that his social capital grew not only through his own writing but also through editorial interventions in the journals. I also show that he relied on scientific racial discourse to develop his view of how Jews should understand themselves and their place in America. In chapter two, I explore ethnicity by focusing upon Kallen and the intercollegiate publication the *Menorah Journal*. The *Journal* is of particular interest because of its prominent role in the development of an American

Jewish ethnic consciousness, as distinct from racial or religious considerations. I also analyze his use of scientific language as a supporting structure for his vision of a Jewish cultural renaissance. In chapter three, I highlight his engagement with modernist discourse, and develop the idea that science, art, and modernism were all equally important to his alternative construction of American and Jewish identity. I broaden the scope of inquiry to include his writings in the non-Jewish press, and I analyze the strategies he employed to cultivate a receptive public. I pay particular attention to how the scientific notion of evolution undergirds his rhetoric regarding democracy. Finally, in chapter four, I analyze the changing fortunes of one publication in particular, Kallen's *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, as a way to assess his engagement in a discourse concerning the relationship of secularism and religion. I examine the spread of secularity in American Jewish life, and I explore how his interpretation of Job helped him to fuse secularism and religion. Human fulfillment, he believed, depended upon nurturing diversity and having faith in democracy.

Chapter 1

Horace Kallen in the American Jewish Press: On Race and Hebraism

Irishman and Jew are facts in nature.

—Horace Kallen, 1918

There are no born Jews.

—Horace Kallen, 1963

Senator Lodge: Do I understand you to deny that the Jews are a race?

Mr. Wolf: How?

Senator Lodge: Do you deny that the word "Jew" is used to express a race?

Mr. Wolf: As the representative of the Union of American Hebrew
Congregations[,]...[I say] the Jews are not a race.

Senator Lodge: [The Jewish Encyclopedia contains] a statement by Joseph Jacobs,
B.A., formerly President of the Jewish Historical Society of England.

"Anthropologically considered, the Jews are a race of markedly uniform type,
due either to unity of race or to similarity of environment." Do you mean to
deny...that the word "Jew" is a racial term?

Mr. Wolf: I have made my statement.⁴⁹

Commissioned by Congress to inquire into the negative effects of immigration generally, the United States Immigration Commission met from 1907 to 1911. It found that immigration from southern and eastern Europe posed a threat to American culture and society. The above-quoted passage is excerpted from the testimony of Simon Wolf, representing the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations, before the joint House-Senate Commission. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States

⁴⁹ Anon., "Is There a Jewish Race?"; Anon., "There Is No Jewish Race!" The coverage by the Jewish press of Jewish communal leaders' testimonies underscores the American Jewish community's deep concern with the political issues at stake.

government seriously investigated how to categorize Jews in order to decide how to treat them under immigration law.

The Commission's recommendations to Congress fed into the xenophobic and nativist sentiment of the era, paving the way for a series of restrictive immigration laws over the next decade that affected, among other groups, Jews seeking to immigrate to the United States. The testimony of the Jewish community leaders from the American Jewish Committee and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations gripped the entire Jewish community. The text of this deposition was published in full in the Philadelphia Jewish weekly, the *Jewish Exponent*, and also in the American Zionist monthly, the *Maccabean*. A 1910 editorial in the *Exponent* explained that Jewish communal leaders intended to convince the commission that Jewish immigrants should be designated according to nation of origin, rather than by race.⁵⁰ The form the questioning took, however, reframed the issue into an either-or distinction between race and religion. This helped to set the tone of internal institutional divisiveness within the Jewish community. The political temper was forcing Jews to choose a definite position, affirming either a religious identification with Judaism or a racial one.

Because of the broad social and political implications, the educated Jewish reading public was naturally invested in racial discourse. Racial discourse concerning Jews involved more than conflict between racist antisemites and Jews. Among Jews, it was also an intra-Jewish discourse in which different voices contributed to the ongoing debate about what it meant to be a Jew. It depended on interpreting the findings of science to support one's claims. There was no single view on race among Jews.

⁵⁰ "The Question of Race."

On the American Jewish Press

Nor was there any single locus in which the discourse took place. This issue and other matters of importance to the American Jewish community were discussed and debated in the pages of the many different English and Yiddish presses that were available, representing the two main languages of American Jews. Historian Michael Brown points out that there was also a Hebrew press in America, but, unlike other immigrant presses, it came into being not to serve the needs of a public that did not yet read English, but as a consequence of an ideology that people should read Hebrew. The Hebraists involved with the Hebrew press, Brown observes, "managed to keep themselves as well as their publications insulated from general American life."⁵¹ They were also "incapable of acclimating themselves fully to America."⁵²

The Yiddish and English presses, however, were fully engaged with American Jewish life and wrestled more directly with issues relating to life in the new adoptive land. In some ways, the Yiddish press was of primary importance. At the height of their popularity in 1925, Yiddish newspapers enjoyed a circulation of more than a half million readers.⁵³ Although they served the needs of a Yiddish-speaking community, contemporary surveys showed that almost three quarters of the readers had lived in the United States for more than a decade and read English-language newspapers regularly.⁵⁴ Sociologist Mordecai Soltes, in his seminal work on the Yiddish press in America, concluded that the demand for Yiddish papers was due in no small part to the sentimental attachment of the readers to that language, as well as

⁵¹ Brown, "All, All Alone: The Hebrew Press in America from 1914 to 1924," 169.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935*, 30.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

the desire to keep abreast of Jewish current events.⁵⁵ The fact that the majority of readers were already fluent in English suggests that readers of the Yiddish press had already taken steps to becoming Americanized. Echoing Soltes's findings, historian Hasia Diner points out that the Yiddish press self-consciously set out to speed up the process of Americanization among its readers.⁵⁶ The Yiddish press, Diner argues, was a very influential force in American Jewish life. "Because they articulated social goals for their newspapers, the editors and writers of the Yiddish press emerged as distinct leaders of the immigrant Jewish community...[T]hey used the Yiddish press as a way to confront the central questions of American life and decide how Jews would fit in with the values of their adoptive land."⁵⁷

The Yiddish-language press, however, could not claim to speak for American Jews as a whole. Neither, for that matter, could the English-language Jewish press. They inhabited different worlds of discourse. The Yiddish press served mainly working-class Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe. The English-language Jewish press served the needs of acculturated, western European, American-born Jews of the middle class. "The Yiddish press and the English-language Jewish press demarcated different stages on the road to Americanization," Diner observes. "The Yiddish newspapers served Jews taking their first steps on the path to acculturation in America. Middle-class Jews who functioned quite freely in mainstream America read and wrote for the English magazines and journals."⁵⁸ The readership of the English-language Jewish press "was undoubtedly less working-class, less centered in the garment trades, less immigrant, less socialist, and less orthodox," Diner writes. "The leaders of the immigrant, working-class Jewish world never appeared" in the English-

⁵⁵ Soltes, "The Yiddish Press: An Americanizing Agency," 193.

⁵⁶ Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935*, 30.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

language Jewish press. Rather, the English-language Jewish press's heroes were Jewish businessmen, lawyers, political figures, and other American Jews "who had achieved prominence on the *American* scene."⁵⁹ It was for this press that Kallen and other second- and third-generation American Jews wrote.

In this chapter, I situate Kallen's particular views on race within a larger discourse concerning American Jewish identity that transpired in the English-language Jewish periodical press. Narrowing the focus to a biographical exploration, historian of science Mott Greene explains, has the advantage of providing specific knowledge of how cultural, political, and scientific developments converge in a given time and place.⁶⁰ Exploring Kallen's presence in the periodical press has the advantage, therefore, of illuminating the middle ground between personal idiosyncrasy and group expression. What, then, was Kallen's view on race and how did he construct his Jewish identity in light of that view? Some have answered this question quite simply: for him, race and ethnicity were fixed, and he was a biological determinist.⁶¹ The full answer to this question is complex, however, for his views changed over time.⁶² These shifts reveal his evolving sense of his Jewish identity.

In this and the following chapter, I trace Kallen's developing views on race between 1906 and 1915, and explore how race science functioned as the convergence point for the crystallization of his views on the interrelationship of Zionism, nationality, and American

⁵⁹ Ibid., 91.

⁶⁰ Greene, "Writing Scientific Biography."

⁶¹ See, e.g., Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*; Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*; Fishman, "Mainstreaming Ethnicity: Horace Kallen, the Strategy of Transcendence, and Cultural Pluralism"; Whitfield, "America's Melting Pot Ideal and Horace Kallen"; Menand, "The Science of Human Nature and the Human Nature of Science."

⁶² See Toll, "Horace M. Kallen: Pluralism and American Jewish Identity"; Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*. For the purposes of this chapter I will limit the exploration of Kallen's racial ideas to the 1900s and the 1910s. From about 1930, however, Kallen no longer wrote about Jews in racial terms and embraced the idea of the purely voluntary nature of culture.

democracy. As Kallen's presence in English-language Jewish print culture grew, he came to occupy a prominent space in the social imaginary of the American Jewish community.

Philosopher Charles Taylor makes a useful distinction between social imaginary and social theory by highlighting the unstructured and inarticulate nature of an imaginary. The social imaginary aims at "a wider grasp of our whole predicament, how we stand in relationship to one another, how we got where we are, how we relate to other groups."⁶³ Kallen's intervention in the American Jewish social imaginary was aimed particularly at articulating a shared social moral order that stemmed from his views on race.

The findings of the English Jewish scientist, Joseph Jacobs, figured large in Kallen's ideas on race at the beginning of the century. Jacobs had come from London to New York in 1900 to take the position of revising editor for the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, which was completed in 1906. He headed the encyclopedia's Department of Anthropology, and was responsible for the prominence the encyclopedia accorded to anthropology. "For the Anglophone [Jewish] world," historian John Efron observes, "the *Jewish Encyclopedia* was the most comprehensive guide to the racial question available."⁶⁴ Jacobs, a pioneer in the anthropological study of Jews along statistical lines, took for granted certain "facts." He believed in the biological concept of race, the permanency of certain racial characteristics, and in the racial purity of the Jews.⁶⁵ All of these were assumptions shared by Kallen in the 1900s and 1910s. Jacobs's methodological cornerstone, the "gold standard" of contemporaneous racial anthropology, was craniometry (the measurement of skulls); and Kallen, as we shall see, relied heavily on these findings up until 1910. He likely gleaned this

⁶³ See Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," 107.

⁶⁴ Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, 89.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 58 ff.

information from the *Jewish Encyclopedia* entries. Finally, Kallen, like Jacobs, read Jewish history as a significant contributing factor to what made Jews racially unique. It was, in fact, as a "student of history" that Jacobs had, in 1898, refuted the view held by America's "premier student of race," William Ripley, that the Jews had intermixed throughout history.⁶⁶

Although both Jacobs and Ripley were agreed that Jews were predominantly brachycephalic, or broad-headed, Ripley interpreted this to mean that the Jews had mixed with other races since they had purportedly originated as dolichocephalic, or long-headed. In the interest of sustaining the idea of Jewish racial purity, Jacobs had retorted that there was "no evidence of any large admixture of alien elements in the race,"⁶⁷ nor had there ever been. Kallen adopted the same posture, initially suggesting that racial purity supported his claim that the Jews were the unique inheritors of a particular moral genius. Jacobs argued in Lamarckian terms that environmental influence rather than racial intermixing had caused cranial changes. Because the Jews "have been forced to live by the exercise of their brains, one should not be surprised to find the cubic capacity of their skulls larger than that of their neighbours."⁶⁸

Both Ripley and Jacobs explored race in neo-Lamarckian terms, an approach particularly appealing to liberal social scientists. It flowed logically from the monogenist school of anthropology, which argued that humanity shared a common point of origin. The polygenist school of anthropology, which held that the human races derived from different origins, was generally the province of the racist schools of thought, supporting the idea that

⁶⁶ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 87.

⁶⁷ Qtd. in *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 88.

racess were biologically determined and immutable.⁶⁹ In the context of the massive immigration wave that the United States experienced in the first decades of the twentieth century, the question of race was socially and politically significant, and carried with it implications for immigration policy. As historian Mitchell Hart explains, the racial question was no longer whether or not the Jews should be granted freedom and equality as it had been in previous generations in Europe; social science was inquiring "into the effects of such freedom on the state, society, and Jews themselves."⁷⁰

After 1910, Kallen distanced himself from reliance upon an anthropology that defined race in terms of cranial measurements. This may well have been due to the influence of anthropologist Franz Boas, who had just concluded his investigations into the anthropometry of immigrants and their descendants, undertaken for the United States Immigration Commission. Boas's findings, submitted to Congress in 1909 and published in 1910, suggested that cranial form was subject to environmental influence, thus exposing the unreliability of the cephalic index to adequately describe race.⁷¹ Kallen remained committed to the idea of a Jewish race, but by 1915 he had come to define it in terms of "psychophysical" inheritance, that is, a physically inherited psychology, expressed as Jewish culture.⁷² Kallen's reliance during the 1910s on the natural determinacy of psychophysical inheritance was a subtle intervention in the debate over whether Jews were a race or a religion.

⁶⁹ See Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*.

⁷⁰ Hart, "Racial Science, Social Science, and the Politics of Jewish Assimilation," 277.

⁷¹ Boas, "Changes in the Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants."

⁷² See Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," 220. See chapters two and three for a more detailed analysis of this idea.

Although Kallen couched it as a racial assertion, his nuanced view of inheritance would also become the basis for a new option for Jewish identity—that of Jewish ethnicity, or what he called "nationality," or the "*natio*." Kallen's intervention in racial discourse is part of a broader discursive context. Literary scholar Sarah Wilson argues that for Jewish intellectuals and authors like Mary Antin and Abraham Cahan, evolutionary theory was at the core of their construction of an ethnic Jewish identity.⁷³ To be sure, Jewish intellectuals did not uniformly rely on evolutionary theory as the best way to articulate Jewish ethnicity.⁷⁴ Some opposed any inferential application from biology.⁷⁵ Neither was Mary Antin's use of evolutionary theory as a metaphor for her own sense of Jewish identity identical with Kallen's philosophical and biological conceptualization of the Jewish race. Nevertheless, Kallen's particular construction became an important point of discussion among Jews.⁷⁶

Kallen on Race

Kallen's first printed articulation of his notion of race, which became the foundation of his later philosophy, appeared in August, 1906. He had just begun graduate studies at Harvard, and he was within months of chairing the first meeting of the Menorah Society, a Jewish student association that became a cultural movement.⁷⁷ He had also become active in the Zionist movement. His "The Ethics of Zionism" appeared in the *Maccabaeon*, a monthly

⁷³ Wilson, "The Evolution of Ethnicity."

⁷⁴ Wilson also acknowledges this point, noting that Jewish culture, conceived of as shared history rather than as shared religious observance or as shared physiognomy, was neither exclusively American nor evolutionist. See *ibid.*, 272, n. 18.

⁷⁵ We shall see in chapter two that Isaac Baer Berkson, for example, following Dewey's lead, opposed a racialized understanding.

⁷⁶ It also became an important point for discussion among non-Jews, which will be discussed in chapter three.

⁷⁷ See chapter two.

magazine published by the Federation of American Zionists.⁷⁸ In that article, he sought to justify the Jewish race's continued survival. The mere fact of survival was not a sufficient justification for life, he believed, for "[m]any noxious things persist," things which we would rather eradicate than allow to live.⁷⁹ He believed that he had to articulate a moral justification for Jewish survival, and that justification was Zionism. "In the economy of nations," he wrote, "that race has a right to its life and individuality whose clear physical vigor has been the ground for effective moral achievement."⁸⁰ This twinning of physical vigor with a distinctive moral efficacy constituted, for him, the sole sanction for the Jewish race's survival.

To discover this moral achievement, Kallen wrote, "we have to turn to ethnology and history, not to tradition or sentiment."⁸¹ He thus underscored the necessity of appealing to scientific authority for validation. He was not the first person to argue that the Jewish *raison d'être* may be discovered through ethnology and history. Jacobs had written in 1891 that the Jews' particular history made them anthropologically unique (in terms of skull shape and brain function) and constituted a record of their contribution to world culture.⁸² For Kallen, ethnology and history validated establishing a connection between biology and culture. Moreover, these allowed him to establish that it was the group that was primary, not the individual.⁸³ "The simple fact which emerges from the ethnological and sociological study of mankind is the fact that the group and not the individual is the fighting unit. It is the race and not the man who, in the greater account of human destiny, struggles, survives or dies."⁸⁴ This

⁷⁸ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, 90.

⁸³ Cf. Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, which shows that he later came to reverse this order of priorities.

⁸⁴ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 62.

was an important rhetorical strategy in an America weaned on tales of rugged individualism and desirous that individuals should shed their ancestral cultural heritage. Science demonstrated the necessity of recognizing the persistence and validity of the social group identity.

Just as Jacobs had argued that Jews had always been a part of European civilization, and had "earned their right to continue to work for the European culture that they have helped to develop," Kallen argued that the right of the Jewish race to survive was established by its continuing contribution to world civilization.⁸⁵ Specifically, he argued that the Hebraic contribution to civilization lay in its ability to address humanity's place in brutal nature. The Jewish solution to this existential dilemma was to give the world a "moral consciousness." This constituted the "psychical character-mark of the Jewish race."⁸⁶ With the spread of the Enlightenment and the principles of human happiness and freedom, the enfranchisement of the Jews followed, which in turn revealed "their unchanged character and race-power," and allowed them to express through the moral law their particular genius.⁸⁷

Kallen's central aim was to argue for Jewish racial purity, a viewpoint shared by a number of Zionist anthropologists, but one that was disputed by American anthropologists like Maurice Fishberg and William Ripley. These two Kallen dismissed. There are those who claim that Jewish racial purity "is an unwarranted assertion and an empty vaunt," he wrote. "Such a claim, made most recently by the unseeing Fishberg, and most notably in a hasty generalization, by Professor Ripley, is based on an assumption amounting to a prejudice, that the Jews, speaking a Semitic language and coming into history from a Semitic territory, are

⁸⁵ Qtd. in Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, 90.

⁸⁶ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 64.

⁸⁷ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 67. It is ironic that the best exemplar of this Jewish moral genius was, for Kallen, Karl Marx, a man whose positive identification with Judaism was tenuous at best.

of Afro-Semitic origin."⁸⁸ This, he asserted, was false. He next recited a list of anthropological "facts" about Jews, all of which could be found in the newly published *Jewish Encyclopedia*.⁸⁹

The fact is that the Jewish race is of Asiatic, probably of Turanian, and not Afro-Semitic origin. . . . [S]cholars like Mr. Lucien Wolf freely assert the Asiatic origin of the Jew. The race is brachycephalic; the head is very broad, the pigmentation is dark with a rufous tendency; the eyes are dark, the lids heavy giving the impression of thought, the lips are full, the chest narrow, the stature is lower than that of the average European. Most notably the race is absolutely tenacious of life, indeed the most long-lived of European races.⁹⁰

Kallen's insistence on the racial purity of the Jews and that they were of Asiatic, rather than Afro-Semitic, provenance was, in the American context, a pointed attempt to distance any association of Jews with blackness.⁹¹ As Gilman observes, European racial science had, since the nineteenth century, defined Jews as racially black because they were not a pure race and were of African origin.⁹² Kallen's recital of anthropological data, however, implies a unanimity of scientific opinion that simply did not exist.

Kallen dismissed "as a prejudice" Ripley's conclusion that the Jewish group was not the "product of an unprecedented purity of physical descent," and that therefore the Jews "are not a race, but only a people."⁹³ Kallen needed the racial category to be operative because it was a critical tool to rebut the assimilationists. If, as Ripley believed, "consciousness of kind" were adequate to describe Jewish group-individuality, and affiliation were merely a matter of choice, then Zionism would be reduced to mere sentimentality.

Following the lead of Jacobs and other like-minded scientists, Kallen insisted on the purity of

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ See "Anthropology - JewishEncyclopedia.com."

⁹⁰ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 68.

⁹¹ Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness* argues that Kallen sought to place Jews further along the spectrum of whiteness.

⁹² Gilman, "The Jewish Psyche: Freud, Dora, and the Idea of the Hysteric," 99.

⁹³ Ripley, *The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study*, 400.

the Jewish race. It supported his twinning of Jewish moral and physical efficacy, which were his mutually reinforcing justifications for Jewish survival: "By these two facts, his vigorous, biological, organic endowment and his definite moral efficacy, the Jew fulfills the condition we set upon which a race can ethically assert its right to maintain its selfhood."⁹⁴ Zionism, Kallen concluded, provided the only avenue in which this dual modality could continue to function.

At this stage in Kallen's thinking, there was no attempt to link Zionism to America or to democracy. Zionism was, for him, the political expression of the moral and physical assertiveness needed to justify Jewish survival. This was a definite rejection of the assimilationists' point of view. History, he believed, demonstrated not that Jews could be assimilated; rather, it showed that Jews assimilated outside influences into themselves. In his view, the Hebraic soul had absorbed into itself the Hellenic soul, making it a part of its nature.⁹⁵ Thus the Jewish race was "biologically an absorber, not of the absorbed."⁹⁶

This was an important point of departure between Kallen's idea of Zionism and Ahad Ha'am's cultural Zionism. Kallen believed that Ahad Ha'am's proposed "Cultural Zionism," a Zionism centered on the cultural spirit of the Jewish people rather than on political aspirations, was no better a "solution" to the "Jewish Question" than assimilation. Although Ahad Ha'am recognized the moral function of the Jewish spirit, Kallen argued that his conception of that spirit was inadequate. "[Achad Ha'am's] envisagement [sic] of the race's spirit in art and letters as a fulfillment of its program," Kallen wrote, "would be, could be

⁹⁴ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 68.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 70.

hardly more than mangy, a bit distraught, of the chameleon quality."⁹⁷ Jewish individuality could only attain its highest expression on "native soil, under native laws, amid native institutions. A cultural center under any other conditions can be little more than artificial, a make-believe."⁹⁸ Nothing less than Herzlian political Zionism, advocating for statehood, was needed to provide the necessary physical and moral foundation to support Jewish growth and vitality.

In 1910, Harry Wolfson, who would later become a professor of philosophy at Harvard, explained that Achad Ha'am's position was basically an inversion of Kallen's position: "It is Achad Ha'am's [sic] idea that Palestine, as a spiritual centre, will attract the Jews, while it is the belief of Dr. Kallen that the body politic is the foundation of the spirit and must precede it."⁹⁹ Jewish statehood was, for Kallen, a prerequisite for the full expression of the Jewish group personality. As early as 1906, he had grounded the idea of nationality, rooted in a nation-state, in racial terms. A Jewish state would establish Jewish equality among nations and ensure the unfettered flourishing of Jewish culture. He had sought to unify the efforts of the cultural Zionists and the Territorialists with the Palestinian Zionists: "Zionists, our duty, here and now, is spiritual self-assertion. Our duty is frank and open combat; our duty is to Judaize the Jew and to open his eyes to the potent facts of existence."¹⁰⁰ Kallen saw Zionism not as an adjunct to Jewish identity, but as the bedrock of Jewish survival and consciousness. He was thus committed to the concept of a Jewish race, biologically "vigorous" and endowed with moral "genius."

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Wolfson, "He Thinks Kallen Improves on Achad-Ha'am."

¹⁰⁰ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism," 71.

Kallen's racial claim, as distinct from Aryan racist ideology, was fundamentally egalitarian and democratic. It enabled him to stake out a claim for Jews among the family of nations:

It is this spiritual self-hood, expressing a vigorous natural life and the moral law in social organization, art and letters, functioning in the family of nations as an indispensable force, that constitutes, by virtue of its effect on human civilization and progress, by virtue of its physical integrity and spiritual splendor, the Jew's moral right to live. It is in this self-hood, so understood, that we posit the ethic of Zionism.¹⁰¹

His "ethic of Zionism" rested upon the positive contributions that Jews would make to the whole of human civilization and progress. Jewish life was morally justified by this virtue.

Kallen's panegyric on the Jewish race and morality must be contextualized by what he meant by "moral." His claim for Jewish moral genius is arguably undermined by his call for blood vengeance against the perpetrators of pogroms in that same article.¹⁰² A clue to what he meant by "moral" may be found in his review of philosopher Ralph Barton Perry's *The Moral Economy* (1909) in the *Boston Transcript*.¹⁰³ The importance Kallen ascribed to Perry's book may be seen in the fact that he titled his review, "The Immutable Facts of Life and Social Intercourse."¹⁰⁴ He focused his attention upon a passage in which morality is characterized as functioning in the same way that Kallen would come to conceive of democracy's functioning.

Perry's view of morality was rooted in the Jamesian pragmatist school of thought, and was derived from the Darwinian evolutionary view that morality is at root a natural social instinct and part of the evolutionary process. Morality described a process rather than a

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² See William James to Kallen, March 29, 1910. Certainly some of his violent rhetoric may be assigned to his youthfulness. James said as much in this letter of recommendation that he wrote for Kallen in 1910: "Five years ago, as is normal with youths who feel a high moral vocation, he used to show a certain iconoclastic fervor, which has mellowed very much with the scepticism of advancing years. I don't think he need be feared in this regard hereafter."

¹⁰³ Perry, *The Moral Economy*.

¹⁰⁴ Kallen, "The Moral Economy: The Immutable Facts of Life and Social Intercourse."

concrete set of ideas. That original natural process is characterized by coordinated group cooperation, designed to overcome threats to survival. The effect of morality is to bring different, even competing interests together in a cooperative fashion. He connected the moral economy to democracy. Democracy's vitality, in his optimistic vision, springs from a common commitment to a universal set of values, affirming freedom and life for all. Kallen lauded Perry's book as the "laboratory textbook in ethics."¹⁰⁵ Perry likely gave him the conceptual framework to connect Zionism to the ethics of democracy and to his program of cultural pluralism, all founded upon a platform of philosophical pragmatism and a post-Darwinian worldview.

Kallen began to articulate this connection in June 1910 in his article, "Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism," published in the *American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger*, a nationally circulated, weekly English-language periodical.¹⁰⁶ Historian Jonathan Sarna regards the *American Hebrew* as having been "the foremost [English-language] Jewish newspaper in the United States."¹⁰⁷ Begun in 1871 as the *American Hebrew*, it grew to absorb the *Jewish Messenger* and three other periodicals by the turn of the century.¹⁰⁸ It was the original home of English-speaking, American-Jewish literati. Emma Lazarus figured among the leading literary figures that it introduced. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* notes that "[n]early all the prominent Jewish writers and communal workers in the United States have been contributors to its pages."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ As we shall see below, this article was part of an ongoing dispute between Kallen and prominent Reform Jewish leaders.

¹⁰⁷ Sarna, "The American Jewish Press," 542.

¹⁰⁸ Madison, *Jewish Publishing in America: The Impact of Jewish Writing on American Culture*, 19.

¹⁰⁹ Vizetelly, "American Hebrew, The."

In "Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism," Kallen repeated Perry's point (without attribution) about morality in the Zionist idiom:

The Jews, in the degree that they are a differentiated and distinct human group, on whatever basis, racial or sectarian, are morally entitled to life only if that difference is elementally and by its very nature contributory to the values of culture and civilization. To demonstrate their ethical right to be is to demonstrate that...the real effect of the Jews is a positive and constructive effect, that by remaining their unaltered selves, by perfecting their natural and distinctive group functions they must contribute to the welfare of nations and serve international comity.¹¹⁰

To answer this question about morality, which rested upon a pragmatic foundation, Kallen instructed the reader to turn to ethnology and history. He insisted that the history of the Jews "must bring the fact of racial distinctiveness of geographico-political individuality clearly to light," and in a footnote he referred readers to his "rather callow but more succinct paper," "The Ethics of Zionism." For further reading regarding the racial basis of culture, he recommended "the very amusing and instructive anti-Semitic tract by [Houston Stewart] Chamberlain." He made no further mention of anthropology, only asserting that Jews are "a *well-defined ethnic group*."¹¹¹

In that essay, Kallen shifted away from circumscribing race by physiognomic markers such as the cephalic index and referred instead to the "prepotency" of the race:

The ethnic identity of that life both history and anthropology sufficiently attest. For the purposes of cultural efficacy it is not necessary that the Jews shall be a *pure* race; it is necessary that they shall be a *prepotent* race. The demonstration that they are such, and even purer than most, I must defer until [sic] another occasion.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Kallen, "Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism," 182.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

He de-emphasized the physical anthropological aspect, and stressed what journalist Walter Lippmann would six years later call "biological mysticism."¹¹³ To be sure, "prepotency" was not his own idiosyncratic word. It had been used by Jacobs in his studies of heritable traits. As Jacobs explained in the *American Hebrew* in 1911, the term "prepotency" was a throw-back to pre-Mendelian biology: "We used to speak of 'prepotency' then where the Mendelians speak of dominance, and of 'atavism' where they refer to recessives."¹¹⁴ Kallen's use of the term appears to have some combined relationship with both orthogenesis and the Mendelian theory of dominance. There was a sense in which he felt that the heritable traits of Hebraism would be passed down without regard to their relative survival value in a given environment, a unilinear evolutionary model that is a feature of orthogenesis.

Although he appeared to back away from his earlier dependence upon the cephalic index as the defining characteristic of a race, his interest in the topic continued, as is clear from his correspondence with Charles Gabriel Seligmann, the chair of Ethnology at the London School of Economics. Kallen solicited Seligmann's views on the significance of Jewish skull sizes, and he responded:

[T]he present day Jews have comparatively little of the Semite in them. The mesaticephalic, or brachycephalic skull and "Jewish" nose being not Semitic traits but belonging to a group of Armenoid Asiatics of whom the Hittites are the classical representatives in antiquity. I don't pretend to any knowledge as to the physical condition of the Jews at the time of the Hyksos and their successors but judging from the obelisk in the British Museum on which are sculptured a number of vanquished including Jehu King of Israel, the Jews had by that time taken on their present physical characters.¹¹⁵

This particular letter is significant as a concrete instance of Kallen's active solicitation of views on race from outside of the American scientific orbit. He kept abreast of developments

¹¹³ Lippmann to Hurwitz, December 24, 1916.

¹¹⁴ Jacobs, "Mendelism and the Jews."

¹¹⁵ Seligmann, December 2, 1913.

in American anthropology, but preferred the views of philosemitic or Jewish European race scientists, such as the Anglo-Jewish biologist Redcliffe Salaman.

Readers of the *American Hebrew* in 1910 knew that Salaman, who applied Mendelian genetics to Darwinian theory, "believed that the Jews were a pure race."¹¹⁶ In fact, Salaman argued that the Jews were, in Mendelian terms, a "recessive" type. The evidence for this, he felt, was only strengthened by Francis Galton's experiments and the composite portraits that he had done in collaboration with Jacobs in 1885.¹¹⁷ The educated Jewish reading public followed such developments in anthropology. Jacobs even went so far as to solicit the *American Hebrew* readers' help in accumulating statistical data for an anthropological study.¹¹⁸ He had proposed a test of whether Mendelism applied to intermarriages between Jews and gentiles by looking at the offspring of the intermarried children of intermarried parents. He wished to determine if, following the Mendelian rule of genetics, three-fourths of those children would resemble the dominant Gentile parent and one-fourth would resemble the recessive Jew. He appealed to his readers to alert him to any such cases of a double intermarriage in order to help resolve the "oft-vexed question of the purity of the Jewish race." He signaled to them the social significance of this investigation: "[M]any Jews are only kept faithful to their Jewish connections by the conviction of their being of the same race with their fellow Jews. This conviction may help to tide them over the present era of transition but, if broken down by anthropology, may cause them to fall entirely away from Jewish communion. What seems at first a merely biological problem may thus have far

¹¹⁶ "Jews a 'Recessive' Race Type."

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Jacobs, "Mendelism and the Jews."

reaching spiritual results."¹¹⁹ The findings of anthropologists, he seemed to believe, could influence the future marriage patterns of Jews and so affect the Jewish future.

The Jewish Press Gives Kallen a Boost

"Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism" was part of a sustained debate between Kallen and Reform rabbis concerning the essential foundations of Jewish identity. Kallen sparked the debate by attacking the Reform movement's recently adopted official credo, "universal Judaism."¹²⁰ "Universal Judaism" was a phrase that Reform rabbis felt captured their belief in a universal moral God, and implied their duty to spread that monotheistic message to the world. The *American Hebrew* trumpeted Kallen's attack by placing "The Value of Universal Judaism" as the lead article of their January 14, 1910 issue. In that article, he dismissed the idea of a "universal Judaism" as a meaningless contradiction, posing as both universal and particularistic at the same time. He accused the Reform movement of "intellectual deficiency."¹²¹ He suggested that the phrase's popularity was entirely driven by emotional appeal. He concluded that both the idea of "universal Judaism" and the connected idea of a "mission of Israel" had "imperial" implications, was intolerant of difference, and was based on egotism while insidiously posing as altruism. In the final analysis, "they aim fundamentally at their own aggrandizement alone."¹²² Not surprisingly, this provoked a response.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Kallen, "The Value of Universal Judaism."

¹²¹ Ibid., 276.

¹²² Ibid., 277.

The *American Hebrew* published a letter to the editor by the Reform rabbi, Max Raisin, in its February 11, 1910 issue.¹²³ First, Raisin defended the term "universal Judaism" as expressing "the highest and broadest possible conception of the God-idea." Judaism's God-idea, Raisin insisted, was superior to that held by both Christianity and Islam. In no uncertain terms, Raisin claimed that Judaism is "*the only true faith*." Raisin then sought to marginalize Kallen personally, resorting to an *ad hominem* argument. "Mr. Kallen," he wrote, "denies having anything in common with the Jews and the Judaism of our day."¹²⁴ He all but declared Kallen to be an apostate. The vehemence with which he denounced Kallen is all the more remarkable considering the fact that Raisin was part of a vocal minority of Reform rabbis who identified positively with Zionism.¹²⁵ Raisin, however, like Reform rabbis generally, embraced an exclusively religious definition of Judaism, and he could not countenance Kallen's attack on that.

Reform Judaism was the unofficial "establishment," while the nationalist Zionists who were, in the main, secular, remained a marginal group until the First World War.¹²⁶ The stridency of the argument with Kallen was exacerbated by the political realities of the day. The Immigration Commission, as noted above, had recently heard testimony from community leaders as it sought to render judgment on the divisive issue of whether it should recognize the Jews as a race or as a religion. For secular Jews like Kallen, many of whom

¹²³ Raisin later became president of the Reform movement's rabbinic arm, the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

¹²⁴ Raisin, "On 'Universal Judaism.'"

¹²⁵ Sarna, "Converts to Zionism in the American Reform Movement," 190. As an institution, however, the Reform movement was anti-Zionist at this stage. Until Justice Louis Brandeis threw his support behind the movement, Zionism had a slightly disreputable flavor associated with it. Anxiety to be seen as loyal Americans led many Jews to reject nationalist Judaism.

¹²⁶ As Sarna observes, there were a number of rabbis who, like Max Raisin and Stephen S. Wise, felt that Zionism was in harmony with their religious commitments. The discursive engagement of Zionism with secularism and religion is a complex historical event, but it is nevertheless possible to broadly differentiate between a secular Zionist approach and a religious Reform approach to constructions of Jewish identity.

were also Zionists, basing their connection to Judaism on racial descent was a compelling alternative to religious faith. Racially determined Judaism, however, could lead to questions about the assimilability of the immigrant Jews into the American milieu, and the Zionists' political activism might cause some to question their exclusive loyalty to America. Reform Judaism had a significant vested interest in opposing this point of view. Congress's either-or mentality helped to entrench the debate among Jews as one between irreconcilable opponents.

A particularly lengthy and strident response to Kallen was expressed in a sermon by the prominent Reform rabbi, Samuel Schulman, and reprinted in the *American Hebrew* on February 25, 1910.¹²⁷ The Reform Conference, Schulman wrote, "proclaimed joyously and boldly the universal message of Judaism that it is a religion, rational and ethical, and applicable to mankind." But this joyous message "got a conceited sneer from a College instructor who boasts of his indifference to either Orthodox, Conservative or Reform Judaism, and presumably, to any Judaism, and who is a type of 'some intellectuals' who would have us commit ourselves to a mere racialism or Zionism."¹²⁸ Such a person should be ignored, Schulman asserted:

[H]e is of the type of the intellectuals who care nothing about the Jewish religion, who for all we know are perhaps not even Theists, but who are Zionists and who want to see the Jewish race perpetuated. If you ask them why, you may get an answer such as this gentleman gave me in conversation, "I'm a Zionist for 'biological reasons.'" I might make fun of this term but I will not. What it means is, that the Jews should continue to live as a race, though he deny everything Israel has stood for in history."¹²⁹

Finally, Schulman compared Kallen, whom he called "the Jewish indifferentist," to "the Christian anti-semite," because both see "the characteristic things of Judaism in the

¹²⁷ Schulman had worked with, and then, in 1903, succeeded, Kaufmann Kohler at Temple Beth-El in New York.

¹²⁸ Schulman, "A Last Word on the Rabbinical Conference," 3.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

particular, in rites, racial or tribal customs, which he tells us we have no reason to be proud of."¹³⁰

Schulman, like Raisin, did not hesitate to resort to *ad hominem* arguments to discredit Kallen. Kallen did not allow that to pass unchallenged: "Now, both Messrs. Schulman and Raisin," he retorted, "imagine that the cogency of a discussion or the truth of a proposition is identical with the nature of its source. Hence their method is essentially an attempt to refute my argument by very courteous animadversions upon my person, my traits, and my incidental private beliefs, of which they are completely ignorant."¹³¹ Kallen argued that Hebraism, better than Judaism, reflected the life of the Jews "as a *well-defined ethnic group*."¹³² He also articulated for the first time a connection between his cultural conception of Hebraism and his national and moral conception of Zionism. The Jewish spirit which is Hebraism, he wrote, is "a flower whose roots are race and whose soil is nationality. Zionism is the one ethical solution to the Jewish problem because...that unique note which is designated in Hebraism will assume a more sustained, a clearer and truer tone in the concert of human cultures, and will genuinely enrich the harmony of civilization."¹³³ For Schulman and for Raisin, this was a debate between Reform and Zionist Jews. But Kallen considered far more than Zionism to be at stake. He was involved in a debate that went to the heart of what it meant to be a Jew and what it meant to be an American.

As we see from this exchange, he had personally become a locus for the debate over Jewish identity. It was a debate that took place in the new public square of modernity, the popular press. Particularly striking is the fact that both Schulman and Raisin had established

¹³⁰ Ibid., 7.

¹³¹ Kallen, "Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism," 181.

¹³² Ibid., 3.

¹³³ Ibid.

positions of authority within the Jewish community. Both were prominent rabbis, and their authority flowed from their position as leaders. Kallen, however, had no comparable standing. The *American Hebrew* played an important role in changing that. Kallen was neither a rabbi nor a leader within an established Jewish community. He was affiliated Jewishly by virtue of his activity in the Zionist movement and his involvement with the Menorah Society, but otherwise he had no mainstream affiliation.¹³⁴ He was not an unknown, as is clear from the fact that Schulman and Raisin saw him as representative of American Zionism.¹³⁵ On balance, however, he could not be said to have as much Jewish social capital as Schulman and Raisin, who, when they spoke, enjoyed the implicit supporting presence of established Reform Jewish communities.¹³⁶ Kallen's capital was essentially academic in nature. The *American Hebrew* said as much when it listed him in its "Persons Talked About" section of its August 4, 1911 issue because of his faculty appointment to the University of Wisconsin.¹³⁷ And yet, the journal made the exchange between Kallen on the one side, and Schulman and Raisin on the other, a debate between equals. By headlining both Schulman's and Kallen's articles, both voices were considered to be on an equal footing in this Jewish public square, and were strong enough to sustain a debate that extended from January through June of 1910. The editors of the *American Hebrew* were sympathetic to Kallen's ideas, it would appear, and aware of the power of the prominent rabbis. We may conclude that the editors were promoting and positioning him, and were therefore responsible for increasing his social capital.

¹³⁴ Until the First World War, the American Zionist movement was small and did not enjoy mainstream support.

¹³⁵ Kallen's centrality to the American Zionist story is explored in Schmidt, *Horace M. Kallen*.

¹³⁶ See Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*. I draw upon Bourdieu's notion of "social capital" as a way of describing the concrete networks of relationships that position individuals and groups in certain relations of power and credibility. In the context of the first decades of the twentieth century, the Reform movement was the face of establishment Judaism.

¹³⁷ "Persons Talked About."

Among the printed press's novel interventions in the public sphere is that it placed people with different social standing onto the same plane of discourse. The presentation format communicated to the reader that all three of these writers had equal authority to speak. The periodical press offered Kallen a unique opportunity to occupy a prominent place within the public sphere of the Jewish community in the only way possible for him, since he was otherwise unconnected to mainstream organized Jewish life. This exchange in the *American Hebrew* thus offers us a striking instance of the press's role in boosting Kallen's "social capital."

The Scientific Vindication of the Hebraic Worldview

Kallen felt particularly provoked by the type of leadership exercised by the Reform rabbinate, and he attacked it time and again in various articles.¹³⁸ It is not that he specifically wanted to counterpose Zionism to Reform, but he did wish to promote a secularized philosophical alternative. In the *American Hebrew* edition of September 17, 1909, he published the earliest and perhaps the most important expression of his point of view, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy."¹³⁹ He considered it important enough to include as the lead article in a book that he published more than two decades later, *Judaism at Bay*.¹⁴⁰

In that article, Kallen described Hebraism (the term he preferred over Judaism) as the application of philosophical Darwinism.¹⁴¹ He began by acknowledging the cultural influence

¹³⁸ see, e.g., Kallen, "Judaism by Proxy."

¹³⁹ Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy."

¹⁴⁰ Kallen, *Judaism At Bay: Essays Toward the Adjustment of Judaism to Modernity*.

