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Rationalization and Apologia: The Intellectual Construction of Judaism

Things never are what they seem because they cannot be. (Neusner 1987, 139, describing the ideology of the writers of *Leviticus Rabbah*)

The antagonists of the Jews have laid a great stress on a passage of Maimonides, who seems to represented [*sic*] as a precept, the expression *Anochri tashih* (make profit of the stranger). But although Maimonides has presumed to maintain this opinion, it is well known that his sentiments have been most completely refuted by the learned Rabbi Aberbanel. We find, besides, in the Talmud, a treatise of *Macot* (Perfection) that one of the ways to arrive at perfection, is to lend without interest to the stranger, even to the idolator. (*Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrim*; Tama, 1807)

Evolutionists propose that ideologies serve the evolutionary interests of those who adopt them (see *PTSDA*, Ch. 1). Rationalization, deception and self-deception are expected among those who create and maintain ideologies, as seen, for example, in Chapters 3–5 where it was noted that anti-Semitic group strategies have been characterized by ideologies that interpret and rationalize history from the perspective of the ingroup. This phenomenon is a direct consequence of social identity theory: groups tend to develop highly flattering self-images that enhance group allegiance and the self-esteem of group members, the only constraint being that the presentation of the ingroup must be plausible (e.g., Crocker et al. 1993). Oftentimes these positive self-images of the ingroup are accompanied by negative portrayals of outgroups.

A paradigmatic Jewish ideology has been to interpret historical events in a manner that conforms to the messianic hope of a return to political power and worldly riches in a restored Israel. This literature, which has its prototype in the ideology of the Tanakh, rationalizes Israel's sufferings at the hands of heathens and idolators as due to its having rejected its God (See *PTSDA*, Ch. 3).

Rationalizations of historical events continued in the post-biblical period. For example, *Genesis Rabbah* was composed in reaction to the emergence of Christianity as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. The new dominance of a religion that accepted the Jewish scriptures forced a reexamination of the status of Jews as the Chosen People of God (Neusner 1987). *Genesis Rabbah* identifies Rome with Esau, the archetypal gentile who has a primeval hatred of his twin brother Jacob, the progenitor of the Jews. The image of the gentile as the brutal, coarse, and animal-like Esau remained central to Jewish consciousness and colored Jewish perceptions of anti-Semitic incidents into the 20th century.

A focus of apologetic literature in the ancient world was defending the exclusivist, intolerant, and separatist tendencies of Judaism:

The apologist endeavored to prove the harmony of thought between the Torah and Greek wisdom. . . . But the fact that in this case it was the minority, and not the majority, that was exclusive and intolerant made the defense particularly difficult. . . . An obstinate sense of alienation was required to fight gods and to reject neighbors who were well disposed toward you and who were always ready to see you in their temples and at their tables—ready even to accept your own Deity into the common pantheon. . . . These attacks [on idolatry] were needed . . . to bolster the faith of those Jews who through too much contact with Greeks might be persuaded to transgress the divine commandments. (Bickerman 1988, 255–256; see also Schürer 1986, 609)

In the ancient world there developed a vast apologetic literature attempting to provide an intellectual defense of Judaism that would be palatable to the Greek intellectual world. Writers such as Philo and Josephus attempted to portray Jewish life, particularly Jewish separatism, in a positive light and to present Jews as morally superior to gentiles by, for example, extolling their family life (J. J. Collins 1985, 169). As in the case of the Reform movement many centuries later, “whatever was bound at first sight to appear peculiar and unpalatable was left in the background as inessential, and the main emphasis was laid on issues for which a sympathetic understanding could be counted on” (Schürer 1986, 153–154; see also McKnight 1991, 70; Sevenster 1975, 19). Many of the arguments boiled down to the “light of the nations” conceptualization, in which Judaism represented a higher morality and thus was a moral beacon for the rest of humanity—another prominent theme of 19th- and 20th-century Jewish apologetics.¹ The ethnic/nationalistic overtones of Judaism were de-emphasized, including the messianic hopes for a return to power in Jerusalem and also the “Princes of Captivity” (i.e., the patriarch and exilarch), who still held considerable religious and political power over Jews—despite the fact that these aspects of Judaism were quite salient to the Jews themselves (Baron 1952, II, 195).