¹⁴¹ Milton R. Konvitz, "H. M. Kallen and the Hebraic Idea," offers a philosophical analysis of this article. Philosophical Darwinism is discussed at length in chapter three.

of Victorian poet and critic Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, which he finds to have become "a commonplace of the critic and a fruitful source of platitude for the smug pulpit of 'reform' Judaism."¹⁴² Against Reform rabbis, who, he feels, merely repeat Arnold's statement that Hebraism and Hellenism share the same goal, Kallen critiqued the terms, juxtaposing them in such a way that he was able to posit a new understanding of Hebraism as the philosophical embodiment of modern scientific views.¹⁴³ Whereas Hellenism saw the world as static and eternal, Kallen asserted, Hebraism embraced change and flux. This difference in worldview extended to views of the operations of science. "[S]cientific Hellenism," he wrote, which understood "the object of science as eternal and immutable substance, as forms, genera, species, varieties, existing eternally in their Aristotelian classifications," had been delivered a "death-blow" by Darwin.¹⁴⁴

It is unlikely that Kallen had actually read *The Origin of Species*. He wrote, inaccurately, "The crux of Darwinism lies in the two principles of 'spontaneous generation' and the 'survival of the fit.'"¹⁴⁵ Darwin did not at all advance a hypothesis concerning spontaneous generation. Kallen also does not seem to be aware of the challenges posed by De Vries's theory of mutations to Darwinian natural selection, which appeared to support saltationism, whereas Darwin had famously maintained the maxim, *natura non facit saltum*: "The latest fashion in evolutionary biology," Kallen wrote, "De Vries [sic] doctrine of 'mutations,' does not challenge them [i.e., spontaneous generation and the survival of the fit],

¹⁴² Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 497.

¹⁴³ His article provoked an admiring reaction from James, although his mentor did caution him against overstating the case of a binary opposition between Hebraism and Hellenism.

¹⁴⁴ Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 498.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

it only asserts them less modestly than they assert themselves."¹⁴⁶ He saw Darwin and De Vries as espousing complementary evolutionary models. His deficiencies in understanding biological theory, however, do not significantly detract from his assertion of its philosophical significance.

Kallen echoed and adapted the ideas of philosopher Henri Bergson, whose lectures concerning his recent *Creative Evolution*¹⁴⁷ he had attended in 1907.¹⁴⁸ Post-Darwinian reality, Kallen wrote, meant "to espouse the flux, to allow for genuine freedom and chance in the world, to insist on the concrete instance rather than on the general law—in a word, to give an overwhelming scientific background to the Hebraic as against the Hellenic visions of the nature of reality."¹⁴⁹ For Kallen, James's pragmatism and Bergson's *élan vital* complemented each other as the articulation of the Hebraic worldview: "The Jamesian and Bergsonian version of the metaphysic of the flux, the metaphysic of Hebraism, open a new era in the history of philosophy—an era in which the old order—Hebraism subordinated to Hellenism—is reversed; an era which will understand the structure of the world as a passing instance in its dynamic [flow]; its form as an ephemeral expression of its own *élan vital*."¹⁵⁰ Bergson and James were thus pressed into service by Kallen to express and justify his Jewish identity. They articulated for him the conditions for a new era of pride in the modern relevance, and, indeed, the triumph, of the Jewish worldview. This was not a religious

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*.

¹⁴⁸ Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration," 18.

¹⁴⁹ Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 498.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

vindication supported by divinely revealed truth, but a thoroughly secular and scientific one.¹⁵¹

With this article, Kallen laid the foundation for what he felt was the abiding condition of the survival-value of Jewish culture. Jewish culture, not religion, was primary. It was scientifically validated, and it supported the idea of a moral life guided by the pragmatic principle of meliorism. On this latter point, Kallen, who viewed the Bible as literature and not as revelation, wrote that the Book of Job was "the most representative Hebraic book."¹⁵² As we shall see in chapter four, he based his Jewish identity, and, later, his vision of secular religion, upon his interpretation of Job, who represented for him the cornerstone of Hebraism. Hebraism accepted things as they are, but at the same time asserted our freedom and our duty to respond to the harsh realities of life with moral integrity and determination. This was the new lens through which Jewish identity should now be construed. Jewish culture did not depend upon a religious justification for its survival, nor was its survival-value measured only in terms of the accident of biological persistence. Kallen here offered a new, secular model of salvation that he felt was the fundamental cornerstone of Hebraism. This was fundamental to his developing sense of Jewish identity.

That Kallen chose to publish his views in the *American Hebrew* also reflects his lifelong pragmatic approach to philosophy. He had always maintained that philosophy was never a purely intellectual pursuit for him; it was always to be translated into action in real life. "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy" announced Kallen's presence in print culture as one of what historian Andrew Jewett has called the "scientific democrats" of

¹⁵¹ See Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*.

¹⁵² Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 497.

Progressive Era America.¹⁵³ For the scientific democrats, who included people like Kallen and philosopher John Dewey, science was a resource for fostering and guiding social change, and they sought to influence public opinion accordingly. Jewett argues that Dewey, for example, "stood for the expectation that science and morality would fuse in a unified, post-Christian, and intrinsically democratic public culture."¹⁵⁴ Kallen believed in the need to create in "his" public (here, the English-reading Jewish public) an awareness of the scientifically validated foundations of Jewish culture, and an appreciation of the fact that culture was more fundamental than religion, economics, or the state, in the life of the people. He believed that the influence he would exert through promoting his ideas in the popular press would initiate a Jewish cultural renaissance.¹⁵⁵

Race Science and the American English-Language Jewish Press

An overview of articles carried by the *American Hebrew* in the decade leading up to the start of the First World War reveals that it published more on race science than did the *American Israelite*, a leading organ for the Reform movement, and the *Jewish Exponent* combined. Interest in the issue of race was spurred by both the U.S. Immigration Commission's inquiries into the issue and by the meeting of the Universal Races Congress in London in 1911. Kallen's particular view on race was not considered uniquely authoritative; the *American Hebrew* had published an opposing view in 1906, which presented Maurice Fishberg's argument that there was no Jewish race.¹⁵⁶ From about 1910, however, there was a

¹⁵³ See Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War*, passim.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵⁵ See Danisch, *Pragmatism, Democracy, and the Necessity of Rhetoric*, which argues that the logic of pragmatist philosophy led its adherents to become social activists.

¹⁵⁶ "The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment."

marked tendency by the magazine to favor the voices of those who did believe in the reality of a Jewish race. This distinguished the *American Hebrew* from the *American Israelite*, which displayed considerably more indecisiveness on the issue. Thus, for example, the *American Israelite* carried an article in 1912 that rehearsed German-Jewish anthropologist Ignaz Zollschan's views, asserting that he had provided "incontrovertible facts" to combat race prejudice (Zollschan's view was that Jews are brachycephalic, or broad-headed, and racially pure); and it carried a contradictory article the following year which referred to Fishberg as "an authority on Jewish anthropology" who rejected the idea of a pure Jewish race.¹⁵⁷ The *American Hebrew* was more consistent in its presentation of racial science.

The first Universal Races Congress garnered international attention for the spotlight that it shone upon racism. In August 1911, the *American Hebrew* carried an article reprinted from the *Jewish Review of London*, which purported to summarize "from an unbiased [sic] stand-point," the variety of views regarding the position of the Jewish people among the world's races.¹⁵⁸ In October of that same year, the *American Hebrew* published an editorial, "Race and Environment," which observed that the issue of whether racial characteristics were determined by heredity or by environment was still undetermined: "Perhaps one of these days science will come to the conclusion that both factors are equally necessary and efficacious. Carlyle put what is probably the truth in his usual vigorous way, when he declared that a cabbage can never produce a rose, but that circumstances will determine whether it is a good or a bad cabbage."¹⁵⁹ Considering the mechanism of transmission to be an open question, but not questioning the fact of transmission itself, suggests that the issue of whether or not the

¹⁵⁷ "The Jewish Race"; "No Jewish Race."

¹⁵⁸ Myers, "Is There a Jewish Race?"

¹⁵⁹ "Race and Environment."

Jews were a race had already been settled. It would seem that, for the *American Hebrew*, Jews were considered to be a race.

From 1911 to 1914, the *American Hebrew* carried a number of articles (some being reprints of articles first printed in England) concerning race that showcased, in particular, the views of Jewish anthropologists such as Jacobs, Salaman, and Zollschan, all of whom rejected the views of Fishberg in favor of the existence of a pure Jewish race.¹⁶⁰ Significantly, the European provenance of these racial views shows the importance that European racial discourse played not only for Kallen, but also for a broad-based Jewish audience.¹⁶¹ The so-called American school of Boasian anthropology had not, at this point, exercised a determining influence on Jewish American views. The development of these racial views, however, left open the question of the implications of the Jewish racial presence on American soil.

Psychophysical Inheritance

By 1915, Kallen had formed definite opinions concerning the significance of the Jewish racial presence in America. He had come to view the Jewish "race" as a "psychophysical inheritance" rather than as something with revealing physical characteristics.¹⁶² His shift to defining race in psychological terms was not his own idiosyncratic approach; it reflected a larger trend in the academy and the scientific

¹⁶⁰ See, e.g., Jacobs, "Mendelism and the Jews"; "The Jewish Race Problem"; Lipsky, "Are the Jews a Pure Race?"

¹⁶¹ Although there were significant national differences in race science in Europe as well, for our purposes it is sufficient merely to note the divide between European modalities and the fundamental challenge to the notion of race posed by the Boasian school of thought.

¹⁶² Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," 220.

community. In this section, we shall see that, for Kallen, this insight shed light on the founding ideals of America, and it guided his views on a Jewish eugenics.

The notion of racial psychic personality was beginning to be popularized.¹⁶³ It was entering discourse as a new way to define racial difference, particularly Jewish racial difference. In July, 1916, psychologist Louis Covitt of Clark University published "The Anthropology of the Jew" in the *Monist* in which he argued that "psychic personality" is "the most potent, determining factor for each and every race," and is "by far the best guide for distinguishing one race from the other; and while physical characters fail, being as they are subject to environment, physiological, and other changes, it persists in spite of all outward changes."¹⁶⁴ The Jewish "race," he argued, serves as a particularly good example of the persistence of racial "psychic personality."¹⁶⁵ His argument was reprinted in the *American Israelite* in October, 1916.¹⁶⁶ A Jewish readership was now exposed to this alternative racial construction.

It was this belief in a racially distinct psychic personality that led Kallen to make the startling claim, in an address before the Jewish Publication Society's (JPS) 26th Annual Meeting in 1914, marking the completion of its translation of the Bible, that the Puritans were descendants of the Jews. He had originally learned to connect his Jewish heritage with Puritan values from his teacher at Harvard, literary scholar Barrett Wendell. Now Kallen had found a scientific foundation for his belief. The *Jewish Exponent* carried the text of his address, in which he said that the lineage of the Calvinist Puritans who settled in New

¹⁶³ See chapter two for a deeper contextualization of this concept.

¹⁶⁴ Covitt, "The Anthropology of the Jew," 391.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ "Anthropological Explanation of the Facial Aspect of the Jew."

England could be traced back to converted Jews in Lincolnshire.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, because Judaism and Calvinism both accept God's providence and both lay claim to being God's elect, he claimed that Calvinism was best described as "a sort of de-Judaized expression of Judaism." These "facts" led to him to make his claim regarding their psychic heredity. "[T]he coincidence in temper is more than a mere accident," he said. "Cultures are racial just as human groups are racial, and psychological heredity is just as capable of characterization in history as is physical heredity and is much more easily to be characterized than physical heredity." The Puritans' "Hebraic" psychic heritage determined their attitude toward government, he asserted, and the "Hebraic stamp" was "set upon the whole of cultured America."¹⁶⁸

Kallen's address before the JPS sparked an editorial in the *American Hebrew*, published the very day the address appeared in the *Exponent*:

[A]ny view that attempts to connect actual theories of life with heredity is almost obviously at variance with the facts of the latter science. One cannot imagine that definite views about fate, free will and other metaphysical entities can be carried over from parent to child in the chromosomes of the germ-plasm, which are the only things physically common to the two.... Puritanism is a product of the Jewish spirit not of the Jewish race, and the affinity between Americanism and 'Hebraism'—as Dr. Kallen calls it—is not due to identity of race but to common ideals which both Jews and Puritans have derived from the same source, the Book of Books.¹⁶⁹

The anonymous author reacted against his racial identification of Jews with Puritans, and argued that the affinity was due to ideals rather than to biology. The author viewed Kallen's claim as an objectionable instance of the current vogue of connecting biology to culture. Even as the editorial rejected Kallen's peculiar racial assertion, however, it reaffirmed that

¹⁶⁷ Kallen, "Jewish Publication Society."

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Anon., "The Hobby Horse of Race," 70.

there exists an essential connection between the Jews and the Puritans. This notion resonated deeply with a generation of American Jews who wished to establish belonging in American culture, and who resisted the racist nativism that had begun to exercise a profound influence upon the nation from even before the First World War.

Kallen's belief in racial psychophysical inheritance guided his views on a Jewish eugenics. He was concerned about the consequences of intermarriage between a Jew and a Gentile from very early on.¹⁷⁰ The first printed articulation of his concern is found in "Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism:"

For the present I can only register my conviction of this fact, *in which lies the negative reason of the moral inevitability of Zionism. This reason, also, I can merely indicate. It is the fact that—popular opinion to the contrary notwithstanding—the crossing of Jews with Gentiles is eugenically undesirable. The progeny is not so good as either parent of pure stock. There is considerable reason to believe that in the long run, crossing means deterioration.*¹⁷¹

At this time, Kallen perceived intermarriage to be a threat to Jewish racial integrity.¹⁷² He accepted the postulate of eugenics, i.e., that miscegenation would result in diminished survival capacity.

The science of eugenics lay at the heart of a very powerful social and political discourse during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁷³ It figured prominently in the debates concerning the large-scale immigration taking place, and raised the spectre of fear over racial dilution and pollution. Although Jewish thinkers like Kallen opposed eugenics-based arguments used to support an immigration quota, this did not mean that

¹⁷⁰ Pearson to Kallen, January 6, 1908.

¹⁷¹ Kallen, "Judaism, Hebraism and Zionism," 183.

¹⁷² Kallen later married a non-Jew, Rachel Oatman van Arsdale, in 1926. Presumably, his views on the subject of intermarriage had changed in the interim.

¹⁷³ See Paul, *Controlling Human Heredity: 1865 to the Present*.

eugenics in itself was considered an invalid or inherently dangerous science. In fact, arguments from eugenics were invoked in the Jewish community to marshal new arguments against a perennial concern—intermarriage. Bloch Publishing Company, for example, was among those who brought the issue to the Jewish reading public. In 1916, it published a pamphlet containing a paper by the Reform rabbi, Max Reichler, on Jewish eugenics that was read before the New York Board of Jewish Ministers. Reichler argued that the rabbinic sages had intuited the wisdom of eugenicists and made marriage laws accordingly.¹⁷⁴ He accepted eugenics as a validated science, and sought only to establish a prior Jewish intuition about it. Reichler interpreted Jewish marriage laws to teach a kind of sexual hygiene: "A number of precautions in sexual relations were prescribed in order to prevent the birth of defectives," he wrote.¹⁷⁵ Reichler was not the first eugenicist to praise Jewish marriage "hygiene," historian Christine Rosen writes, but he was the first rabbi to attempt to reconcile eugenics with his faith.¹⁷⁶ She points out that he was also distinctive in his "emphasis on 'psychical' as well as physical well-being."¹⁷⁷ Reichler wrote that "both physical and psychical qualities were inherited," and concluded that a rabbinic interdiction against intermarriage had been established "to preserve and improve the inborn, wholesome qualities of the Jewish race."¹⁷⁸ Kallen's notion of psychophysical inheritance was thus not as exceptional as may be supposed. Reichler provides a good example of an influential Reform rabbi who shared this

¹⁷⁴ Reichler, *Jewish Eugenics: A Paper Read Before the New York Board of Jewish Ministers*.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁷⁶ Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement*, 109. She notes that Rabbi Stephen S. Wise had also demonstrated receptivity to eugenics two years earlier by sponsoring lectures on it "through Synagogue House, his congregation's social service department."

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁷⁸ Reichler, *Jewish Eugenics: A Paper Read Before the New York Board of Jewish Ministers*, 17–18.

view. Reichler's essay was noticed by secular Jewish leaders, and cited approvingly by Fishberg.¹⁷⁹ The notion of eugenics had a receptive Jewish audience.

Kallen's major intervention on the subject of eugenics and intermarriage was published in 1918 in the *American Jewish Chronicle*, a short-lived weekly (1916-1918). Kallen may have chosen this venue to publish because of the strongly pro-Zionist and anti-radical Reform agenda of its editor, S. M. Melamed. "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem" appeared in three installments.¹⁸⁰ Its argument was that intermarriage would lead, at best, to biological ethnic "degeneration," and, at worst, group suicide. Kallen's support for the eugenics-based argument against intermarriage was grounded in his racial views. The "social fact" of Jews was unalterable, he wrote, but nevertheless "there are great masses of Jews who have lost their memories as Jews." "What they have forgotten they have forgotten by intention, and [they] have prevented their children from becoming conscious of," he observed. "'Das Judentum,' they have felt with Heine, 'ist ein Unglück,' and they have acted accordingly, repressing, denying, destroying." Psychologically, he argued, this has only caused "repressed Jewishness with expressed neurasthenia."¹⁸¹ Attempts to obliterate one's own Jewish identity, he believed, result in a nervous disorder.¹⁸² In fact, he perceived a veritable epidemic among Jews of "neurasthenia," a dysfunction purportedly resulting from their social maladjustment.

According to Kallen, the psychophysical inheritance of the Jew was a biological fact. This implied that human individuality has a social element to it: "[A]s a social fact, the individuality of any living thing can not be detached from a social setting in time, even if it

¹⁷⁹ Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement*, 109.

¹⁸⁰ Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 1"; Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 2"; Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 3."

¹⁸¹ Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 1," 559.

¹⁸² Neurasthenia, referring to nervous exhaustion, was generally believed to be particularly widespread among Americans. Specifically, it was believed to afflict affluent intellectuals, who were overwhelmed with the pace of modern urban life. A rather fashionable disease, it was associated with the privileged class of American society.

can be detached from a social setting in space."¹⁸³ Kallen understood individuality to be the product of a mental process, a psychological relationship to one's history (i.e., one's temporal environment), out of which one creates a sense of relationship to one's physical (i.e., one's spatial) environment.

If individuality is inseparable from a social setting in time, then individuality is dependent upon memory:

You hear every so often of some man or some woman getting a blow on the head and forgetting their selfhoods, so that they have each to build up a new personality and a new character. Because their recollections of their pasts are completely lost, they have to begin life anew altogether. Their character and individuality is memory, and without memory, without the presence of the *then* in the *now*, there is no individuality. When a group forgets its history it has lost its social memory, it has lost its individuality. When an individual loses his personality, his memory, the contents of his biography, he has lost his self-hood; he is merely a body without a mind.¹⁸⁴

The function of memory is as important to the group's health as it is to the individual's. Just as an individual's self-hood depends upon memory, so too a group's sense of self depends upon its social memory. More importantly, the individual and the group are co-implicated. The individual's psychophysical inheritance, the source of his or her individuality and self-hood, is congenital.

Kallen was concerned about the negative effect that intermarriage and mixed breeding would have upon the group. If the psychophysical inheritance of a sufficient number of individuals were altered, the collective impact upon the group's continuity would be catastrophic. To bolster his eugenics claim, he offered a definition of race that echoed the viewpoint of Zollschan: "Where you find a certain definite continuity in a social unit, traceable through history, a continuity of mental type, a continuity of physical type, together

¹⁸³ Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 1," 558.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 558–9.

with a continuity of social function, and psychological activity, there you have what for the purposes of history constitutes a race," he wrote. "From that point of view, it need not be argued, the Jews are, as Dr. Zollschan shows, a race and one of the purest of races."¹⁸⁵ Mixed marriages, Kallen believed at that time, constituted an attempt at mixed breeding that would lead to the degeneration of the group's mental stability. The attempt would run counter, not only to the "well established eugenic value" of "straightforward breeding," but to the natural course of evolution: "[T]he course of evolution is not toward unification," Kallen explained. "It is toward diversification. Races and people, and so on, become more and more different, not more and more alike.... The desire for fusion is a desire to run counter to the course of nature, and this desire is motivated by an attempt to escape a social disability, which you can not escape by such fusion."¹⁸⁶

Kallen cited the findings of Zollschan in support of his views. Historian John Efron identifies Zollschan as a significant figure in racial science discourse, and observes that he was motivated by the desire to defend Jews against antisemitism. His book on the Jewish racial question went through five editions between 1910 and 1925, thus "assuring Zollschan a prominent position among both Jewish and gentile anthropologists who worked on Jewish racial problems."¹⁸⁷ Efron explains, "To the antisemites, Zollschan stressed the cultural and historic value of the Jewish people, emphasizing their contributions to humanity. In response to Jewish factionalism, he maintained that the Jews formed a single, homogeneous racial type. To the assimilationist Jews, his anthropology contained sharp strictures against those who

¹⁸⁵ Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 3," 655.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 658.

¹⁸⁷ Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, 155.

were misguided enough to think that cultural assimilation altered the biological facts of race."¹⁸⁸

These features of Zollschan's thinking may be mapped onto Kallen's own priorities. Thus, Kallen's views on race must be located, by his own specific declaration of affinity, with those Zionist anthropologists who advanced what Efron calls an "anthropology of resistance," beginning with Jacobs at the turn of the century. "Clearly, a belief in racial purity did not exclude a belief in the power of the environment to change bodily form," Efron observes. "In fact, Jacobs and many of the Zionist anthropologists amply demonstrated how it was possible to create an anthropology of resistance without betraying their allegiances to Enlightenment values concerning human adaptability."¹⁸⁹

Kallen's social and political views, as we have seen, were much closer to those of the English and German Jewish race scientists than to their American counterparts, Boas and Fishberg. Ultimately, the American, English and German Jewish race scientists all anchored their views in what Efron terms "a hopeful and redemptive liberal humanism."¹⁹⁰ Jewish racial theory had none of the associations of hierarchical dominance that was characteristic of non-Jewish racial science. The American school, however, did not offer the hope of resistance against assimilation, and so it ultimately undermined Kallen's view that society needed to affirm the natural differences that pertained to groups and to people. The European Jewish "anthropology of resistance," transformed by Kallen's appropriation of it for his own purposes, became for him a scientific justification for his social and political philosophy.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 160.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Competing for Social Capital

In this chapter, I have explored Kallen's entry in the discourse concerning American Jewish identity. American politics in the 1900s and 1910s helped to polarize American Jews into ideological camps. One, represented by the Reform movement, insisted on prioritizing a religious definition for Judaism. Another, represented in the main by Zionists, believed in Jewish racial identity. At issue were the conditions for Jewish belonging in America. Kallen's perspective was unique, as he argued that the Hebraic psychophysical inheritance offered a moral justification for Jewish existence, and that this inheritance was also one that was shared with the Puritan founders of America. His point of view was not so idiosyncratic, however, that it failed to find any traction in American Jewish discourse. The periodical press carried his ideas into the public domain, and it also provided a forum in which extended debate concerning them took place.

The evolution of his thinking concerning race paralleled developments taking place in contemporary scientific circles. His presence in Jewish print culture established him not only as a vocal participant in an ongoing racial discourse that was international in scope, but also as someone who was able to appropriate scientific discourse and reframe it in the popular mind such that it articulated a secular redemptive vision for Jews and for America. He attempted to lay the groundwork for a liberal humanism designed to ensure Jewish health and survival even as he sought to integrate Hebraism into the fabric of American ideals. The Jewish press, in turn, helped to boost his authority in the public square of American Jewish discourse.

In this and in the following chapters, we see that Kallen's growing presence in print culture is an important indicator of his developing social capital. Bourdieu describes the

exchanges of non-economic forms of capital as taking place within what he calls "fields," or areas of discourse and interaction in which power is negotiated.¹⁹¹ I have shown how Kallen competed in the field of the Jewish press for the distribution of the capital of his ideas concerning race, culture and Zionism. Different presses, with their different reading audiences, represent different fields with different exchanges of capital. In the next chapter, we shall examine Kallen's relationship to one particular Jewish publication, the *Menorah Journal*, and its associated campus-based organization, the Menorah Association. In the university environment, in which Kallen enjoyed a great deal of social capital, his role in interpreting ethnicity in America was especially prominent.

¹⁹¹ Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*.

Chapter 2

Ethnicity as Nationality: The Significance of Psychophysical Inheritance

[T]here is no place for...hyphenated Americans.

—Louis Brandeis, 1905

[T]o be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists.

—Louis Brandeis, 1914

In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold contrasted two cultural forces, Hebraism and Hellenism, arguing that although the final aim of both is to achieve perfection or salvation, they differ in the course they pursue towards that goal. "The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they really are," he wrote, whereas "the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience."¹⁹² The "essential bent" of Hebraism was to "set doing above knowing."¹⁹³ Reflecting upon Arnold's ideas forty years later, Kallen refashioned these terms in the service of his own secularized vision of Judaism's compatibility with the modern scientific zeitgeist.¹⁹⁴ He argued that, just as Darwin's challenge to the idea of the fixity of species meant seeing the world as existing in a state of flux, so too Hebraism allowed for chance and freedom in the world. Humanity had begun to perceive the world for what it is, he contended, rather than impose an idea of what it ought to be. This modern worldview was,

¹⁹² Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*, 145.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁹⁴ Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy."

to him, fundamentally Hebraic; it was imprinted on the psyche of the Jew as a way of relating to the world.

For him, Hebraism transcended the religion of Judaism. It signified the "total biography of the Jewish soul."¹⁹⁵ Kallen promoted his notion of Hebraism through the Intercollegiate Menorah Association (IMA), a university-based Jewish cultural movement that he helped to found in 1906 while a graduate student at Harvard. At its third annual convention held at the University of Cincinnati in 1914, he spoke about the distinction he saw between Hebraism and Judaism. Judaism "stands exclusively for a religion," he said, "for that partial expression of the Jewish genius which is religious." Hebraism, on the other hand, stands "not for that particular expression of the Jewish mind, religion, but for all that has appeared in Jewish history, both religious and secular." It is the "flower and fruit of the *whole* of Jewish life. Its root is the ethnic nationality of the Jewish people."¹⁹⁶ Hebraism became the "guiding philosophy" of the Menorah movement, historian Daniel Greene writes. Inspired by Kallen, it used the term "to articulate a conception of Jewish identity based primarily on inquiry into the humanities, including history, language, literature, and the visual arts."¹⁹⁷

In the course of his involvement with the Menorah movement, Kallen developed his ideas concerning Jewish identity and the place of the Jews in America in the context of contemporary racial discourse. He came to see race, fundamentally, as a biologically inherited psychological construct. From this basic premise, he developed a secular conception of Jewish identity rooted in "nationality" (i.e., "ethnicity") a concept that he first

¹⁹⁵ Kallen, "Third Annual Convention Luncheon," 130.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 130–2.

¹⁹⁷ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 29.

articulated in its mature form in the pages of the *Menorah Journal*.¹⁹⁸ The *Journal* devoted significant attention to discussing the implications of Jewish "nationality" over the subsequent half decade.¹⁹⁹

Historian Michael Galchinsky describes the *haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment) as a movement in which the Jews shifted from being aliens to being citizens, from being an autonomous and segregated community to being an integrated one.²⁰⁰ In the early twentieth-century, American context, the project of the *haskalah* was unfinished. The influx of millions of immigrants from eastern Europe brought these issues to the fore, as the American Jewish community wrestled with the problem of integration and assimilation. In response, Kallen, and with him the Menorah Association, attempted to stimulate a Jewish cultural renaissance on American soil, and advocated making a place for a hyphenated Jewish-American identity, arguing that it was possible to harmonize and affirm Jewish nationality with American citizenship. Claiming space for a "hyphenated American" was, as is well known, controversial. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson had both unequivocally rejected the idea because it implied allegiances to nations other than America. As Kathleen Dalton, a biographer of Roosevelt, puts it, Wilson and Roosevelt "together unleashed an anti-hyphen movement."²⁰¹ Affirming hyphenation as a positive principle was a serious challenge to mainstream American sentiment, which trumpeted 100% Americanism. Kallen occupied a prominent position in the discourse concerning hyphenation beginning in 1915, when he

¹⁹⁸ Kallen, "Nationality and the Hyphenated American"; see Sollors, *The Invention of Ethnicity*, xiii. "Nationality" and "ethnicity" are interchangeable terms in this context. The word "ethnicity" did not appear in print until 1941.

¹⁹⁹ Hapgood, "The Jews and American Democracy"; Bourne, "The Jew and Trans-National America"; Dewey, "The Principle of Nationality"; Zimmern, "Nationality in the Modern World"; Simon, "Religion and Nationality"; Berkson, "A Community Theory of American Life: The Problem of Adjustment in the Light of Jewish Experience."

²⁰⁰ Galchinsky, *The Origin of the Modern Jewish Woman Writer*.

²⁰¹ Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life*, 462.

affirmed the necessity of a hyphenated Jewish-American identity in both the Jewish and non-Jewish press.²⁰²

His active involvement in the issue of Jewish identity in America began upon his return to Harvard to pursue graduate studies. Motivated both by positive intellectual inspiration and negative social prejudice, he became intensely engaged with Jewish life in the university. He was not only a driving force in the growth of the American Zionist movement, he was also the founding ideologue of the Menorah Society, which was dedicated to fostering a secular, humanist Jewish cultural renaissance on American campuses. He chaired the first meeting of the Harvard-based Menorah Society in 1906, which involved sixteen undergraduate students, and he served as the group's intellectual guide.²⁰³ Greene observes that "the early evolution of his thinking regarding the role of particular cultural groups in a political democracy depended in large part on his association with the Menorah Society and its desire to promote Jewish culture."²⁰⁴ Evaluating Kallen's thought in the context of the Menorah Association is necessary not only to appreciate the development of his notion of Jewish nationality as secularized Jewish identity, but also to appreciate how it entered into American Jewish discourse.

He envisioned the Menorah Society bringing "the separate Jewish classes together in terms of a common ideal," and serving as the source for "the revitalization of Jewish idealism among Jews who are to be the leaders of the next generation."²⁰⁵ Its cultural authority was

²⁰² See, e.g., Kallen, "Nationality and the Hyphenated American"; Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915; Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915; see Brandeis, "A Call to the Educated Jew"; Brandeis, *The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It*. Brandeis joined Kallen in affirming the validity of a hyphenated Jewish-American identity in 1915. We shall see below that he was indebted to Kallen for the development of his ideas.

²⁰³ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 16.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Kallen to Hurwitz, July 26, 1916.

affirmed by the endorsement and involvement of prominent intellectuals, including Louis D. Brandeis (later, Supreme Court Justice) and Judge Julian Mack.²⁰⁶ Thanks in large part to his missionizing energy, the movement quickly spread to other American campuses. Kallen organized a number of Menorah societies from Columbus, Ohio in the Midwest to Berkeley, California in the far west.²⁰⁷ In January 1913, the Menorah societies banded together to form the Intercollegiate Menorah Association (IMA), and became the most influential Jewish organization on American campuses.²⁰⁸ By 1919, there were nearly eighty campus chapters.²⁰⁹ It was through the IMA and the *Menorah Journal*, the voice of the Menorah movement, that Kallen promoted his ideas concerning Jewish ethnicity.

The Menorah Association and the Hebraic Psyche

Greene shows that the Menorah Association's debates mark a noteworthy chapter in American Jewish life.²¹⁰ They helped to articulate Jewish ethnicity and culture in an American idiom. At a time when, at least in the popular mind, there were no clear distinctions among the concepts of culture, race, and nationality, the main function of these ideas was to distinguish religion from a set of humanist and secular associations. The sciences of psychology and anthropology served as support structures for these ideas, an intellectual scaffolding supporting new cultural constructs. Kallen's contribution was to advance a particular construct, built upon scientifically validated ideas.

²⁰⁶ Auerbach, *Rabbis and Lawyers* analyzes the gradual shift in leadership for American Jews, from rabbis to lawyers and judges. His analysis does not, however, touch upon the growing authority of academics and scientists.

²⁰⁷ Toll, "Ethnicity and Freedom in the Philosophy of Horace M. Kallen," 161.

²⁰⁸ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 35; "What Is the Menorah Movement?," 294; Hurwitz, "The Menorah Movement," 50.

²⁰⁹ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 39.

²¹⁰ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*.

Historian Eric Goldstein remarks that Kallen was "slow" to view Jewish identity as rooted in culture instead of race.²¹¹ A number of scholars have likewise suggested that Kallen's ideas were outdated almost before he voiced them. He seemed not to recognize the anthropological conclusions of the Boasian school of American anthropology, which had overturned previous conceptions of race; and he appeared to ignore the pioneering social scientists who understood culture rather than race to be the important criterion for understanding social groups.²¹² In this reading of the historical record, Kallen swam against the current of contemporary scientific thought. This interpretation, however, extracts him out of the social and scientific context in which he lived and wrote. In the popular mind, the nature and limits of race, culture, and nationality were not clearly defined. As well, there existed a plurality of scientific views. Although the aforementioned scientific thinkers came to represent the American scientific consensus, that consensus was still decades away. In the field of anthropology, Boas had only just begun to argue for a fundamental separation between race and culture,²¹³ still seen by many as intrinsically linked, thanks in large part to the influence of philosopher Herbert Spencer.

Kallen was well aware of all of the scientific developments in question, but, as we shall see, he had reason to be concerned with the American anthropological school of thought and with the cultural paradigm of ethnicity advanced by some social scientists. In chapter one,

²¹¹ Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 179; Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 89; see Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, 179. Greene observes that Kallen stopped referring to descent-based identity by the mid-1920s. Compared to Britain, the United States was slow to reject scientific racism. Efron notes that American scientific opposition to racism did not become pronounced until after the Second World War.

²¹² Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 89; Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, 183; cf. Pianko, "'The True Liberalism of Zionism': Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism"; Toll, "Horace M. Kallen: Pluralism and American Jewish Identity". Pianko and Toll allude to the fact that this view has colored evaluations of Kallen by scholars like David Hollinger, Orlando Patterson, and Jonathan Hansen.

²¹³ See Morris-Reich, *The Quest for Jewish Assimilation in Modern Social Science*.

I showed that Kallen moved from physiological to psychological understandings of race. His reticence to drop the word "race" from his vocabulary should be viewed against the backdrop of the consequences he feared if the notion of hereditary influence were to disappear from the discourse concerning Jewish identity in America.

Goldstein argues that Jews used racial rhetoric to negotiate the contested space between inclusion and exclusion in American society. He writes that Jews understood that America was divided between the black and white races, and they sought to position themselves in the spectrum of whiteness. Kallen's contribution to racial discourse in America, Goldstein contends, was to place Jews further along the spectrum of whiteness.²¹⁴ Political scientist Victoria Hattam, however, counters that "whiteness scholars have too readily collapsed ethnicity back into whiteness," leading to a misreading of ethnic politics.²¹⁵ She writes that Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, for example, "was not on the road to whiteness; there is no equivocation in his anti-assimilationist appeals."²¹⁶ Similarly, for Kallen, although he recognized that antisemites resented the ambiguously white status of Jews,²¹⁷ this did not affect his central aim. It remained vital to him to highlight Jewish racial difference.

Kallen did not wish simply to collapse Jewish ethnicity into whiteness. His aim was to work out the essential defining characteristics of Jewish difference. His toast at the second Menorah convention dinner in 1913 serves as a case in point. In his speech, he referred to race not in order to counter an imposed inferior ethno-racial assignment, but in order to distinguish Hebraism from religious affirmation. In particular, he used the concept of race to

²¹⁴ Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness*, 179.

²¹⁵ Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 51.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 58.

oppose Reform Judaism's hegemony over the American Jewish community, which was assumed not only by Reform rabbis, but by eminent philanthropic lay leaders as well. He was adamant that the term "race" should communicate something urgent, necessary and more important than religion. The notion of voluntary association was the essence of religion. For him, the involuntary association of race presented the stronger link to his heritage and was one to which he could relate. Kallen's claim for an inborn psychic racial inheritance allowed him to minimize the importance of religious belief in his construction of Jewish identity: "Jews change their religion; I am myself an adherent of no religion, but I should resent harshly a statement that I am therefore no Jew," he said. "And I think that even Mr. Schiff, who denies that he is a member of a Jewish race and insists that he is a member of a religious sect, called Jews, will find it very much harder to change his grandfather than to change his religion."²¹⁸

Kallen's centrality to the Menorah movement was highlighted by the toastmaster at the dinner, who introduced him as "one of the leading spirits in the organization of the Harvard Menorah Society" and "a pillar of strength in the work of the Menorah Society of the University of Wisconsin."²¹⁹ Near the beginning of his speech, which followed shortly after one delivered by the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College president Kaufmann Kohler, Kallen made it clear that he rejected Reform Judaism's universalism, seeing it as a fossilized thing, not as an active producer of culture. He attacked the Reform idea of a "mission of Israel," characterizing it as "a barbarous and egotistical doctrine."²²⁰ The

²¹⁸ Intercollegiate Menorah Association, *The Menorah Movement: For the Study and Advancement of Jewish Culture and Ideals*, 84. Jacob Schiff, a prominent philanthropist and Jewish communal leader, was present at the dinner.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

continued existence of a mission depended, he claimed, upon its non-fulfillment, and posited a condition under which Jews alone could "be noble and godly," whereas the rest of mankind was required to remain "ignoble and wicked."²²¹ To him, Reform Judaism's idea of a mission to promote monotheism was arrogant, considering that it was Christianity that had in fact spread the doctrine; it served only the social interests of the Reform movement's wealthy elite. He felt, moreover, that Reform's embrace of the universal brotherhood of man ignored the realities of particular ethnic distinctiveness.²²² In sum, Reform Judaism's ideologies seemed to him to constitute "a pretentious ideological effort by spokesmen for a wealthy elite," as historian William Toll put it, "not simply to assert superiority to the gentiles but to dissociate themselves socially from the body of the immigrant poor."²²³

Kallen's opposition to the idea of a mission extended to the connected idea of the Jews as a "chosen people." That belief, he argued, was a compensatory dogma, serving to make palatable the Jews' difficult lived reality under oppression and antisemitism. He had no patience for such metaphysics; he insisted on the data of sociologists and anthropologists to describe Jews. He believed that the facts showed that Jews had certain inborn characteristics: "A special bias, an inherited *psyche*, makes us respond to it [Hebraism] more readily, makes us the natural conservers and developers of the Hebraic vision."²²⁴ Jews, in other words, were psychologically predisposed to Hebraism. This, he argued, made the mission of the Menorah Association more vital than any religious program. The Menorah Association, with its focus

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Toll, "Ethnicity and Freedom in the Philosophy of Horace M. Kallen," 160.

²²³ Toll, "Horace M. Kallen: Pluralism and American Jewish Identity," 63.

²²⁴ Intercollegiate Menorah Association, *The Menorah Movement: For the Study and Advancement of Jewish Culture and Ideals*, 84.

upon Hebraism, was attuned to Jewish "psychological heredity." The Association's "privilege and duty," he insisted, was "to *advance* Hebraic culture and ideals."²²⁵

His notion of Hebraism as inherited instinct coupled with *noblesse oblige* functioned, ironically, as a secular version of the chosenness dogma that he so vehemently rejected. He replaced a religious concept of chosenness with a biological one. Hebraism came with its own secular mission. Instead of spreading monotheism, he wished to spread Hebraic culture and ideals. Although in its earlier years, the Menorah movement entertained debates at its conventions regarding whether or not religion should be a part of its mission,²²⁶ Kallen's vision remained at the core of that mission. The *Menorah Journal*, in its articulation of the mission, incorporated the humanistic message of Kallen's Hebraism: "For conceived as it is and nurtured as it must continue to be in the spirit that gave birth to the Menorah idea, the *Menorah Journal* is under compulsion...to deepen the consciousness of *noblesse oblige*[,]...dedicated first and foremost to the fostering of the Jewish "humanities" and the furthering of their influence as a spur to human service."²²⁷ The *Journal*, however, made no reference to psychic inheritance. That aspect of Kallen's thought did not become central to the movement's self-understanding, although the *Journal* did publish articles that embraced the notion.

The concept of an inborn psychic inheritance was common among turn-of-the-century psychologists and social scientists. At the dawn of the twentieth century, anthropologists looked to the size and shape of the head as the determinative racial marker. Psychologists and liberal intellectuals, on the other hand, looked to psychological type and behavioral instinct

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Intercollegiate Menorah Association, *The Menorah Movement: For the Study and Advancement of Jewish Culture and Ideals*.

²²⁷ "An Editorial Statement," 1–2.

as the determinative racial markers.²²⁸ Representative of the latter point of view are two figures whose writings appeared in the *Menorah Journal*, and to whom we now turn our attention—Granville Stanley Hall, president of Clark University and the founder of the American Psychological Association in 1892, and Charles William Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard University.²²⁹

The *Menorah Journal*: Popular Discourse Concerning Psychic Inheritance

The *Menorah Journal* was the voice of the Menorah movement, but it was far more than a house organ. It was known as one of the better literary quarterlies in the country, and enjoyed a national circulation and prestige beyond the bounds of college campuses. It featured regular contributions from leading Jewish intellectuals and important gentile thinkers.²³⁰ "There has been something of the Menorah idea, and, in fact, some of the *Menorah* writers," literary scholar Robert Alter observes, "in every Jewish journal of intellectual aspirations that has appeared since the late 1930's."²³¹

A distinguishing layout feature of the *Menorah Journal* was that each article featured a photograph of the author and a facsimile of the author's signature, and included a biographical sketch of the author, including, where applicable, the author's scholarly credentials, or their status as a university student, and their connection to the Menorah Association. The *Journal's* print layout thus flagged its rootedness in the university context,

²²⁸ Fallace, *Dewey and the Dilemma of Race: An Intellectual History, 1895-1922*, 12–13; Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*, 235–69.

²²⁹ The *Menorah Journal* often published articles by non-Jews. Publishing articles by Eliot and Hall underscores the *Menorah Journal's* intention to transcend parochialism.

²³⁰ Krupnick, "The Menorah Journal Group and the Origins of Modern Jewish-American Radicalism"; Korelitz, "The Menorah Idea: From Religion to Culture, from Race to Ethnicity"; Alter, "Epitaph for a Jewish Magazine: Notes on the 'Menorah Journal.'"

²³¹ Alter, "Epitaph for a Jewish Magazine," 55.

its desire to establish itself as an intellectual journal, and, finally, its role in promoting the Menorah movement itself (this last was also naturally reinforced by its regular reports on the happenings of the Association).

Hall's "Yankee and Jew" appeared in the April 1915 issue of the *Menorah Journal*.²³² The *Journal* introduced Hall as president of Clark University, "a leading authority on education and psychology, and author of a number of important books, notably *Adolescence* (2 vols. 1904)."²³³ It underscored his interest in the Menorah Society by noting that he had originally delivered "Yankee and Jew" as a speech to the Clark Menorah Society. In the article, Hall remarked on the commonalities that he observed between Yankees (i.e., Puritan Anglo-Saxons) and Jews. These commonalities stem, he argued, from ideals Jews share with Jesus. He sought to draw attention to the psychological affinity between his construction of Jesus and his perception of Jews: "Such of us psychologists as have recently been interested in the psychological aspect of Jesus' life and work understand, as had never been understood before, how purely Jewish he was.... According to many conceptions the chief trait of Jesus was a strong and deep enthusiasm for the loftiest things in life," he wrote. "His soul was unconquerable by misfortune and disaster, like that of the Jewish race itself." Jesus was, therefore, "an extremely representative man of your race."²³⁴

Hall derived from this psychological insight the lesson that the "enthusiasm for the loftiest things in life" shared by Jews and gentiles should lead to tolerance for difference:

We must neither of us abandon our birthright. We must be the very best Puritan Anglo-Saxons we possibly can, and you must be the best Jews possible, for out of these component elements American citizenship is made up. This country stands for the dropping of old prejudices, such as those that

²³² Hall, "Yankee and Jew: An After-Dinner Address."

²³³ *Ibid.*, 87.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 89.

are inflaming Europe now with war. If we can satisfy each other's ideals and meet half way the thing is done, and the melting pot which America stands for has got in its work. I want the Menorah Society to feel that it is in the van[guard] of this movement.²³⁵

The American melting pot need not imply the obliteration of ethnic and racial distinctiveness. Sharing values and committing to "satisfy each other's ideals" suffices for the melting pot to have "got in its work." Puritan Anglo-Saxons and Jews should each strive to be the best representatives of their respective "race" that they could be. Such differences as there are would be relatively inconsequential, since each "race" makes the same commitment to American citizenship.

Charles William Eliot's "The Potency of the Jewish Race" occupied the front page of the June 1915 issue of the *Menorah Journal*.²³⁶ The *Journal* introduced Eliot as the president emeritus of Harvard University, and stressed that he was "revered...by all Americans as a great leader of thought and opinion." It highlighted his connection to the Menorah movement, noting that he had welcomed its initial organization in 1906 and had facilitated its subsequent growth. Preparing this article for the *Journal*, it suggested, was a demonstration of his "continued sympathy with the Menorah aims and his interest in the *Menorah Journal*."²³⁷ In the article, Eliot opined that "[t]he principal difference between races is difference of ideals." "The Jewish race," he wrote, "affords the strongest instance of the influence on a human stock of lofty ideals." This is because "in all generations and in all their various environments they have exhibited, and still exhibit, a remarkable racial tenacity and vigor." The Jewish

²³⁵ Ibid., 90.

²³⁶ Eliot, "The Potency of the Jewish Race."

²³⁷ Ibid., 141.

race's continued tenacity and vigor are due, he averred, "to the rare strength and significance of its ideals."²³⁸

If the Jewish race is to pass "the test of liberty," Eliot wrote, "it will get over its apparent tendency of the moment towards materialism and reliance on the power of money, hold fast to its social and artistic idealism, and press steadily towards its intellectual and religious ideals."²³⁹ As uncomfortably as his remark sits with us today, it was, in the context of the time, a relatively enlightened stance to take. Although Eliot granted legitimacy to the antisemitic canard of Jewish materialism, his statement undermined the claims of racial theorists who identified this as an essential Jewish racial characteristic. For Eliot, it marked only an "apparent tendency of the moment." Rather, the essential characteristics of the Jewish race are positive, discovered in their social, artistic, intellectual, and religious ideals.

Through Hall and Eliot, the *Journal* contributed to popular discourse a psychologically manifested theory of race that was markedly different from the craniometric racial studies being conducted by anthropologists such as Franz Boas and Maurice Fishberg. That racial ideals may be nurtured into maturity through education, but are naturally present within the individual as a psychic inheritance, was a hallmark of Hall's Haeckel-inspired approach to psychology. Adopting Haeckel's maxim that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, Hall believed that the child's mental development recapitulated racial development.²⁴⁰ The idea of an inborn psychic inheritance was thus not unique to Kallen; it was well established within both scientific and popular discourse.

²³⁸ Ibid., 141–2.

²³⁹ Ibid., 144.

²⁴⁰ Green, "Hall's Developmental Theory and Haeckel's Recapitulationism."

Kallen and *Daniel Deronda*

Kallen's belief in the unique psychic inheritance of Jews may also have been inspired by another powerful cultural resource—literature.²⁴¹ From the time of its publication in 1876, George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* was widely hailed by its Jewish readers as a powerful response to racial prejudice. It had a significant impact on the self-perception of Jews in the Victorian Anglo-Jewish context.²⁴² Historian Daniel Kotzin observes the profound influence *Daniel Deronda* exercised on such prominent American Jewish intellectuals and Zionists as Judah L. Magnes, Emma Lazarus, and Louis Lipsky, among others.²⁴³ Although there is no direct evidence that Kallen was influenced by Eliot's novel, there is a resonance linking his and Eliot's views concerning inheritance.

Eliot explicitly suggested that Jews pass along a moral inheritance, linked to memory, a notion that bears more than a passing resemblance to Kallen's articulation of Hebraism. The character of Daniel Deronda is a man of evident moral and spiritual superiority who is inexorably drawn to his Jewish ancestral ties by an innate drive. The prophetic character of Mordecai insists that the "heritage of Israel is beating in the pulses of millions; it lives in their veins as a power without understanding," transmitted as "the inborn half of memory."²⁴⁴ The parallel to Kallen's view that Jews have inherited Hebraism is striking. Mordecai says:

Who says that the history and literature of our race are dead? Are they not as living as the history and literature of Greece and Rome, which have inspired revolutions, enkindled the thought of Europe, and made the unrighteous

²⁴¹ Kallen taught English literature at Princeton from 1903 until 1905, and had intended to write his doctoral dissertation on John Marston, the seventeenth-century English satirist and dramatist. Kallen was keenly interested in literature. See Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration," 17–18.

²⁴² Cheyette, *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society*; Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*.

²⁴³ Kotzin, *Judah L. Magnes: An American Jewish Nonconformist*, 1st ed.:31, 345 n. 40.

²⁴⁴ Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 596.

powers tremble? These were an inheritance dug from the tomb. Ours is an inheritance that has never ceased to quiver in millions of human frames.²⁴⁵

This corresponds to Kallen's view, noted above, that the Menorah program should facilitate Jewish learning in order to "advance" Hebraism as a "living force in civilization."²⁴⁶

Deronda's Jewish identity consists of no particular beliefs or practices, but he is a hero, a cultured and civilized man, whose "inborn half of memory" draws him to learn about his grandfather and impels him, at the end of the novel, to turn towards the east in a dramatic nod to nascent political Zionism, symbol of the future hope not only of Jews but also of international comity.²⁴⁷ So, too, Kallen believed that Jews were naturally drawn to their psychic cultural inheritance, which he underscored by his oft-repeated phrase (also found in his toast discussed above) that one cannot change one's grandfather, and that it found natural expression through Hebraism and Zionism.

Kallen's striking turn of phrase has precipitated no small amount of commentary among scholars.²⁴⁸ Historian Noam Pianko argues that since he does not refer to the parents, his emphasis on the grandfather represents a shift away from the notion of cultural biological heredity and towards the psychological, sociological, linguistic and religious dimension of association. He overstates his case, however. The fields of psychology and sociology were not so clearly separated from biology. Moreover, his focus upon the function of what he calls

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Intercollegiate Menorah Association, *The Menorah Movement: For the Study and Advancement of Jewish Culture and Ideals*, 84.

²⁴⁷ See Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*.

²⁴⁸ Pianko, "'The True Liberalism of Zionism': Horace Kallen, Jewish Nationalism, and the Limits of American Pluralism." Sollors, Hollinger, Goldstein, and Hansen read Kallen's formulation as an affirmation of Kallen's biological determinism and essentialism.

Kallen's "grandfather thesis" does not explain why Kallen would have chosen to employ this phrase at all.²⁴⁹

Reflecting upon the possible influence of *Daniel Deronda* offers us a new insight into Kallen's turn of phrase. Deronda comes to reclaim his Jewish heritage through learning about his grandfather, Daniel Charisi. In his quest to learn more about his heritage, he journeys to see the banker Joseph Kalonymos, whom he seeks out because he was a friend of his grandfather's. He thanks Kalonymos for saving him from remaining ignorant of his parentage and for taking care of the chest his grandfather had left in trust to him: "The moment wrought strongly on Deronda's imaginative susceptibility: in the presence of one linked still in zealous friendship with the grandfather whose hope had yearned toward him when he was unborn, and who, though dead, was yet to speak with him in those written memorials which, says Milton, 'contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are,' he seemed to himself to be touching the electric chain of his own ancestry."²⁵⁰ Kalonymos then presents him with his grandfather's chest, thus restoring to Deronda his heritage. Finally, Deronda declares, "I shall call myself a Jew."²⁵¹ Deronda's romantic reclamation of his heritage may have exercised an influence on Kallen, particularly considering that he himself only came to reclaim his Jewish heritage as a young man at Harvard. One could easily imagine Kallen adding the same caveat as did Deronda: "But I will not say that I shall profess to believe exactly as my fathers have believed."²⁵² The interlinked nature of culture and race

²⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 63, n. 19. Pianko does speculate that Kallen may have been responding to a colleague's claim that only the third generation feels fully American, but this is little more than a guess.

²⁵⁰ Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, 787.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 792.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

was a self-evident proposition for Kallen. The idea of an inborn core of Hebraism was the product of the force of a half-century's absorption of English, philosemitic, racial discourse.

Race and Religion: Enter Anthropology

We saw in the previous chapter the contentious debate concerning the classification of Jews as a race or as a religion, and we noted the Reform movement's insistence on defining Judaism as a religion. Kohler, for example, had said at the Menorah Association's Third Annual Convention: "We must insist that the Jewish race, the Jewish people or nation, if you want to call it so, can form only the body; Judaism, the Jewish religion, is the soul. And we will always stand not merely for the body, not merely for the material side, not merely for race, which is the lowest kind of life, but for the spirit, the soul of Judaism, and that is its religious truth."²⁵³ Reform religious leaders were not the only ones, however, to take issue with Kallen's racial construction of Jewish identity. He also faced the opposition of American anthropologists such as Alfred Kroeber and Maurice Fishberg. The conclusions of these anthropologists, as we shall see, tended to be sympathetic to the religious perspective of Kohler, a perspective that was fundamentally incompatible with Kallen's conception of Hebraism.²⁵⁴ The *Menorah Journal* functioned as a prominent public platform where these different points of view were aired.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Kohler, "Third Annual Convention Luncheon," 129.

²⁵⁴ See Board of the Hebrew Union College Literary Society to Kallen, January 6, 1915; Office of Public Relations to Kallen, March 15, 1965. Kohler likewise felt the incompatibility of their views. He barred Kallen from speaking at Hebrew Union College in 1915 because he perceived him to be an atheistic Zionist. HUC's Literary Society sent Kallen a formal apology. Fifty years later, Kallen was awarded an honorary degree at HUC's New York school, underscoring the tremendous institutional changes that took place during the intervening decades.

²⁵⁵ See Marcus, *The American Jew, 1585-1990: A History*, 354. He argues that the *Journal's* influence was widespread enough to have possibly influenced German Jewish university students as well.

Kroeber published "Are the Jews a Race?" in the *Journal* in December 1917.²⁵⁶ In it, he observed that racial features might be mental as well as physical. "The Negro is unstable, emotional.... The Mongolian and the American Indian are slow."²⁵⁷ He maintained that there was a distinction to be made, however, between acquired and inherited mental characteristics: "What human minds acquire, they receive from education, from environment. What human minds inherit from their race is instinctive and unalterable."²⁵⁸ He thus followed the same line of argument as Kallen, but he drew the opposite conclusion. Jews, he argued, are not a race. With regard to anatomy, he rejected the idea that Jews bore any distinctive traits. With regard to physiognomy, such as facial expressions, he granted that there are Jewish traits, but that these traits were the result of having a common religion, education, and habits of life. With regard to mentality, he granted that there is such a thing as a "'typical Jew' in character and temperament, but he is the product of social conditions, not of heredity and race."²⁵⁹

"If, then, the Jew is not a race, what is he?" Kroeber asked. "For over two thousand years, he has not formed a nation in the political sense."²⁶⁰ He concluded that the only thing common to all Jews, both past and present, was their faith: "The Jew, then, is a group, a caste, in the better sense of the word, held together by religion."²⁶¹ Thus he used anthropology to dissect the term "race," and concluded that the Jews were, at root, a religion and not a race. Whereas Kallen maintained that Jews inherited "a natural capacity for Hebraism, not an

²⁵⁶ Kroeber, "Are the Jews a Race?"

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 291.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 293.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

acquired one,"²⁶² Kroeber believed that Jewish character and temperament were socially conditioned. His view, echoing as it did the position of the Reform movement that Judaism is a religion and the Jews are not a race, would have proved infertile soil for Kallen's conception of Hebraism.

That the *Journal* printed Kroeber's article and did not mention the Balfour declaration, which had been issued only a month before, electrifying the Jewish world, prompted an immediate critical response on the lead page of the weekly, *American Jewish Chronicle*. The pro-Zionist *Chronicle* had long been concerned with the Menorah Association's relationship with Zionism and it critically assessed the *Journal's* attitude towards Zionism. In an editorial published in December 1917, it noted: "The *Menorah Journal* by publishing its new race philosophy at the present time and completely ignoring the most epoch-making events in Jewish life, sets a poor standard for a leading organ of our young Jewish academicians."²⁶³

In the *Journal* issue in question, Kroeber's article was close to last. Other articles, "Bridging the Gulf: The Public Library and the Foreign Born," "Jewish International Lawyers," "American Literature in Hebrew," and "Sonnets on Sinai" preceded it. The *Chronicle* editorial could presumably have taken issue with any or all of these for not focusing upon the momentous Balfour declaration, but the author was intent on selecting this one for condemnation because his overriding concern was with Kroeber's assertion that the Jews are not a race and are held together only by religion. Taking up almost four columns of space, the editorial chastised the *Journal* for promoting the "errors" of anthropologists to the reading public:

²⁶² Intercollegiate Menorah Association, *The Menorah Movement: For the Study and Advancement of Jewish Culture and Ideals*, 84.

²⁶³ "Editorial," 219 "[E]poch-making events" is a reference to the Balfour declaration and the international sensation that it caused.

The racial theoretician of *The Menorah Journal* repeats the error of many other anthropologists who are too materialistically orientated to apply the same methods to human races which are applied to animal races. It is altogether wrong to consider the question of the human race from a purely physiological point of view. That is more veterinary physiology than race theory. A. L. Kroeber [sic] as well as *The Menorah Journal* should know that race is not a physiological notion only, for if it were, the word race would have to be cut out from our vocabulary.²⁶⁴

Rather than restrict race to a question of physiology, the author insisted that race is marked by propinquity and the sharing of ideals. In this respect, he shared the same view of race as both Hall and Eliot: "If a group of human beings have lived under the same conditions for thousands of years, if they have clung together all the time, and if they have been dominated by certain definite principles and have cherished the same ideals, they are a race, whether they are all long-headed or not and whether the hair of all of them is black or blond."²⁶⁵ The editorial concluded by noting that Kroeber's claim was a tired rehearsal of the position of Reform rabbis everywhere, little more than a platitude: "Nor is the assertion of A. L. Kroeber [sic] that the Jews, not being a race, are held together by religion new. This he can hear every Saturday or Sunday from every reformed rabbi here and abroad."²⁶⁶ The author here identified (and rejected) an important consequence of Kroeber's thesis, which is that it suggested a possible alignment of his anthropology with the ideological position of the Reform movement.

Fishberg made a similar argument in "Assimilation: A Statement of Facts by a Scientist," published in the *Menorah Journal* in February 1920, in which he employed anthropology to refute race theorists, leading to what Kallen would have called the "Judaist"

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 218.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.; see Askowith, "A Letter from the Menorah Journal" for the *Journal's* response. It did not address the question of race, but strongly asserted that the *Journal* did not take sides on debatable issues.

view.²⁶⁷ Billed by the *Journal* as "an authority on the anthropology and the pathology of the Jews," Fishberg attacked the "pseudo-scientists known as race theorists."²⁶⁸ He offered for general consumption some of the conclusions that he had drawn from his 1911 study.²⁶⁹

I have shown in my book, "The Jews," that from the standpoint of race purity the Jews do not materially differ from other groups of white people in civilized countries. Anthropologists have agreed that, when carefully examined, there are discovered among the modern Jews various racial elements and that it is not purity of ethnic strain that characterizes the Jew, but community of religious belief.²⁷⁰

Even if we may consider the Jews a race, he observed, this did not imply racial purity. What bound Jews together was not racial purity, but religious community. For him, this meant that the barriers between Jews and other whites in America were not insurmountable, biologically speaking, and that, therefore, assimilation was possible: "There are, consequently, no more racial obstacles to assimilation of the Jews among white peoples than there are to the assimilation of the Germans in America."²⁷¹ Assimilation need not necessarily imply the disappearance of the Jews as a distinct group: "Given two different groups of humanity living in the same locality, the anthropologist and the sociologist are usually satisfied when the language, religion, customs and habits of the population are or become homogeneous, as ample proof that assimilation has taken place."²⁷² His phrasing suggested to the reader that he spoke not just for himself or a particular school of thought, but with authority for the scientific field in general.

The forces of assimilation, according to Fishberg, would inevitably force change upon American Jews with the passage of time. In his view, the main source of resistance to

²⁶⁷ Fishberg, "Assimilation: A Statement of Facts by a Scientist."

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁶⁹ Fishberg, *The Jews: A Study of Race and Environment*.

²⁷⁰ Fishberg, "Assimilation: A Statement of Facts by a Scientist," 25.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 25.

this process lay in the essentially religious character of Judaism. Here, again, he positioned himself as representing the received wisdom of the consensus of sociologists:

It is the opinion of sociologists that certain Jewish religious rites, ordinances, and rituals have been more effective in preventing assimilation of the Sons of Jacob than all the Christian and Mohammedan laws which have been ordained against their [the Jews'] coalescence with the general [Christian or Muslim] population during the entire period of their dispersal among the nations.²⁷³

The consensus, as he understood it, was that Jewish religious laws had functioned more effectively as a barrier to integration with the general, non-Jewish population than had the laws enacted by the Christian and Muslim rulers that were designed to keep Jews isolated. Kallen rejected both of Fishberg's assertions—that religion is the foundation of Judaism, and that assimilation naturally happens in the absence of religious resistance. He refused to grant the religious spectrum of Jewish life priority over his secular claim to Jewish identity.

Kallen expressed his views in a letter written to Judge Julian Mack in 1915. In it, he insisted that the historic and primary Jewish contribution to the world was not monotheism but an ethical attitude: "That the Jews have contributed monotheism to the world is a legend, not a fact. The ancient world was about as monotheistic as it is now when the Jews entered it, and the importance of monotheism is derived from interpretations by religionists, not interpretations by historians and sociologists. It is rather an ethical attitude to which an incidental monotheism was accessory that the Jews have contributed to the world."²⁷⁴ For him, the ethical attitude, or Hebraism, was primary, not religious belief:

Religion is less than life, and as life becomes more and more secularized, the religion of the Jews becomes less and less of the life of the Jews. I use the word Hebraism, consequently, to designate the whole of that life, of which Judaism is a part.... This is justified by history also—for Judaism appears toward the end of the history of the ancient Jews; it is post-prophetic, and it

²⁷³ Ibid., 29.

²⁷⁴ Kallen to Mack, January 19, 1915.

goes on from the time of its appearance with other secular expressions of the spirit of the Jewish nation. These are not Judaism, but Jewish, and such usage gives us the word Hebraism for the whole.²⁷⁵

In light of the growing trend towards secularism that he saw all around him, Kallen believed that as Jews became less religious but were no less Jews, the truth of his proposition had become self-evident. Hebraism, not Judaism, was a term better suited to designate the whole of Jewish life, a life that included "secular expressions of the spirit of the Jewish nation." Kallen was also opposed to a less than pro-active approach to the maintenance of Jewish cultural difference. To Kallen, Fishberg's conclusion smacked of obsolescence and fossilization, not vitality. Fishberg, at best, suggested the possibility of mere survival in America; Kallen insisted on the obligation to nurture creative vitality.

Fishberg concluded by suggesting that political Zionism, with its implication that Jews would live an isolated existence in their homeland, "might prove to be the only preservative of Judaism which has thus far been suggested."²⁷⁶ Only by isolating themselves, in other words, could Jews prevent the erosion of Judaism brought on by the force of assimilation. Kallen's view of Zionism as an expression of nationality through internationality could not be more different. Zionism, for Kallen, did not imply political or social isolation. As he told both Jewish and non-Jewish reading audiences, it represented "first and foremost the Jewish programme of international service through national self-realization...[fulfilling,] in Mazzini's words, the Jews' 'special function in the European work of civilization.'...To the nations of the world it [Zionism] reasserted the prophetic ideal of internationalism as a democratic and cooperative federation of nationalities."²⁷⁷ For Kallen,

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Fishberg, "Assimilation: A Statement of Facts by a Scientist," 37.

²⁷⁷ Kallen, "Zionism and the Struggle Towards Democracy," 379; Kallen, "Zionism and Democracy," 656.

then, Jewish "national self-realization" was inextricably linked to international service. Far from being isolationist, Zionism represented for Kallen a commitment to the ideal of "internationalism."

If Fishberg were right that isolation alone would preserve Judaism, then Kallen's vision of Zionism as internationalism would not prevent its eventual dissolution. For Kallen during the 1910s and into the 1920s, only the notion of a Jewish race, understood to mean primarily the psychophysical inheritance of the Jewish people, provided the necessary assurance that Jewish life would persist.²⁷⁸ Thus, Kallen faced a battle on two fronts. He opposed not only the Reform religious leaders (who, at the time, spoke for American Jews generally) who insisted on a religious definition of Judaism, but he also opposed the scientific views of American anthropologists like Kroeber and Fishberg. The logic of their position lent credence to the religionist perspective and undermined Kallen's insistence on the authenticity of racial (later, ethnic) identification.

The *Menorah Journal's* receptivity to publishing the articles of scientists underscores how much they, just like the academics and other literary intellectuals also regularly featured in the *Journal*, were perceived to be leading cultural authorities. Their contributions were thus relevant to the *Journal's* stated mission of nurturing a Jewish cultural renaissance. It also highlights the fact that, as intimately connected as Kallen was to the Menorah organization as a whole and to the *Journal's* editor, Henry Hurwitz, in particular, the *Journal* did not simply promote Kallen's perspective. Hurwitz, chancellor of the IMA as well as editor-in-chief of

²⁷⁸ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," 220. "Psychophysical" is the term Kallen employed. Psychophysical inheritance refers to the social structuring of a person's personality, i.e. habits of thinking and behavior that are rooted in the ethnic group. In this sense it bears an analogy to Bourdieu's concept of the "habitus," although (in keeping with its early twentieth century context) Kallen conceived of it as transmitted through biological heredity.

the *Journal* from its founding in 1915 until his death in 1961, published Kallen's views together with those of people who differed with him.²⁷⁹ Although Kallen did not exercise a determining influence on this "leading journal of Jewish opinion in the English language,"²⁸⁰ neither was he irrelevant. Kallen's views were in active circulation, and were an important part of the public discourse concerning the nature and purpose of Jewish identity. We have seen that he was an important spokesman for the Intercollegiate Menorah Association (IMA). We turn now to examine more closely an article concerning Jewish nationality that he contributed to the second issue of the *Menorah Journal* in April 1915.

Invoking Nationality: Jewish Identity as Ethnicity

"The forces of modern life embodied by such terms as 'ethnicity,' 'nationalism,' or 'race' can indeed be meaningfully discussed as 'inventions,'" literary scholar Werner Sollors writes. "Of course, this usage is meant not to evoke a conspiratorial interpretation of a manipulative inventor who single-handedly makes ethnics out of unsuspecting subjects, but to suggest widely shared, though intensely debated, collective fictions that are continually reinvented."²⁸¹ Sollors invokes political scientist Benedict Anderson and social anthropologist Ernest Gellner, who argue that nationalism is a modern invention that developed in response to changes brought on by the American and French revolutions and by technological advances (especially advances in printing) that provided new ways to imagine connectedness to a group of people. He interprets ethnicity through this understanding of nationalism as a modern invention of connectedness. He rejects the view of those who posit a timeless

²⁷⁹ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 24.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁸¹ Sollors, *The Invention of Ethnicity*, xi.

essence to ethnicity. He thus aligns himself with those theoreticians whom political scientist Anthony Smith categorizes as "modernists," who argue that the nation-state is an entirely modern phenomenon, as against the "perennialists" who regard it as a modification of the premodern state.²⁸²

Smith takes an intermediate position between the "modernist" and "perennialist" schools of thought to describe nationalism. While he agrees that nationalism as an ideology and the nation-state as a political norm are quite modern, he qualifies that by understanding these in light of their relative continuity or discontinuity with collective cultural units and sentiments of previous eras. He strikes a similar intermediate stance in his interpretation of ethnicity, observing that ethnicity exhibits features of both schools of thought. For him, "the 'core' of ethnicity...resides in the quartet of 'myths, memories, values and symbols' and in the characteristic forms or styles and genres of certain historical configurations of populations."²⁸³ Modern nations, he believes, are built upon this pre-existing form that he calls "ethnie," the French derivative from the Greek term *ethnos*:

The approach adopted here defines ethnie as clusters of population with similar perceptions and sentiments generated by, and encoded in, specific beliefs, values and practices. Here the demographic element is important, but secondary to the cultural. For ethnie are viewed as consisting in: (1) symbolic, cognitive and normative elements common to a unit of population; (2) practices and mores that bind them together over generations; and (3) sentiments and attitudes that are held in common and which differentiate them from other populations.²⁸⁴

Smith's position is that although nationalism may be a modern creation, the clusters of populations that make up the nation created it out of pre-existing relational bonds consisting of cognitive elements, cultural practices and mores, and common sentiments and attitudes.

²⁸² Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

Ethnic consciousness, however, experienced a transformation co-extensive with the rise of nationalism, he argues. Ethnic groups not only provided the raw material for the rise of nationalism and the creation of the modern nation-state, but they themselves were transformed and politicized in the transition to modernity: "[T]he pressures for ethnic to move towards nationhood (but not necessarily independent statehood) are extremely powerful.... In practice, this meant a triple movement: from isolation to activism, from quietism to mobilization and from culture to politics."²⁸⁵ The constitutive importance of ethnic groups to the modern nation-state, he contends, is discovered in their triple movement to activism, mobilization, and politics. Ethnic groups do not simply exist as static entities within the national body; they interact dynamically with and shape the modern nation-state.

Smith's model of ethnicity works well when applied to the Jewish group. Jewish studies scholar Ze'ev Gries, who also rejects Anderson's "modernist" argument, argues that Jews did not need to imagine a community in print in the same way that other nations did, because their identity was forged before the development of printing.²⁸⁶ Jewish understandings of ethnicity are particularly important to consider because, although Jews are not the only ones to have crafted notions of ethnic difference, Hattam points out that "Jews in particular coined the term *ethnicity* since their diasporic origins raised questions of group loyalty and national belonging differently than for other immigrant groups."²⁸⁷ Unlike other immigrant groups, Jews often faced persecution in their territorial places of origin and felt no attachment to a national identifier the way Irish, Italian, or Polish immigrants did. In

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 154.

²⁸⁶ Gries, *The book in the Jewish World*, ix.

²⁸⁷ Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 46.

Hattam's estimation, this made Jews particularly receptive to identifying by ethnicity rather than by nation-state.

Hattam finds the 1910s to be the critical moment of category formation for the term ethnicity.²⁸⁸ She argues that a robust understanding of the conceptual framework for ethnicity must entail a close reading of the formative writings by Jews during that decade. She notes that Kallen was a seminal figure in establishing Jewish self-understanding as an ethnic group, along with sociologist Julius Drachsler and educational philosopher Isaac Berkson, and further notes that the debates over Jewish identification are best recaptured by examining articles published in the *Menorah Journal*.²⁸⁹

Kallen's "Nationality and the Hyphenated American" appeared in the April 1915 issue of the *Menorah Journal*, the same issue in which Hall's article was published. In his article, Kallen articulated a position that in some respects anticipates Smith's interpretation of ethnicity. Its appearance paved the way for him to circulate his ideas concerning Jewish identity. The *Journal* introduced Kallen by noting his scholarly credentials. It noted especially his contributions to philosophical and general periodicals, and that he was the author of the recently published *William James and Henri Bergson* (1914).²⁹⁰ It also highlighted his connection to the Menorah movement, as "one of the founders of the Harvard Menorah Society," who "has rendered signal service, both by tongue and pen, to the Menorah movement."²⁹¹ Kallen's focus in "Nationality and the Hyphenated American" was on the American national stage. Writing in the shadow of the war, he was attuned to the growing urgency of nationalist rhetoric. He argued that the Jews are a nation, and advocated the

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 196 n5.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 46–7.

²⁹⁰ Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*.

²⁹¹ Kallen, "Nationality and the Hyphenated American," 79.

desirability of conceiving of America as a commonwealth of nationalities. To him, the viability of democracy itself depended upon realizing this vision.

Although Kallen called Jews a "nationality" rather than a "race" in that article, this did not mean that he had abandoned racial notions. Rather, for him, the term "nationality" captured what Hollinger calls the "ethno-racial" quality of Jewish identity.²⁹² Whereas a nation referred to a socio-political and territorial entity, nationality (read, ethnicity) was rooted in inheritance. Distinguishing between nation and nationality, Kallen explained that nations were fundamentally composed of nationalities, a notion which finds an echo in Smith's claim that ethnies are the basic building blocks of nations: "Nationality is not nationhood, although it is the most important constituent of nationhood. Many nationalities may compose a nation (such is the case of the British, Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires, of the Swiss Republic, of our own Union), and then the relation between the nationalities will determine the strength or the weakness of the nation."²⁹³

Kallen's claim constituted not only a claim about Jews, but about America. The prevailing climate of opinion saw America as fundamentally composed of individual citizens. The logic of assimilation in the melting pot of America was based upon this premise. It inspired an extensive campaign to assimilate newcomers through Americanization programs was vigorously promoted, championed by a myriad of institutions, including the Reform Jewish establishment. By 1918, there were over one hundred organizations involved in the Americanization of Jewish immigrants.²⁹⁴ Kallen, however, replaced the notion that

²⁹² Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, 92.

²⁹³ Kallen, "Nationality and the Hyphenated American," 80.

²⁹⁴ Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 45.

individuals constituted the basic building blocks of the nation with the idea that ethnic groups were the basic building blocks:

Political freedom in America has tended to generate self-expression of each national group, and our country is to-day, broadly speaking, a great coöperative commonwealth of nationalities, British, French, German, Slavic, Jewish, each freely developing, in so far as it is self-conscious, its national genius, its language, literature and art in its own characteristic way as its best contribution to the civilization of America as a whole, realizing in this way the ideal of the democracy of nationalities, of international comity and coöperation which our prophets were the first to formulate.²⁹⁵

The strength of the nation, he argued, depended on the relations in America between these constituent group units, not on the successful homogenization of the population.

Homogenization of the nation through compulsion, Kallen wrote, was the antithesis of democracy. Citing the example of Austria-Hungary, he asserted that the "direct occasion of the great war" was due to the fact that the government there, "instead of being a democracy, has in the long run been directed toward the control and exploitation of many nationalities by one or two.... In Austria-Hungary, nationality, having been exploited and suppressed, has been the enemy and destroyer of nationhood."²⁹⁶ In Switzerland, by way of contrast, "nationhood, being democratic, is the safeguard and insurance of nationality."²⁹⁷ Supporting the free cooperation of nationalities in America, he continued, best expressed American democratic ideals, ideals that were inspired by the Hebraic influence. "In this country," he wrote, "the whole spirit of those institutions which constitute American nationhood makes for the liberation and harmonious coöperation of nationalities. This spirit is also a part of the Hebraic spirit, ...the spirit that literally inspired the democracy of our

²⁹⁵ Kallen, "Nationality and the Hyphenated American," 82.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 80-1.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 80.

America."²⁹⁸ Jews immigrated to America, he claimed, precisely because they were "moved to undertake their great American adventure by the ideal of nationality.... They sought freedom to be themselves, to realize their national genius in their own individual way."²⁹⁹

The Jewish need to seek freedom "to be themselves" and to "realize their national genius" was rooted, Kallen believed, in that inheritable quality called nationality, which inevitably exerted a claim upon every individual. Thus, he wrote:

[Nationality] is a force much deeper and more radical, distinctly more primitive and original, than anything else in the structure of society. It hyphenates English and Germans and Austrians and Russians and Turks no less than it hyphenates Americans, and, in the failure of the external socio-political organization of Europe to give it free play, it is the chief, almost the only, cause of the present unendurable European tragedy.³⁰⁰

Nationality, for him, exhibits features of what Smith labels as the "perennialist" view.

Nationalities constitute the basic building blocks of nations, and nationalities are inherited and essential components of identity that exists independently from and prior to any identification with an "external socio-political organization" (i.e., a nation).

Kallen also argued, on the other hand, that modernity fundamentally transformed the consciousness of nationality. Although nationality was not invented by modernity, he claimed that it experienced a renaissance in the nineteenth century, when people understood for the first time the "entire significance" of nationality.³⁰¹ Only then did it come "to full consciousness in fact and idea," he claimed. "Its great voice is the Italian thinker and patriot, Mazzini." Quoting Mazzini, Kallen explained that his paean to nationality helped to rekindle hope in international democracy: "[T]hey seek to elaborate and express their idea, to

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 81.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 80.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 82–3.

contribute their stone also to the great pyramid of history.... In principle, nationality ought to be...the recognized symbol of association; the assertion of the individuality of a human group called by its geographical position, its traditions and its language, to fulfill a special function in the European work of civilization."³⁰² As Kallen understood it, modernity awakened within nationalities an awareness regarding their potential to advance the cause of democracy and of civilization. In this sense, he affirmed what Smith calls the "modernist" view.

Nationality, or, ethnicity, for Kallen, was a natural feature deeply rooted in the pre-modern past, but modernity had effected a change in nationalities by awakening within them an awareness of their potential to advance the cause of civilization. In its broad contours, therefore, his thought anticipates the balance between the "perennialist" and "modernist" views that Smith proposes in his writing on ethnicity. His view of ethnicity led him to posit an ethical obligation for Jewish nationality: "Our duty to America, inspired by the Hebraic tradition,—our service to the world, in whatever occupation,—both these are conditioned, in so far as we are Jews, upon the conservation of Jewish nationality. That is the potent reality in each of us, our selfhood, and service is the giving of the living self. Let us so serve mankind; as Jews, aware of our great heritage, through it and in it strong to live and labor for mankind's good."³⁰³ Nurturing and supporting the growth and development of Jewish nationality, or the Jewish group personality, would, in turn, support the growth and development of a stronger, healthier American nation. He thus laid the foundation for an understanding of Jewish ethnicity that exists in a symbiotic relationship with the modern democratic nation-state.

³⁰² Ibid., 83.

³⁰³ Ibid., 86.

Kallen's construction of Jewish identity as nationality in this article had a palpable influence on Louis Brandeis. In April 1915, the same month that Kallen's article appeared in the *Menorah Journal*, Brandeis delivered an address to a Reform rabbis' conference. "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It" was subsequently published as a pamphlet by the American Zionist movement.³⁰⁴ The closeness with which Brandeis's speech follows Kallen's writing, both in terms of ideology and in terms of the very structure of the argument, makes it clear that he had read and accepted the premises advanced in Kallen's article. Historian Sarah Schmidt has explored extensively how Brandeis' ideological position regarding Zionism was derived from his contact with Kallen.³⁰⁵ In 1905, Brandeis had rejected Zionism and the idea that America could tolerate "[h]abits of living or of thought which tend to keep alive difference of origin,"³⁰⁶ but by 1914, he had come to support the idea that one could be both a Zionist and an American. "[T]o be good Americans, we must be better Jews," Brandeis proclaimed, "and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists."³⁰⁷ Schmidt argues that Kallen gave Brandeis the intellectual justification necessary to change his point of view. He helped Brandeis find a way to make Zionism compatible with American patriotism. As we shall see, Brandeis's view of Zionism was predicated upon Kallen's premise that nationality, or ethnicity, was fundamental to Jewish self-understanding, and that a proper understanding of nationality involved appreciating both its heritable characteristics as well as its modern significance.

³⁰⁴ Brandeis, *The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It*.

³⁰⁵ Schmidt, "The Zionist Conversion of Louis D. Brandeis"; Schmidt, "Horace M. Kallen and the 'Americanization' of Zionism - In Memoriam"; Schmidt, "Horace M. Kallen: The Zionist Chapter"; Schmidt, *Horace M. Kallen*; see Urofsky, "Horace M. Kallen: Prophet of American Zionism (review)," who validates Schmidt's argument.

³⁰⁶ Qtd. in Mason, *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life*, 442.

³⁰⁷ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 446.

Brandeis's "The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It" echoes Kallen's claims about nationality: "The difference between a nation and a nationality is clear; but it is not always observed," Brandeis said. "Likeness between members is the essence of nationality; but the members of a nation may be different. A nation may be composed of many nationalities, as some of the most successful nations are."³⁰⁸ Brandeis, then, like Kallen, distinguished between nations and nationalities, and stressed that successful nations are composed of nationalities. Like Kallen, he also affirmed the idea that the unity of nationality is not a mere modern socio-political construct but is "a fact of nature."³⁰⁹ "The movements of the last century have proved that whole peoples have individuality no less marked than that of the single person," Brandeis asserted, adding that "the individuality of a people is irrepressible."³¹⁰ He repeated Kallen's claim that the cause of the Great War lay in the attempt to suppress and homogenize nationalities: "The false doctrine that nation and nationality must be made co-extensive is the cause of some of our greatest tragedies. It is, in large part, the cause also of the present war. It has led...to cruel, futile attempts at enforced assimilation."³¹¹

Brandeis, moreover, asserting the modern significance of nationality, also cited Mazzini and quoted from the same passage as did Kallen.³¹² He claimed, like Kallen, that the newly awakened consciousness of nationality not only inspired within people the desire for freedom for full development, but it also provided the framework to support the flowering of democracy and advance the cause of civilization: "The new nationalism proclaims that each

³⁰⁸ Brandeis, *The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It*, 6.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

race or people, like each individual, has a right and duty to develop, and that only through such differentiated development will high civilization be attained," Brandeis said. "Not until these principles of nationalism, like those of democracy are generally accepted, will liberty be fully attained, and minorities be secure in their rights."³¹³ American democracy and civilization stood to gain by recognizing and supporting the nationalities that comprise the nation. Furthermore, he asserted, Jewish nationality, in particular, resonates with American ideals, echoing Kallen's claim that the Hebraic spirit undergirds American values: "Our [Jewish] teaching of brotherhood and righteousness has, under the name of democracy and social justice, become the twentieth century striving of America and of western Europe. Our conception of law is embodied in the American constitutions which proclaim this to be a 'government of laws and not of men.'"³¹⁴ Therefore, Brandeis proclaimed, "Let us make clear to the world that we [Jews] too are a nationality clamoring for equal rights, to life and to self-expression."³¹⁵

Brandeis's speech was fundamentally shaped by Kallen's "Nationality and the Hyphenated American." Remarkably, Brandeis did not acknowledge Kallen's influence. Why this is so can only remain a cause of conjecture. Perhaps he felt what literary scholar Harold Bloom calls an "anxiety of influence."³¹⁶ Alternatively, perhaps he knew that in order to persuade a room full of Reform rabbis of his position, it would be best not to invoke Kallen's name. Whatever the reason for his omission, the fact remains that Kallen's construction of Jewish identity as nationality entered into wide circulation and became an important part of American Jewish discourse.

³¹³ Ibid., 5–6.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*.

This is not to suggest that Brandeis's support inaugurated a sea change in American Jewish self-perception. In fact, opposition to this construction of Jewish identity remained strong, in no small part because Brandeis and Kallen insisted on linking Jewish nationality to Zionism. In 1916, for example, the *Outlook*, a weekly progressive magazine of opinion,³¹⁷ dedicated its January 5th number to the issue of political Zionism. It juxtaposed two competing perspectives. First came an article by Brandeis ("Palestine and the Jewish Democracy"), in which he repeated his earlier claims regarding Zionism.³¹⁸ The second article, by Reform rabbi Samuel Schulman,³¹⁹ rejected that position: "[W]e do not desire the creation of a new nationality within the American people," Schulman wrote. "America is a democracy that deals directly with the individual, irrespective of his racial descent or religious profession. America is not organized on the basis of race, but on great moral ideas. Therefore American nationality has no room within itself for the cultivation of an alien national consciousness on the part of any group."³²⁰ He did not distinguish between nation and nationality, and therefore perceived Zionism in America to represent the threatening idea of divided national loyalties. Furthermore, America, in Schulman's estimation, was composed of individuals, not nationalities. America, he asserted, "deals directly with the individual," not with racial or religious groups.³²¹ The *Outlook* expressed its agreement with Schulman's position in opposition to Brandeis.³²² Thus, the meaning of American Jewish identity was still being contested. The idea of ethnicity had not yet won the day.