An interesting tendency beginning in the ancient period was the development of ideologies in which the intellectual contributions of gentiles were traced to specifically Jewish sources. Lefkowitz (1993; see also Gabba 1989, 639ff; Schürer 1986, 611) shows that beginning in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., Jewish historians “consciously and deliberately determined to claim that their

own ancient civilization had priority over the culture of their Greek conquerors” (p. 16). One technique was to assert that prominent Greek writers and poets were Jews; another was to assert that Greek philosophy and literature depended on Jewish religious writings. The most flagrant example of this type of ethnocentric history was Aristobulus (2nd century B.C.), “the father of custom-made ethnic history,” who “cited other writers, both authentic and forged, to ‘prove’ the truth of the Bible and to show that the Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, not to mention the poets Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus, and Aratus depended on the books of Moses” (Lefkowitz 1993, 16).

This phenomenon continued long after the ancient world. In medieval Spain, “enthusiastic halakists [writers on Jewish law], who deplored the necessity of drinking draughts of ‘Jewish Wisdom’ from Greek fountains, comforted themselves with the fiction that the reputed astronomy of the Greeks was really a full-grown product of the Jewish intellect which the Hellenists had wrung from the sages of vanquished Judea as a prize of war during the time of the Second Commonwealth” (Neuman 1969, 104).²

Intellectual defenses of Jewish religious writings occurred periodically during the Middle Ages, with Franciscan and Dominican friars providing the intellectual assault forces for the Christian side, sometimes with the aid of Jewish renegades. One source of conflict in medieval France was the perception among Christians that the Jewish religious service and liturgy contained slurs on gentiles or Christianity. (Without naming names, Jordan [1989, 140] refers to an apologetic literature by modern Jewish historians denying the reality of these charges; Maccoby [1982] is a good example of Jewish apologia of this kind.) However, Jordan cites evidence that such slurs were common and indicate a high level of animosity of Jews toward gentiles (see also Stein 1959, 58). Particularly irksome to Christians were slurs on the Virgin Mary. “The Hebrew chroniclers vented their helplessness by denigrating Mary as the harlot mother, the menstruating mother, and denigrated her son’s worshippers as the worshippers of a ‘putrid corpse’ ” (Jordan 1989, 140). Cohen (1994, 141) notes that Mishnaic and Talmudic literature contain explicitly disparaging references to Jesus, although by the time of printing these were mostly excised, as a result of Christian or self-imposed Jewish censorship. He also notes a Hebrew medieval book that describes Jesus as “the crucified one, a rotting corpse that cannot avail and cannot save.”

In 1240 there was an official disputation conducted by the church at Paris on charges that Jewish religious writings (including the Talmud, the Mishnah, and Rashi’s commentary on the Talmud) contained explicitly anti-Christian sentiments, including the permissibility of deceiving Christians; the right of Jews to the goods of the gentiles; the permissibility of not keeping oaths made to Christians; the bestiality and immorality of Christians; hostility of Jews toward all other people; that Jesus was conceived in adultery; that Jesus is boiled in hot excrement in hell because he mocked rabbinical writings (see Rosenthal 1956). The theme of Talmudic ethics vis-à-vis gentiles was very prominent: e.g., one

disputed passage, b. Baba Kamma 38a, states that if a Canaanite ox gores an Israelite damages must be paid, but damages need not be paid if an Israelite ox gores a Canaanite—an expression of the fundamentally ethnocentric ethics of the Talmud that has figured in anti-Semitic writing in modern times as well (see Chapter 2). The passage recounts an incident when Roman agents investigating the ethics of the Talmud disagreed with this passage but did not tell their government.

The Jewish defendants in the Paris disputation argued that the negative comments on gentiles actually refer to the ancient Egyptians and Canaanites and not to Christians (see comments of R. Yehiel in Maccoby 1982, 160–161). However, despite this argument, the Jewish masses “did not differentiate between the non-Jew in the Talmud and the non-Jew of his time” (Rosenthal 1956, 68; see also Rabinowitz 1938, 90). Further, the idea that gentiles were not idolators (and thus not subject to an ethical double standard) was not established (Stein 1959). Indeed, the authoritative Maimonides explicitly viewed all Christians as idolators, and Cohen (1994, 141) notes that Christianity was “regularly” classified as idolatry. The responses of the rabbis to Talmudic comments that Jesus of Nazareth practiced sorcery and led others to idolatry were probably unconvincing to the panel, since the rabbis appeared to accept the comment as referring to the Jesus of Christianity; Rosenthal (1956, 168) terms the responses as “confused” and “full of contradictions,” while the apologist Maccoby (1982, 218) describes them as “too stupid to be credible.” The trial resulted in the conviction of the Talmud on all charges, and as a result twenty-four cartloads of the Talmud were burned.