³¹⁷ "Harold Pijlsifer, Poet and Editor."

³¹⁸ Brandeis, "Palestine and the Jewish Democracy"; Brandeis, "A Call to the Educated Jew"; Brandeis, *The Jewish Problem: How to Solve It*.

³¹⁹ This is the same person mentioned in chapter one.

³²⁰ Schulman, "Why American Jews Consider Zionism Undesirable," 40.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² "The Outlook's Opinion," 42.

Contesting the Limits of Ethnicity

The significance of ethnicity had reverberations far beyond the pages of the *Menorah Journal*. The Chicago School of Sociology, which from 1913 was the "outstanding center of the discipline in America," played an important role in this regard.³²³ The Chicago School's original nucleus included John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, James Hayden Tufts, James Rowland Angell, and Edward Scribner Ames. They shared with Kallen an aversion to the Americanization vogue in American politics. They were "vociferously tolerant," historian Fred Matthews observes. Hostile to "biological racism" and committed to the notion of the "malleability of personality," he writes, "the Chicago sociologists argued against the exclusionism and forced-assimilation programs of the years during and after World War One."³²⁴ They were, in a sense, allies with Kallen against the threat posed by nativists and even against the liberal progressives who denied the validity of a hyphenated American identity.

The Chicago school shared with Kallen the perspective that the significant basic unit in society was the cultural group, a fundamentally important step towards validating the presence of distinct ethnic groups within the national body. Historian Marlene Shore explains that "[t]he inherent logic of Chicago philosophy demanded a new approach to the study of society and culture: its organic and evolutionary precepts required that society be seen as an organism whose members were socially constituted, not as a collection of individuals who were somehow externally connected."³²⁵ Following the philosophical lead of Burke, Hegel, and Bonald, these social scientists "all asserted the historical, logical, and therefore ethical,

³²³ Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology: Robert E. Park and the Chicago School*, 89.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

³²⁵ Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada*, 83.

primacy of society to the individual," Matthews writes. "The isolated individual was an abstraction; in reality the irreducible unit was the individual embedded in a network of relationships and statuses—fathers, sons, masters, workers, burghers, peasants."³²⁶ But the Chicago sociologists' ideas about culture were derived from the American school of anthropology (specifically, Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and Edward Sapir),³²⁷ who, as we have seen, rejected the postulate of fixed racial characteristics in connection with the ethnic group. These pioneering social scientists contributed to the understanding that ethnicity should be understood as a non-racial social category, a conceptual shift that finally separated culture from nature.

This conceptual shift was founded upon the principle of the malleability of personality, derived from the Darwinian-inspired functionalist school of psychology represented by James and Dewey.³²⁸ Chicago theory "stressed the mutability, the constant shifting quality, of ethnicity as of other social institutions."³²⁹ The Chicago social scientists validated the ethnic experience more than any mainstream social science discipline had yet done, but their understanding of the mutability of personality and of ethnicity meant that they did not endeavor to establish a programmatic resistance to assimilation. They believed assimilation, i.e., the disappearance of subnational ethnic cultures, was inevitable:

"[A]lthough ethnic groups and accommodation to new societies were at the centre of its [the Chicago school's] interest," Matthews explains, "it conceptualized them in a pattern of sweeping historical change, which would ultimately homogenize them into the urban pattern

³²⁶ Matthews, *Quest for an American Sociology: Robert E. Park and the Chicago School*, 36–7.

³²⁷ Shore, *The Science of Social Redemption: McGill, the Chicago School, and the Origins of Social Research in Canada*, 117.

³²⁸ Green, "Darwinian Theory, Functionalism, and the First American Psychological Revolution."

³²⁹ Matthews, "Louis Wirth and American Ethnic Studies," 125.

that defined the modern world."³³⁰ The Chicago school's "assimilationist" paradigm of ethnicity contrasts strongly with Kallen's conception of the natural persistence of ethnicity. Kallen's position, historian Sidney Ratner writes, "contradicted the views of such authorities on assimilation as Isaac Berkson in *Theories of Americanization* (1920), Julius Drachler in *Democracy and Assimilation* (1920), and Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller in *Old World Traits Transplanted* (1921)."³³¹

Kallen and Brandeis were not alone in promoting the notion of Jewish ethnicity as a secular basis for Jewish identity in America. Many others, both Jewish and non-Jewish, accepted the idea of Jewish ethnicity.³³² But there was disagreement concerning the nature of ethnicity. Berkson, representative of the "assimilationist" paradigm among Jewish thinkers, contested Kallen's claim that ethnicity describes an inheritance that inevitably exerts itself in the psyche of the individual.³³³ This claim is what separated Kallen, at this stage in his thinking, from other Jewish American architects of ethnicity.

Berkson developed his "community theory" of ethnicity as the thesis of his doctoral dissertation, which was published as *Theories of Americanization*. Shortly before its publication, he presented his thesis to the readers of the *Menorah Journal*, in an article entitled "A Community Theory of American Life: The Problem of Adjustment in the Light of Jewish Experience."³³⁴ That he published it in the *Journal* indicates his desire that his thesis

³³⁰ Ibid., 126.

³³¹ Ratner, "Horace M. Kallen and Cultural Pluralism," 189.

³³² Important examples include the philosopher John Dewey, essayist Randolph Bourne, and journalist Norman Hapgood, all of whom published on this subject in the *Menorah Journal*. Our focus, however, is upon the intra-Jewish debates.

³³³ Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 46 notes that Kallen and Berkson specifically refer to Jews as an ethnic group.

³³⁴ Berkson, *Theories of Americanization: A Critical Study, With Special Reference to the Jewish Group*; Berkson, "A Community Theory of American Life: The Problem of Adjustment in the Light of Jewish Experience."

be read as part of the intra-Jewish discourse concerning the terms of Jewish group life in America. From the moment of its founding in 1915, the *Journal* emerged, as Greene, Hattam, and Korelitz note, as a premier location to debate the meaning of ethnicity for American Jews.³³⁵

An editor's note summarizing Berkson's article preceded it:

In his forthcoming book on "Theories of Americanization" (to be published by Teachers College, Columbia University), Mr. Berkson seeks to define a position for ethnic minorities in American democracy. Following a condemnation of various programs for this adjustment of minority groups, such as "Americanization," the "Melting Pot," and the "Federation of Nationalities," he elaborates in a suggestive chapter from which the ensuing essay is a selection, a "community" theory as illustrated by American Jewish life.³³⁶

Providing a summary of the article was an unusual editorial step. The editor usually provided biographies, not synopses. Hurwitz, the *Journal's* editor, was, it would seem, intrigued by Berkson's ideas. The introduction went on to make special note of Berkson's connection to the Menorah movement as a founder of the Menorah Society of City College of New York and its second president. It was typical for the *Journal* to make special note of its contributing authors' connections to the Menorah movement, and the inclusion of that information here suggests that Berkson's theory of American Jewish ethnicity was considered as a contribution to the movement, furthering the aim of the Menorah Association to promote the advancement of Jewish culture.

³³⁵ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 64; Hattam, *In the Shadow of Race: Jews, Latinos, and Immigrant Politics in the United States*, 48; Korelitz, "The Menorah Idea: From Religion to Culture, from Race to Ethnicity."

³³⁶ Berkson, "A Community Theory of American Life: The Problem of Adjustment in the Light of Jewish Experience," 311.

In that article, Berkson dismissed Kallen's idea of democracy functioning as a federation of nationalities, focusing particularly upon Kallen's formulation that "we cannot change our grandfathers:"

In the 'federation of nationalities' theory, which is pivoted on the identity of race, the argument is primarily that 'we cannot change our grandfathers.' The community theory, on the other hand, makes the history of the group, its esthetic, cultural, and religious inheritance, its national self-consciousness, the basic factor. This change of emphasis from race to culture brings with it a whole series of implications, arising from the fact that culture is not inherited but must be acquired through some educational process. The difference is crucial. A community of culture possible of demonstration becomes the ground for perpetuating the group, rather than an identity of race, questionable in fact and dubious in significance.³³⁷

He removed heredity entirely from consideration. As Berkson saw it, group cohesion was maintained not by racial determinism but by persuading its members of the value of its cultural and spiritual aspirations: "The perpetuation of the ethnos in a democratic land must rest on the clear consciousness of the worth of the ethnic heritage."³³⁸ Ethnic groups were, in other words, cultural groups, constituted as contingent and voluntary affiliations of people.

Berkson expanded on his views concerning nationality as ethnicity in *Theories of Americanization*. The "Cultural Zionists," who, he said, identify the Jewish people with its cultural and spiritual aspirations, come "very close to the view that nationality is essentially a psychological force."³³⁹ Defining a nation as "[a] race which possesses its own language, customs, culture and enough self-consciousness to preserve them," he suggested that "[t]his definition of nationality in cultural terms gives the clue to the solution of our problem of harmonizing two nationalities dwelling side by side.... [I]t reveals a way of retaining loyalty both to the cultural life of the ethnic group and to the life of the total group in all its

³³⁷ Ibid., 311–12.

³³⁸ Ibid., 316.

³³⁹ Berkson, *Theories of Americanization: A Critical Study, With Special Reference to the Jewish Group*, 101.

aspects.... Two cultures have possibilities of harmonization which two political or economic independences would never have."³⁴⁰ Nationality, he made clear, referred not to a psychologically inherited force, but to the cultural life of the ethnic group. This, for him, solved the problem of justifying Jewish nationality within the American nation.

Berkson essentially reformulated and expanded upon the position that his teacher John Dewey had articulated in his 1917 *Menorah Journal* article, "The Principle of Nationality."³⁴¹ There, Dewey had also cautioned against a racialized understanding of nationality. He wrote: "The concept of a nation of one race and one blood has mainly been invented after the event to account for certain unclear ideas of nationality, rather than to state the presence of a physiological fact."³⁴² Instead, Dewey believed that nationality signified "the cultural fact that people live together in [a] community of intellectual life and moral emotions, of sentimental ideas and common practices, based upon common traditions and hopes."³⁴³ Such a "community of tradition, ideas and beliefs, or moral outlook upon the problems of life," Dewey wrote, "which is perpetuated and more or less fixed by language and literature, creates a body of people somehow distinctly united by very strong ties and bonds."³⁴⁴ So, too, Berkson could affirm the idea of Jewish nationality insofar as it was understood to be a cultural construct separate from racial heredity and from political and territorial ambitions.

Berkson, summarizing the advantages that his "community" theory had over both the "Americanization" and "Federation of Nationalities" theories, highlighted the constructed

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 101–2.

³⁴¹ Dewey, "The Principle of Nationality."

³⁴² Ibid., 203.

³⁴³ Ibid., 204.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 203–4.

nature of culture and the contingency of ethnic affiliation: "The 'Community' theory...leaves all the forces working; they are to decide what the future is to be. Both the 'Americanization' and 'Federation of Nationalities' theories presume too much to 'fix' conditions; the one would make the citizen conform to the nature of a mythical Anglo-Saxon, and the other to harmonize with the soul assumed to reside in the ethnos."³⁴⁵ He, on the other hand, desired "that all forces be given a just opportunity to exert their influence."³⁴⁶ Thereupon, if "the ethnic group perpetuates itself, only then does it become justified to the reason. On the other hand, if the ethnic group finally disintegrates, the 'Community' theory really resolves itself into the 'Melting Pot' theory, accomplishing the fusion without the evils of hasty assimilation."³⁴⁷ Berkson believed that theories aimed at fixing conditions for ethnic groups were misguided. He preferred a *laissez faire* attitude. People were, and should be, free to choose their affiliations.

Kallen did not let the challenges posed by Berkson (or, for that matter, by Drachsler or by Park and Miller) pass by without notice. His rebuttal, however, is not part of the discourse recorded in the *Menorah Journal*. He published it in his book, *Culture and Democracy in the United States*.³⁴⁸ Berkson's "community theory" of ethnicity, he contended, was inadequate because it did not recognize what he perceived to be the enduring, stable, and persistent nature of ethnicity:

[T]he adaptability of life is wonderful, and communities, like persons, suffer much and surrender more, only to save their souls alive.... In one way or another, that inward half of his being, the 'methods of valuation,' the group

³⁴⁵ Berkson, *Theories of Americanization: A Critical Study, With Special Reference to the Jewish Group*, 117.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ Kallen, "'Americanization' and the Cultural Prospect"; *pace* Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 89, who suggests that Kallen was persuaded by the mid-1920s to adopt the point of view of his critics, Berkson, Dewey, and Drachsler.

patterings, the consuetudinous rhythms and symbols of custom and speech that are his heritage, the springs of his character, will color and direct his response. This inward half necessarily and automatically behaves in such a way as to maintain itself and grow, and if it is prevented from doing so directly, openly, in free interplay with its social *milieu*—then, necessarily and automatically, it will do so obliquely, hiddenly, in conflict with its *milieu*. The *milieu* may exterminate it, but the *milieu* will not assimilate it.³⁴⁹

The salient point for Kallen is that ethnicity will naturally and of necessity find expression in the life of the individuals who form it. Ethnicity, or nationality, exists as personality. As happens with Daniel Deronda, the "inward half" that is the individual's ethnic heritage will inevitably assert its claim: "Birth, which we do not choose, carries with it simultaneously certain cultural acquirements of a nature so basic, so primary, as to be indistinguishable from inheritance," Kallen wrote. "The acquirements are, in fact, the infant's immediate social inheritance.... Empirically, race is nothing more than this continuity [of the physical stock] confirmed and enchanneled in basic social inheritances. It is hardly distinguishable from nationality."³⁵⁰ Whereas for Berkson, culture is synonymous with nationality, for Kallen, culture is a product of nationality. Ethnicity, or nationality, Kallen believed, is a basic social inheritance, the ground out of which culture develops.³⁵¹

Revisiting Kallen's Model of Ethnicity

We have seen that over the course of a decade, Kallen's views on race shifted away from a physiological to a psychological understanding. By 1915, he had come to believe that race is expressed through psychophysical inheritance, which carried with it the connotation

³⁴⁹ Kallen, "‘Americanization’ and the Cultural Prospect," 162–3.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 176–7, 182.

³⁵¹ Although Kallen later came to affirm a cultural understanding of ethnicity similar to that which Berkson had articulated, I do not explore that here because my purpose has been to contextualize the evolution of Kallen's thinking during a time in which the meaning of the term ethnicity was evolving.

of an amalgamation of culture with race. This shift in his thinking towards understanding race in psychophysical terms is particularly significant because he developed and published his views on ethnicity based upon this view of racial heredity, subsequently sparking a larger discourse concerning Jewish ethnicity that engaged Jews and non-Jews, academics, scientists, rabbis, judges, and other public intellectuals.

Kallen's entry into the realm of public discourse regarding Jewish ethnicity is marked by the 1915 publication of "Nationality and the Hyphenated American" in the *Menorah Journal*. The *Journal* was uniquely positioned to entertain the issues that he raised precisely because it had no stake in the various Jewish movements or political trends. It had no religious or Zionist affiliation, and, moreover, it enjoyed national circulation and a broad readership that included Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, Jewish university students, and Jewish communal leaders. It quickly became the premier forum to discuss the developing consciousness of Jewish ethnicity. Kallen had helped to fashion the Menorah movement's mission, and he believed it would lead the way to a Jewish cultural renaissance. This cultural renaissance movement, as he envisioned it, merely continued the project that "Hebraism" had begun. Considering his involvement with the Menorah movement, it seems only natural that he would choose the *Journal* as a venue to promote his vision of Jewish nationality to a Jewish audience for consideration and debate. He may not have persuaded a majority of Jews to follow his lead, but his influence was profound. Brandeis was deeply influenced by Kallen's thought and adopted it as his own. For its part, the *Journal*, although it did not endorse his particular vision of nationality, found compelling the attempt to identify the parameters for Jewish American identity from a secular point of view. This is demonstrated

by the fact that it featured articles discussing the implications of Jewish nationality over the next half decade.

We have seen how Kallen's ideas were embedded in the social and scientific milieu in which he lived and wrote. At the same time, however, there are significant ways in which his theory of ethnicity finds reverberations today. I have attempted to argue that Kallen's views prefigure some contemporary constructions of ethnicity, constructions that developed without having him necessarily in mind. It is, therefore, particularly timely now to examine Kallen's discursive interventions on the subject. Scholars of nationalism and ethnicity, like Anthony Smith and John Hutchinson, for example, emphasize the ethnic characteristics of the modern nation, and argue, as had Kallen, that the fundamental building block of nations is ethnic groups. Kallen's belief in the indestructibility of the ethnic group bears some conceptual relationship to what Smith calls the persistence of ethnic. Smith and Hutchinson find, furthermore, that ethnic groups are not simply residual subnational groupings. Ethnicities, rather, dynamically interact with and shape the modern nation-state, exercising an "important regulatory principle" in politics, as Hutchinson puts it, "concerned with questions of the moral content and boundaries of a collectivity over which power is exercised."³⁵² Kallen, similarly, had argued that Berkson's static model of ethnicity and his *laissez faire* attitude were inadequate. He believed that American Jews had, through Zionism, an active role to play in American politics and a moral obligation to shape the direction of American democracy. I do not draw these parallels in order to make a post-modern out of Kallen. That would repeat the mistake other critics have made and extract him from his milieu. I do so in order to avoid another mistake: reading his views on Jewish ethnicity as a historical footnote

³⁵² Hutchinson, "Ethnicity and Modern Nations," 653.

with no contemporary relevance. Kallen may not bring us closer to an understanding of what ethnicity is, but the conceptual connections to contemporary theorists suggest that his voice in the discourse continues to this day.

The discourse in which Kallen sought to establish the grounds for Jewish ethnicity was part of a larger discourse concerning the place of Jews in America. His intervention helped to establish one way in which Jews could identify a secular basis for self-understanding and legitimate a hyphenated Jewish-American identity. In the next chapter, I expand upon his vision of American democracy and its relationship to Jewish ethnicity. I explore the scientific rhetoric that undergirded it, and I analyze Kallen's role in the print culture that challenged prevailing conceptions of America and democracy. I situate his ideas within a specific network of relationships, and, in particular, I locate him within emerging American modernism.

Chapter 3

Horace Kallen as a Modernist: A Discontent of Hope

If the turbulence of the times within you takes form in a discontent of hope, it makes of you an optimist.

—Horace Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States*

Concertgoers packed into Aeolian Hall in New York City on Tuesday afternoon, February 12, 1924, to hear bandleader Paul Whiteman's "modern American orchestra," as he called it, perform a program entitled "An Experiment in Modern Music."³⁵³ Among the featured pieces was the world premiere performance of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. "I heard it as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America," Gershwin later recalled, "of our vast melting pot, of our unduplicated national pep, of our blues, our metropolitan madness."³⁵⁴ His fusion of jazz with concert idioms was an immediate sensation, and it was performed eighty-four times by Whiteman that year.³⁵⁵ Musicologist Carol Oja writes that the composition's appearance marked one of the most important musical events of the decade.³⁵⁶ The popular reception of Gershwin's piece, which had originally been entitled *American*

³⁵³ Qtd. in Oja, "Gershwin and American Modernists of the 1920s," 651–2.

³⁵⁴ Pollack, *George Gershwin: His Life and Work*, 297. Gershwin's reference to the "melting pot" approaches the mid-century understanding of the term as an expression of cultural pluralism.

³⁵⁵ Oja, "Gershwin and American Modernists of the 1920s," 650.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 648.

Rhapsody,³⁵⁷ established his central role, Oja argues, in fixing "the perimeters of American modernism."³⁵⁸

In the same year in which Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* made its appearance, the term "cultural pluralism," coined by Kallen, made its print debut in what has become regarded as his seminal work, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (1924).³⁵⁹ In opposition to the reigning melting pot ideology, he pushed for the inclusion of different immigrant ethnicities as equal participants in American democracy. He argued that American culture should properly be understood as the lived product of the varied groups that make up America, each one making its own distinct contribution to the symphony of American civilization. The uniquely American blend of sound that is *Rhapsody in Blue*, which showcases the individuality of instrumental sounds, is cultural pluralism's closest musical analog.

My purpose in juxtaposing this musical piece of American modernism with Kallen's philosophy is to open up a fresh perspective with which to engage his thought and writing. *Culture and Democracy in the United States* is typically evaluated in the context of immigration and ethnic studies. This is evident even from the publication context in which it has been reissued over the years. Thus, for example, Arno Press reprinted it in 1970 as part of a series called "The American Immigration Collection." That name alone, in fact, appears on the hardback cover; the book title itself appears only on the side-binding. When Transaction Publishers, an academic publishing house oriented to the social sciences, republished it in 1998, it was as part of a series called "Studies in Ethnicity." These publication decisions indicate that scholarship has assigned Kallen's book to the specific canons of immigration

³⁵⁷ Schiff, *Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue*, 13.

³⁵⁸ Oja, "Gershwin and American Modernists of the 1920s," 648.

³⁵⁹ Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States: Studies in the Group Psychology of the American Peoples*.

and ethnic studies. In this chapter, I argue that *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, considered in its original publication context with Boni & Liveright, is embedded within, and is a contribution to, American modernism.

Considering Kallen as part of the modernist movement sensitizes us to the network of relationships in print culture that Kallen cultivated during the years in which he developed his most important contribution to American social and political thought. As well, it helps us to contextualize his self-understanding as a contributor to the ongoing project of modernity. Finally, it adds another layer to our understanding of his self-construction as a Jewish-American, as someone who believed that each term in the hyphenated phrase is a relational term and can be understood only in light of the other.

In the foreword to *Judaism At Bay* (1932), Kallen identified "the prevailing social aspirations and the increasingly prepotent social powers" that characterize the secular world of modernity as science, humanism, democracy, and industry.³⁶⁰ As a modernist thinker, he addressed America with the insights of science and with the values of humanism, with support for the idea of democracy and the value of a cooperative ethic in industry. These were all concrete ways in which Kallen established his presence as a modernist critic of America. In the print milieu in which he disseminated his ideas, he gravitated to the modernist movement as the environment that would best support his attempt to cultivate a receptive public and inspire social change.

In 1930, writing about art and art criticism, he described the power of public opinion in relation to the critic:

One cannot overstress the event that in the end it is the public whose decision determines whether a work of art or a school of criticism shall survive or

³⁶⁰ Kallen, *Judaism At Bay: Essays Toward the Adjustment of Judaism to Modernity*, 2.

perish; that schools of criticism absorbed in their warfare against one another, and movements in the arts absorbed in the development of their methods and realization of their purposes, behave as though their publics were passively waiting for their light and guidance. This is a delusion. On the record of history and of biography, the public is always present, and actively present. An artist might conceivably produce and exist without a public. A critic never could. He is a middleman, he intervenes between artist and public and creates a triangle of which he is the third member. He is the complication in the life of art.³⁶¹

Kallen credited the public with agency, as a decision-making body that confirmed or condemned works of art and schools of criticism. I read Kallen as the critic in this scenario, as "the complication in the life of art." He interpreted values in art as he interpreted values in society, and presented his ideas to the reading public, who, he wrote, were not merely present, but "actively present." Ultimately it was the public who would decide the fate of his views. The specific reading public that he sought to engage was the politically left-wing, educated, and self-educating intelligentsia. These were the people who were likely to respond positively to his ideas and also take action in response. This, as we shall see, is why he published his more significant social criticism in the *Nation*, became intimately involved in the management of the *Dial* in the wake of the First World War, and published several books with Boni & Liveright.

The ways in which Kallen engaged with the forces of modernity, as he perceived them, is what makes him a modernist. We may measure this against the definition of modernism that he himself wrote, which quickly became the operative definition of modernism for its time and created the backdrop for future developments concerning the concept. He wrote it for the relatively new *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* in 1933:

Modernism may be described as that attitude of mind which tends to subordinate the traditional to the novel and to adjust the established and

³⁶¹ Kallen, *Indecency and the Seven Arts: And Other Adventures of a Pragmatist in Aesthetics*, xiv–xv.

customary to the exigencies of the recent and innovating.... The modernistic attitude, in sum, arises where a fission develops in the social or intellectual order because a new invention or discovery has become powerful enough to impose adjustment to itself upon the resistant environment which it has entered as an interloper. The process of adjustment begins in some individual or small group whose life or work has been dislocated. Automatic at first, it soon gets rationalized into a program which wins adherence for a wider and wider range of personalities and locations.³⁶²

Modernism, for him, describes the process in which innovation, whether artistic, scientific, or technological, forces a resistant social environment to undergo an adjustment to accommodate it. The modernist intellectual is someone who, like Kallen, prescribes an adjustment to the new conditions of life characterized by the rise of industry and science and the spread of democracy and humanism. Cultural pluralism is a modernist innovation, connected to American modernist art and literature, because it insisted on an adjustment in the teeth of a highly resistant social and political environment.

Kallen's interest in modernist art stemmed in part from his perception that art represented the creative expression of the mind making value out of existence. He expressed this view as early as 1914.³⁶³ Contrasting art with philosophy, he wrote, "Art does not substitute values for existences by changing their rôles and calling one *appearance* and the other *reality* [as does philosophy]: art converts values into existences, it realizes values, injecting them into nature as far as may be.... Philosophy realizes fundamental values transcendently, beyond experience: art realizes them immediately within experience."³⁶⁴ Comparing art to religion, he claimed that whereas art creates values, religion conserves them.³⁶⁵ Philosophy "imaginatively abolishes existence in behalf of virtue" and religion seeks

³⁶² Kallen, "Modernism," 564, 568.

³⁶³ Kallen, "Value and Existence in Art and in Religion."

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 273.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 274.

"to control and to escape the environment which exists by means of the environment which is postulated," he asserted.³⁶⁶ Art, on the other hand, "realizes values *in* existence."³⁶⁷ "In art," he concluded, "existence is without value and is converted into value. Art makes actual existences over into actual values."³⁶⁸ For him, existence and values are united in the world of art, creating meaning in life. Here he articulated the philosophical link that connects art to the social criticism with which he was engaged. His notion of democracy in America took especial note of the conditions of existence and of realizing values in that existence.

Kallen's interest in and involvement with American modernist art was extensive.³⁶⁹ In particular, he was interested in artwork produced by Jewish artists.³⁷⁰ He was a friend of painter and sculptor Maurice Sterne (1878-1957), an American Jewish immigrant. Sterne had begun experimenting with modernism from the early 1900s, and during the 1920s he divided his time between Italy, where Kallen stayed as his guest in 1927,³⁷¹ and New York where he taught at the Art Students League. Sterne's reputation as one of the foremost artists in America was established with an exhibit of his work in 1926 at the Scott and Fowles Gallery, and reinforced in 1933 when he was the first American painter to be honoured with a retrospective exhibit at the New York Museum of Modern Art.

The retrospective featured pieces selected from sixty-seven different collections, including a drawing on loan from "Dr. and Mrs. Horace Kallen of New York."³⁷² Kallen

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 276.

³⁶⁹ "A Kallen Bibliography in Aesthetics" lists several dozen titles, including books, articles, and pamphlets. As well, he corresponded with numerous modernist authors, including Sinclair Lewis and T. S. Eliot.

³⁷⁰ See Antin to Kallen, October 9, 1918. Antin, a Jewish immigrant and author, solicited Kallen's help to promote promising Jewish writers to a wider audience.

³⁷¹ (Special Correspondence), "Three American Philosopher Exploring Rome in Motor Car."

³⁷² Exhibit #137: Rocks, Monhegan Island, 1917. Drawing in color. 24x30 inches.

authored the MOMA brochure's introduction to the Sterne exhibition.³⁷³ In it, he wrote that an artist is usually known because he or she "exemplifies some aesthetic philosophy or some psychological theory of perception and technological theory of execution. The very names of the schools signalize their extra-pictorial preoccupations: 'Impressionism,' 'Post-Impressionism,' 'Cubism,' 'Futurism,' 'Orphism,' 'Vorticism,' 'Synchronism,' 'Dada,' 'Expressionism.'"³⁷⁴ Members of these schools are really "metaphysicians and psychologists," he continued, who speak "to the *cognoscenti*; they make no communication to the masses of men."³⁷⁵

Such an elitist approach was anathema to Kallen. His criticism of the art schools, that they "make no communication to the masses of men," was the same criticism that he leveled against American philosophy, and against which attitude he defined his own work: "I have not been able to devote myself exclusively to what is euphemistically known as 'scholarship' and the sheer academic life. My earliest interests were as literary as philosophical, and were soon crossed by direct participation in political and economic movements of the land," he wrote. "Hence I have never attained that fullness of pedagogical withdrawal which custom and prejudice ordain for the practice of philosophy in America."³⁷⁶ Kallen liked Sterne's work in part because, like his own, "it exemplifies no school; it calls for no special psychological or aesthetic theory," and, most importantly, "it speaks with the same clarity and appeal to the masses as to the experts."³⁷⁷ This reflects exactly how he perceived his own writing. He saw Sterne's work as applying "to the exigencies of the present hour the enduring meanings of the

³⁷³ Kallen, "Maurice Sterne and His Times."

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ Hook and Konvitz, *Freedom and Experience*, viii.

³⁷⁷ Kallen, "Maurice Sterne and His Times," 8.

past."³⁷⁸ The observations that he made about Sterne's art may be applied with equal accuracy, as we shall see, to Kallen's own journal articles and books. He sensed congruence in agenda between the art movement of modernism and his self-expression as a modernist thinker. In this respect, cultural pluralism is a prose analog of modernist art. His writing created value out of lived experience, out of the social and intellectual "fission" of the day. It attempted, in accord with his own definition of modernism, to "impose adjustment to itself upon the resistant environment which it has entered as an interloper."³⁷⁹

Philosophical Darwinism

Kallen first articulated the post-Darwinian task of philosophy in 1909.³⁸⁰ He developed a modified version of Arnold's original construction of Hebraism and Hellenism out of his understanding of Darwinism. He acknowledged the influence of two thinkers in particular who, in his opinion, best embodied the new task of philosophy:³⁸¹ "The great task of developing the philosophy of evolution in the Darwinian sense of the word—and that is a very different sense from the popular and philosophic one—is the affair of William James, an American, and Henri Bergson, a Jew of France."³⁸² Kallen wrote that James's philosophy of pragmatism had made a radical contribution to thought by introducing "spontaneous variation" and "the survival of the fit" into epistemology.³⁸³ If an idea or a value endures, it is "fit." From Bergson, Kallen continued, he learned that reality is a "moving act:" "You are

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 11.

³⁷⁹ See above.

³⁸⁰ Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy."

³⁸¹ It is of course well understood that Kallen's philosophic influences were many, and included such Harvard luminaries as Josiah Royce, George Santayana, and Barrett Wendell. The discussion here is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of Kallen's philosophy and influences, but is more narrowly focused on features that pertain to scientific discourse.

³⁸² Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 498.

³⁸³ Ibid.

face to face with reality, not when you are reasoning about it, not when you have *ideas* of it, but when you are *living* through it."³⁸⁴ The contingency, the flux of life, could be got at only through lived experience.

James and Bergson found many points of commonality between them. Thus, for example, Bergson wrote to Kallen that he found "la concordance parfaite entre mes vues sur les concepts et le résumé que W. James en a fait dans son *Pluralistic Universe*."³⁸⁵ James thought very highly of Bergson's ideas and was responsible for introducing Bergsonism into American Pragmatism.³⁸⁶ Bergson differs from James "in emphasis rather than substance," Kallen wrote. "James stresses the epistemological and ethical aspects of philosophy; Bergson, the metaphysical. Like James, he finds knowledge, ideas, concepts to be entirely practical. Their existence is justified by their use."³⁸⁷ Kallen did not, however, understand Bergson's thinking to be merely an extension of James's own. He distinguished sharply between their philosophical perspectives on evolution in *William James and Henri Bergson* (1914), and, as we shall see, he made it clear that his preferences lay with James's philosophical outlook.³⁸⁸

Kallen explained that Bergson believed that the "truly *he* of *him*, the differentiae that constitute his humanity, are mere appearance, and his individuality is secondary, not primary." The source of reality itself was found "only in the unindividuated totality" of the spirit of life, the *élan vital*.³⁸⁹ The *élan vital*, in becoming matter, immediately begins to diversify. Speciation, in Bergson's metaphysics, describes the struggle of life to return to its source in an undifferentiated spiritual unity: "The goal of life is its own free mobility. The

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Bergson to Kallen, July 14, 1910.

³⁸⁶ Lawlor and Moulard Leonard, "Henri Bergson."

³⁸⁷ Kallen, "Hebraism and Current Tendencies in Philosophy," 498.

³⁸⁸ See Kallen, "James, Bergson, and Traditional Metaphysics."

³⁸⁹ Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*, 208.

enemy of that mobility is matter. Hence the work of life is the conquest of matter."³⁹⁰ The Darwinian principle of natural selection thus operated as the principle of life overcoming matter, expressing itself freely and diversifying. But human individuality, then, was merely a secondary expression, an accident, of the primary universal process of differentiation, which seeks ultimately to transmute differentiation into a spiritual unity. Even human intelligence, the place where Bergson located the nexus of matter and spirit, was ultimately of secondary importance. Kallen explained:

What is most distinctive of man [i.e., his intelligence] is least distinctive of the *élan vital*.... Race and individual, what is different and distinct in them, are accidental and relatively unreal in the universe. Beside the creative center, the flux of life, the downrush of matter, the totality of organic beings, these former are unrealities, mere appearance, the superficialities and last steps of becoming, not its deep and throbbing heart.³⁹¹

Individuation may be an intrinsic feature of the natural world, but, for Bergson, this was not of ultimate significance. As we shall see, however, for Kallen, individuation was of ultimate significance.

Kallen identified Bergson's dualistic antithesis between spirit and matter as the central feature that distinguished his thought from James's radical empiricism. Kallen did not presuppose, as did Bergson, a fundamental unity of being separate from its expression in the world of time and space. Rather, following James, he accepted the reality of speciation and differentiation at face value.³⁹² His understanding of James's radical empiricism may be fruitfully compared to his conception of art. Just as he had written about Sterne's art, that it

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 209.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 219.

³⁹² See James, *A Pluralistic Universe: Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the Present Situation in Philosophy*.

"exemplifies no school,"³⁹³ so, too, Kallen wrote elsewhere, James sought "to build no system."³⁹⁴ James's radical empiricism rejected the metaphysics of traditional philosophy in favor of a scientifically infused philosophical program. Radical empiricism, Kallen explained, was best described as an attitude rather than as a system:

Radical empiricism aims...to describe reality as it comes to cognition, to apprehend experience in its purity.... It lays no weightier emphasis on the mind than on nature, on environment than on organism, on concept than on percept. Being, for radical empiricism, is neutral, and demands chiefly a narrative of its behavior and a plan for meeting its events. These, radical empiricism points out, are the buds and burgeons of a flux of a seething plurality of entities.... The 'total'...is not a whole but an aggregate of eaches, each with a vote that it casts primarily for itself, each involving novelties, chances, mutations, and discretenesses.... Thus, although recognizing human values, and indeed making them central, radical empiricism refuses to distort the world...that these values may be eternally conserved.... It acknowledges...the right and the will and the struggle to be.³⁹⁵

The parallels to Kallen's characterization of art are readily apparent. Art, like radical empiricism, acknowledges "the reality of immediate experience."³⁹⁶ Art, in "injecting" values into nature, does not "claim for its results greater reality than nature's. It claims for its results greater immediate harmony with human interests than nature."³⁹⁷ Radical empiricism finds existence to be morally neutral. So too, in art, "existence is without value and is converted into value."³⁹⁸

For James, Kallen wrote, "nothing could be more repugnant than a conception of individuality like [Bergson's]."³⁹⁹ Kallen explained that "James assumes the Darwinian hypothesis, naturally: what is human in man is a spontaneous variation, a mutation upon the

³⁹³ Kallen, "Maurice Sterne and His Times," 8.

³⁹⁴ Kallen, "James, Bergson, and Traditional Metaphysics," 239.

³⁹⁵ Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*, 27–28.

³⁹⁶ Kallen, "Value and Existence in Art and in Religion," 273.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 276.

³⁹⁹ Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*, 222.

subhuman surviving by force of its inward power. What matters to him, however, is this: that, whatever the origin of individuality, whether it be primary or derived, once it *occurs*, it is the thing that counts, not its source."⁴⁰⁰ Individuality, then, is not merely a way-station on the journey to a life of the spirit as Bergson would have it; it is, as James asserts, of ultimate significance by virtue of its existence. The Jamesian view of individuality fundamentally shaped Kallen's worldview.⁴⁰¹

Having affirmed the ultimate reality of existence as it occurs, Kallen contended, James, as it were, realized "values *in* existence."⁴⁰² Value and existence, as in art, become fused in the aspect of intelligence as the seat of the "creative act, the inventiveness, of the human spirit."⁴⁰³ In a definite rejection of Bergson, Kallen concluded, "Not the immediate push of society or the remoter onrush of an *élan*, but the constant choices of the individual, urge humanity forward."⁴⁰⁴ James's "pluralistic insistence on individuality,"⁴⁰⁵ rooted in an (ostensibly) Darwinian view of evolution, leads to the conclusion that "[t]he moral universe, too, is not a monarchy but a federal republic."⁴⁰⁶ These ideas concerning individuality, which by easy extension, applied equally well to the "organism" of society, lay at the root of Kallen's pluralistic philosophy, and were deeply indebted to a philosophical view of evolution that valued pluralism and did not exceptionalize it.

Because it minimized the import of individual distinctiveness and posited a higher order of an undifferentiated whole, Bergson's evolutionary metaphysics was not well suited

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 223–224. Kallen misattributed spontaneous mutation to Darwin.

⁴⁰¹ See Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*.

⁴⁰² Kallen, "Value and Existence in Art and in Religion," 274. Kallen does not use this phrase in *William James and Henri Bergson*, but the conceptual connection to James's thought is evident.

⁴⁰³ Kallen, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*, 229.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 230.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., 233.

to support a social theory that valued pluralism for its own sake. For Kallen, individual distinctiveness carried ultimate significance, a position that was supported by James's pluralist approach to post-Darwinian philosophy.⁴⁰⁷ He concluded his analysis of James's and Bergson's understandings of the philosophical implications of Darwinian evolution with the affirmation that diversity, difference, and distinctiveness must be accepted as part of the natural order, dealt with as inevitable and constitutive aspects of reality, and considered as parts of the whole, which consists of an "aggregate of eaches."⁴⁰⁸ This Jamesian approach to the world finds its musical echo in *Rhapsody in Blue*. As a composition, it, too, is a whole formed out of an aggregate of diverse, different, and distinct instruments and sounds. Kallen's perception that reality is constituted as an "aggregate of eaches" was at the core of his attempt to reframe American democracy in such a way that it accorded with his understanding of the nature of reality in the post-Darwinian mold and reflected the "moral economy" that he had learned from Ralph Barton Perry.⁴⁰⁹

Cultivating a Public

In 1914, ten years before the anti-immigration Johnson-Reed act was passed into law, Kallen's colleague at the University of Wisconsin, sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross, published a racist anti-immigration book entitled *The Old World in the New*.⁴¹⁰ Ross analyzed specific physical, mental, and moral racial traits of Celtic Irish, German, Scandinavian,

⁴⁰⁷ Toll, "Horace M. Kallen: Pluralism and American Jewish Identity" notes as well Josiah Royce's influence on Kallen.

⁴⁰⁸ Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, 4 suggests that one way in which Dewey and he differed as pragmatists is that Dewey was disposed to treat problems as aspects of the "'wholes' in which they figure," whereas he was disposed "to start with the item, the individual, and to interpret 'wholes' as aggregations of and consequences from comparatively independent individual components."

⁴⁰⁹ See chapter one.

⁴¹⁰ Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People*.

Italian, Slavic, East European Hebrew, and other "lesser" immigrant groups, and determined that the massive influx of immigrants was having a deleterious effect upon native, white American racial stock. Published by The Century Company, the book was a compilation of essays that Ross had contributed to the conservative monthly, *The Century Magazine*, over the course of a year. Ross's ideas regarding dysgenic racial selection were rendered timely by the unprecedented waves of millions of immigrants that had been admitted to the United States over the previous two decades. He warned not only of the disastrous economic, political, and social effects that unrestricted immigration would cause, but also of the physical and moral degradation that would take place because of the intermingling of these races with the American pioneering breed. America, he concluded, was committing race suicide.

Provoked by Ross, Kallen published "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" in response.⁴¹¹ He began by observing that Ross's opinions were widely shared: "Mr. Ross is no voice crying in a wilderness. He simply utters aloud and in his own peculiar manner what is felt and spoken wherever Americans of British ancestry congregate thoughtfully."⁴¹² Kallen's perception of popular attitudes was quite correct. The spectre of race suicide had been raised by no less prominent a figure than President Theodore Roosevelt as early as 1907, and in 1924 the Johnson-Reed Act, which severely curtailed immigration, was passed "to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity."⁴¹³ Eugenics scholar Diane Paul has noted that the political shift away from Gilded Age individualism towards Progressive Era state collectivism created the conditions to legislate eugenics-based reform programs. America began to assert state

⁴¹¹ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915; Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915.

⁴¹² Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915, 191.

⁴¹³ U.S. State Department, "Milestones: 1921-1936 - Office of the Historian."

regulatory powers over race-related issues, including marriage, fertility, and immigrant population.⁴¹⁴ This was the racially charged climate of anti-immigrationist sentiment into which Kallen fired a salvo against Ross's arguments in "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," published in the *Nation* in two installments in February 1915.

"Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" marks a significant moment in American social thought. In it, Kallen set forth the basic parameters of cultural pluralism (although he did not employ that term there). First, he posed the question of how to create social cohesion in musical terms: "Our spirit is inarticulate, not a voice, but a chorus of many voices each singing a rather different tune. How to get order out of this cacophony is the question for all those who are concerned about those things which alone justify wealth and power, concerned about justice, the arts, literature, philosophy, science. What must, what *shall* this cacophony become—a unison or a harmony?"⁴¹⁵ "Unison," Kallen made clear, implies the imposition of will and the eradication of difference. "Harmony" preserves individuality: "What do we *will* to make of the United States—a unison, singing the old Anglo-Saxon theme 'America,' the America of the New England school, or a harmony, in which that theme shall be dominant, perhaps, among others, but one among many, not the only one?"⁴¹⁶

In the concluding section to that article, he offered his well-known orchestra metaphor to answer this question:

As in an orchestra, every type of instrument has its specific timbre and tonality, founded in its substance and form; as every type has its appropriate theme and melody in the whole symphony, so in society each ethnic group is the natural instrument, its spirit and culture are its theme and melody, and the harmony and dissonances and discords of them all make the symphony of civilization, with this difference: a musical symphony is written before it is

⁴¹⁴ Paul, "Darwin, Social Darwinism and Eugenics," 214–239.

⁴¹⁵ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915, 217.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 219.

played; in the symphony of civilization the playing is the writing, so that there is nothing so fixed and inevitable about its progressions as in music, so that within the limits set by nature they may vary at will, and the range and variety of the harmonies may become wider and richer and more beautiful.⁴¹⁷

The ethnic groups of society are, as it were, instruments within the orchestra of America. The music is emphatically not a "unison," but features the interplay of individual instruments that create "harmony and dissonances and discords." He referred to a conceptual divide between a musical symphony and the symphony of civilization, insofar as a musical symphony depends upon fixed writing; here too, there is a parallel to *Rhapsody in Blue*. Although it later became a fixed musical score, its world premier included improvisational clarinet and piano playing, thus partially bridging the very gap that separated a musical symphony from the symphony of civilization.⁴¹⁸ His metaphor for American civilization thus finds an accidental resonance in Gershwin's modernist piece.

The weight now attributed to "Democracy versus the Melting-Pot" was by no means a foregone conclusion at the time. The notion of cultural pluralism did not become a commonplace until mid-century. "It takes about 50 years for an idea to break through and become vogue," Kallen later reflected.⁴¹⁹ He knew that in order for his ideas to gain traction, he would have to take steps to cultivate a receptive audience. There were three distinct strategies that he employed to do this. First, he sent his writing to select public intellectuals who, he hoped, would use their influence to propagate his views.⁴²⁰ This proved to be an effective strategy; thus, for example, Dewey responded positively to Kallen's article:

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 220.

⁴¹⁸ Jablonski and Stewart, *The Gershwin Years: George and Ira*, 95.

⁴¹⁹ Schmidt, "Horace M. Kallen and the 'Americanization' of Zionism - In Memoriam," 60.

⁴²⁰ Scholars would later group these like-minded intellectuals under the umbrella term, cultural pluralists. They included figures such as John Dewey, Randolph Bourne, Norman Hapgood, and Alain Locke.

I quite agree with your orchestra idea, but upon condition we really get a symphony and not a lot of different instruments playing simultaneously. I never did care for the melting pot metaphor, but genuine assimilation *to one another*—not to Anglo-saxondom—seems to be essential to an America. That each cultural section should maintain its distinctive literary and artistic traditions seems to be most desirable, but in order that it might have the more to contribute to others.⁴²¹

Dewey's approval was conditional, but at the same time it reassured Kallen of the approval of one of America's most important philosophers. Essayist and public intellectual Randolph Bourne acknowledged his indebtedness to Kallen in "Trans-National America," published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and again in "The Jew and Trans-National America," published in the *Menorah Journal*.⁴²² Kallen's friend and mentor, Harvard psychologist Edwin Holt, thanked him for sending his articles and reflected on his hopeful ending: "Your articles in the *Nation* are very profound and interesting. I wish that 'the dominant classes in America' shall 'want such a society.' But I have misgivings. I stake no hopes on anything good com[ing] out of us for many generations yet."⁴²³ Kallen was also pleased to learn, as he noted in a letter to Henry Hurwitz, that his article had attracted the notice of the President of the United States: "Democracy vs. Melting Pot seems have to created [a] stir. I'm told even [President Woodrow] Wilson has mentioned it."⁴²⁴

Second, Kallen was very active on the lecture circuit. He addressed Jewish students on university campuses across America, intent on promoting the Menorah movement and building the Zionist movement. His cross-country touring schedule was grueling, and ended up invaliding him for a time. In a one-week period alone, from January 27 to February 3 (his first article in the *Nation* appeared just two weeks later, on the 18th), he delivered no fewer

⁴²¹ Dewey to Kallen, March 31, 1915.

⁴²² Bourne, "Trans-National America"; Bourne, "The Jew and Trans-National America."

⁴²³ Holt to Kallen, April 20, 1915.

⁴²⁴ Kallen to Hurwitz, 1915.

than nine different addresses to students in California, and attended a half dozen other meetings. Among the topics he spoke on was "Democracy vs. the Melting-Pot," which he delivered in San Francisco on January 29th, 1915.⁴²⁵

Third, Kallen engaged with a reading public in two consecutive issues of the *Nation*. Here he sought to cultivate a receptive climate of public opinion among the liberal intellectual readership of the *Nation*, an intellectual weekly magazine of opinion, published then as a weekly supplement to the daily *New York Evening Post*. The *Nation* typically covered a wide range of topics, from current events to literature, science, and philosophy. Its subscription numbers were, by its own admission, rather small, but it prided itself on its disproportionate influence and its educational appeal: "[T]hose whom it taught and inspired were all the time going out to teach and inspire others," read an editorial on the occasion of the *Nation*'s semi-centennial in 1915. "In the colleges it was a power with the choicer natures; on more than one farm it was a college to awakening intelligences denied a college education."⁴²⁶ Kallen likely saw it as a venue to nurture the creation of an alternative public opinion to that of the conservative readership enjoyed by Ross. Although his article was a response to Ross, their different publishing venues (one, conservative, and the other, liberal) shows that they addressed different reading publics. Kallen did not try to convince a public already swayed to Ross's point of view; he attempted to foster an alternative body of public opinion.

This third tactic, however, did not result in the kind of impact for which he had hoped. Despite the fact that the *Nation* afforded Kallen a substantial twenty-four columns of space over the course of two issues (thirteen columns in the first installment), there was very little

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ "The 'Nation's' Jubilee."

response to his article in the popular press. The *Nation* itself carried no other articles on the topic afterwards; it focused its attention on the war and the issues that it raised. The English-language Jewish press appears to have taken the most interest in him.⁴²⁷ The *American Israelite* was delighted with the prominent public forum Kallen had been accorded: "Prof. Edward A. Ross, whose unjust attacks on the Jews the *Israelite* refuted in its issue of September 30, found a very able opponent in Dr. Horace M. Kallen of the University of Minnesota," read an editorial following the appearance of Kallen's first article.⁴²⁸ "It is a source of gratification that a paper of the standing of the New York *Nation* allows to Dr. Kallen's argument thirteen columns of space.... We are glad that the championship of the Jewish immigrant is in such able hands and receives the advantage of such a prominent public forum."⁴²⁹ Nevertheless, the *Israelite* qualified its approbation of Kallen: "We may be pardoned for the suggestion that Jews, more than anybody else, should welcome men of such brilliant attainments as Brandeis and Kallen, and gladly extend to them the freedom of expounding their views which is granted to them before a larger public, though these men may differ with the views held by the majority of Jews on the religious interpretation of our cause."⁴³⁰ It intimated that the ideological divide separating Kallen from Reform Judaism would normally preclude the *Israelite's* receptivity to him, but there was a pressing need to provide a united front against antisemites.

The *American Hebrew* offered a different qualification in its review. It observed that Kallen had published "a striking article" written to oppose the views of those who hold that

⁴²⁷ This study is focused upon the matrix of relationships with which Kallen was primarily involved. "His" public were readers of the English-language Jewish press, as I note in chapter one. Exploring reactions to Kallen in the Yiddish and Hebrew presses would, however, be an interesting study in itself.

⁴²⁸ Kallen and Ross were colleagues at the University of Wisconsin.

⁴²⁹ "Editorial."

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

all immigrant differences will be obliterated by the forces of Americanism. Its interest naturally being slanted towards Jews in particular, it reprinted those parts of Kallen's article that specifically discussed Jews.⁴³¹ A separate editorial was carried in that same issue of the *American Hebrew* that focused attention on his sociological thesis:

In short, Prof. Kallen would have the United States, instead of playing "Yankee Doodle" on a penny whistle, conduct a grand concerto in which all the elements of the nation can contribute their share. The picture is a pleasing one, but we fancy that Prof. Kallen rather underrates the influence of American surroundings on even the newer immigration and exaggerates the permanent effect of ethnic diversity.... But there can be no doubt that his thesis is true of the new immigration for the next generation or so, and his careful analysis of the sociological consequences deserves widespread attention.... It is signally appropriate that so careful a study should come from a son of the "new immigration."⁴³²

The *American Hebrew* reacted positively to his orchestra metaphor, but it, too, registered qualified support. Its reservation, however, was not ideological, but sociological. It suggested that the social forces of assimilation would eventually erode the boundaries of ethnic diversity. His thesis, it opined, was therefore valid only "for the next generation or so." At this stage in his career, the record from the English-language Jewish press shows that, with respect to his acceptance as a social critic and politically active public intellectual, he had begun to acquire what Bourdieu calls "social capital" within the Jewish community. But the absence of reaction to his article in the non-Jewish press indicates that he had not as yet gained much attention outside of that community.⁴³³

⁴³¹ "Democracy versus the Melting Pot."

⁴³² "Editorial: 'The Orchestration of Humanity.'"

⁴³³ This observation applies strictly to Kallen's presence in the popular press. Kallen's professional and academic credentials as a philosopher and psychologist were already well-established within their respective professional fields, but our interest lies in tracing Kallen's struggle to use that authority to formulate and guide public opinion on a variety of issues.

The Social Application of Natural Selection

Kallen first presented his mature thesis to the first joint meeting of the American and Western Philosophical Associations, held at the University of Chicago in December 1914.⁴³⁴ The abstract of his paper was published in the February 18, 1915 issue of *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, the same date as the first installment of his "Democracy versus the Melting-Pot" in the *Nation*.⁴³⁵ Significantly, the title of Kallen's presentation before the Philosophical Associations had been "Democracy *and* the Melting-Pot," not *versus* (emphasis mine). The wording change signals a change in writing style, towards a combative rhetoric.

In "Democracy and the Melting-Pot," Kallen identified three phases through which the meaning of "democracy" had passed in modern times. The first phase was the idea of basic equality for all, together with the creation of the concept of the individual. The second phase characterized the present age (the 1910s), and was illustrated by current progressive party politics. Attention was fixed upon society, rather than the individual.

"[Democracy]...insists that government is an instrument aiming at the welfare of the governed and that the machinery of government must be such...as to be easily abandonable when it proves inefficacious. But it tends in practice toward the suppression of individualities, the centralization of power, and the hypostasis of instruments."⁴³⁶ Democracy in this stage, he wrote, "is instrumental and corrective, not intrinsic in its significance."⁴³⁷ The growth of

⁴³⁴ First, Kallen attended the Third Annual Convention of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association held at the University of Cincinnati on December 23-24, 1914, and then went from there to Chicago to attend this philosophy convention held from December 28-30, 1914. Even his travel itinerary shows how integrated the Jewish and the non-Jewish fields of his life were.

⁴³⁵ Abstract in Bush, "The Joint Meeting of the American and Western Philosophical Associations."

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 95.

industry and communications, together with the pressures of assimilation, he opined, had led to the illusory belief that America is a "melting-pot," "the womb of a newer and happier race, etc."⁴³⁸

The reality, he asserted, is that America is far from homogenous. Urban and rural populations were geographically, industrially, and socially stratified, and American ethnic groups retained their "distinct physical and cultural heredity" and tended not to intermarry, he claimed.⁴³⁹ Americanization, in fact, amounts to little more than superficial imitation.⁴⁴⁰ Consciousness of this reality, he argued, may lead to the development of a new, third phase in the meaning of democracy, which "may lead to a restoration of its intrinsicity."⁴⁴¹ This new phase would understand that the United States "is, in fact, *states*, a federation of politically and ethnically diversified peoples, who as they become more prosperous become more self-conscious and nationalistic. All in all, this is as it should be.... The freedom of self-development implied in the Declaration is now conceived as the freedom of a *social* self, this self is at its broadest efficacy ethnic."⁴⁴² Thus, as Kallen conceived it, democracy should be understood as a cooperative federation of nationalities.

The changes in the conception of democracy that Kallen charted in his presentation, which explained and situated the idea of the "melting-pot" as a consequence springing from the second phase, justifies the title as "Democracy and the Melting-Pot." The article that he published in the *Nation*, however, contained no reference to gradual developments in conceptions of democracy. There he presented a bluntly provocative rhetoric, a binary

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

opposition between "democracy" and its antithesis, the "melting-pot." From the very title, the reading audience was asked to make the simple choice between right and wrong.

Democracy's "intrinsicity," as he developed the idea in "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," derived from evolutionary discourse, which had become the driver for socio-economic and political theories. Both Kallen and Ross accepted the notion that racial and cultural traits were inseparable from each other and were heritable, but a close examination of their divergent claims shows that they had different underlying assumptions. Ross emphasized competition in society, citing the "modern competitive order,"⁴⁴³ whereas Kallen highlighted the value of cooperation.

Ross began his *The Old World in the New* by highlighting the defining role of the struggle for existence: "When you empty a barrel of fish fry into a new stream there is a sudden sharpening of their struggle for existence. So, when people submit themselves to totally strange conditions of life, Death whets his scythe, and those who survive are a new kind of 'fittest.'"⁴⁴⁴ In his construction of America, the pioneers were a noble and hardy stock, whose value and mettle were proved by prevailing against hostile environmental forces. The "sifting of the wilderness" resulted in improved American stock "fiber" that was passed on to their descendants. "It is such selection that explains in part the extraordinary blooming of the colonies after the cruel initial period was over."⁴⁴⁵ His evaluation of each immigrant group was, in essence, an assessment of their relative ability to contribute to the survival worthiness of the American stock, and each group was found wanting. Based upon his racial analysis, he then drew pessimistic conclusions concerning the economic, political, and social effects of

⁴⁴³ Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People*, 30.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

immigration, and ended with the warning that the mixing of "American blood" with "immigrant blood" would result in dysgenic selection.

Ross identified specific heritable mental, behavioral, and physical characteristics that attached to various immigrant groups—the Celtic Irish, the Germans, the Scandinavians, the Italians, the Slavs, the eastern European Hebrews, and other so-called "lesser" immigrant groups. He imagined himself to be a dispassionate, fair-minded and objective scientific observer of each race's traits. His inclusion of eastern European Jews in this listing reveals his belief that they were primarily a nationality, rather than a faith group. In this regard, Kallen and Ross shared the same basic assumption, since Kallen also viewed the Jews as, first and foremost, a nationality. Ross, however, was particularly focused upon the provenance of eastern Europe because of the larger question of the assimilability of these new immigrants: "It is too soon yet to foretell whether or not this vast and growing body of Jews from eastern Europe is to melt and disappear in the American population just as numbers of Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French Jews in our early days became blent with the rest of the people."⁴⁴⁶

Ross described these immigrant Jews in stereotypical terms: "None can beat the Jew at a bargain, for through all the intricacies of commerce he can scent his profit."⁴⁴⁷ He identified "intellectuality," a "combinative imagination," and "abstractness" as specifically Hebrew racial traits, and added, "The Jew has little feeling for the particular. He cares little for pets."⁴⁴⁸ These oddly specific traits were, he believed, objective facts. He believed that American upper-crust society's discriminatory practices against Jews were a natural reaction

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., 167.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 160.

to their racially determined objectionable behaviors: "In New York the [race] line is drawn against the Jews in hotels, resorts, clubs, and private schools, and constantly this line hardens and extends. They cry 'Bigotry' but bigotry has little or nothing to do with it. What is disliked in the Jews is not their religion but certain ways and manners."⁴⁴⁹ Nevertheless, although Ross found discrimination against immigrant Jews to be understandable, he objected to the "cruel prejudice" of "all lump condemnations," and opined that America could absorb "thirty or forty thousand Hebrews from eastern Europe" per year, "without any marked growth of race prejudice."⁴⁵⁰ Beyond that number, he warned, "there will be trouble."⁴⁵¹ He concluded by holding open the possibility that America, "the strongest solvent Jewish separatism has ever encountered,"⁴⁵² could work its melting pot magic and, through mixed marriages, "end the Jews as a distinctive ethnic strain."⁴⁵³ Aside from one passing comment imputing "race prejudice" to Ross,⁴⁵⁴ Kallen did not directly address his antisemitic calumnies, possibly because he desired his article to be read as a call for social change and not merely as a defense of Jews.

Kallen attacked Ross's claim of American racial homogeneity, as we shall see below, and challenged his conclusion that, were the immigration of eastern European Jews sufficiently curtailed, the "distinctive ethnic strain" of Jews would likely dissolve in the melting pot of America. Ross's focus upon the natural and heritable physical, mental, and behavioral characteristics of races placed these groups squarely in the natural world, subject to the driving force of competitive selection. Kallen, although he acknowledged the role of

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 164.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 166.

⁴⁵⁴ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915, 193.

competitive natural selection in the natural world, believed more fundamentally in the affirmation of diversity implied by natural selection. Darwin expressed this idea in his famous metaphor of an entangled bank: "It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us."⁴⁵⁵

Kallen accepted the Darwinian idea that morality derived from the natural principle of social cooperation revealed in nature's web of connectivity, and that, therefore, increased social diversity in turn implied the increase of a balanced interdependency.⁴⁵⁶ Morality, or social cooperation, is "established as natural, inevitable, [and] coincident with life taken as a bundle of interests."⁴⁵⁷ As Kallen had understood Perry to say, cooperative morality, expressed as federative democracy, was a natural extension and consequence of life because it ultimately supported the further growth and diversification of life.⁴⁵⁸ Survival, Kallen wrote in more than one place, is not enough. He asserted as early as 1906 that a group's existence had to be morally justified.⁴⁵⁹ Judgment concerning the adequate moral justification for survival hinged upon the extent to which the survival of one contributed to the continued flourishing of diversity. In this light, cooperation, rather than competition, ultimately supported the natural process of life's continual diversification.

⁴⁵⁵ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 360.

⁴⁵⁶ Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*.

⁴⁵⁷ Kallen, "The Moral Economy: The Immutable Facts of Life and Social Intercourse."

⁴⁵⁸ See chapter one.

⁴⁵⁹ Kallen, "The Ethics of Zionism."

Kallen's primary interest in Darwinism lay in what he perceived to be its philosophical application. For him, natural selection's social significance rested in what it teaches rather than in what it does. From the basic observation that diversity is a fundamental fact of nature and that cooperation and interdependency facilitate further diversification, a social principle of cooperative morality expressed in federative democracy followed. Ross, by way of contrast, perceived in natural selection a different social significance. It directed the physical development of races. Kallen did not accept Ross's premise that natural selection was physically operative in the social sphere. As we shall see, by dismantling the scientific premises supporting Ross's claims, he attempted to demonstrate that natural selection would not lead to the end of ethnic distinctiveness or to the creation of a new and homogeneous American race.

Evolution and Rhetoric

In "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot," Kallen took up the gauntlet thrown down by Ross in *The Old World in the New*.⁴⁶⁰ Ross's central claim was that, through the pressures of absorbing millions of immigrants, and as a result of inter-ethnic marriages and breeding, the "native white stock" of America would be driven to extinction. Two drivers of Darwinian evolution—population pressure and sexual selection—would destroy the American Anglo-Saxon stock and replace it with a new and inferior hybrid American race. As we shall now see, Kallen's rhetorical strategy was to discredit Ross's argument from natural selection. He argued that there was no such thing as biological American stock. He also tried to disarm the

⁴⁶⁰ That Kallen's article is a rebuttal to Ross's book is made clear by his naming Ross numerous times in his article. The *Nation* provided the publishing information for *The Old World in the New* in a footnote on the first column, together with the list price of \$2.40, for any interested reader who might care to purchase it.

alarms raised by Ross concerning population pressure, which, in the natural world, helps to drive natural selection. Finally, he addressed the issue of sexual selection, which drove the hopes of Americanizers who looked forward to the creation of a new American race, and drove the fears of racist eugenicists like Ross, who feared the weakening of American stock. He concluded that both groups were misguided, and that their attachment to the melting-pot ideal had blinded them to the heterogeneous reality of America. Instead, he urged the recognition of the emergence of a new democratic order of a cooperative federation of nationalities, joined together by their common commitment to American ideals. The strength of his rhetoric rests upon the cultural authority of evolutionary discourse, and, specifically, in his ability to wrest the discourse of natural selection from the cause of xenophobic nativists like Ross.

Kallen attacked Ross's claim that the core and essential American identity is rooted in Anglo-Saxon racial homogeneity, ostensibly threatened by the immigrant invasion. He wrote that Ross presumed that only Americans of British descent like himself were native white American stock, but that history shows that America grew out of a plurality of nationalities, each imbued with like-mindedness and self-consciousness, their psychophysical inheritance, and each of which had long ago become American: "Frenchmen and Germans, in Louisiana and in Pennsylvania, regarded themselves as the cultural peers of the British, and because of their own common ancestry, their like-mindedness and self-consciousness, they have retained a large measure of their individuality and spiritual autonomy to this day, after generations of unrestricted and mobile contact and a century of political union with the dominant British populations."⁴⁶¹ American civilization, he argued, is the aggregate product of many

⁴⁶¹ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915, 191.

nationalities, all of which exhibit the inalienable qualities of like-mindedness and self-consciousness."⁴⁶² Ross's America, a nation born from homogenous Anglo-Saxon stock, was a fantasy. His fear that natural selection would wreak dysgenic havoc on American Anglo-Saxon stock was little more than a chimera.

Having discredited the notion of racial homogeneity in the nation's history, Kallen turned his attention to the question of American racial homogeneity in the future. Focusing his attention on the notion of "Americanization," he observed that the term connotes "the fusion of the various bloods, and a transmutation by 'the miracle of assimilation' of Jews, Slavs, Poles, Frenchmen, Germans, Hindus, Scandinavians into beings similar in background, tradition, outlook, and spirit to the descendants of the British colonists."⁴⁶³ The goal, he clarified, was to absorb that Americanism whose "spiritual expression" is found in the "New England school."⁴⁶⁴ Proponents of this ideal, he explained, believe the goal of assimilation would be attained through education, and, more importantly, through intermarriage, which would blend "all the European stocks" into a new "American race."⁴⁶⁵

Both racist nativists and optimistic Americanizers believed in the future evolution of a new American race, albeit with different understandings of its significance. For Ross and his ilk, it was something to fear. For liberal proponents of the melting pot, it pointed to "a newer and better being whose qualities and ideals shall be the qualities and ideals of the contemporary American of British ancestry."⁴⁶⁶ Both the hopes and the fears attached to this future development, Kallen asserted, were groundless. There would be no new American

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 192.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 193.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

race. Noting the prevalence of ethnic stratification in the country as a whole, he remarked that "the likelihood of a new 'American' race is remote enough, and the fear of it unnecessary. But equally remote also is the possibility of a universalization of the inwardness of the old American life. Only the externals succeed in passing over."⁴⁶⁷ Moreover, Kallen argued, the intrinsic and ineradicable qualities that attach to ethnicity will, in the end, assert themselves no matter how one might try to deny them. Those who appear to be Americanized, like certain Jewish writers, he wrote, "protest too much."⁴⁶⁸ They tout it "like an achievement, a tour de force," but nevertheless reveal in their writing "a dualism and the strain to overcome it."⁴⁶⁹ Even Ross's anxiety regarding American Anglo-Saxon civilization, he wrote, is a case in point of the inevitability of "ethnic nationality returned to consciousness."⁴⁷⁰ The non-British elements in American society have provoked a reawakening of his ethnic self-consciousness.

The hopes and fears pinned to the coming of a new American race, Kallen argued, ignore a basic fact of nature. Ethnicity is heritable and an inalienable quality within every individual: "Behind him in time and tremendously in him in quality are his ancestors; around him in space are his relatives and kin, looking back with him to a remoter common ancestry. In all these he lives and moves and has his being. They constitute his, literally, *natio*."⁴⁷¹ The term "American," by way of contrast, functions simply as "an adjective of similarity:"

Similar environments, similar occupations, do, of course, generate similarities: "American" is an adjective of similarity applied to Anglo-Saxons, Irish, Jews, Germans, Italians, and so on. But the similarity is one of place and institution,

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 194.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 193. Kallen refers to Mary Antin and Israel Zangwill, among others.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 194. Kallen's perception of the recurrent resurgence of ethnic consciousness is strikingly similar to that more recently observed by Hutchinson. See chapter two.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

acquired, not inherited, and hence not transmitted. Each generation has, in fact, to become "Americanized" afresh, and, withal, inherited nature has a way of redirecting nurture.⁴⁷²

American identity, in other words, takes on cultural shape only in the hyphenate form, prefixed by the ethnic group of origin (thus, e.g., Irish-American, Jewish-American, German-American). "Inherited nature," meaning the psychophysical inheritance of ethnicity, will assert itself. Racial homogeneity, then, neither existed in the past nor will it exist in the future. Ross's claims for the past and fears for the future, Kallen asserted, were both without basis in fact.

On Population Pressure

Ross wrote with alarm about the "undue growth of cities," which was exponentially increasing the demographic pressures on "American stock."⁴⁷³ In his estimation, "American stock" in the cities had been steadily diminishing, while "foreign stock" had come to constitute three-fourths of the cities' populations.⁴⁷⁴ He provided statistics from the 1910 Census on the relative distribution of "native white stock," "foreign stock," and "foreign-born." American urban life, as Ross saw it, was infested with foreign stock, and was now a tale of "congestion, misliving, segregation, corruption, and confusion."⁴⁷⁵ This, however, was only true of the urban crush created by immigrants in "motley groups like Pittsburgh." He opined that in cities like Indianapolis, a "native center" where American stock still prevailed, such social issues did not exist.⁴⁷⁶ The trend, he feared, was only getting worse. Native white

⁴⁷² Ibid., 193.

⁴⁷³ Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People*, 239.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 240.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

stock was being literally crowded out of its natural environment, and supplanted by a morally degenerate alternative. He believed that the general mixing of people together in concentrated urban areas had seeded the growth of cultural disintegration. The urban melting pot created a kind of internal rot that was beginning to become manifest in public life.

Although Kallen granted that the massive influx of immigrants in recent decades had wrought a demographic transformation in America, he could not have disagreed more with Ross's pessimistic observations. He reiterated the argument that he had made in "Democracy and the Melting-Pot," that the American urban environment was patently not a melting pot. He argued that in both urban and rural populations, ethnic groups were stratified "first of all geographically, the layers of the races of Europe following the streams of migration westward; then, industrially; different nationalities follow different employment, and, finally, socially, the upper classes being in the long run identical with the earlier comers."⁴⁷⁷ The different nationalities that immigrated to America tended to stick together in their own groups, not as ideological separatists or isolationists, but naturally, as their psychophysical inheritance asserted itself.⁴⁷⁸

The qualities of city life that so alarmed Ross reflected no deep internal, cultural rot. These had only external and superficial significance: "The *common* city life, which depends upon like-mindedness, is not inward, corporate, and inevitable," Kallen explained, "but external, inarticulate, and incidental, a reaction to the need of amusement and the need of protection, not the expression of a unity of heritage, mentality, and interest."⁴⁷⁹ City life was not a proving ground of one native, settled race facing persistent demographic pressures on

⁴⁷⁷ Bush, "The Joint Meeting of the American and Western Philosophical Associations," 95.

⁴⁷⁸ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915, 220.

⁴⁷⁹ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915, 192.

that environment. It yielded no single unity of mind that could support this charge. The city was an environment in which different ethnic groups negotiated their own needs and interests in relation to each other, in the political and educational spaces they shared. Concessions to "the Irish vote," "the Jewish vote," "the German vote" were a feature of political life, as was the existence of compromise school committees that represented different ethnic groups. The city, Kallen believed, could in fact be a model of cooperative democracy in action, not a hostile environment in which natural selection, operating through the forces of population pressure, would threaten the life of native white stock.

On Sexual Selection

Another alarming aspect about the melting pot for Ross was dysgenic sexual selection. He warned of the general diminishment of the good looks of Americans through miscegenation: "It is reasonable to expect an early falling off in the frequency of good looks in the American people," Ross wrote. "It is unthinkable that so many persons with crooked faces, coarse mouths, bad noses, heavy jaws, and low foreheads can mingle their heredity with ours without making personal beauty yet more rare among us than it actually is."⁴⁸⁰ He noted with particular concern the natural physical weakness of Jews: "On the physical side the Hebrews are the polar opposite of our pioneer breed. Not only are they undersized and weak-muscled, but they shun bodily activity and are exceedingly sensitive to pain."⁴⁸¹ He contrasted them with American stock: "Natural selection, frontier life, and the example of the red man produced in America a type of great physical self-control, gritty, uncomplaining, merciless to the body through fear of becoming 'soft.' To this roaming, hunting, exploring,

⁴⁸⁰ Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People*, 287.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 289.

adventurous breed what greater contrast is there than the denizens of the Ghetto?"⁴⁸²

American stature, physique, vitality, and morality were therefore going to suffer from the admixture of immigrant blood. He believed that "the competition of low-standard immigrants is the root cause of the mysterious 'sterility' of Americans." American fecundity suffered, he argued, chiefly where immigrants arrived.⁴⁸³ Every race, he wrote, after it has become Americanized, is attacked by "fatal sterility."⁴⁸⁴ Ross concluded that the forces of sexual selection were contributing to race suicide: "A people that has no more respect for its ancestors and no more pride of race than this deserves the extinction that surely awaits it."⁴⁸⁵

Kallen's rebuttal to this consisted of two parts. First, he argued that incidences of mixed marriage were statistically insignificant: "[I]n the mass, neither he [the immigrant] nor his children nor his children's children lose their ethnic individuality. For marriage is determined by sexual selection and by propinquity, and the larger the town, the lesser the likelihood of mixed marriage."⁴⁸⁶ Ethnic groups naturally preferred endogamy, he believed. Second, he appealed to history to make the point that mixed breeding had never been a factor in the development of ethnic groups:

The notion that the [Americanization] programme might be realized by radical and even enforced miscegenation, by the creation of the melting-pot by law, and thus by the development of the new "American race," is, as Mr. Ross points out, as mystically optimistic as it is ignorant. In historic times, so far as we know, no new ethnic types have originated, and what we know of breeding gives us no assurance of the disappearance of the old types in favor of the new, only the addition of a new type, if it succeeds in surviving, to the already existing older ones. Biologically, life does not unify; biologically, life

⁴⁸² Ibid., 290.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 300.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 304.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915, 194.

diversifies; and it is sheer ignorance to apply social analogies to biological processes.⁴⁸⁷

He asserted that ethnicities are permanent, and, in a sense, primordial. In his view, no new ethnic groups had originated since historic times. They predated civilization. Theoretically, he allowed, a new ethnic type could arise through mixed breeding, but this was not likely to happen. He contended that the Americanization program would not lead to "a unison of ethnic types."⁴⁸⁸ Rather, it would at most lead to "a unison of social and historic interests," but even this would come at a great cost. It would be "established by the complete cutting-off of the ancestral memories of our populations."⁴⁸⁹ It required, in his view, enforced homogenization, which would only result in what he had described as a dysfunctional "dualism and the strain to overcome it."

Having argued that natural selection processes did not play a role in the creation or development of ethnicity, Kallen presented his alternative vision. He believed that his solution to the problem of creating social cohesion affirmed the biological impulse towards diversity. He felt that the time had passed that the New England Brahmins could claim to represent the American type: "At the present time," he wrote, "there is no dominant American mind."⁴⁹⁰ The reality with which America had not yet come to grips was that the *natio*, or ethnic group, was "the fundamental fact of American life."⁴⁹¹ America was *de facto* composed of a plurality of ethnicities, and it must therefore adopt a prospective rather than a retrospective stance with respect to its cultural cohesion. He took the Jews to be the

⁴⁸⁷ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915, 219.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 217.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

paradigmatic example of ethnicity asserting itself despite the outward appearance of assimilation:

[O]nce the wolf is driven from the door and the Jewish immigrant takes his place in our society a free man and an American, he tends to become all the more a Jew. The cultural unity of his race, history, and background is only continued by the new life under the new conditions... In sum, the most eagerly American of the immigrant groups are also the most autonomous and self-conscious in spirit and culture.⁴⁹²

The social experiment of enforcing Americanization, which had been self-imposed by the Jews themselves, had resulted only in an even greater sense of autonomy and self-consciousness.

Thus, Kallen arrived at his fundamental thesis: "Starting with our existing ethnic and cultural groups," he wrote, America as a nation should free and strengthen "the strong forces actually in operation."⁴⁹³ It should "seek to provide conditions under which each [ethnicity] may attain the perfection that is proper to its kind."⁴⁹⁴ What troubled Ross and so many others, he wrote, "is not really inequality; what troubles them is *difference*."⁴⁹⁵ America, he countered, must embrace diversity. Diversity, he insisted, was guaranteed by evolutionary fiat. He identified psychophysical inheritance as the natural and determining feature of the *natio*, or ethnic group. In today's parlance, we might call it an assertion of "ethno-racial" consciousness. Externally America might succeed in cutting off the immigrant from the past. "Not so internally," he asserted. "[W]hatever else he changes, he cannot change his grandfather."⁴⁹⁶ This essentialism, however, was only tenuously tied to a biological process.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 218.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 219.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 18, 1915, 194.

His primary purpose was to distinguish between temporal and spatial social settings, and to assert the salience of memory in the formation of an individual's and a group's identity.

Although Kallen did not elaborate on this point here, he did so at length elsewhere. In "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem" (1918), he wrote:

I have been accustomed to phrase [the social fact of individuality] in the formula that, although you can change everything about you, ... although you can change almost any connection which you establish with your environment, there is one connection that you do not establish and you can not change: you can not change your grandfathers. Now this melodramatic way of phrasing the fact of heredity implies simply, that human individuality, that, indeed, the individuality of any living thing is a special kind of social fact. And, as a social fact, the individuality of any living thing can not be detached from a social setting in time, even if it can be detached from a social setting in space.... Heredity is only the foundation of personality. Memory is its generation and achievement. A man is his biography. Individuality itself, as that begins from the day of birth to the present moment, is a thing which is to be defined by its temporal relationships. What you were not only determines what you are, but is what you are. Your past is present in you, and if your past should not be present in you, if it be not active in you, you would not be you.... When a group forgets its history it has lost its social memory, it has lost its individuality. When an individual loses his personality, his memory, the contents of his biography, he has lost his self-hood; he is merely a body without a mind.⁴⁹⁷

Biological heredity, the subject of Ross's concern in *The Old World in the New*, was only the "foundation of personality" for Kallen. Ross, as we have said, ultimately placed humanity at the mercy of the mechanistic and impersonal forces of natural selection. In such a universe, one's past, one's memory, had no defining role to play. There was little to no role for the personality; there was only a determining racial typology. Kallen, however, insisted that we transcend our biologically determined selves through the faculty of memory. Memory is the defining feature of individuality, whether considered for the group or for a single individual person.

⁴⁹⁷ Kallen, "Eugenic Aspects of the Jewish Problem: Part 1," 558–559.

This is what was implied by ancestral endowment, and this is what Kallen pointed to in the conclusion to "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot:"

What is inalienable in the life of mankind is its intrinsic positive quality—its psychophysical inheritance. Men may change their clothes, their politics, their wives, their religions, their philosophies, to a greater or lesser extent: they cannot change their grandfathers. Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, in order to cease being Jews or Poles or Anglo-Saxons, would have to cease to be. The selfhood which is inalienable in them, and for the realization of which they require "inalienable" liberty, is ancestrally determined, and the happiness which they pursue has its form implied in ancestral endowment. This is what, actually, democracy in operation assumes. There are human capacities which it is the function of the state to liberate and to protect.⁴⁹⁸

Democracy, then, by taking into consideration the value of difference, the prevalence of diversity, and the intrinsically positive role that psychophysical inheritance played in the life of people, would promote a government characterized by cooperation rather than competition. Kallen believed that democracy, once properly aligned with biological processes, had the potential to usher in a new moral economy that would value diversity without itself descending into the competitive natural order of Ross's universe, of Tennyson's "Nature, red in tooth and claw,"⁴⁹⁹ of the war of all against all.

A Time of Transition

"Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot" marks an important moment in Kallen's biography. He had begun a foray into the public sphere, outside the confines of academia, as a politically engaged public intellectual. Although he had been at the University of Wisconsin since 1911, he had been unhappy there almost from the beginning. He resigned in April 1918. The immediate impetus for his departure was the lack of academic freedom on

⁴⁹⁸ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," February 25, 1915, 220.

⁴⁹⁹ "In Memoriam A.H.H. by Lord Alfred Tennyson."

American campuses that peaked during the war years. He advocated for the rights of pacifists at a time when it had practically become treason to suggest that America need not enter the war. He quickly found himself at odds with both the faculty and administration of the university.⁵⁰⁰ His departure had been building for some time, however. His friend and mentor, Harvard psychologist Edwin Holt, reflecting on his impending departure, wrote: "I regret very much on some accounts that 'the axe has fallen'! Though on others I am not so sure that it is not a fortunate thing to have the Gordian knot cut."⁵⁰¹ Kallen appears to have decided to bring things to a head with the publication of a politically volatile piece in the *Nation* in March of 1918.⁵⁰² As he wrote to his friend at the *Dial*, editor George Donlin, "My most recent irregularity is my article in the *Nation* on the political situation in Wisconsin. They may kick me out before I get out in consequence. That is one reason for hurrying my resignation if that is possible."⁵⁰³

The year 1918 was a trying time for Kallen. His father had passed away in December 1917, and his future career was uncertain. An examination of his correspondence from that fateful year shows the turmoil in his life. He began to work through the conditions under which he would become a politically engaged social scientist, philosopher, psychologist, and author. In April 1918, he wrote to Holt about the uncertainties he faced:

I shall be out of this, I think, by the end of the month. Precisely what to do I do not know for the present—for the present there is some work in the way of propaganda and war stuff which may keep me going for a little while. Of course I am more anxious than ever to get into the affray and to have a peck at the Hun: But mostly he needs mental killing and I suspect that I shall continue

⁵⁰⁰ "Dr. Horace Kallen, Philosopher, Dies"; Konvitz, "In Praise of Hyphenation and Orchestration," 18.

⁵⁰¹ Holt to Kallen, February 28, 1918.

⁵⁰² Kallen, "Politics, Profits, and Patriotism in Wisconsin."

⁵⁰³ Kallen to Donlin, March 18, 1918; Kallen is referring to Kallen, "Politics, Profits, and Patriotism in Wisconsin."

with that. Certainly I do not want to have any teaching responsibilities, that is a deadly thing under any circumstances.⁵⁰⁴

He was still relatively unsettled in 1919, as he indicated to Rachel Jastrow, the wife of psychologist Joseph Jastrow and sister to Henrietta Szold: "There is nothing to report except a disorderly turmoil in my career since I left Madison."⁵⁰⁵

Kallen found work with President Wilson's "Inquiry," informally called the "House Commission," a group of academic advisors convened to advise the president on post-war national policy: "On the House Commission I had reports on the Jewish question and on the League of Nations. I was kept busy on that until peace was declared," he wrote to Jastrow. "Then I went into the enterprise of organizing liberal opinion in behalf of the League of Nations—through the League of Free Nations Association. I am still doing a good deal of that, making my living meantime by lecturing to forums etc., and writing. It is not much of a living, but it keeps me going."⁵⁰⁶ He dived into political activism as a writer. He wrote reports for the House Commission, and he published two political treatises supporting Wilson's efforts to create a League of Nations, entitled *The Structure of Lasting Peace* and *The League of Nations Today and Tomorrow*.⁵⁰⁷

It seemed for a short while that Kallen had found a niche as a political propagandist. As he wrote to Jacob Billikopf, executive director of the American Jewish Relief Committee, he believed that he was eminently suited to working on behalf of the American government abroad: "There is hardly anybody, I suspect, who has a more living realization of the positive

⁵⁰⁴ Kallen to Holt, April 9, 1918.

⁵⁰⁵ Kallen to Jastrow, February 28, 1919.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Kallen, *The League of Nations, Today and Tomorrow*; Kallen, *The Structure of Lasting Peace: An Inquiry into the Motives of War and Peace*.

implications of Americanism and of our purposes in the war, than I," he wrote.⁵⁰⁸ In January 1918, he sent President Wilson a copy of *The League of Nations Today and Tomorrow*, the receipt of which was acknowledged by the president's secretary in July. He also requested that Wilson allow him to dedicate his forthcoming publication, *The Structure of Lasting Peace*, to him. Wilson personally responded in September 1918, writing that, although he was appreciative, he had nevertheless to decline: "I hope that you will believe that, though I am obliged to decline, it is through no lack of genuine appreciation. I must decline merely because I cannot venture to associate my name with any particular plan, for fear the association would be misinterpreted. I feel obliged to confine myself in this matter to my own official utterances."⁵⁰⁹

Kallen's direct involvement in American government and politics, however, did not last long. He had simultaneously become involved with a group of intellectuals who were embarking on an exciting new venture in education, the New School for Social Research. With the possibility it offered of allowing him to combine his philosophical activism with teaching, Kallen's professed dislike of teaching evaporated: "At present, I have had a windfall in the way of a collection of lectures for the New School of Social Research," he wrote to Jastrow. "This may become a very great instrument of democratic opinion. I do not know any more about it than I tell you."⁵¹⁰ Kallen's future would soon become tied to the New School, where he remained until his retirement in 1970.

⁵⁰⁸ Kallen to Billikopf, March 5, 1918.

⁵⁰⁹ Wilson to Kallen, September 30, 1918.

⁵¹⁰ Kallen to Jastrow, February 28, 1919.