During the period of the Inquisition, a large apologetic literature developed among Hispano-Portuguese Jewish emigrants that was intended to refute Christianity and to bolster the resolve of the crypto-Jews remaining in the Peninsula (Yerushalmi 1971, 48). Even prior to the Inquisition, however, such New Christian intellectuals as Fernán Díaz, Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, and Alonso de Cartagena emerged to defend the orthodoxy of the Conversos, refute the arguments of the enemies of the anti-Converso camp, and develop novel theological perspectives that cast a positive light on Jews both in the Old Testament and contemporary times (Netanyahu 1995, 351–661). These writers had to overcome a very large corpus of Christian writings in which Jews were depicted in a negative light, with the result that “in search of Christian authorities who would support his own understanding of the prophecies, [Torquemada] had to skip from one commentator to another, take a portion from one and a sentence from another, and ignore whole bodies of Christian comment in order to present his case for Israel on the basis of the Bible” (Netanyahu 1995, 540).

Particularly interesting here is the tendency (congruent with traditional Christian formulations; see Chapter 3) for these writers to conceptualize Jews as a racial group, as in the writings of Alonso de Cartagena, who viewed Jews as a group that was “united by a blood relationship whose origins went back to Abraham” (Netanyahu 1995, 530). God chose Abraham, Cartagena argued, to

be the progenitor of the people that would be dedicated to His service, and because of their special role as the carnal progenitors of Christ, Jews had to remain separate from other peoples and occupy an elevated moral status compared to other humans: “Not only was the Jewish people raised to the status of nobility in mankind . . . ; it was also allotted the status of holiness” (p. 533). Because of this special role as a chosen race, the Jews were like a closed religious order composed of morally superior individuals distinguished by a superior genetic heritage and therefore worthy of being the progenitors of Christ—a twist on traditional Jewish conceptualizations of their status as a Chosen People. In this view, the conversion of Jews to Christianity is not really a conversion at all, because it merely represents a deeper understanding of their role in history—a claim made to refute charges that it would be difficult for the New Christians to accommodate themselves to Christian teachings. Indeed, a remarkable aspect of the Converso apologetics generally was that they were so crafted that the Conversos conceptualized themselves as not betraying their people or their law (Netanyahu 1995, 936–937). By becoming Christians while retaining their ethnic identity, they had provided a bridge between “ethnic Israel” and “spiritual Israel.”

These ideologies rationalize the continuity of group identity and cohesiveness while nevertheless providing it with a novel surface of Christianity. The insight of these New Christian apologists was that Christianity could serve as a perfectly viable ideology in which the group continuity, including ethnic solidarity, of the New Christians could be preserved. The existence of such ideologies is consistent with the idea (though of course it does not prove) that many Conversos did in fact accept Christian religious beliefs, as some have maintained (see Appendix), while nevertheless identifying with an endogamous, cooperating group that was self-consciously separate from the surrounding Old Christian culture.

From the standpoint of social identity theory, the ideology may be interpreted as an attempt by the New Christian apologists to alter the social categorization process of the Old Christians so that group status becomes theoretically irrelevant. New Christians and Old Christians remained separate groups, but by changing their religion (what one might term a “surface ideology of group status”), the New Christians attained a certain theoretical legitimacy, at least within a Christian theological perspective. Indeed, a 15th-century satirist depicts an Old Christian as stating that because of their conversion to Christianity the New Christians had become “legitimate” and were now entitled to use their “manipulations, chicaneries, subtleties and deceits, without fear of God and shame of the people” (in Netanyahu 1995, 513). The Old Christians, however, persisted in seeing the New Christians as a cohesive, endogamous and highly successful outgroup that was battling for economic and political supremacy in Spain (see Appendix).

Cartagena’s message is that the continuation of the New Christians as an unassimilated, genetically segregated group within Spanish society should be

irrelevant from a Christian moral and theological perspective. He implies that New Christians can continue to retain their group integrity, group ties, and genetic segregation in order to preserve their distinguished lineage. (Cartagena rationalized the high social status of the New Christians as resulting from their superior genetic lineage.) However, the rest of Christian society ought to view such behavior as theoretically irrelevant and cease categorizing individuals as New Christians because such racist thinking is contrary to Christian theology and morality. This attempt at ideological manipulation is a forerunner to several important post-Enlightenment Jewish intellectual movements. A major theme of *The Culture of Critique* is that these movements have advocated universalist ideologies for the entire society (e.g., Marxism) in which the importance of the Jew/gentile social category is less salient and is of no theoretical importance.