The *New Republic* and the New School for Social Research

Kallen was not the only academic who was frustrated by the intolerant atmosphere and the growing restrictions on academic freedom on American university campuses. Historians James Harvey Robinson and Charles Beard of Columbia University were among the prominent academics who were outraged by the increasingly restrictive atmosphere. Beard and Robinson resigned from Columbia after colleagues were fired for publicly opposing the United States' entry into World War I. Although they personally supported America's entry into the war, they, like Kallen, opposed the violations of civil liberties and restrictions on freedom of speech that threatened to erode the foundations of American democracy. They quickly found an intellectual home with the intellectual circle associated with the *New Republic*.⁵¹¹

That journal, like the *Nation*, was a weekly magazine of political and cultural commentary with left-of-center leanings. It was founded in 1914 by Herbert Croly, author of the influential *The Promise of American Life* (1909), which attacked *laissez-faire* policies and helped to shape the Progressive Era agenda of increasing government involvement in social reform. For Croly, historian David Levy explains, democracy "implied a machinery actively, persistently, candidly employed on behalf of social and economic amelioration."⁵¹² Croly actively sought out like-minded intellectuals to write for his journal, and now, in the wake of Beard's and Robinson's resignations from Columbia, he began to discuss with them the creation of an alternative to the existing university system, one that would not impose restrictions and would help to train future progressive leaders. Croly organized weekly

⁵¹¹ Rutkoff and Scott, *New School: A History of the New School for Social Research*, 9.

⁵¹² Levy, *Herbert Croly of the New Republic*, 112.

meetings with them, which were attended by leading intellectuals, jurists and philanthropists. Kallen was among Croly's invitees.⁵¹³

Kallen also discussed with Croly the possibility of becoming a correspondent for the *New Republic* in Europe. Croly responded in December 1918: "I should like very much to have an opportunity of talking over with you your proposed trip to Europe and the possibility of doing some work for the *New Republic* there.... I should be very glad to do anything within my power to help you get over there, and I feel sure the work that you would send back would be very useful to the *New Republic*."⁵¹⁴ Kallen got as far as applying for a passport, but the State Department denied his application because it claimed that the *New Republic* was oversupplied with correspondents in Paris.⁵¹⁵

Kallen then turned his attention more fully to the New School for Social Research. On January 20, 1919, Croly sent him a telegram inviting him to teach, and, in February 1919, the New School opened its doors.⁵¹⁶ Its progressive and scientifically-minded founding faculty believed that "advocacy and objectivity were not only compatible, but were of small value when separated," historians Peter Rutkoff and William Scott write. "They saw themselves as advocates of a cosmopolitan and progressive humanism that contrasted profoundly with [Columbia president Nicholas Murray] Butler's defense of the American status quo."⁵¹⁷ The school was an anti-institutional institution that sought to provide a forum for new social critical perspectives on American life. Its aspirations to effect a fundamental social reconstruction were short-lived, however, and, the school was for various reasons

⁵¹³ Rutkoff and Scott, *New School: A History of the New School for Social Research*, 11.

⁵¹⁴ Croly to Kallen, December 21, 1918.

⁵¹⁵ Croly to Kallen, June 12, 1919.

⁵¹⁶ Croly to Kallen, January 20, 1919.

⁵¹⁷ Rutkoff and Scott, *New School: A History of the New School for Social Research*, 17–18.

forced to restructure by 1923. Alvin Johnson, associate editor of the *New Republic*, guided the school toward its new orientation away from social science and toward cultural subjects.⁵¹⁸ It would no longer perceive itself as an instrument of social reform.

By the late 1920s, psychology, art, and literature became the new focus, and courses in these areas were entirely modernist in orientation. Its faculty, which included preeminent modernists like art critic Leo Stein (brother to Gertrude Stein), composer Aaron Copland, writer Waldo Frank, literary critic Gorham Munson, psychoanalyst Sandor Ferenczi, and urban planner Patrick Geddes, among many others, "introduced their students to 'modern' cultural developments even as the New School acted as a patron and forum for their work."⁵¹⁹ Kallen's lectures on Jamesian pragmatism and cultural pluralism, infused with the "modern" perspective, were "legendary," Rutkoff and Scott note. He, together with philosophers Morris Cohen and Sidney Hook "established the school as the platform for pragmatism in the 1930s and 1940s."⁵²⁰ "[T]he New School came to represent 'modernism,'" Rutkoff and Scott observe, "broadly defined as artistic creativity, social research, and democratic reform."⁵²¹ Thus it was that, within the space of a decade, Kallen found himself in the heart of the premier institution in America for the study of modernist art and thought. His ties to modernism in America were thus fostered, albeit indirectly and accidentally, by his relationship with Croly and Johnson, editors of the *New Republic*.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., 79.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 38.

The *Dial*

Kallen's engagement with modernism through print culture went well beyond publishing articles and making professional contacts. This becomes especially clear upon examination of his relationship with the editorial staff of the *Dial* in 1917-18. The *Dial* established itself as a magazine of literary modernism and progressive politics during the second half of the 1910s, making it particularly compatible with his outlook. Kallen played an important role in shaping the direction of the magazine during those years.

The *Dial* was founded in Chicago in 1880 (although its founder claimed it to be a continuation of the original 1840 Transcendentalist publication of that name).⁵²² In 1916, Martyn Johnson, a Chicago decorator who had also been associated with the fledgling *New Republic*, purchased it and reoriented its focus to literary modernism and progressive politics.⁵²³ It changed hands once again in 1919, when Scofield Thayer and James Sibley Watson, Jr. bought it from Johnson. In its final phase, from 1920 until it ceased publication in 1929, it became an important venue in which transatlantic modernist art and literature was introduced to an American audience.⁵²⁴ Kallen's primary interest and involvement with the magazine was in its penultimate phase, during the Johnson years. These were the years in which his blended interest in literary and political matters meshed with the interests of the *Dial*.

⁵²² Bell, *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys, 1960-1980*, 75.

⁵²³ Joost, "The *Dial* in Transition: The End of the Browne Family's Control, 1913-1916," 287-88; Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, 233.

⁵²⁴ Wolin, *The Rhetorical Imagination of Kenneth Burke*, 16-17.

Kallen had in fact already published in the *Dial* before Johnson took over.⁵²⁵ Historian Nicholas Joost suggests that his contribution signals the magazine's transformation at that time. Its reviews and literary criticism, he argues, still revealed "the uneasy survival, passive and compromised, of the genteel tradition," but Kallen's attitude, Joost averred, was "much more liberated and advanced than were the mistrustful qualifications of the reviewers of poetry and fiction."⁵²⁶ Kallen's presence, in other words, presaged the magazine's future orientation.

Johnson published his vision for the *Dial* on January 25, 1917:

In announcing Mr. George Bernard Donlin as Editor the publisher takes occasion to make the following statement of the principles which will inspire the policy of *The Dial*. . . . *The Dial*, under its present management, will endeavor to carry on a fruitful tradition. It will try to meet the challenge of the new time by reflecting and interpreting its spirit—a spirit freely experimental, skeptical of inherited values, ready to examine old dogmas and to submit afresh its sanctions to the test of experience. If criticism is peculiarly needed, it is because criticism, with its sharply intellectual values, its free curiosity, and its necessary concreteness, can share almost equally with creative writing the privilege, of revealing us to ourselves. And in a democracy such as ours no task is more worth while.⁵²⁷

He laid out the conditions for the magazine's modernist orientation: it would reflect critically upon the times, be "skeptical of inherited values," and it would introduce a new "freely experimental" spirit. It was still "a fortnightly journal of literary criticism, discussion, and information," as the front page read, but Johnson made it clear that the magazine saw itself as having a social conscience as well. It had something to contribute towards American democracy. In accordance with its vision, it published articles of literary criticism and

⁵²⁵ Kallen, "Cosmic Systems and Philosophical Imagination."

⁵²⁶ Joost, "The Dial in Transition: The End of the Browne Family's Control, 1913-1916," 283.

⁵²⁷ "An Announcement."

politics. For the next three years, until Thayer and Watson, Jr. transformed it yet again, the magazine retained this blended orientation towards literature and politics.

Kallen was among those whom Johnson recruited from the outset to become regular contributors.⁵²⁸ From that point on, he became an informal consultant, relied upon for his publishing and sales acumen. That he well understood the business of book publishing is evident from his correspondence with Johnson over the proposed publication of his *The Structure of Lasting Peace*. Kallen, who compiled the book from a series of articles being published in the *Dial*, advised Johnson on the timing for its release:

If we are going to print the thing as a *Dial* book, I think that we had better follow the conventional procedure and get the book out a little while before the series is concluded. You know how it goes with the serial novels in the magazines: the books are out an issue or so before the serial is completed. The commercial advantage of that is obvious."⁵²⁹

The plan to publish it as a *Dial* book, as it happens, did not materialize. Johnson made arrangements for its publication with Marshall Jones. Kallen nevertheless prominently featured the book's connection to the *Dial* in the foreword, and wrote that he owed its "inception and completion" to its editor, his "dear friend" Donlin.⁵³⁰

Johnson consulted Kallen regarding his proposal to move the offices of the *Dial* from Chicago to New York:

I think you know that I am placing the *Dial* on the newsstands January 1st? I am also opening a New York office and I have a strong inclination to bring the *Dial* to New York next summer. I find that the salaries and manufacturing costs are cheaper here than in Chicago and the problem of my being here and Donlin there is very complicated. I shall be interested in hearing your reactions to these various ideas.⁵³¹

⁵²⁸ Clayton, *Forgotten Prophet: The Life of Randolph Bourne*, 232.

⁵²⁹ Kallen to Johnson, January 24, 1918.

⁵³⁰ Kallen, *The Structure of Lasting Peace: An Inquiry into the Motives of War and Peace*, vii.

⁵³¹ Johnson to Kallen, December 3, 1917.

Kallen replied that, although "it is fine to place the *Dial* on the newsstands and to have a New York office," he was against moving the operations as a whole. "Things are lost in the shuffle in New York, while the *Dial* in particular has been an asset to the town of Chicago." He advised Johnson to "wait in this matter until we can talk it over."⁵³² In the end, Johnson moved the *Dial* to New York in 1918.

Kallen's involvement in the operations of the *Dial* extended even to the hiring of associate editors. Thorstein Veblen, whom Johnson had wanted to recruit as an associate editor, was poised to accept a job with the War Labor Board. Kallen intervened and persuaded him to move to New York and join the editorial board of the *Dial* in June 1918.⁵³³ He was also responsible for the hiring of an instructor in English at the University of Wisconsin, Clarence Britten, as an associate editor. "Thanks to your rather amazing interest in me," Britten wrote to Kallen, "I am engaged here to assist Stearns.... [I] want to say 'thank you' in superlatives for suggesting me to Johnson."⁵³⁴

Kallen became particularly close with the young Chicago journalist, George B. Donlin, whom Johnson had appointed editor in 1917. Donlin, who was forced to step down when he fell ill with tuberculosis in 1918, looked to Kallen as his mentor. Thus, he wrote to Kallen in 1917: "Now, my dear Kallen, I wish I could express with something like adequacy the gratitude I feel for the encouragement and help you have given me since I came to the *Dial*."⁵³⁵ After Donlin fell ill, Johnson decided to bring on Harold Stearns as editor. He informed Kallen of this in December 1917: "I don't know whether Donlin has written you about his going West for his health. His present plans, I believe, are to leave here about the

⁵³² Kallen to Johnson, December 13, 1917.

⁵³³ Bell, *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys, 1960-1980*, 75.

⁵³⁴ Britten to Kallen, December 28, 1917.

⁵³⁵ Donlin to Kallen, December 13, 1917.

19th. I have been fortunate enough to secure Harold Stearns from the *New Republic*, who, during Donlin's absence, is to carry on the editorial responsibilities under the title of Associate Editor."⁵³⁶

Kallen cautioned that Johnson should reconsider hiring Stearns: "Confidentially, I am uncertain about Stearns," he wrote. "I knew him, I think, when he was in one of my classes at Harvard. As I remember him, he is too temperamental to be quite reliable, but it may be that time has stabilized him. However, hold off if possible and look around."⁵³⁷ Kallen, meanwhile, maintained his correspondence with Donlin and kept him abreast of developments at the *Dial's* offices. In January 1918, he wrote to Donlin:

The *Dial* will I think hold its own, but we are missing you sorely. I spent a couple of days in the office with Johnson, Britten and Stearns. You will need to hold a pretty firm hand on Stearns.... Britten is I think a find.... I daresay Johnson wrote you of the plans to turn the *Dial* into a weekly, as soon as you are strong enough to take hold again. The whole enterprise turns on your getting well.⁵³⁸

But by the end of that year, shortly after Johnson moved the *Dial* to New York, the magazine was struggling financially. Kallen wrote to Donlin that he had "formulated the plans for the reorganization of the *Dial* which it is now carrying out,"⁵³⁹ but those plans did not materialize because Johnson sold it to Thayer and Watson, Jr. in 1919. The Thayer-Watson *Dial* opened a very different chapter in the life of the journal. It would now ignore political issues and focus purely on aesthetics.⁵⁴⁰ With that change, Kallen's centrality to the management of the magazine faded away. His view that modernist art and literary criticism should remain connected to social and political concerns did not reflect the magazine's new vision.

⁵³⁶ Johnson to Kallen, December 11, 1917.

⁵³⁷ Kallen to Johnson, December 13, 1917.

⁵³⁸ Kallen to Donlin, January 11, 1918.

⁵³⁹ Kallen to Donlin, December 2, 1918.

⁵⁴⁰ Joost, *Scofield Thayer and the Dial: An Illustrated History*, 21.

The years from 1917 to 1919 were a time of tremendous upheaval for Kallen, but during that time he made considerable contributions to American intellectual and literary modernism. These contributions were inseparably bound up with print culture. He authored politically and philosophically provocative articles in national, liberal magazines like the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Dial*. He was deeply involved with the editorial staff of the *Dial*, which was devoted to literary modernism and progressive politics. His relationship with Croly of the *New Republic*, a man who helped to shape Progressive Era politics in America, led to his career change, which in turn led ultimately to an even deeper engagement with American modernist art and thought.

Modernism as Life: Kallen at the Intersection of Art, Science, and Publishing

For Kallen, the significance of modernism lay not in isolated aesthetics, but in the interplay of art, science, culture, and politics. Kallen shared this perspective with certain other modernist art critics, like Amelia Defries of the Royal Institution in London, who had a deep interest in modernism and in the intersection of art, science, and culture. Thus, for example, in a 1916 article in the *American Magazine of Art*, Defries, a proponent of civic art, wrote, "The place of art in relation to the life of the community and the city is being recognized by the politician, the biologist, and the sociologist as well as by the artist himself. Over and over again the Prime Mover in the Civic Movement has scorned the Utilitarians who pushed art out of the national life."⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴¹ Defries, "Stephen Haweis as a Civic Artist," 13.

Defries, who would later write a biography of the renowned urban planner Patrick Geddes that would be picked up by Boni & Liveright in New York,⁵⁴² contacted Kallen in 1920, telling him that she had heard he wished "to correspond re[garding] progressive ideas." She wrote that she hoped "soon to see an effort made to organise a Federation or orchestration of all the progressive artists & Scientists, that these workers rather than unskilled labour, should lead."⁵⁴³ The arts, for Defries, as for Kallen, had social implications. She, like him, hoped to see artists and scientists in the vanguard of a socially progressive movement.

Kallen's response indicates his interest in the connection of art to science and industry and its practical bearing on life. The world of the arts, he wrote, reflects the great and growing social conflict in America. This had led him to reflect on "the bearing of art as an institution on the rest of life."⁵⁴⁴ What particularly interested him was the role of the artist as a cultural leader, articulating values and spurring social change. As a social scientist, however, he saw himself more in the role of the art critic than the artist. He drew a striking analogy between the political scientist and the theatre critic in 1923:

May it not be rightly said, then, that political scientists are like critics at the play? Their reports of the performance will be fairly at one in naming the cast and recording the plot. But this naming and tracing is the least important thing about the reports. These become units of force in so far as they incorporate and utter also the reactions of the critics to their performance, their judgments of approval and condemnation. These are agencies in the fate of the play. They have power to make and to break, to sustain and to destroy.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴² Defries, *The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and His Gospel*, 1927; Defries, *The Interpreter Geddes: The Man and His Gospel*, 1928.

⁵⁴³ Defries to Kallen, April 26, 1920.

⁵⁴⁴ Kallen to Defries, June 8, 1920.

⁵⁴⁵ Kallen, "Political Science as Psychology," 191.

Kallen perceived himself as an investigator in much the same way as he described critics at the play. He did not merely observe American social and political life. He asserted judgment as well. He saw himself as having agency in the fate of the political drama of America.

Kallen conceived of *Culture and Democracy in the United States* as a work of political science grounded in psychology. One year before its publication, he made explicit his views on the connection between the sciences, and on the subjectivity and agency of the political scientist, in "Political Science as Psychology," published in the *American Political Science Review*.⁵⁴⁶ Political science, he wrote, is best described as "the attentive response of various temperaments to a special pattern of associative action among men usually called citizenship. It is thus psychology twice over. It is psychology as the behavior of the political scientist; it is psychology as the behavior of the citizen."⁵⁴⁷ The political scientist, he insisted, not only records observations, but also, like a critic at the play, passes judgment on the results. The "distilled essence of a living political science," as he put it, would communicate not only the subject matter, but function at the same time as "an analysis, a judgment, a bid for change."⁵⁴⁸ He saw political science as a force for change because its very presentation compels a reaction. It not only observes a living subject, in other words, but it partakes of the subject itself. It does not merely describe; it is self-consciously part of its own discourse. The facts are self-consciously re-presented, transvaluing the values they describe, providing, as Kallen cited James, "an option, momentous, living, and insecure."⁵⁴⁹

Political science and psychology serve as the foundation for *Culture and Democracy in the United States*. Kallen included his *Nation* article, "Democracy versus the Melting-Pot,"

⁵⁴⁶ Kallen, "Political Science as Psychology."

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 191.

in this collection of six essays, but he had now re-conceptualized its significance. The original article's subtitle, "A Study in American Nationality," was removed from the reprint. In fact, all the articles in it had their subtitles removed. The book's subtitle serves as a conceptual replacement for these, signaling Kallen's shift in emphasis and his desire to tie together all six essays under one collective subtitle: *Studies in the Group Psychology of the American People*.⁵⁵⁰

The subtitle may have been intended to pique further sales interest, given the growing public interest in the findings of psychology at that time, but it also indicates Kallen's awareness of the political implications of that science. Racist anti-immigration activists, for example, used the findings of the Army Alpha and Beta intelligence tests to buttress their claim that America was becoming mentally feeble because of the influx of immigrants: "Over 1.7 million draftees were tested, and the apparent results shocked America," historian of psychology Christopher Green writes. "Over half of draftees tested as 'morons' or lower. Southern and eastern European immigrants, as well as African Americans, were said to have average mental ages of preteen children."⁵⁵¹ As early as 1922, the *New Republic* ran articles by John Dewey and Walter Lippmann that ridiculed the attempt to quantify American minds.⁵⁵² Kallen approvingly cited the latter's articles. He had a very different approach to American group psychology. He was not interested in the question of mental variability; his focus was upon the question of group mental adaptation to the changed social conditions of

⁵⁵⁰ See Genette, *Paratexts*, for more on the role of the productions surrounding the text that enables it to become a book and offered as such to its readers. Paratexts, such as subtitles, he argues, are zones of "transaction" with the reader, communicating authorial intent and influencing the reception of the text.

⁵⁵¹ Green, "Darwinian Theory, Functionalism, and the First American Psychological Revolution," 80.

⁵⁵² Dewey, "Individuality, Equality, Superiority"; Lippmann, "The Mental Age of Americans." Lippmann was sufficiently exercised that he published six articles on the subject in six sequential issues of the *New Republic*.

modernity.⁵⁵³ Various forms of mal-adaptation to the conditions of modernity were already in evidence in American society, he argued, from fear-based xenophobic nativism and racism to the misguided optimism of assimilationism. He postulated an adaptation that would not attempt to impose homogeneity upon a naturally diverse environment, but would accept the naturalness of diversity, the salience of group difference, and would seek to foster inter-group cooperation.

By virtue of its publishing pedigree alone, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* must be considered part of the growing literary modernist movement in America. Kallen's publisher, Horace Liveright, was, as biographer Tom Dardis puts it, a "firebrand" who became one of the foremost publishers of modernist literature in the twenties.⁵⁵⁴ Liveright was responsible in many ways for the creation of the modern American literary canon. He published Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot (in book form), Sherwood Anderson, Eugene O'Neill, and several other Nobel Prize-winning authors. No stranger to scandal, Liveright was not only a risk-taking gambler, but his firm was also one of the speakeasies of the day, at which liquor flowed freely. Liveright was also a risk-taker in publishing. Over the objections of his staff, for example, he published Sigmund Freud's "racy" *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* in 1920. This attracted the attention of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, causing a scandal that helped to increase sales of the book, and, incidentally resulted in a significant boost to Freud's reputation in America.⁵⁵⁵ With respect to Kallen, Liveright recognized in him "a fellow progressive troublemaker," literary scholar

⁵⁵³ Green, "Darwinian Theory, Functionalism, and the First American Psychological Revolution," explains that both of these perspectives were represented in the functionalist school of psychology, which school dominated the field in America until after the First World War. One strain led to the Army intelligence tests and focused on mental variability. Kallen, however, was aligned with the Deweyan strain of functionalism, which focused on mental adaptability to the social environment.

⁵⁵⁴ Dardis, *Firebrand*.

⁵⁵⁵ See *ibid.*; Gilmer, *Horace Liveright: Publisher of the Twenties*.

Chris Green writes. "Kallen, Liveright explained, was 'radical' like his other authors—John Reed, Theodore Drieser, Eugene O'Neill. 'Radical,' Liveright clarified, meant that they 'got at the root of things'."⁵⁵⁶

Boni & Liveright had become a significant publishing house by the early 1920s, due in large part to Liveright's willingness to take risks.⁵⁵⁷ Firms like D. Appleton and Co., E.P. Dutton, Henry Holt, and Charles Scribner's Sons, among others, were conservative bastions, run by old families and old money. They represented the entrenched Anglo-American literary heritage, and they generally ignored the "the feverish wave of literary experimentation taking place in Europe," Dardis observes. "It is for this reason that so many of the major works of the twentieth-century modernists were published by Jewish firms in the late teens and twenties."⁵⁵⁸ Given the prevalent antisemitism among the established publishing firms, Jews like Liveright had to strike out on their own if they wished to enter the publishing world. Jewish firms like Boni & Liveright did not necessarily pursue the publication of Jewish authors or Jewish interests, but their willingness to take risks and to challenge the establishment marks their different ethno-cultural vantage point. They were publishing on the margins, as it were, just as Jews were socially and culturally placed at the margins.

Jewish publishing firms held no allegiance to the conservative publishing establishment and they had nothing to lose by trying something new, since they had no contacts or contracts with established writers. Moreover, they were attracted to the rebellious literature of modernism that protested convention, and they were also aware that the

⁵⁵⁶ Green, *The Social Life of Poetry: Appalachia, Race, and Radical Modernism*, 686.

⁵⁵⁷ Dardis, *Firebrand*, 51.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

intellectual needs of millions of non-Anglo-Saxon Americans were not being met.⁵⁵⁹

Liveright, a publisher with a talent for finding audiences for authors who challenged society, was a natural fit for Kallen. Kallen's book appeared as one of the ninety-one titles published by Boni & Liveright in 1924.⁵⁶⁰

Boni & Liveright numbered among a small group of Jewish publishers who cultivated a similar set of authors and audiences, and showed "distinct but allied motivations in promoting pluralism to a liberal readership in 1920s America," Green writes. "The ascendance of reactionary forces in 1924 worked against *and* gave rise to Jewish publishers pluralist sympathies."⁵⁶¹ The fact that Kallen's book did not immediately cause a sea change in American self-perception is not so much a statement about Kallen as an individual as it is a statement about the difficulties faced by liberal pluralists generally, both authors and publishers. Not only was the Johnson-Reed Immigration Quota Act legislated in 1924, but also universities like Harvard and Columbia established admission quotas for Jewish students,⁵⁶² and the Ku Klux Klan reached its peak with three million members.⁵⁶³ Kallen was enmeshed within a larger matrix of pluralist authors and publishers who worked against the American political mainstream, and English-language, popular Jewish publishing houses and editors featured prominently in that matrix. "New York City Jewish editors were closely connected and often apprenticed with each other before moving on to start their own houses,"

⁵⁵⁹ Gilmer, *Horace Liveright: Publisher of the Twenties*, 8–9.

⁵⁶⁰ Egleston, *The House of Boni & Liveright, 1917-1933: A Documentary Volume*, 64.

⁵⁶¹ Green, *The Social Life of Poetry: Appalachia, Race, and Radical Modernism*, 43. Other New York Jewish literary publishing houses of the time included H. B. Huebsch (which merged with Viking in 1925), Alfred A. Knopf (sold to Random House in 1960), Simon & Schuster, Viking Press (merged with Penguin in 1970), Covici-Friede, and Random House, among others..

⁵⁶² See Synott, *The Half-Open Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900-1970* for a study of the Jewish student "quotas" at leading Ivy League institutions during this period.

⁵⁶³ Green, *The Social Life of Poetry: Appalachia, Race, and Radical Modernism*, 43.

Green notes.⁵⁶⁴ The connection between the Jewish publishing houses extended to their common commitment to pluralism, he writes, noting the appearance of several other pluralist books the following year—William Carlos Williams' *In the American Grain* and Alain Locke's *The New Negro*, released by A. C. Boni, and Viking publisher's release of *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, edited by James Weldon Johnson.⁵⁶⁵ Kallen's 1924 contribution to the growing discourse in pluralism not only served to highlight the unique position of the Jews, but it also exposed the roots of the American national psychology that had given rise to such an extreme and hostile social environment.

Attentiveness to Kallen's subtitle, *Studies in the Group Psychology of the American People*, reveals an orientation important to Kallen that was lost in the subsequent republications of the book, which, in resituating it within their own realms of discourse, omitted the original subtitle. *Culture and Democracy in the United States* was, in Kallen's estimation, the product of "a living political science," and offered "a critical analysis of the behavior of men in their civic relationships."⁵⁶⁶ Kallen's particular focus was the civic relationships among different groups in America and how group mentalities influenced those relationships. Calling his book a "study" of these relationships did not imply that he understood the book to be a dispassionate and objective analysis. Rather, it was unapologetically written as an impassioned plea for reasoned pluralism and tolerance in a frenzied, irrational and fearful time. It was an intervention, the intervention of a social critic. It was "an analysis, a judgment, a bid for change."⁵⁶⁷ As a psychologist, political scientist, and Jew, Kallen was deeply invested in staking out his claim for America. His experiment of

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Kallen, "Political Science as Psychology," 190, 194.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 190.

cultural pluralism was a social thought experiment, and, as a pragmatist, the validity of his hypothesis had to be tested for its functionality. The press provided Kallen with the opportunity to test his hypothesis, by communicating his message to a readership that could "react to it as a force." Kallen conceived of political science as a force for change because its very presentation could stimulate a reaction.

Pragmatic Modernism and Jewish Identity

Modernism is typically understood through the lens of the avant-garde, an ideology of rupture and opposition, emphasizing shock and discontinuity. But, as literary scholar Lisi Schoenbach argues, this narrative obscures another critical lens through which modernism may be read, the modernism of the pragmatists. Dubbing it "pragmatic modernism," she cites the examples of Dewey, James, and others as exemplifying "a tradition of thinkers who...explored the best ways to reintegrate the released energies of shock and defamiliarization back into the social fabric."⁵⁶⁸ For Kallen, the "shock and defamiliarization" caused by industrialization, economic issues, and political turmoil had caused a dysfunctional psychological reaction in America, born of irrational fear and anxiety. His solution to the dilemma was to affirm social differences, advocate for social cooperation, and reestablish the grounds for American democracy. He hoped that art, literature, psychology, and political science would play a role in agitating for changes that would heal the torn social fabric.

Kallen, as a "pragmatic modernist," responded to the turbulence of the times with, to use his phrase, "a discontent of hope."⁵⁶⁹ Schoenbach calls this "recontextualizing,"

⁵⁶⁸ Schoenbach, *Pragmatic Modernism*, 13.

⁵⁶⁹ Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, 16.

borrowing pragmatist Richard Rorty's term, because it "implies the ability to radically rethink existing circumstances without relying upon the ideology of the break."⁵⁷⁰ By stressing historicity and continuity, Kallen thus "recontextualized" America and democracy into a mode compatible with post-Darwinian realities.

Kallen's involvement with Boni & Liveright marks the culmination of a process that had begun almost ten years prior, when he first became deeply involved with the modernist movement through his relationships with editors. With *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, he entered an interconnected web of relationships that brought pluralists and modernists together with Jewish publishing houses. The course of modernism in America was fundamentally shaped by the involvement of firms like Boni & Liveright.

Historian Jonathan Sarna writes that Jewish publishers in America had two main goals. These were "to forge a new Jewish cultural center in America and to integrate American Jewry into a nationwide community [of Jews] bound together by a culture of print."⁵⁷¹ Sarna's focus, however, is upon publishing by Jews, for Jews, and about Jews. In this chapter, we have considered a broader compass for American Jewish publishing. Jewish publishing houses like Boni & Liveright, Viking, Random House, and Alfred A. Knopf, had quite different goals from those noted by Sarna. Although these Jewish publishing firms did not necessarily evince any particular concern for Jewish issues, their existence and their continued close relationships with one another grew out of the Jewish experience in America. They rebelled against their marginalization in American society and culture by the gentile

⁵⁷⁰ Schoenbach, *Pragmatic Modernism*, 13.

⁵⁷¹ Sarna, "Two Ambitious Goals: Jewish Publishing in the United States," 377.

establishment, and, in the process, helped to promote modernist literature in America.⁵⁷² As American Jewish publishers, then, they represent a third goal for Jewish publishing in America—to carve out space for Jews within American society, in the process creating a nationwide multiethnic community bound together by a culture of print. Kallen's self-understanding as a Jew was wrapped up with this goal. His sense of Jewish identity was intimately tied to his vision for America, his commitment to cultural pluralism, and his hopes for modernism as a progressive social influence. The story of *Culture and Democracy in the United States* constitutes, to borrow from Kallen's metaphor, his unique instrument with "its specific timbre and tonality." It is his Jewish contribution to an "American Rhapsody."⁵⁷³

In the following chapter, we will deepen our exploration of Kallen as a modernist writer and thinker, and turn our attention to his life-long interest in the biblical book of Job. His reconstruction of Job had little to do with traditional Jewish exegesis; indeed, his interpretation met with considerable resistance. He approached Job from a modernist perspective. He read in Job a rejection of theodicy, and an affirmation of "Hebraism," or philosophical Darwinism. Kallen found in Job a way to express himself as a Jew in a modernist American idiom.

⁵⁷² See Gilmer, *Horace Liveright: Publisher of the Twenties*, 8–9; Green, *The Social Life of Poetry: Appalachia, Race, and Radical Modernism*, 44.

⁵⁷³ "American Rhapsody" was the title Gershwin initially gave to "Rhapsody in Blue."

Chapter 4 On Secular Religion: The Book of Job and Democracy

Behold, he will slay me; I have no hope. Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him.

—Job 13:15

In this chapter, I chart changes in Kallen's thinking over the course of fifty years through a close examination of his relationship to the book of Job. The evolution of his identity as a Jew and an American is recorded in his changing interpretation of that biblical book. I organize his engagement with Job under the headings creation, revelation, and redemption, because his personal growth reflects these themes, albeit in a psychological, secular modality. Kallen's persistence in proselytizing his views to Americans generally, and to American Jews in particular, makes the study of his personal growth of particular interest. His story is part of the larger story of the circulation of secularism in American society and in the Jewish community during the first half of the twentieth century. I draw upon the idea of the "circulation" of "social energy" first advanced by literary scholar Stephen Greenblatt in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (1988).⁵⁷⁴ Greenblatt's notion of the social "circulation of energy," an important idea in the literary critical school of New Historicism that he helped to found, is that the "social energy"

⁵⁷⁴ Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*.

of a concept increases the more that concept is engaged with multiple social discourses. I shall examine Kallen's discursive interventions on the subject of religion and secularism in a number of different social and print contexts, and attempt to demonstrate that Kallen played an important role in shaping the direction of the discourses.

Kallen's alignment with the secular Jewish intellectuals who gathered around the *Menorah Journal* has led historians like Michael Meyer to see him as representative of an ideological camp within American Judaism that stood opposed to Jewish religious institutions.⁵⁷⁵ On this reading of the historical record, Kallen stands beyond the periphery of ideas and influences that permeated and changed American denominational Judaism. He was someone whose views were simply rejected by them. I argue that his well-known anticlericalism and hostility to organized religion is not the important aspect of his legacy for religious discourse. I contend that Kallen should be viewed as standing within the networks of ideas and relationships that shaped American culture and American Judaism. I adopt philosopher Jürgen Habermas's description of secularization as a "push for mutual perspective taking so that different communities can develop a more inclusive perspective by transcending their own universe of discourse."⁵⁷⁶ I argue that Kallen's writing and his relationships were part of that push. His writing, contacts, and activities, are a part of the discursive engagement of American Jews with secularism, not only within the obvious circles of the socialists, communists, and other non-religious groups, but also within the liberal denominations of American Judaism.

In keeping with a general trend, many Jews had become secular-minded and this-worldly, with faith in the tools of science to address the problems of life. What was needed,

⁵⁷⁵ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 305.

⁵⁷⁶ Qtd. in Butler, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, "ProQuest Ebrary," 66.

Kallen felt, was a profound readjustment, from Judaism to "Hebraism." He construed Hebraism, as we saw in chapter one, to mean the totality of Jewish life, encompassing but not circumscribed by religion, and compatible with a post-Darwinian worldview. Its roots lay buried deep in the Jewish past, and Kallen believed that he could recover them from the literary remains of the book of Job.

His publication of *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* in 1918, and his republication of it in 1959, mark important episodes in his life as a commentator upon America and upon Jewish life in America.⁵⁷⁷ Kallen's interest in that biblical text requires explanation. He was quite disenchanted with religion and skeptical of religious institutions, as we have seen. Kallen's university cultural environment, however, partook of the dominant Protestant culture that characterized American, and American university, life in that period.⁵⁷⁸ The strong Protestant religio-cultural influence may have played a role in drawing his attention to the text. Charles William Eliot, president of Harvard, for example, once opined that the book of Job is "unsurpassable as literature."⁵⁷⁹ The significance of Job for Kallen lay not in its status as a religious text, but in its character as literature. As we shall see, he desired to find within Jewish literary and philosophical tradition a level of cultural sophistication to match that of the Greek tradition. As a secularist, he would have needed a nontheistic reason to find Job meaningful. This he found in his interpretation of the book of Job as the archetypal expression of the Hebraic worldview, and of Job himself as a proto-modernist.

⁵⁷⁷ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918; Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1959.

⁵⁷⁸ See Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*.

⁵⁷⁹ Eliot, "The Jewish Contribution to Modern Social Ethics."

Creation: Kallen Secularizes Job

Reflecting on the books he had written that represented him most adequately, Kallen listed his *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* (1918) first.⁵⁸⁰ His interest in Job may be traced to 1911, when he read Semitic languages and literature professor Nathaniel Schmidt's *The Messages of the Poets: The Books of Job and Canticles and some minor poems in the Old Testament, with introductions, metrical translations, and paraphrases*. Schmidt had particularly highlighted what he found to be the "modern" elements in Job. It shifts its interest "from heaven and hell to earth," he wrote, highlighting humanity's insignificance in the universe. He was struck by "the determination of Job...to abide by the interpretation imposed by the facts," and concluded that "Job spoke to the modern mind as he had never spoken before."⁵⁸¹

The shift in focus "from heaven and hell to earth" is suggestive of the shift from the "transcendent frame" of experience to the "immanent frame" of experience identified by philosopher Charles Taylor as a fundamental conceptual change that characterizes our secular age.⁵⁸² The conditions for human flourishing, Taylor argues, became conceived in nontheistic terms. This focus on the human condition rather than on divine will resonated powerfully for Kallen. Schmidt's translation and his commentary clearly made an impression on him: "I am glad that my interpretation of 'Job' interested you," Schmidt wrote to Kallen.⁵⁸³ Schmidt had laid the groundwork for Kallen to read the book of Job as a text that speaks to the modern mind.

⁵⁸⁰ Kallen, "Horace M. Kallen."

⁵⁸¹ Schmidt, *The Messages of the Poets: The Books of Job and Canticles and Some Minor Poems in the Old Testament, with Introductions, Metrical Translations, and Paraphrases*, 7:105–6.

⁵⁸² See Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

⁵⁸³ Schmidt to Kallen, October 25, 1911.

Within two years, Kallen had developed his thinking concerning Job as an expression of Hebraism in the post-Darwinian mode, in which man was "forced to recognize that he is but a part of nature," as Schmidt had put it.⁵⁸⁴ In a letter dated October 27, 1913, in which Kallen accepted Henry Hurwitz's invitation to become a member of the Menorah College of Lecturers, he offered to prepare lectures under the general heading, "The Meaning of Hebraism." Among Kallen's five suggested subtopics for Hebraism in the ancient world was "God and Nature in Job."⁵⁸⁵ He also prepared Job as a play, in line with his theory that Job had originally been written in the form of a Greek drama. In 1913, the Wisconsin Dramatic Society gave two performances of it,⁵⁸⁶ and its appearance caught the attention of the *Philadelphia Jewish Exponent*.⁵⁸⁷

At the urging of Hurwitz, the Harvard Menorah Society followed suit in 1916 with its own production of Kallen's drama.⁵⁸⁸ Kallen, together with Hurwitz, was intent on promoting it as an expression of the humanistic spirit of Jewish culture. For him, it represented an assertion that Jewish culture existed on a par with Greek tradition. The *American Israelite* notes that the play was well-received: "It was produced with great success in Milwaukee, and at the University of Wisconsin."⁵⁸⁹ The *Jewish Exponent* wrote that, whereas "the views of most of the big men in literature today...assert that in their whole literature the Jews have not a single drama," Kallen had refuted their views with his argument that, in its "original form," the book "has all the characteristics of a drama written by a Hebrew writer in the Greek

⁵⁸⁴ Schmidt, *The Messages of the Poets: The Books of Job and Canticles and Some Minor Poems in the Old Testament, with Introductions, Metrical Translations, and Paraphrases*, 7:102.

⁵⁸⁵ Kallen to Hurwitz, October 27, 1913.

⁵⁸⁶ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918, vi.

⁵⁸⁷ "Domestic Notes: Happenings of Interest in American Jewry."

⁵⁸⁸ Hurwitz to Kallen, November 22, 1915.

⁵⁸⁹ "Book of Job Dramatized."

language."⁵⁹⁰ The *Exponent* thus regarded his thesis as a muscular assertion of Jewish participation in world literature and culture.

Kallen's *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy: Restored With an Introductory Essay on the Original Form and Philosophic Meaning of Job* appeared in 1918. In the introductory essay, Kallen argued that Job's original form was that of a Greek Euripidean tragedy, and he interpreted its message as a modern commentary on the human condition. In the post-Darwinian world, humanity had to learn to adjust to living in an unjust world not specifically designed to satisfy human needs. Job, he believed, had understood this presciently. The introductory essay "contains the total summary of my studies in the Hebraism of antiquity," he wrote to Hurwitz, "and represents my conclusions concerning its natural development and significance."⁵⁹¹ The book included an additional introduction written by the prominent professor of the history of religions at Harvard, George Foot Moore. The fact that Moore endorsed it is significant. Greene writes that Moore "described Jewish studies as an alternative to assimilation. Moore himself embodied the Menorah Association's ideal: as a Christian who taught Jewish history and world religions at Harvard, Moore legitimated Jewish studies within an elite American setting."⁵⁹² He found Kallen's thesis, that Job was originally written in the Euripidean style, to be an "ingenious hypothesis,"⁵⁹³ and saw fit to discuss it in his course lectures on the History of Religions.⁵⁹⁴ This legitimated Kallen's thesis in the very epicenter of American academe.

⁵⁹⁰ "Domestic Notes: Happenings of Interest in American Jewry."

⁵⁹¹ Kallen to Hurwitz, March 2, 1917.

⁵⁹² Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 96.

⁵⁹³ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918, x.

⁵⁹⁴ Wolfson to Kallen, March 17, 1918.

Kallen wrote of his intention to reach a broad audience to biblical literature professor Charles Kent, who promised to review his "exceedingly alluring" interpretation of Job for the *American Jewish Chronicle*.⁵⁹⁵ Although this pleased Kallen, he did not want to limit his readership to a Jewish audience. His response indicated this quite clearly: "It gives me great pleasure to learn that you will review my work on Job. I do hope it may find a larger circle of readers than those of the *American Jewish Chronicle*."⁵⁹⁶ Kallen's book did attract the attention of Albert Shaw's *American Review of Reviews*, but it said that his work "will prove of dominant interest to biblical students and admirers of the Euripidean drama," a limitation that most likely disappointed Kallen.⁵⁹⁷

Not all Jewish reviewers reacted as positively to Kallen's thesis as had the *Exponent*. Claude Montefiore, the founder of British Liberal Judaism, reviewed Kallen's book for the *Harvard Theological Review*. He assessed the viability of Kallen's hypothetical reconstruction of Job as a Euripidean tragedy, and concluded that it must be regarded as a failure. He recognized how deeply personal was Kallen's connection to Job:

Dr. Kallen, like the rest of us, is deeply impressed with the greatness of *Job*. And his just admiration, as it seems to me, has led him on to find in *Job* his own philosophy of life. What *he* thinks is the true moral of life, what *he* thinks is the right explanation of the riddle of the universe, that he discovers already expounded by the author of *Job*. As the Hero of the Gospels has often been made to preach the particular sort of religion and of Christianity which is most congenial to each commentator in turn, so is *Job* made to preach the philosophy of Dr. Kallen.⁵⁹⁸

Montefiore was quite right. Kallen's view of Job was not echoed by any other Jewish thinker.

It is entirely Kallen's.

⁵⁹⁵ Kent to Kallen, June 10, 1918; Kent to Kallen, October 12, 1918.

⁵⁹⁶ Kallen to Kent, October 20, 1918.

⁵⁹⁷ Shaw, "Plays and Playwrights," 332.

⁵⁹⁸ Montefiore, "Book Reviews," 221–222.

In Job, Kallen found that human courage and dignity, not faith, are the sum of Hebraic wisdom. Job, he wrote, "is a courageous continuation of that [Hebraic] tradition, its most profound, its most vital and logical culmination. It is the summing up and generalization of the historic experience of the Jewish people."⁵⁹⁹ Its central lesson, he wrote, is one of humanism:

In it [Hebraism] the soul of man comes to itself and is freed. It is a humanism terrible and unique.... It is without illusion concerning the quality, extent and possibilities of the life of man, without illusion concerning his relation to God. It accepts them, and makes of the human soul the citadel of man—even against Omnipotence itself—wherein he cherishes his integrity, and so cherishing, is victorious in the warfare of living even when life is lost.⁶⁰⁰

This was quite unlike Greek humanism, he argued, which declared "an ultimate happy destiny for man in a world immortally in harmony with his nature and needs."⁶⁰¹ This Greek "anthropomorphosis," as he put it, constituted a great illusion obscuring our ability to see the world truly as it is, and substituting for reality a future-oriented delusion of purposeful design.

It is precisely for this reason that the Joban philosophy was not popular, he argued, and could not prevail in the subsequent development of Jewish (or Christian) religion:

This is why, on the confrontation of Hebraism with Hellenism, Hellenism conquered the Jewish mind itself: why the philosophic tradition has been dominated by Greek ideas, why religion has remained illusion rather than vision, why it is only with the coming of science that Hebraism begins to come into its own. For science yields power where it creates disillusion; it is a conquest of nature through knowledge. But the Hebraic mind had in Job become disillusioned without such compensating mastery of nature: its science was childishness. It had attained illusion only with mastery of self, and such an excellence is too rare and difficult ever to become a common virtue of mankind.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918, 68.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

Greek thought, in other words, colonized Judaism by virtue of its (and religion's) seductive but illusory view of the universe. Only the coming of the scientific age had exposed it for the illusion that it is.

He believed, however, that he had discovered in Job a different relationship to Hellenism. There, he argued, Hellenism was absorbed but did not do the absorbing. Job adopted Hellenistic styles for his own uniquely Hebraic ends. For Kallen, Job represented the outcome of the free exchange of ideas between peoples. As he wrote in *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, "Cultural values arise upon the confrontation, impact, and consequent disintegration and readjustment of different orders, with the emergence therefrom of new harmonies."⁶⁰³ He saw in Job cultural values arising from just such a confrontation. It was, he wrote a "distinctively Hebraic" work that had received "Hellenic form."⁶⁰⁴ He posited that the values and vitality of Judaism derive not from God's Revelation at Mount Sinai, but from the ongoing discursive exchanges between cultural groups. This idea, undeveloped as of yet, would become, as we shall see below, the kernel of his understanding of secular religion.

Montefiore's reaction to Kallen was extreme. Even if his teaching were correct, he wrote, there is one thing that it is not: "It is not Judaism."⁶⁰⁵ Montefiore may have granted him a place within secular nationalism, but Kallen's "subversal and denial of Judaism" precluded Montefiore from validating his work as a contribution to Jewish thought.⁶⁰⁶ Interestingly, however, Kallen's hypothesis of the intermingling of the Hellenic and Hebraic traditions did not excite Montefiore's ire. Indeed, in *Liberal Judaism and Hellenism (1918)*, Montefiore had written that in today's world, religion, to be viable, must "absorb and adopt

⁶⁰³ Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States*, 202.

⁶⁰⁴ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918, 24.

⁶⁰⁵ Montefiore, "Book Reviews," 223.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 224.

the Hellenic spirit."⁶⁰⁷ He believed that there was a "kinship between Hellas and Judæa," and "therefore we can fuse the spirit of Hellas with our own."⁶⁰⁸ He had no objection to uniting Athens and Jerusalem. It was Kallen's conclusions regarding God that Montefiore found unacceptable. For Montefiore, as for the Reform movement, Judaism was in the first instance a matter of faith, which was precisely the point Kallen disputed. Kallen's Job (like Schmidt's) shifted his attention from heaven to earth, from Taylor's "transcendent frame" to the "immanent frame." This secularization of Job is what Montefiore could not countenance.

For the *Menorah Journal*, on the other hand, such theological questions were entirely beside the point. In fact, the appearance of *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* became the impetus for the *Journal* to devote almost an entire issue to the subject. It flagged its intentions in its February 1919 edition, telling its readers that they could expect a "four-act" feature in the next number:

From the Bible to Euripides, and from the classic alcoves of Cambridge University to the present-day theatre on Broadway, will be the range and scope of this group of articles. Professor Gilbert Murray, the world's greatest authority on Euripides, will give a sympathetic opinion on the theory of Dr. H. M. Kallen that the Book of Job was deliberately written on the model of a Euripidean tragedy. Dr. Max Radin, who has made a special study of Jewish life in the Greek and Roman periods, will treat Dr. Kallen's theory with less tender mercy. Stuart Walker, who, as this note is written, is presenting the "Book of Job" as a drama in a Broadway theatre, will give his theory of the dramatic value of the Old Testament classic for present-day theatregoers. In conclusion will be given a Menorah critic's impressions of Stuart Walker's production.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁷ Montefiore, *Liberal Judaism and Hellenism*, 190.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁶⁰⁹ "Editor's Note," February 1919.

The *Journal* delivered on three of its four promised pieces.⁶¹⁰ The critical review of Walker's production of *Job* was never printed.

The *Journal* did not limit itself to a review of Kallen's book. It used his book as a launch pad for a conversation among others. Kallen's ideas were favorably received by Murray and rejected by Radin, but the conversation did not stop there. It then presented an unrelated self-reflection by Walker, whose own production of *Job* had enjoyed a short run on Broadway.⁶¹¹ The fact that Walker's play had nothing to do with Kallen prompted the editor to insert an explanatory note that Kallen's *Job* had been performed several times and therefore offered an interesting contrast to Walker's production.⁶¹² The plays were connected only to the extent that both believed that the issues *Job* grappled with came alive in the theater. The *Journal* re-presented Kallen's work as both a scholarly piece and a dramatic performance, highlighting *Job* as a literary and cultural artifact. In this way, it helped to underscore Kallen's larger project, which was to inject a historical consciousness of Jewish humanism into American Jewry.

This was entirely in keeping with the *Journal's* vision. Historian Lewis Fried (2001) observes:

The *Menorah Journal* often posed the legacy and nature of Jewish life as leading to an innovative, American Hebraism—an American Jewish culture that reflected its pasts—within a Hellenism of nations. As did its parent organization the Intercollegiate Menorah Association, the *Menorah Journal* pointed out that the Jewish legacy was as worthy of study as the Greco-Roman heritage, since all possessed and promoted cosmopolitan minds. The implications were arresting, just as America was seen as a nation of nations, so its pasts of Israel, Greece, and Rome constituted a metaphorical antiquity of nations within a nation.... The debate over the meaning of these terms

⁶¹⁰ Murray, "Job as a Greek Tragedy"; Radin, "A Mistaken Hypothesis"; Walker, "The Book of Job on the Stage."

⁶¹¹ Walker, "The Book of Job on the Stage," 105.

⁶¹² "Editor's Note," April 1919.

[Hellenism and Hebraism] ran deeper than mere intellectual speculation, as it involved a discussion of the nature and shape of the American Jewish community.⁶¹³

The *Menorah Journal's* so-called "four-act" feature suggests that it saw in Kallen's and Walker's plays not only a way to recover a Jewish literary cultural heritage, but a way to contribute to the continued growth and vitality of Jewish culture.

This discourse constitutes what I call the "creation" phase of Kallen's Job. His "restoration" of Job to its putative original Euripidean form reflects a version of an "innovative, American Hebraism," as Fried puts it, "within a Hellenism of nations." His Job preserved its Hebraic individuality even as it participated in Hellenic culture. It was, in other words, a perfect model for how he envisioned Jewish ethnic participation in American society. Jews absorbed American culture, but preserved their identity despite the pressures of Americanization. His Hebraic-Hellenic Job mirrored the creation of a hyphenated Jewish-American identity.

Revelation: Psychology Renarrates Religion

Job's "revelation," Kallen believed, consists in his becoming aware of the contingency of the human condition. As noted above, the book's central message was, for him, humanistic. Kallen's Job is not a prophet of God; he is a prophet of psychological man. Job recognizes that human existence is contingent not on proper faith or on moral living, but on the flux of life that has only an impersonal regard for life. In response, he exclaims, "Behold, he will slay me; I have no hope. Nevertheless I will maintain my ways before him." (Job 13:15). Kallen interpreted this to mean that Job realizes that the ultimate value of existence is posited

⁶¹³ Fried, "Creating Hebraism, Confronting Hellenism: The Menorah Journal and Its Struggle for the Jewish Imagination," 148.

on integrity grounded in courage and self-respect. The "destiny of man," he concluded, is to "maintain his ways with courage rather than with faith, with self-respect rather than with humility or better perhaps, with a faith that is courage, a humility that is self-respect."⁶¹⁴

The Joban perspective on the human condition and the meaning of life constituted, for Kallen, a secular revelation. The internal life of man was declared to be the locus of salvation: "His [Job's] attitude declares that the validity of each man's struggle to live has to be an inward validity never to be sanctioned from any outer source," he wrote in 1927. "[I]t consists in a kind of self-acceptance, ...in being true on the basis of what one finds within one's self, not on the basis of what one finds outside one's self."⁶¹⁵ This self-awareness, in turn, becomes the ground for human fulfillment and happiness. It resolves the cognitive dissonance which derives from traditional religion, he asserted, which insists that despite all evidence to the contrary, the world was made for our ends: "The conflict between the ground of our existence and its intent has lapsed.... If happiness names anything, it names this state of...self-integration."⁶¹⁶ Kallen thus applied a psychological interpretation of religion to Job. The ultimate significance of Job's secular revelation lies in its functionality. The Joban response represented, for him, the ground for a psychologically healthy response to the realities of existence.

We shall now see how Kallen applied his functionalist psychological interpretation of religion to comment upon the nature and place of religion in America. I interpret his intervention in American discourse as a distinctively Jewish voice protesting against Christian cultural hegemony in the United States. He chastised religious institutions for their

⁶¹⁴ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918, 77.

⁶¹⁵ Kallen, *Why Religion*, 282–3.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 283.

anemic response to modern conditions. He read the historical record as one of religious institutions' religious warfare against science and retarding human struggles toward freedom, but suggested that a proper understanding of religion's psychological appeal would enable people to appreciate religion free from institutional control. His contribution to the national discourse adds to our appreciation of how American ideas about religion and human nature developed from interactions between Jews and Christians.⁶¹⁷

De-Christianizing and Psychologizing Religion

Kallen believed that religious institutions were fundamentally out of step with modernity. His criticism was directed not only at Jewish religious institutions. He also targeted church institutions. He launched his strongest offensive against them in Little Blue Book Number 1681, *The Warfare of Religion Against Science* (1931), one of Haldeman-Julius's Little Blue Books pocket book series.⁶¹⁸ Little Blue Books, the creation of one of America's most successful publicists, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (1889-1951), was an especially popular series in the twenties. It was pitched to the poor and working class as a "University in Print," intended to serve as a self-education and self-help series priced at an affordable five cents per book.⁶¹⁹ The series grew to include more than two thousand titles and sales totaled in the hundreds of millions.⁶²⁰

Little Blue Book Number 1681, which rehearsed the narrative of an eternal conflict between science and religion popularized by John William Draper and Andrew Dickson

⁶¹⁷ See Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*.

⁶¹⁸ Kallen, *The Warfare of Religion Against Science*, 1931.

⁶¹⁹ Palmer, *Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and the Education of the Poor of America*.

⁶²⁰ Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, 129.

White in the previous century,⁶²¹ may be considered a variation on what historian of science James Secord has termed "literary replication."⁶²² The concept bears a certain analogy to biology, as book historian Leslie Howsam explains: "Like cells, texts replicate themselves, but with variants; and like organisms, books evolve from one state to the next...and a later generation's reading will differ from that of the author's contemporaries."⁶²³ Secord and Howsam refer specifically to the reproduction and republication of books. There is a sense in which the notion of "literary replication" may be fruitfully employed here as a way to describe how changed social circumstances alter how a concept is read. Kallen's text is a variant of the "conflict thesis" idea that evolved out of his own needs and out of his particular social context.

Kallen knew that the "conflict thesis" was not the only way, or even the most popular way, in which religion and science were perceived to interact.⁶²⁴ Many Protestant pastors and churches viewed science as compatible with religion, and some went so far as to integrate science and scientists into their religious worldview. He acknowledged this, citing the example of the Riverside Church in New York City, led by the liberal pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick. In an overt attempt to proclaim the compatibility of religion and science, the Riverside Church had recently erected an edifice that featured carvings of scientists (including Einstein) amid carvings of angels and other more traditional religious icons. Kallen also referred to the writings of University of Chicago theologian Henry Nelson Wieman, sharply attacking the "new type of theologian who is all eloquence about the glories

⁶²¹ Draper, *History of the Conflict Between Science and Religion*; White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*.

⁶²² Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*.

⁶²³ Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories*, 43.

⁶²⁴ See Barbour, *Religion in an Age of Science*. Barbour proposes four ways in which science and religion relate to each other: conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration.

of scientific method in religion, the uses of experimentation and the like, until one might think that religion had come to terms with science and become a laborer in its vineyard following its ways."⁶²⁵ Their thinking was misguided and misleading, Kallen claimed: "The 'props' which are used to shore religion up, even when borrowed from science, are used willy-nilly with the purpose at the same time to break science down."⁶²⁶ He believed that science thus co-opted would ultimately end up by serving religion's needs.

Kallen's dismissal of the idea of an integration between religion and science led him to claim all the more strongly that White and Draper did not go far enough in exposing religion alone as the aggressor: "The history of science and scientists," he insisted, "is a history of complete pacifism and nonresistance toward religion. Nay, more, it records much friendliness and cooperation; when scientists do actively consider religion, they do so to bring it aid and comfort, to sustain and to strengthen it."⁶²⁷ He argued, as a secularist and atheist, that religious institutions were intrinsically opposed to free will and free thought and that they indoctrinated rather than served people.

Kallen extolled the virtues of science's objectivity. This view contradicted his own assertion from a decade prior that although objectivity is the ideal of science, the reality is that it is a subjective process.⁶²⁸ Little Blue Book Number 1681, however, was prepared as both an educational as well as a polemical piece for a working-class reading audience. He likely felt no need to differentiate between the ideal and the reality here. Structuring a clear and absolute binary opposition between religion and science was an effective rhetorical strategy for addressing a mass audience.

⁶²⁵ Kallen, "The Warfare of Religion Against Science," 1948, 115.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 93.

⁶²⁸ Kallen, "Political Science as Psychology."

The conclusion to his essay begins with an observation rooted in the Joban perspective:

If man were not, in Job's words, born unto trouble, what would he be born to? If there were no warfare to man upon earth, whatever else could there be to him? Religion and science are opposite poles of the same energies, like cold and heat or dark and light. Where one is, the other cannot be, so long as the energies are actual, since both present merely locations and degrees of the movement of our vital forces, since both serve but as stances of the total propulsion of our living selves. From the quietness and securities of fixed and frozen faith to the quicknesses and inquiries of mobile, warm doubt and back again, up and down and round and round, our spirits move, all the days of our life."⁶²⁹

Kallen wished to persuade the reader that conflict between science and religion was a necessary condition of their natures. The reason behind his refusal to entertain any other options becomes clear with his concluding lines: "[T]he thin red line of life thrusts on, manifold, changeful, varied, a warfare and a trouble, division in its works and ways, death at its heart. Of this creative thrust religion and science are as the magnetic poles, not to be joined together while it can carry on."⁶³⁰ He needed religion and science to be in conflict. To him, the conflict illumined a process in the life of the human spirit.

This process, first proposed, as Kallen would have it, in the book of Job, sees conflict as an essential aspect of growth. The absence of conflict implies death. Conflict, healthily managed, would promote free inquiry, diversity, the growth of knowledge, and the development of personal integrity and excellence. The purported integration of science with religion, he felt, was simply an instance of the church adopting a new strategy to reassert its old metaphysics, moral suasion, and social power. His invocation of the conflict thesis was designed to counter the integrationist strategy, and to expose the fallacy to his readers. He hoped thereby to challenge peoples' unquestioning acquiescence to church institutions. His

⁶²⁹ Kallen, "The Warfare of Religion Against Science," 1948, 126–7.

⁶³⁰ Ibid., 127.

close friend, philosopher George Santayana, to whom he had sent a copy of *The Warfare of Religion Against Science* in Rome, drew this conclusion from his reading of it: "I have absorbed your counterblast to religion. As a popular tract it is capital, beating the eloquent parsons at their own game."⁶³¹

Kallen's and Haldeman-Julius's assessment of popular culture ran counter to the commonly-held narrative about the "Roaring Twenties," English professor Dale Herder writes. That narrative dwells on the stereotypes of the "Jazz Age" and "Lost Generation;" that is to say, on the moral dissoluteness and general disillusionment of the period. Haldeman-Julius, however, believed that the American people were fundamentally optimistic, moral, and socially progressive: "The popular image of dissipation, immorality and new-found license in the twenties is not substantiated by Haldeman-Julius' perception of the decade," Herder writes. "Ethics had indeed changed since the war, he [Haldeman-Julius] said in Little Blue Book Number 1374 (1929); the new ethical outlook, unlike the older more narrow, restrained, and innocent one of the past, was typified by freedom (not license), personal expression, and practical (as distinguished from religiously dogmatic) values."⁶³² Herder contends that the data from the publishing record shows that Haldeman-Julius properly understood American intellectual taste. He believed that the American people were seeking to self-improve, and his "University in Print" was the key to that self-improvement.

Kallen similarly believed that he was addressing a socially progressive readership interested in self-improvement. His presentation was informed by the Joban philosophy of life he had articulated over a decade prior—a philosophy of freedom. That Kallen understood

⁶³¹ Santayana and Holzberger, *The Letters of George Santayana*, 4:296.

⁶³² Herder, "Education for the Masses: The Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books as Popular Culture During the Nineteen-Twenties," 238–9.

his essay primarily as a meditation on freedom is further confirmed by his inclusion of it seventeen years later in *The Liberal Spirit* (1948), a collection of essays concerning the problem of freedom in the modern world.⁶³³ The conflict between science and religion thus provided the raw material for him to show "how the continuing crisis of freedom may be overcome by faith acting without illusion."⁶³⁴ His intended to illumine what he believed to be the necessary conditions for human freedom. His participation in the discourse concerning the place of religion in America thus engaged a broad readership, which was encouraged to think through the relationship between science and religion, and to consider the consequences of that relationship.

The Warfare of Religion Against Science must also be considered as a Jewish intervention in that discourse. Little Blue Book Number 1681 registered a protest against Christian cultural hegemony. In this respect, it fit into Haldeman-Julius's publishing vision. Haldeman-Julius, a second-generation American Jew, had early on appreciated the popular appeal that series would have for an American audience that "had tired of Christian piety," historian Andrew Heinze writes. "Seeing himself as a successor to Voltaire and Paine, Haldeman-Julius launched a thirty-year freethinking crusade against religious dogma in general and Christianity in particular."⁶³⁵ His attacks utilized the science of psychology as support for his secularizing vision. Heinze observes that the Little Blue Books "subjected Jesus himself to psychiatric examination."⁶³⁶ The result was to distill "an American Jewish propensity to identify the 'true' values of America with those leaders who had ceased to be true Christians," he argues. "From Joseph Jastrow to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Jews

⁶³³ Kallen, *The Liberal Spirit: Essays on Problems of Freedom in the Modern World*.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, vi.

⁶³⁵ Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, 128–29.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

showed themselves eager to enter the marketplace of readers and, in that arena, to use psychology as a weapon against Christian domination of American culture."⁶³⁷ Little Blue Book Number 1681 thus marks Kallen's participation in what David Hollinger describes as the "de-Christianization" of America that took place during the mid-twentieth century.⁶³⁸

Functionalist Psychology Secularizes Religion

Kallen did not write only for the working-class market. Four years before Little Blue Book Number 1681, he published *Why Religion* with Boni & Liveright for a middlebrow readership.⁶³⁹ Whereas his popular tract intended to describe the relationship between science and religion, in this book he sought to educate the reader concerning the psychological foundations of religion. Kallen's interest in applying the science of psychology to understand religion was consistent with broad popular interest in the mind and personality in American culture during the 1920s and 1930s. Religious Studies scholar Matthew Hedstrom notes that many books on psychology, such as James Harvey Robinson's *The Mind in the Making* (1922), were bestsellers.⁶⁴⁰ There was a significant base of readers that was interested in psychology, and many were involved with the "mind-cure" movement. Popularized by Mary Baker Eddy, who founded Christian Science in the nineteenth century, the "mind-cure" movement emphasized the healing power of positive emotions and beliefs. "The American

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 129–30.

⁶³⁸ Hollinger, *Science, Jews, and Secular Culture: Studies in Mid-Twentieth Century American Intellectual History*.

⁶³⁹ Kallen, *Why Religion*.

⁶⁴⁰ Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century*, 72.

fascination with psychology," Hedstrom writes, had, by the 1920s, "become a central cultural paradigm for understanding the self, society, and the experience of the divine."⁶⁴¹

In addition to this popular phenomenon in American culture, a special affinity between American Protestantism and psychology had been established, as scholars like Hedstrom and psychiatrist and theologian Keith Meador observe.⁶⁴² It was a trend begun at the turn of the twentieth century, sparked in large measure by William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.⁶⁴³ As Meador puts it, James and his followers "renarrated religion through psychology."⁶⁴⁴ By 1927, the year Kallen published *Why Religion*, psychology came to occupy such an important place in American Protestantism that it provoked H. Reinhold Niebuhr to protest in the *Christian Century*, the most influential American Protestant journal of the first half of twentieth century, against the "sterile union" of psychology and religion that had resulted from the "revolution introduced by William James and his followers."⁶⁴⁵

The selling potential of books on psychology was not lost on Boni & Liveright. It marketed *Why Religion* as "a notable contribution to the psychology of religion," and it highlighted in particular the connection between Kallen and James on the dust jacket: "This book, by a gifted disciple and interpreter of William James, takes up, after two decades of scientific advance, the unanswered questioning that was stirred by the famous *Varieties of Religious Experience*." The following year it brought Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* to an

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁴² Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century*; Meador, "'My Own Salvation': The Christian Century and Psychology's Secularizing of American Protestantism."

⁶⁴³ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*.

⁶⁴⁴ Meador, "'My Own Salvation': The Christian Century and Psychology's Secularizing of American Protestantism," 282.

⁶⁴⁵ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 270; see also Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century*, 72. Both Meador and Hedstrom cite Niebuhr as evidence of the secularization wrought by psychology upon Protestant Christianity in America. See

American audience.⁶⁴⁶ James's *Varieties* was republished in 1929 by Modern Library, which had originally been founded by Boni and Liveright.⁶⁴⁷ Kallen's book was thus part of a larger discourse being circulated in the late 1920s by Boni & Liveright (among others) concerning the relationship between psychology and religion.

James, Dewey, Kallen, and Wieman of the Chicago Divinity School, all understood that relationship in pragmatic, or functionalist, terms. Religion became understood in terms of the functions that it served in the life of the individual, and described by the habits of individuals and groups. "Functionalism" was born with the appearance of Dewey's *The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology*.⁶⁴⁸ It constituted an effort to model scientific psychology upon the Darwinian evolutionary paradigm, and became the dominant school of psychology in America for the first three decades of the twentieth century. As noted in chapter three, there was a variety of schools of functionalist psychology. Some studied mental variability (the focus of the testing movement), while others studied mental adaptation to the social environment.⁶⁴⁹ There were also different approaches to the study of religion that stemmed from functionalist psychology. For example, a secular humanist like Kallen and a religious humanist like Henry Nelson Wieman both used the tools of functionalist psychology but they understood religion in very different ways.

Kallen's perspective relied heavily upon James's concept of the "will to believe." The truth-value of belief lies not in the content of that belief, but in the function that it serves. Belief is a form of mental adaptation. It reflects the choice of one option from among a variety of options, and, in its more significant form, is driven by a pressing need to make a

⁶⁴⁶ Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*.

⁶⁴⁷ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

⁶⁴⁸ Dewey, *The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology*.

⁶⁴⁹ Green, "Darwinian Theory, Functionalism, and the First American Psychological Revolution."

choice. It is the psychological ground for salvation, not because that salvation is directed towards an ultimate good, but because salvation is discovered by the psychological benefits derived from the Jamesian will to believe:

Now, in this sense, in this very atheistic and non-institutional sense, religion is one of the conditions of both progress and happiness. Without this projection of the will to believe by means of symbols into the unknown in space and time and matter, there can be churches, there can be static and rigid organizations of society, there can be habit-bound communities and individuals, but there cannot be a free, flexible, changing life, there cannot be progress, there cannot be happiness. Progress and Happiness are grounded on a religious foundation, but religious in complete contrast to the traditional meanings of that word. This is the living religion of the firing line, of the danger-points of life, and at the firing line there can be no finalities and no infallibles. There can be nothing but faith in a projection, in an imagined content of value; faith that carries on only by its own momentum and by no other. Religion in this sense is at the core of personality, is the spirit of society as these move dangerously from one phase of existence to the next.⁶⁵⁰

Religion so construed serves a real psychological need. Its validation comes not from supernatural authority, but from the religious experience itself. Indeed, for Kallen, the supernatural is not an objective fact, but an emotional one.⁶⁵¹ Religion, in the non-institutional sense, becomes the core of personality by virtue of the function it serves in giving purpose, meaning, and hope.

Wieman, a former Presbyterian minister, shared much in common with Kallen philosophically. He, too, had been influenced by William James, Josiah Royce, Henri Bergson, Ralph Barton Perry, and John Dewey. He believed in treating the subjective religious experience as the critical factor in religion, and he wished to interpret the significance of religion from an empirical analysis of that experience. The conclusions that he drew, however, were very different from those of Kallen. He conceived of God as a

⁶⁵⁰ Kallen, *Why Religion*, 286.

⁶⁵¹ Kallen, *Why Religion*, 303.

creative process, and he maintained that belief as such is worthless if it is not directed towards the supreme good. "The task of theology, he [Wieman] argued, must be to reconstruct a theocentric religious belief from an empirical analysis of the hard data of human religious experience."⁶⁵²

Wieman, a founder of process theology in liberal American Protestantism, began to develop his ideas in *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*.⁶⁵³ In it, Wieman devoted an entire chapter to responding to *Why Religion*.⁶⁵⁴ Kallen became, for him, a useful foil against whom he could contrast his own thinking: "We believe Kallen has correctly stated the facts," Wieman wrote, "but we do not agree with the inferences he draws from them. Religious belief is certainly full of illusion and these illusions console and inspire. But we do not believe they have the value Kallen attributes to them."⁶⁵⁵ While he accepted the Jamesian premise that belief involves selective action in response to certain stimuli, he insisted that it must be "rightly directed."⁶⁵⁶ He rejected Kallen's use of the term "salvation," which, he noted, "is not necessarily directed toward the supreme good."⁶⁵⁷ Without metaphysical content, he found it to be meaningless. "The supreme good will be found only as we learn how to select stimuli and develop systems of response to stimuli in such a way as to give rise to the most delightful of all possible worlds.... In this sense God, the ultimate cause or condition, enters into the supreme good, since he is that which gives rise to the best possible world when man makes right adjustment to him."⁶⁵⁸ Wieman thus applied a functionalist approach to his

⁶⁵² Luker, "Wieman, Henry Nelson."

⁶⁵³ Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*.

⁶⁵⁴ Wieman, "Ultimate Cause, Supreme Good and Religious Experience."

⁶⁵⁵ Wieman, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, 151.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 158–59.

religious worldview, but he understood progress and happiness to be achieved only when the mind was directed towards the "supreme good."

Kallen reviewed Wieman's book for the *Journal of Philosophy*.⁶⁵⁹ He criticized his "arbitrarily assumed metaphysical assumptions."⁶⁶⁰ He considered him a representative "of a growing mode of ratiocination which protesting loudly that religion is in need of clear and distinct modern ideas, adds to the current obfuscation and obscurantism by befogging such clear and distinct ideas as it has."⁶⁶¹ In this exchange between Kallen and Wieman, we see that *Why Religion*, with its psychological apparatus and its Joban (as Kallen saw them) philosophical underpinnings,⁶⁶² played a role in the growing discourse concerning religion's relationship with psychology in America. His ideas provoked a thoughtful response, even if Wieman rejected his claims.

Kallen's intervention in religious discourse is also representative of a Jewish perspective. In his extensive criticism of Wieman's book, Kallen particularly noted his Christian bias:

Religion may be non-specific, but Jesus is still the Most High; the religious experience may imply solitary worship, but the church is still necessary; science may be the only source of verifiable truth, but the Bible is the precious concentration "of these many centuries of worship and experimental living." One religion is no truer than another, but missionaries—of course, Christian ones—have a peculiar justification, as has "religious education" in the public schools. Life consists in adapting yourself to your environment, but adapting yourself to your environment is the same as "getting right with God."⁶⁶³

Wieman was self-contradictory, Kallen claimed. Moreover, his argument expressed a Christocentric point of view. For Kallen, the functionalist approach to religion must be

⁶⁵⁹ Kallen, "The Wrestle of Religion with Truth by Henry Nelson Wieman."

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 278.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁶⁶² See Kallen, *Why Religion*, 282–3.

⁶⁶³ Kallen, "The Wrestle of Religion with Truth by Henry Nelson Wieman," 278.

devoid of any hint of metaphysics. As a participant in the discourse that led to the de-Christianization of American academic and public thought, his engagement with Wieman may be read as a Jewish voice of protest against American Protestant cultural hegemony.

Engaging with Jewish Religious Humanism: Kallen and Cronbach

Why Religion did not stimulate a response among rabbis. We may assume that this is due in part to the fact that, although popular psychology was fulfilling a religious function for many Americans, many American rabbis disdained religious humanism for what they perceived to be its anemic commitment to religion. In Reform Judaism, "religious humanism remained confined to a vocal minority," Meyer writes. "In both the [Hebrew Union] College and the [Central] Conference [of American Rabbis] theism remained the dominant form of belief."⁶⁶⁴ Given that Reform Judaism was considered the most prestigious form of Judaism in America,⁶⁶⁵ Kallen was simply outside of mainstream Jewish religious discourse.

The internal dynamics of the Jewish community, however, proved decisive in forcing change. Beginning in the late 1920s, Heinze writes, "the middle class of assimilated Jews who congregated in Reform temples proved a responsive audience for the ideas of Jewish psychological thinkers."⁶⁶⁶ The educated laity who were interested in psychology, together with the vocal minority of religious humanists in the Conference, brought pressure to bear upon the movement. In 1928, the Central Conference of American Rabbis took the unprecedented step of inviting a psychiatrist to speak at their annual convention.⁶⁶⁷ In 1937,

⁶⁶⁴ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 317.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁶⁶⁶ Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, 208.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

the Hebrew Union College began to offer a course in pastoral psychology.⁶⁶⁸ In 1946, Reform rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman, with the publication of his national bestseller, *Peace of Mind*, which offered a synthesis of religion and psychology, became not only the most celebrated rabbi in America but also "a rabbi to the American public."⁶⁶⁹ His "theological concoction," Heinze notes, "was a potent blend of Kaplan's philosophy [i.e., his functionalist view of religion], Freud's psychology, American democracy, and Liebman's favorite theme from rabbinic Judaism, the idea of men and women being in partnership with God."⁶⁷⁰ The dynamics that led to this shift from placing functionalist psychology outside the bounds of Jewish religious discourse to placing it firmly within and, moreover, representing Judaism with it to the wider American public, is a complex tale. The relationship between Kallen and Reform rabbi Abraham Cronbach (1882-1965) is a part of this tale.

Abraham Cronbach was appointed to a newly created chair of Jewish social studies at Hebrew Union College in 1922, where he remained for the rest of his life.⁶⁷¹ Best-known for his activism as a pacifist, Cronbach also introduced a religious humanist perspective to the College.⁶⁷² Prior to his academic appointment, he had developed an interest in psychology from his work as a chaplain.⁶⁷³ In the same year that he joined the College faculty, he published "Psychoanalysis and Religion" in *The Journal of Religion*, in which he opened an inquiry into the psychoanalytic values undergirding religion.⁶⁷⁴ Reform Judaism had, from its inception, embraced the historical scientific school of study. Cronbach now called for

⁶⁶⁸ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 315.

⁶⁶⁹ Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, 215; Liebman, *Peace of Mind*.

⁶⁷⁰ Heinze, *Jews and the American Soul: Human Nature in the Twentieth Century*, 230.

⁶⁷¹ "Abraham Cronbach Papers."

⁶⁷² Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 317.

⁶⁷³ "Abraham Cronbach Papers."

⁶⁷⁴ Cronbach, "Psychoanalysis and Religion."

psychological study, based on pragmatic principles. Like his liberal Protestant contemporaries, he hoped to find through such an exploration a basis for the unity of religion and psychology, founded upon common understanding and mutual respect.

Kallen's first correspondence with Cronbach concerning Judaism in America began with a disagreement over Kallen's *Menorah Journal* article, "Can Judaism Survive in the United States?" (1925).⁶⁷⁵ In that article, Kallen painted a bleak picture of the widening fissure between Jewish tradition and modernity: "As the ways of thinking and ways of behaving based on science and conditioned by industry enter into the texture of the daily life of Jews, Judaism and its institutions fall more and more into an innocuous desuetude," he claimed. "The survival of Judaism is postulated upon the inertia of a respect for the past and the energy of a fear of the future."⁶⁷⁶ He upbraided rabbis for failing to adjust to the modern world of science and industry. In particular, he faulted the three liberal seminaries that were best positioned to address modern conditions (the Jewish Theological Seminary, Hebrew Union College, and the Jewish Institute of Religion) for providing rabbinical training wholly lacking in "American or generally Jewish as against Judaistic content."⁶⁷⁷

Kallen's article was one of a series of inflammatory articles launched by the *Journal's* editor Elliot Cohen. Cohen, Hurwitz, and Kallen all published articles highly critical of the Jewish religious establishment. These articles changed the perception of the *Journal* by Reform rabbis, who came to see it as representative of an ideological camp opposed to Reform Judaism.⁶⁷⁸ Whereas it had once been possible to imagine an alliance between the

⁶⁷⁵ Kallen, "Can Judaism Survive in the United States?," April 1925; Kallen, "Can Judaism Survive in the United States?," December 1925.

⁶⁷⁶ Kallen, "Can Judaism Survive in the United States?," December 1925, 545.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 555.

⁶⁷⁸ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 305; Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 143–46.

allegedly non-partisan *Journal* and Reform rabbis, matters had now deteriorated beyond repair. Julian Morgenstern, president of Hebrew Union College, issued a strong condemnation of the *Journal*, signaling its "declining reputation among Reform Jewish leaders and rabbis."⁶⁷⁹ Abba Hillel Silver, a prominent Reform rabbi, wrote "Why Do the Heathen Rage?" as a rebuttal to the views of Cohen, Hurwitz, and Kallen.⁶⁸⁰ Although Hurwitz had promised Silver that the *Menorah Journal* would print his article, Cohen reneged on that promise. As a result, Silver resigned from the board of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association.⁶⁸¹ The rift between the secular intellectuals of the *Journal* and the Reform movement seemed complete. Morganstern and Silver had made it clear that they felt that the secular intellectuals of the *Journal* had nothing positive to offer Reform Judaism. Whereas Wieman, as we saw above, included Kallen within the discursive boundaries of his construction of religion, Morganstern and Silver excluded him (and Cohen and Hurwitz) from religious discourse.

The rift was not as complete as it first appears. The one person with whom Kallen engaged in a dialogue was Cronbach. Cronbach did not react to Kallen's article with outrage. He wished for a dialogue. Kallen responded:

[P]lease believe that I am not anti-rabbinic; I have no feeling in the matter beyond a deep and growing anxiety about the future of the whole Jewish cultural complex in the United States, Judaism included, and an interest in a scientific approach to the study of conditions and remedies. I welcome discussion and am only too happy to recognize facts wherever and whenever they are pointed out. My judgment of the function of rabbis in [the] survival of Judaism is not one which I formed with pleasure; it is one which was forced on my by the situation. Any data that would justify revising it would be most welcome.... The situation in Judaism calls for scientific analysis and cooperative study of all who genuinely care about its future, not for personal

⁶⁷⁹ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 146.

⁶⁸⁰ Silver, "Why Do the Heathen Rage?"

⁶⁸¹ Greene, *The Jewish Origins of Cultural Pluralism*, 147.

recrimination and defensory [sic] tactics.... If you ever come this way I shall be glad to talk with you about these matters.⁶⁸²

Cronbach endeavored to persuade Kallen to amend his negative assessment of the rabbinate, but Kallen was unmoved. In his opinion, individual examples to the contrary were not sufficient to invalidate his conclusions about the group as a whole: "The statistical average is identical with no particular person," Kallen wrote. "Yet it does define the group."⁶⁸³

In Kallen's estimation, it was impossible to remain a rabbi and still subscribe to current scientific scholarship: "In my judgment scientific scholarship leads to agnosticism and atheism. Would your college follow it there?"⁶⁸⁴ In his mind, there was an inherent incompatibility between science and religion, which was precisely the point that Cronbach disputed. Nevertheless, he wrote, this did not present an insurmountable obstacle to their relationship:

At bottom you and I are not so far apart as you pretend. The idea that we are is due to the notion that my papers are an attack and not a description, and that the rabbinate needs defense. It doesn't. It is what the economic & social situation has made it and seems satisfied. Meantime the Jewish tradition loses in vitality and significance. That is what bothers me, and why I study the rabbinate as well as the Jewries of the world. If I am irked at all it is by the Jewish policy of repression, of the traditional fear of Hillul Hashem [blasphemy]. Free, if necessary, violent discussion, open and thorough airing of views, oxygenation, seem to me essential to salvation. I hope they do to you.⁶⁸⁵

Kallen had found in Cronbach someone with whom he could maintain a dialogue.

Cronbach was a popular teacher at the College, especially in the 1930s.⁶⁸⁶ The school culture under Morgenstern's presidency (1922-1947) was markedly different from that which had characterized the Kohler years. Both students and faculty "enjoyed complete freedom of

⁶⁸² Kallen to Cronbach, December 22, 1927.

⁶⁸³ Kallen to Cronbach, January 4, 1928.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 302.

expression," Meyer writes.⁶⁸⁷ Although Cronbach was the sole representative of religious humanism on the faculty,⁶⁸⁸ this did not mean that he lacked a sympathetic audience among his students. In fact, Meyer notes, Cronbach "exercised considerable influence on students" among those who were "intellectually uncomfortable with theism."⁶⁸⁹

On the occasion of Cronbach's tenth anniversary with the College, a committee of the student body organized to honor the popular teacher. The result was the publication of a compilation volume of Cronbach's writings, *Religion and its Social Setting* (1933).⁶⁹⁰ Kallen was the inspiration behind its publication, as was made clear by the chair of the Cronbach anniversary committee and student editor of *The Hebrew Union College Monthly*, Martin M. Weitz. He wrote to Kallen, "Thanks again very much for your suggestion to make the Cronbach book and to help make as large a section of the liberal world as possible Cronbach-conscious—and too for your kindly and personal interest in me."⁶⁹¹ The book foregrounds Cronbach's psychological functionalist approach to religion. Religion was an assertion of a person's perceived highest purpose, and whatever served that end may be called God. Religion must be evaluated by its effectiveness in preserving and ennobling values, not in its fidelity to supernatural revelation. Despite the fact that a majority in the College and in the Conference subscribed to the theism propounded by Samuel S. Cohon, the College's professor of Jewish theology,⁶⁹² Kallen believed that this student-led initiative signaled a developing change in the College. He attributed this shift to the efforts of both Weitz and Cronbach. *The Hebrew Union College Monthly's* "tone, attitude and interest are [a] far cry

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 317.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 302.

⁶⁹⁰ Cronbach, Weitz, and Hebrew Union College. Committee on the Cronbach anniversary volume, *Religion and Its Social Setting: Together with Other Essays*.

⁶⁹¹ Weitz to Kallen, April 3, 1933.

⁶⁹² Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 317.

from what seemed to prevail at Hebrew Union College when I had an entertaining visit there back in 1915," Kallen wrote Weitz. "They seem to me to mark a very positive advance."⁶⁹³

Kallen and Cronbach regularly exchanged manuscripts and publications. Cronbach, for example, wrote to him of his gratitude for his help in the preparation of his "The Psychoanalytic Study of Judaism."⁶⁹⁴ Kallen sent him a copy of *The Warfare of Religion Against Science*. Cronbach thanked him for it, expressing "admiration" for his "brilliant powers." Although he could not bring himself to agree with his thesis, he nevertheless felt compelled to consider his point of view: "I ask myself the question: What really is so grievously wrong about religion that a man like Prof. Kallen should go to such pains as to show it up in such a desperately unfavorable light? A thing may be ever so excellent and yet something must be radically wrong if people are somehow inclined to ignore its excellences and to concentrate on its blemishes." Cronbach did not believe that the "dunce cap," as he put it, fit him as "a devotee of religion" and of science, but, he wrote, "I do say that religion greatly needs setting its house in order so long as there is something about it which makes a man like you willing and eager to institute such a comparison."⁶⁹⁵ He announced his intention to share Kallen's work with his students, and hoped that he would be able to convince the administration to invite him to lecture:

I am going to lend your paper to my students. I wish I could get you to meet my students and wrestle it out with them. I have steadily been making efforts to get you invited to Cincinnati. But, alas, certain bygoners refuse to be bygoners. Nevertheless I continue my efforts. I think that religion, MY religion, has everything to gain from a man like you. You are a purifyer [sic]. You are an assailant that can prompt needed improvements.
Assuring you of my abiding esteem, I am
Devotedly,

⁶⁹³ Kallen to Weitz, June 3, 1932.