As has undoubtedly often been the case in other eras (see, e.g., the discussion of the Dreyfus case in Chapter 6), the apologists were intellectually far more sophisticated than their opponents, and collectively they dominated the literature of the period. Netanyahu shows in great detail the intellectual and political accomplishments of Torquemada and Cartagena prior to their apologetic work, and Díaz was the top-ranking New Christian official in the government of Castile. Their arguments, while necessarily departing from orthodox Christian arguments in their defense of the Jews, are presented in a highly literate, scholarly style that undoubtedly commanded respect from an educated audience. They were highly skilled in developing the very intricate, tortured arguments necessary to overcome the existing anti-Jewish bias of Christian theology. The result of all this intellectual activity was a stunning, if temporary, victory over the Toledo rebels of 1449 (Netanyahu 1995, 658). The rebels were soon regarded by the public as moral, religious, and political renegades; they were excommunicated by the pope, and their leaders were imprisoned and executed.

Since the Enlightenment, Judaism has had to be reconciled not only with the modern idea of citizenship in a nation-state, but also with modern trends in science and, in particular, with philosophic conceptualizations of Christianity and Judaism emanating from gentile intellectuals. The basic response of Jews to these intellectual trends was aptly summed up by pioneering Jewish-French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) who noted that the Jewish response to modernity was not to embrace modernism for its own sake but rather to shape modernism as part of a continuing struggle in which it would retain its essential nature unsullied: “The Jew . . . seeks to learn not in order to replace his collective prejudices by reflective thought, but merely to be better armed for the struggle. . . . [H]e superimposes this intellectual life upon his habitual routine with no effect of the former upon the latter” (in Cuddihy 1974, 26).

The principle problem in all of this literature was for Jews to justify the continued existence of Judaism as a legitimate religion along with Christianity (e.g., Meyer 1988, 62ff). The common theme among Jewish apologists was to portray Judaism as the most ethical of religions, with a unique moral, altruistic, and

civilizing role to play vis-à-vis the rest of humanity—modern versions of the ancient “light unto the nations” theme of Jewish religious writing.

Several prominent gentile philosophers developed theories of Christianity that assigned Judaism a very limited role in human history and proposed that Judaism was at best a morally inferior anachronism and not really a religion in the highest sense. There was a long list of such philosophers during the 17th–19th centuries, including Baruch Spinoza, born a Sephardic Jew. Spinoza viewed Judaism as concerned mainly with worldly success and as practicing an exclusivism that resulted in hatred by gentiles. For Immanuel Kant, Jews had excluded “from its communion the entire human race, on the ground that it was a special people chosen by God for Himself—[an exclusiveness] which showed enmity toward all other peoples and which, therefore, evoked the enmity of all” (Kant 1793, 117; brackets in text). Kant perceived Judaism as a national/ethnic movement with an ideology of eventual political reunification of its dispersed members:

[Judaism] is really not a religion at all but merely a union of a number of people who, since they belonged to a particular stock, formed themselves into a commonwealth under purely political laws, and not into a church; nay, it was *intended* to be merely an earthly state so that, were it possibly to be dismembered through adverse circumstances, there would still remain to it (as part of its very essence) the political faith in its eventual reestablishment. (*Religion within the Limits of Reason*; Kant 1793, 116; italics in text)

Kant’s critique of Judaism was important because of his prominence as a philosopher, and Jewish reformers quickly took up the intellectual challenge of rationalizing Judaism within this intellectual context. The result was a new emphasis among the reformers on purely religious faith as the moral basis of Judaism. Sermons and intellectual defenses of Judaism now focused not on the minutiae of ceremonial law or on the eventual reestablishment of a Jewish political entity, but on ideals of virtuous behavior. “Thus, instead of being the religion of no morality—as Kant defined it—the Reformers sought to present Judaism as the religion most exclusively concerned with morality, and hence most worthy of the future” (Meyer 1988, 65). Because of the critical importance of morality, there was an attempt to reinterpret passages from Jewish religious writings that represented a doubtful morality—a project which is of continuing interest in the modern world (see below).

The German Idealist philosophers, such as Hegel, tended to view Judaism as an anachronism because of their emphasis on historical progress of the human spirit. Within this framework, Judaism was a predecessor of Christianity, but the latter represented a higher stage in the progress of the human spirit (Findlay 1962). Solomon Formstecher, in his *The Religion of the Spirit* (1841; see Meyer 1988, 70–71), reversed this idea by proposing that Jewish history was really an attempt to reach a spiritual ideal first described by the prophets and that Christianity and Islam are the agents of Judaism in its attempt to lead humanity to spiritual perfection. Judaism at its essence was therefore fundamentally ethical

and spiritual. As with many other attempts to rationalize Judaism throughout the ages, this rationalization is a variation of the “light of the nations” theme originating in antiquity. Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840) also developed an apology for Judaism within the Hegelian system, arguing essentially that Judaism as the purest monotheism was identical with the Hegelian universal absolute Spirit, and that all other religions were particularistic (see Rose 1990, 112–113).