⁶⁹⁴ Cronbach, "The Psychoanalytic Study of Judaism"; Cronbach to Kallen, November 25, 1932.

⁶⁹⁵ Cronbach to Kallen, November 17, 1931.

Abraham Cronbach⁶⁹⁶

Kallen was still persona non grata at the College, but, through Cronbach, its students would now have the opportunity to be exposed to his ideas.

Cronbach sufficiently impressed Kallen such that, as noted above, he urged Weitz to publish *Religion and its Social Setting* as part of their plans to honor Cronbach. At Weitz's behest, Kallen wrote the introduction to the book, and permitted him to publish an advance copy of it in *The Hebrew Union College Monthly* in order to promote its sales. His introduction glowingly described Cronbach's integration of science with religion, suggesting a new openness on Kallen's part to moving beyond the "warfare" model, as well as marking the introduction of Cronbach's psychological approach to Reform Judaism. He praised Cronbach's presentation of the "philosophical and psychological fundamentals" of Judaism. He also identified Cronbach as a modernist. Religionist critics of modernism, Kallen wrote, protested that God had become "nothing more than our highest social purpose," but, be this as it may, "the identification saved the substance of religion as a projection of feeling and integrated it with science as a way of thought." Cronbach's modernism, he added, "stresses the emotional and the poetic," able "to assume for authority such Christian Modernists as Ames, Wieman and Coe, but to employ the anti-religious Freud as a support for the power and value of religious meanings." Cronbach's Judaism, he concluded, may be called "Evangelical Judaism" with respect to human relations. The "good" Jew is so not in proportion to his subscription to dogma, but in proportion "to the possibilities of stimulating friendships and reciprocal inspirations in all Jewish sections."⁶⁹⁷

Cronbach wrote appreciatively to Kallen:

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ Kallen, "Introduction to Forthcoming Volume."

So often have I been misinterpreted that I find it an honor and a joy when someone sets forth correctly what I am trying to say. You have expressed my thoughts better than I can express them myself.... It pleased me particularly that you used the phrase "Evangelical Judaism." I think your mind gave birth to that expression while you and I were seated on the porch of your domicile in Columbus Ohio when I had the privilege of being your guest and conversing with you in June 1930. That phrase is a most suitable peg on which to hang some useful ideas."⁶⁹⁸

Kallen's support for Cronbach was rooted in their shared belief that religion articulates values and aesthetics. They were united by their shared commitment to humanism and the insights of psychology, although Kallen's humanism was secular and Cronbach's was religious.

As a result of Kallen's collaboration with Weitz over the publication of the Cronbach volume, he came to exercise influence on that student of Cronbach. Kallen viewed his new relationship with Weitz as an opportunity to further circulate his views among Reform rabbis. He sent him his new book, *Judaism at Bay* (1932),⁶⁹⁹ for which Weitz thanked him and announced his intention to lead group discussions on it: "I plan to read parts of it to a small but interested group I have organized here for a discussion of 'Modern World Problems.'"⁷⁰⁰ Through Cronbach and Weitz, Kallen's ideas circulated among religious humanists in the Reform movement. He entered into the larger discourse that eventually led to the inclusion of functionalist psychological thought in mainstream American Jewish religious thought.

Redemption: On Secularism as Religion

During the 1940s and 1950s, Kallen's efforts to define the terms of religion's engagement with science and democracy intensified. By the 1950s, he had synthesized secularism, religion and democracy. This synthesis, however removed from established

⁶⁹⁸ Cronbach to Kallen, April 2, 1933.

⁶⁹⁹ Kallen, *Judaism At Bay: Essays Toward the Adjustment of Judaism to Modernity*.

⁷⁰⁰ Weitz to Kallen, June 14, 1932.

institutional Judaism, was still part and parcel of his self-understanding as an American Jew. He came to see himself as a modern-day Job, concerned with individual integrity and engaged, as historian of science George Reisch puts it, in "an ongoing vigilant patrol of the epistemic shoreline," guarding against all forms of what he perceived to be fascist thought.⁷⁰¹

In a 1934 radio broadcast, Kallen offered a politicized reading of Job. He claimed that Job 13:15 implies resistance to totalitarianism. His message left a memorable impact on at least one listener:

We tuned in on the radio the other day, and chanced to hear Dr. Horace Kallen drop the word of insight which we must pass on to our readers. Speaking on Facism [sic], Dr. Kallen made reference to the famous passage in the 13th chapter of "Job," which runs, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." The speaker then pointed out that this was a mistranslation; that, in the original Hebrew, the verse stated, "He will slay me; I have no hope; yet will I defend my integrity to His face." The first and familiar version, said Dr. Kallen, conveys perfectly the attitude of the loyal citizen in the Fascist state. Subject to a tyranny which he knows will absorb and crush him, destroy all his individuality in the interest of a totalitarian society, he yet puts his trust in the dictatorship and obeys it. The second version of the great biblical passage, the correct one, is a beautiful illustration, said Dr. Kallen, of the attitude of the man who would be free. It is the perfect slogan of liberty, as over against the repressive rule of either church or state.... Strike me if you will,... Yet am I the master of my own life.... We have never heard the case for liberty put more vividly than this.⁷⁰²

Kallen here used a biblical reference (in Jewish religious terms, he delivered a "davar Torah") to drive home a point about freedom and liberty. He aligned Job with democracy. It signaled a transition in his thinking. Over the course of the next twenty years, as we shall see, he came to interpret Job as postulating the premise for democracy and cultural pluralism, an idea rooted in his original understanding of the Book of Job as a product of the discursive exchange between the Greek and Hebraic worldviews discussed above.

⁷⁰¹ Reisch, *How The Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science: To the Icy Slopes of Logic*, 170.

⁷⁰² "Unity - April 2, 1934."

He was particularly invested in defending against what he perceived to be religion's threat to science's independence. To him, the hallmark of modernity was the triumph of science and democracy over ecclesiastical control. Kallen, who had earlier identified Job as a proto-modernist in this respect, saw himself as adopting a Joban stance of resistance against the attempts of religious institutions to exert control in politics or in science.⁷⁰³ He vigorously opposed the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, which was founded in 1940 and sponsored by the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary under the leadership of Chancellor Louis Finkelstein. The Conference's aim was to chart a progressive traditionalist religious path to unify science, philosophy and religion, promote democracy, and articulate an American moral order.⁷⁰⁴ Finkelstein also used it to cement Jewish with American religious values. Historian James Gilbert notes that one legacy of the Conference is that it helped to popularize the notion that American values were based upon a common Judeo-Christian heritage. It helped to create "a new ecumenism of American religions."⁷⁰⁵ Kallen, together with Dewey, however, opposed the Conference because it represented to them a covert attempt to impose traditionalist religion on American intellectual life.⁷⁰⁶ For Kallen, the real enemy was the Catholic Church. He believed that the Conference's validation of neo-Thomist and Catholic doctrine represented a threat to American democracy.⁷⁰⁷

Kallen wrote a sharp rebuke to Finkelstein after the first Conference. Although, as a Jew, he too recognized the importance of "active toleration," he believed that the Conference

⁷⁰³ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1918, 67.

⁷⁰⁴ Beuttler, "Organizing an American Conscience: The Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, 1940-1968. (Volumes I-III)."

⁷⁰⁵ Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science*, 92.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

"made the painful impression of active intolerance."⁷⁰⁸ According to Gilbert, he "feared that Finkelstein had made a devil's pact with the Catholic Church."⁷⁰⁹ He explained his opposition to the Finkelstein conference in a letter to his friend, philosopher Van Meter Ames:

As I understand it, Einstein had been practically hounded into sending them a paper. In this paper he gave his conception of God and Nature as they developed out of his feeling of the trend of science. Mr. Finkelstein denounced him then and there. That whole meeting was a clerical's holiday for Jesuits and neo-Thomists. It caused such a disturbance even among the timid Protestants that the latter meetings seem to have been shaped to overcome the bad feeling caused by the first. But all of them are designed so to harmonize science and religion that science is converted into the hand-maiden of the special orthodoxies whose interests the protagonists of the conference are trying to further. Dewey and I have consistently declined to participate in the meetings.⁷¹⁰

Finkelstein had publicly denounced Einstein's "cosmic religion." Kallen perceived the Finkelstein conference to be intent on silencing dissenting voices regarding the relationship between science and religion.

Alarmed by what they perceived to be the "alliance of Finkelstein with Catholic, neo-Thomist intellectuals and religious scientists," Kallen and Dewey, working with Unitarian minister Edwin H. Wilson, editor of the *Humanist*, convened the rival Conference on the Scientific Spirit and Democratic Faith in 1943.⁷¹¹ As Kallen conceived it, their conference would take up the cause of "democratic religions" against authoritarianism.⁷¹² Although their conference met only four times, concluding in 1946,⁷¹³ those years helped to cement for him his conception of secularism as religion.

⁷⁰⁸ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 85.

⁷⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁰ Kallen to Ames, April 27, 1943.

⁷¹¹ Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science*, 84, 87.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, 88.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, 89.

He defined religion, as we have seen, in psychological functionalist terms. The religious attitude of faith in an as-yet unrealized possibility was of ultimate importance. In this respect, he shared much in common with Dewey.⁷¹⁴ Democracy, which provided the surety that no one religion would presume to dominate any other, was itself a faith commitment in the workings of society. Kallen now had come to see himself as a defender of "democratic religions." From here, it was only a small step to declaring that the most democratic of all religions is democracy itself. This he did in 1951. His "Democracy's True Religion" appeared first as an article in the *Saturday Review of Literature*,⁷¹⁵ and then was published as a pamphlet with Beacon Press.⁷¹⁶ In it, he described the religion of the American Idea, a phrase that he adopted from Unitarian abolitionist Theodore Parker:

For the communicants of the democratic faith, this is the religion of religions, the common faith in the way of life which keeps impartial peace among them all and assures to each its liberty on equal terms with the others. It is the one way in which each, although maintaining its unique and singular individuality, although cherishing its incommensurable difference, can yet live together with the others in such wise that it can grow in liberty and safety more certainly than if it sought to exist solo.⁷¹⁷

In this formulation, he reiterated in large measure his original cultural pluralism thesis, but without reference to racial ideas. Cultural pluralism now rested on a common faith in democracy.

"Secularism is religion," he declared. "It favors the betting of one's life on equal liberty for all men to believe, to inquire, to hear, and to teach, against the exclusive authoritarian claims of a special occupational class."⁷¹⁸ He argued that secular religion,

⁷¹⁴ See Dewey, *A Common Faith*.

⁷¹⁵ Kallen, "Democracy's True Religion," July 28, 1951.

⁷¹⁶ Kallen, *Democracy's True Religion*, 1951.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

democracy, and science all express the same commitment to human freedom. Relying upon the definition of faith that he had set forth in *Why Religion*, Kallen saw in secularism precisely the same sort of demand for active commitment that described religious faith.⁷¹⁹ It required of the believer to "bet" one's life on that proposition over the rival claims of sacerdotal authority. As such, it served the same function as traditional religious belief and therefore qualified to be considered a religion. Moreover, because it guaranteed the freedom of all beliefs and all religions, it was a kind of metareligion. The American Idea, secular, scientific, and democratic, was, for him, the religion of religions.⁷²⁰

He elaborated on these ideas in correspondence with his friend, poet T.S. Eliot. The fact that he corresponded with someone of Eliot's stature is significant. Considering Eliot's cultural cachet and religious standing, Kallen's correspondence with him is a dramatic expression of his commitment to proselytizing American religion. His attempt to convince Eliot of the validity of his conception of religion represents a discursive intervention at the very heart of modern culture. Eliot's reputed antisemitism may make their friendship seem unlikely, but they were close friends for several decades. Their surviving correspondence dates from 1927, and continues through 1960,⁷²¹ but they had been close friends at Harvard

⁷¹⁹ Kallen, *Why Religion*, 90.

⁷²⁰ See Kallen, *Secularism Is the Will of God: An Essay in the Social Philosophy of Democracy and Religion*.

⁷²¹ See Omer, "It Is I Who Have Been Defending a Religion Called Judaism": The T.S. Eliot and Horace M. Kallen Correspondence," 322. See also Ranen Omer-Sherman, "Rethinking Eliot, Jewish Identity, and Cultural Pluralism"; Schuchard, "Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture"; Perloff, "A Response to Ronald Schuchard." Omer-Sherman's "It is I Who Have Been Defending a Religion Called Judaism," published in 1997, inspired a debate among literary scholars in a special section of *Modernism/modernity* in 2003 (10.1), in which Ronald Schuchard and six other scholars debate the issue. Anecdotes related by Schuchard make it clear that Eliot's respect for Kallen was deep and genuine. Omer-Sherman and Schuchard take Eliot's correspondence as evidence that he did not see Kallen as his "pet Jew," which is a common trope with antisemites like Ezra Pound. Marjorie Perloff, however, rejects their interpretation. My purpose in exploring the correspondence is not to evaluate Eliot's views, but to explore Kallen's ideas and intentions more thoroughly.

from 1906 to 1911, so it seems likely that earlier letters have been lost.⁷²² Over the course of some thirty-three years, they corresponded about a wide range of topics, including philosophy, poetry, religion, cultural pluralism, and the nature of secularism.⁷²³ This correspondence is significant for Eliot scholars, constituting, as literary and Judaic studies scholar Ranen Omer (now Omer-Sherman) puts it, a record of his "sustained intellectual engagement with the role of Jews and Judaism in Western culture."⁷²⁴ The correspondence is also a striking testimony to Kallen's unflagging optimism that support for his beliefs, or, at least, respect, could be won out of reasoned conflict, even from a thinker as diametrically opposed on philosophic and religious issues as was Eliot. Omer-Sherman argues that Barrett Wendell, who had persuaded the young Kallen to reconsider his negativity towards his Jewish heritage and convinced him to embrace Hebraism, may have also indirectly taught his pupil the general principle that profound shifts in attitude may occur when there is respectful dialogue. In Omer-Sherman's opinion, Kallen wrote to Eliot because he saw "an unprecedented opportunity to influence the great poet."⁷²⁵ He argues that Kallen's optimism was not misplaced, and that his notion of cultural pluralism, in fact, wrought a signal effect upon Eliot, leading to Eliot's "late enthusiasm for [cultural] diversity."⁷²⁶

Kallen likely hoped that he would also either be able to persuade Eliot to validate his notion of the "American Idea" as religion, or at least convince him to take the idea as a serious alternative to his own worldview. "Please believe, dear Tom, that religion is as serious a word to me as it is to you," Kallen wrote. "Religions are many, and can be

⁷²² Schuchard, "Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture," 14.

⁷²³ Omer, "'It Is I Who Have Been Defending a Religion Called Judaism': The T.S. Eliot and Horace M. Kallen Correspondence," 322.

⁷²⁴ Ibid.

⁷²⁵ Ibid., 328.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

separated into two components, *faith*, and *the content of faith*.⁷²⁷ He attempted to find common ground with Eliot by prioritizing the function of faith over its content: "What is common to the global miscellany of religions, then[,] is not *what* is believed, but *how* it is believed." Each religion's adherents bet their lives on its proposition for salvation. The American Idea, he wrote, is no different. It signified "the statement of faith concerning God and man and human relations expressed by the Declaration of Independence." He argued that this faith has been a guiding creed for the American people, who have struggled "in the schools, the churches, the workshops, the halls of government and the courts to incarnate faith in fact. The Idea is American, and not British, not Swiss, not Scandinavian, the same way as an individual is American and not British or other."⁷²⁸

He reiterated his conception of the American Idea as metareligion: "The American Idea can be, and is, not so much *a* religion, as religion, indeed the one reliable catholicity of religions, and the American religion insofar as Americans *are* Americans. For they are Americans, and not merely citizens of a particular sovereign state, in the measure of their commitment to the American Idea." Because it is a religion "wherein...diverse individual religions are united," he concluded, "it is religion at the opposite pole of...religious intolerance." The American Idea is by its very nature tolerant and pluralist, and, he added, "it is for this reason too, that the Idea works as the creative propulsion of a national culture."⁷²⁹

Kallen, who, as we have seen, had located Hebraism prior to Judaism, believing that religion is a product of culture, was unable to persuade Eliot to reconsider his contention that the reverse was true, that culture was a product of religion: "[C]ulture is the outcome of, the

⁷²⁷ Kallen to Eliot, December 23, 1954.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

living garment of, a religion," Eliot wrote to Kallen on November 6, 1954.⁷³⁰ Eliot's rebuttal was respectful and thoughtful as he sought to untangle their points of disagreement. As they discussed the relationship between democracy, the American Idea, and religion, the subject of Jews and Judaism remained an important subtext to this discussion. Eliot, fearing that Kallen's postulated religion for America invited totalitarianism and oppression, appealed to him to consider the importance and value of the Jewish religion. Kallen responded by underscoring his belief that only the democratic religious idea ensured tolerance and freedom for all, preventing traditional revelatory religions from seeking totalitarian dominance themselves. The American Idea, he wrote, "displaces Judaism's and Christianity's traditional arrogation of divine election with the belief that divinity, however conceived, plays no favorites and favors no one human conception of itself above any other."⁷³¹ At the end of their unresolved debate over the issue of Judaism as a religion and its relationship to the American Idea, Eliot wrote finally in 1955, "You know, it seems to me that you have been defending a religion called the American Idea—and that it is I who have been defending a religion called Judaism."⁷³²

Their extended correspondence bears witness to how central to their disagreement over American "religion" was the friction between a religious definition of Judaism and an ethno-cultural understanding of it. The fact that they agreed to disagree, however, is not in itself important. Kallen understood that what was of central importance was the mutual respect they had for each others' ideas, and their continued openness to dialogue. Thus, he

⁷³⁰ Qtd. in Schuchard, "Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture," 19. Strict controls over Eliot's letters preclude me from being able to quote directly from his letters.

⁷³¹ Kallen to Eliot, December 23, 1954.

⁷³² Qtd. in Schuchard, "Burbank with a Baedeker, Eliot with a Cigar: American Intellectuals, Anti-Semitism, and the Idea of Culture," 20.

wrote to Eliot on July 25, 1953, "you recognize that artists and thinkers sustain the integrity of their singular vision and action only as 'a sporting fellowship even among opposite minds.'"⁷³³ In other words, it was the very act of disagreeing that led each to develop and clarify, to "sustain the integrity," of their own thoughts. At a minimum, then, we may conclude that Kallen found it useful to debate the issues with this modernist icon because it helped him to articulate himself more clearly through a dialectical process.

During the 1950s, American national piety consisted of a bland civil religion. Dwight Eisenhower gave voice to this in 1954: "Our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is. With us, of course, it is the Judeo-Christian concept, but it must be a religion that all men are created equal."⁷³⁴ Whereas many Americans, like Eisenhower, viewed America as the home to many different religions united in civility, Kallen insisted that secularism communicate a more urgent and meaningful religious message. Americans, he believed, had "bet their lives on the American Idea,"⁷³⁵ a yearning for human freedom, and America's diverse individual religions were united in their faith in human fulfillment through democracy. Kallen's conception of American civil religion remains among the robust formulations from that time: "Secularism cannot be freedom from religion; it must be freedom from coercion and exploitation by a particular religion.

Secularism is freedom of religion to be different. Thus, again, Secularism is the Will of God."⁷³⁶ Stressing the lesson of Job, Kallen wrote that it was postulated "on the individual's concern for his own integrity, and on his consequent free movement between and among the

⁷³³ Qtd. in *ibid.*, 19.

⁷³⁴ Qtd. in Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science*, 92.

⁷³⁵ Kallen to Eliot, December 23, 1954.

⁷³⁶ Kallen, *Secularism Is the Will of God: An Essay in the Social Philosophy of Democracy and Religion*, 95.

diversity of group formations."⁷³⁷ His was a secular religion, and, although he may not have won many adherents, he did gain attention.⁷³⁸ Those who disagreed with Kallen, like sociologist of religion and author Will Herberg, could not ignore his views. The disagreement, in fact, helped to advance the debates by forcing a further clarification of the alternatives.

In lectures delivered at Drew University in 1961,⁷³⁹ Herberg, author of the widely acclaimed *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (1955),⁷⁴⁰ analyzed the paradox that America was "at once the most religious and the most secularistic of nations."⁷⁴¹ In the context of the 1950s, he observed, the American Way had become the "operative religion" of Americans, and "conventional religion" (meaning normative Christianity and Judaism) played a social function in helping people find a sense of belonging in a subcommunity. Whereas the ethnic subcommunity had provided Americans with the requisite sense of belonging in the past, he argued, now that role had devolved to the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religious communities. The American Way represented the "what" of American religion, and belonging to one of the three established religions described the "how" of belonging.

Herberg used Kallen's *Democracy's True Religion* as a sounding board for his own ideas, just as Wieman had earlier clarified his views in response to Kallen's *Why Religion*. Herberg identified *Democracy's True Religion* as "the classic formulation of the benevolent syncretism [of religion and culture] that constitutes America's secularized religion."⁷⁴²

Kallen's religion of the American Idea was in some ways the paradigmatic expression of the

⁷³⁷ Kallen, *Cultural Pluralism and the American Idea: An Essay in Social Philosophy*, 87.

⁷³⁸ See, e.g., "Is Democracy a Religion?"

⁷³⁹ Herberg, "Religion in a Secularized Society: The New Shape of Religion in America (Lecture I)"; "Religion in a Secularized Society: Some Aspects of America's Three-Religion Pluralism (Lecture II)."

⁷⁴⁰ Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*.

⁷⁴¹ Herberg, "Religion in a Secularized Society: The New Shape of Religion in America (Lecture I)," 155.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 157.

shared national piety of the era. In 1954, the same year that Kallen published *Secularism is the Will of God*, the U.S. Congress added "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. This piety, historian George Marsden observes, was born of "World War II patriotism, Cold War anxieties, inherited American ideals, similar religious and moral heritages, and a burgeoning economy that provided most people with at least the hope of sharing in the American dream. In such a setting, pragmatism could draw on shared moral capital."⁷⁴³ But, Herberg wrote, theologians who were critics of American religion had "grave misgivings" about Kallen's claim that democracy was a viable "superreligion." They took belief seriously, and could not "easily be persuaded to dissolve it in the generalized religiosity of the American Way."⁷⁴⁴ For "theologically concerned" critics, argued Herberg, secularization in America had come to mean the emptying of meaningful content from religion.⁷⁴⁵

Although Kallen did not directly engage in dialogue with Herberg over this, he might have countered that, although he hoped to empty religion of its supernaturalist illusions, he nevertheless valued religious feeling and found in secularism a deep faith commitment. "As a Secularist," he wrote, "I recognize the equal right of all the world's different faiths to be what they are as they are, so long as they do not cancel this right for themselves by refusing it to others."⁷⁴⁶ His identification as a secularist did not negate his strong sense of connection to his Jewish identity. He distinguished between those whom he called "Judaists" and "Jews."⁷⁴⁷ The former were religious; the latter, secular. The latter group, he wrote, believes in "an ongoing transvaluation of the 'religious' tradition by the sciences of man and nature and by

⁷⁴³ Marsden, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief*, 131.

⁷⁴⁴ Herberg, "Religion in a Secularized Society: The New Shape of Religion in America (Lecture I)," 158.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁶ Kallen, *What I Believe and Why-Maybe: Essays for the Modern World*, 148.

⁷⁴⁷ Kallen, "'Jew' and 'Judaist.'"

the industrial and other arts." He perceived his secular religion to be an expression of such an ongoing transvaluation. This transvaluation was the key, he believed, to "the ongoing existence and growth of the distinctively Jewish group."⁷⁴⁸ His belief in secularism was his contribution to the ongoing growth of the "distinctively Jewish group."

Redemption: On Job and Liberty

By the 1950s, the book of Job had come to represent for Kallen the essential expression of his faith in freedom and democracy. This he expressed in a popular radio broadcast series entitled "This I Believe," created in 1951 to address the fears and anxieties of the age.⁷⁴⁹ Broadcast from 196 stations in the U.S. and abroad two to three times a day and repeated at intervals over several weeks, each five-minute episode featured the personal philosophy of different speakers.⁷⁵⁰ Kallen's episode aired in 1953. He told his listeners that his beliefs had developed out of his reading of Job. "Now in my seventieth year, I am asked what have I bet my life on," he said.

Pondering the answer, I find that above all else, I believe in equal liberty for every person to believe, to change his beliefs, to tell his beliefs; and in reason, the one method by which this equality of all believers is most reliably confirmed and advanced. I believe that democracy is the free orchestration of mankind's equal liberty; that progress is their teamwork, that peace is their reciprocal guarantees.... Now to bet one's life on equal liberty for everybody as the goal, and on reason as the going to this goal, is to...live by a fighting faith in the freedom which Job bet his life on when he challenged the justice of the almighty and the almighty justified him.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁴⁹ Murrow, "Introduction to the Original This I Believe."

⁷⁵⁰ Wheelock to Kallen, April 14, 1953.

⁷⁵¹ Kallen, "This I Believe: Horace M. Kallen."

Whereas in the past, Kallen had stressed reading Job as an expression of Hebraism's philosophical compatibility with modernity, he now highlighted Job's faith commitment. He identified Job's faith with his. They both lived with a fighting faith in freedom.

Having cemented in his mind the connection between Job, faith, and democracy, he sought to republish his *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* for the new era. The republication would become part of his proselytizing efforts on behalf of the American Idea. In 1959, he found a publisher in Hill and Wang, a firm that specialized in publishing dramas. Hill and Wang's interest may have been piqued because of the recent runaway success of Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.* (1958), a modern retelling of the story of Job.⁷⁵² They probably believed that there was a potential audience for Kallen's Job.

In the new preface, he justified his republication by noting its uniqueness (and importance) as a dramatic rendering of the biblical text, which no one else had done. Referring to MacLeish's *J.B.*, Kallen characterized that play as part of the "matrix of orthodoxy" of which all recent commentators (including Josiah Royce and Carl Jung) seemed to be a part. They focus on the prologue of the biblical tragedy, he explained, which fit the natural human tendency to want a happy ending. This natural "hunger of the heart," he wrote, "impelled the canonical masking of the Tragedy of Job by the form the Bible preserves it in," and "has motivated the bulk of its traditional reinterpretations." Kallen, on the other hand, wished to preserve "the tragic intention of the Tragedy of Job." The Joban conclusion, he added, is "neither reconciliation nor submission, but recognition."⁷⁵³

⁷⁵² MacLeish, *J.B.: A Play in Verse*.

⁷⁵³ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1959, vii–xvi.

The most striking part of his new introduction is when he refers to Robert Frost's *A Masque of Reason*,⁷⁵⁴ a 1945 comedy purporting to be the 43rd chapter of the book of Job, with its theme, as he put it, of "the tragedy's vital heresy." He wrote that the humanism in Frost's *Masque* is true "to the spirit of the Hebrew Tragedy of Job," and that it established why, "of all books in the biblical canon, the poetic drama of Hebrew Job concurs best with whatever is modern and not merely contemporary in the faith of modern man."⁷⁵⁵ Through his references to *J.B.* and to *A Masque of Reason*, he linked his *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* to American dramatic literature. He did not include any religious commentators or theologians in his treatment of modern interpretations. He situated his republication of Job as American drama and literature, in the tradition of Robert Frost and Archibald MacLeish. Only, with Kallen, however, as we have seen, was it also a secular religious offering. He made sure to send T. S. Eliot a copy of it, who, Omer-Sherman records, expressed "his delight at receiving a new edition of *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy* from Kallen."⁷⁵⁶

He particularly hoped that his Job would have an impact on Jewish communities and the State of Israel. Job would now become the vehicle to export the American Idea. He awaited the publication of his Job in paperback, as he wrote to Arthur Wang in June 1959, so that he could take copies with him to Stockholm where he was to speak on "Cultural Pluralism in the Modern World" before the World Jewish Congress. That venue would allow him to distribute his ideas to an international assembly of Jewish representatives, which he hoped would translate into further sales opportunities abroad. "I am particularly concerned

⁷⁵⁴ Frost, *A Masque of Reason*.

⁷⁵⁵ Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy*, 1959, xvi.

⁷⁵⁶ Omer, "'It Is I Who Have Been Defending a Religion Called Judaism': The T.S. Eliot and Horace M. Kallen Correspondence," 328. Omer-Sherman also notes that the original 1918 version was probably the first work by Kallen that Eliot had ever read.

that there should be a market in Israel," he wrote. "Regarding Israel, perhaps you could arrange sales on the basis of certain reserve funds which the United States Government makes available for the purpose of distributing American books and American ideas."⁷⁵⁷ He believed that since Job was self-evidently about the American Idea, the American government might help to finance the distribution of his book as part of their propaganda efforts.

He was concerned that the State of Israel should embrace the values to which he subscribed. Insofar as Israel represented a center for the Jewish people, he believed, it should also represent democratic values. He had written on this subject several years earlier in the *Menorah Journal*. In "Whither Israel" (1951), he described "the [Israeli] governmental dilemma between, on the one hand, a solidarity to be created by appeasing protagonists of religious intolerance and coercion and, on the other hand, remaining loyal to the principle of equal liberty for the different."⁷⁵⁸ He worried that Israel might acquiesce in militarization and in the political empowerment of the religious bloc, thereby undermining democracy and embracing totalitarianism. He appreciated that Israel was caught on the horns of a terrible moral dilemma: "The alternatives are to accept the murder of freedom at the hands of its foe or to kill freedom in order to save it from the foe."⁷⁵⁹ The book of Job, he wrote, described the attitude of courage and faith that Israel should adopt. Although the future was uncertain, Israel must maintain its faith in freedom. If it were to transpire that Israel were destroyed, then at least it "will have held fast to its integrity and not paid for some form of physical

⁷⁵⁷ Kallen to Wang, June 9, 1959.

⁷⁵⁸ Kallen, "Whither Israel," 132.

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

survival with moral suicide."⁷⁶⁰ Kallen thus offered his Joban philosophy as a moral guide to sustain Israel's commitment to freedom and democracy.

I have charted the changes in Kallen's thinking over the course of fifty years, and noted how, through it all, the book of Job retained its grounding meaning for him personally. From announcing Job's presence as a drama in Jewish literature, to finding in Job an expression of philosophical Darwinism, and on to reading Job as a prototypical version of the American Idea, Kallen's personal changes are recorded in his changing interpretations of Job. These changes in his self-understanding, in his sense of personal identity as a Jew, as an American, and as a human being, describe his own struggle for survival: "When we say we struggle for our own survival, it isn't primarily the survival of the body that we struggle for," Kallen once said. "It's for a certain identity, a certain pattern, of the action of the body, of the living and thinking and feeling that are expressed in words and in habits of life and in ideals."⁷⁶¹ For Kallen, that struggle entailed discursive engagement with a wide spectrum of American life.

As a consequence of his engagement with print culture, and with a wide spectrum of American intellectual life, including religious and cultural leaders like Cronbach, Wieman, Eliot, and Finkelstein, whose receptivity to his ideas varied, his story is enmeshed in the larger story of American and Jewish religious discourse. By examining the social circulation of Kallen's ideas, we gain appreciation for the protean quality of secularism and the engagement of science and religion. The discourses cause a renegotiation of the meaning of the terms, and help to constitute culture. Kallen's interventions in the discourses concerning the engagement of science and religion, the meaning of freedom and democracy, and the

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid., 143.

⁷⁶¹ Kallen, *Humanisms: The American Dream and the American Idea*.

function of secularism, were not only personal reflections; they also contributed to the development of Jewish life in America.

Conclusion

This dissertation is a meditation on Jewish identity. I analyze different print venues in order to triangulate our subject, Horace Meyer Kallen, to assess his impact on the American Jewish community, and to reflect upon the transformative power of religious and scientific discourses. I first examine English-language Jewish periodicals like the *American Hebrew & Jewish Messenger* and the *Menorah Journal*, and discuss Kallen's views on race and nationality as interventions in an intra-Jewish discourse concerning Jewish identity. I then analyze Kallen's strategies to cultivate a receptive public on the national stage, and explore his involvement in the modernist movement and clarify how it is linked to his philosophical project. In the final chapter, I reflect upon his relationship to the book of Job. I trace his construction of Jewish identity through it, and analyze his contributions to the circulation of secularity in Protestant and Jewish religious discourse. I maintain throughout a focus upon scientific culture as the common currency, because science was the lens through which people refracted their self-understanding.⁷⁶² I highlight the Jewish community's engagement with scientific thought as its identity as an ethnic group developed, and I explore how scientific thought and secularism have engaged with religion. I also show how these discourses shaped the lives of individuals.

The biographical perspective that I adopt to address American and Jewish communal issues is well suited to bound a discussion of fashioning identity. Jewish identity has

⁷⁶² See Meyer, "Secular Transcendence: The American Religious Humanists."

individual implications, and the movements and shifts in that communal identity are urged along by the discussions and confrontations that take place among actors in the periodical press and in books. At the same time, I demonstrate how the relationships between authors and editors, and between thinkers and leaders, as revealed in written correspondence, guide the discourse. I link this biographical sketch to communal perspectives, traced through the press, to identify ways in which the circulation of ideas works through interpersonal interactions.

The Struggle for Identity

Reflecting on the relationship of the individual to the different social fields in which he lives, Kallen focused his attention on what he called "the living man," the one who exists in subjective relationships:

Broadly speaking, the relation may be compared to the relation of a moving searchlight to the objects which it illuminates. The point of illumination is the lamp, but the field which is illuminated is outside the lamp. As the lamp swings, the beam moves. Now one thing is illuminated, now another. The lamp, the light and the fields lit up are as the living man [lamp], his responsiveness [light] and the social institutions he responds to [fields]. The lamp by illuminating them cuts them out of their context and establishes them in a special relationship to itself. They, being illuminated, limit and define the lamp's special field. Lamp and field determine each other reciprocally but not necessarily.⁷⁶³

The living man corresponds to the lamp, his responsiveness corresponds to the light, and the social institutions he responds to correspond to the fields. Taken together, they represent a totality of experience that is determined by the quality of the dynamic and reciprocal relationships between the living man and the fields of his engagement.

⁷⁶³ Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, 33–4.

For Kallen, this implied struggle—a struggle for the survival of integrity and individuality. This is rendered all the more poignant by the fact that the field of struggle, as he put it, was no longer nature but human relations "enchanneled in the establishments of civilization itself."⁷⁶⁴ Kallen's construction of Jewish identity entailed a "Joban" struggle to maintain his integrity and to support the integrity and diversity of the Jewish community. It also entailed modulating consistency with change. The racial determinism of his early years was replaced by a faith in humanism in his later years, but these different ideas were connected through his changing conception of cultural pluralism. To borrow the term once again, he "recontextualized" himself. Kallen reflected upon the role of change in the struggle for identity:

When we say we struggle for our own survival, it isn't primarily the survival of the body that we struggle for. It's for a certain identity, a certain pattern, of the action of the body, of the living and thinking and feeling that are expressed in words and in habits of life and in ideals. So that, if you agree that human beings are different from each other, that each is struggling to live long, to make a personal history, and that that struggle which we call struggle for self-preservation is basically a process of self-alteration, because as soon as you stop altering, as soon as you really stay unchanged, you're dead. The living change, they alter. The dead are immortal. They can't die again, they never alter.⁷⁶⁵

His struggle to establish his place as an American Jew largely unfolded in the public square of the press. As a result, it became part of the American Jewish community's discourses concerning its sense of identity. As American Jews began to think through the implications of ethnicity and secularity, American Jewish modernity was born.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁷⁶⁵ Kallen, *Humanisms: The American Dream and the American Idea*.

The New Physics, Art, and Becoming

As Kallen saw it in 1933, philosophical Darwinism, which affirmed freedom, chance, individuality, and the flux of life, found further confirmation in the new developments of the physical sciences. They were "undergoing a revolution which restored chance, individuality and freedom to paramountcy," he wrote. "This revolution was initiated by the labors of Einstein and Planck and is still in process." He felt that the physicists themselves, however, were not ready to face the implications of relativity and indeterminacy for the human condition: "[I]t has not yet influenced the hearts of men courageously to accept the individual, the relative, the contingent and to make the most of their opportunity."⁷⁶⁶ Instead, he wrote, physicists such as Arthur Eddington, James Hopwood Jeans, and Robert Andrews Millikan "sublated" the insights of physics, chemistry and astronomy "into the aspect of a divinity that shapes our ends happily."⁷⁶⁷ As he saw it, they allowed religion to subvert and coopt science into serving an illusory teleology. He, by way of contrast, insisted on seeing indeterminacy as fundamental. The new scientific context merely confirmed for him the Jamesian perspective on individuality and freedom that he had embraced all along.

In an undated interview held sometime after Einstein's death in 1955, Kallen contrasted his interpretation of relativity with that of Einstein:

Einstein was first and last a determinist. I'm not. Einstein insisted that the articulation of cause and effect was made more precise rather than less precise by means of the concept of relativity, and he looked for the achievement of what he called the Unified Field in which the determinism would be more explicit and complete than ever.... The cosmic determinism is analogous to the determinism that's in Spinoza's philosophic system. And the identification of the two is a very important thing in the interpretation of Einstein's basic philosophic intention. Now, I myself am disposed to hold...that relativity

⁷⁶⁶ Kallen, *Individualism: An American Way of Life*, 125.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

makes a break, if one can see it, with the deterministic postulate, and that it had relations to the implications of the quantum theory.

I think that he was so committed to the determinist postulate and so certain that the causal sequence could be discerned that he thought that the suggestion of chance could not be a deception on the part of the universe. Now, I agree that it could not be a deception, but for me, the consequence is that chance is real.⁷⁶⁸

Kallen suggested that Einstein could not admit the possibility that his theory of relativity showed that chance is real. He again articulated his commitment to a worldview of flux and chance, a premise basic to his views on freedom and individuality. These were views that, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, he had held were the philosophical consequence of Darwinism, but now he found their philosophic home in the consequences of relativity and quantum theory. As ever, his continuing interest in science was in its utility in interpreting the human condition.

From about 1967, during the last decade of his life, Kallen found in the kinetic art of Israeli artist Ya'acov Agam someone who had succeeded in translating quantum theory into an important affirmation and instantiation of individualism in the flux of life. He called Agam the "Painter of Becoming." He regarded his work as an exemplar of the ethos of modernity, representing the artistic expression of Hebraism.⁷⁶⁹ He preserved an article reporting on one of Agam's installations, in which a man is pictured wearing a shirt with the same colour vertical stripes as the painting behind him.⁷⁷⁰ As the subject sways back and forth, a camera captures the movement as one blur of motion. The subject's position is indeterminate, and he is different from moment to moment. The elapse of time, the piece seems to be saying, allows us to perceive the continual process of "becoming."

⁷⁶⁸ Kallen, interview.

⁷⁶⁹ Kallen, "Hebraism and Modernity."

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

In the interview Kallen gave regarding Einstein, he spoke of his preference for the term "time-space" over "space-time:" "I regard time as being more fundamental," he said, and "closer to basic reality."⁷⁷¹ Time was more fundamental for Kallen because he was interested in the human story of "becoming." Agam's approach to time, he felt, affirmed his views on Hebraism and becoming. Agam himself confirmed the identification of his art and his concept of time with Hebraism. In another newspaper clipping that Kallen preserved, Agam is quoted as saying, "Today, in all forms of art, we fight against the past and against time. That's why whenever you look at a work of art, it recalls something that happened before. There is a different approach, the Hebrew concept. Its basic approach to life holds that man came from dust and returns to dust. Hebrew civilization teaches us that we cannot fight for eternity, we cannot fight time." Agam then connected this idea to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle:

"According to Heisenberg's principle," says Agam, "it is impossible to measure the mass of a particle at the same time you measure its speed. If you can measure its speed, you can't measure its weight. We are forever without a total view of reality. We can only know it in part and in stages."

"A scientist," in Agam's view, "approaches life and reality today as a possibility. Life is a possibility, and it is important to try to create a visual expression to fit this new approach to modern science."⁷⁷²

Agam had, in essence, captured in his art Kallen's Hebraism and his understanding of the modern ethos. Connecting science and philosophy through art allowed him to instantiate the contingency of identity in moments of time.

What it meant for Kallen to be a Jew, to be a human being, to be alive, and to live in the modern world is captured in this idea of "becoming." His continual "becoming" was the

⁷⁷¹ Kallen, interview.

⁷⁷² Kallen, "Hebraism and Modernity."

music of his "self-orchestration." We have seen how his views on race shifted, from craniometry to the psychophysical, and then to distancing himself from racial ideas and biology altogether. His views on religion shifted. His position in both Jewish and non-Jewish society shifted. As well, his relative influence in these various fields changed. But through all of these changes, he preserved his Joban "integrity," or, to refer once again to Kallen's orchestra metaphor, the "specific timbre and tonality" of his individuality.

"The Playing Is the Writing"

This intellectual biography of Horace Kallen not only offers insight into his life, it also offers a modality with which to study the formation of American Jewish identity from the early twentieth century to mid-century, and to trace the circulation of this discourse and that of the engagement of science and religion within print culture. As well, this intellectual biography highlights how the discourses involved in individual and communal constructions of identity shape events even as they are shaped by them. The focus upon one individual and his relationships is a valuable complement to broader, community or national studies that consider the aggregate whole. Just as the aggregate speaks of no one person in particular, so too no one person can speak for the aggregate. But the aggregate "orchestra" exists only by virtue of the individual "musical instruments" that make it up. Regarding the "symphony of civilization," Kallen wrote that "the playing is the writing," suggesting the dynamic indeterminacy of its performance.⁷⁷³ Kallen's writing represents the playing of one theme in the unfinished symphony of American Jewish life.

⁷⁷³ Kallen, "Democracy Versus the Melting-Pot: A Study of American Nationality," 220. Kallen makes the point that the "symphony of civilization" is distinguished from musical symphonies in that the "notes" are not prescribed.

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