Kaufmann Kohler (1918) is an important example of the Reform tendency (also seen, e.g., in Kohler’s mentor, David Einhorn, and in Samuel Hirsch’s *The Religious Philosophy of the Jews*) to assert that Jewish ethics is universalistic while at the same time maintaining that Israel must remain separate while it presents a moral beacon to the rest of humanity. Kohler was also an ardent opponent of intermarriage and conversion because racial impurity would lessen Israel’s ability to carry out its historic civilizing mission to the rest of humanity. The perfection of humanity is achieved as each race, while remaining separate, comes together to pursue common interests with other races (p. 314).³ Until the present, Judaism had been “restrained by its two daughter-religions from pursuing its former missionary activity” (p. 445). However, “this will be an auspicious time for Israel to arise with renewed prophetic vigor as the bearer of a world-uniting faith, as the triumphant Messiah of the nations” (p. 445). In pursuing its mission, Israel is the altruistic martyr whose sufferings from anti-Semitism atone for the sins of the rest of humanity:

Israel is the champion of the Lord, chosen to battle and suffer for the supreme values of mankind, for freedom and justice, truth and humanity; the man of woe and grief, whose blood is to fertilize the soil with the seeds of righteousness and love for mankind. From the days of Pharaoh to the present day, every oppressor of the Jews has become the means of bringing greater liberty to a wider circle. . . . Every hardship that made life unbearable to the Jew became a road to humanity’s triumph over barbarism. (p. 375)

Continuing the ethnocentric interpretations of history begun by Aristobulus in the ancient world, Kohler states that even before the messianic age, for centuries Jews were “the real bearers of culture” (p. 363), including commerce, industry, literature, and art (p. 365). “Our modern Christian civilization, so-called by Christian historians, is largely the fruit of the rich intellectual seeds sown by Mohammedans and Jews” (p. 443).⁴

These “light of the nations” reconceptualizations of Judaism as representing a higher morality are reflected in official Reform pronouncements. The Pittsburgh Reform Platform of 1885 stated that the Jewish idea of God is “the central religious truth for the human race” (reprinted in Meyer 1988, 386). Later, the Columbus Platform of 1937 stated that the message of Judaism “is universal, aiming at the union and perfection of mankind under the sovereignty of God” (reprinted in Meyer 1988, 388–389). A 1976 resolution spoke of Jewish peoplehood and of ethnic ties with the state of Israel, but it also asserted that “The state of Israel and the diaspora, in fruitful dialogue, can show how a people transcends nationalism even as it affirms it, thereby setting an example for humanity

which remains largely concerned with dangerously parochial goals.” Similarly, Judaism as a “civil religion” in late 20th-century America has been justified by its moral imperative: “The identification of Judaism with applied morality has been a primary Jewish civil religious strategy for vindicating both its embrace of America and its support of Jewish group perpetuation” (Woocher 1986, 28).⁵

Universalistic morality as the essence of Judaism is also common among secular Jewish intellectuals. In his summary of the writings in a symposium on “Jewishness and the Younger Intellectuals” appearing in *Commentary* (published by the AJCommittee), Norman Podhoretz (1961, 310) notes that

what is most surprising and, to my mind at least, most reassuring is the atmosphere of idealism that permeates this symposium, an idealism that many of the contributors themselves associate with the fact of their Jewishness. Believing (on the basis, it should be emphasized, of an obviously scant acquaintance with the literature and history of Judaism) that the essence of Judaism is the struggle for universal justice and human brotherhood, these young intellectuals assert over and over again that anyone who fights for the Ideal is to that degree more Jewish than a man who merely observes the rituals or merely identifies himself with the Jewish community. This is really what the 1944 group was also saying [i.e., a similar symposium of young Jewish intellectuals convened by *Commentary's* predecessor] that the essential tradition of Judaism came to be embodied in modern times not in the committed Jewish community but in the great post-Emancipation figures who rushed out of the ghetto to devour and then re-create the culture of the West: Marx, Freud, Einstein.

Despite the lack of historical perspective contained in such writings (and acknowledged by Podhoretz), one cannot underestimate the importance of the fact that the central pose of post-Enlightenment Jewish intellectuals is a sense that Judaism represents a moral beacon to the rest of humanity. Surprisingly perhaps, even Zionism has been rationalized as having universalist moral aims. During World War I Martin Buber responded to attacks on Zionism by liberal Jews anxious to condemn a movement that had overtones of beliefs in Jewish racial superiority (see Chapter 5); indeed, Buber himself had advocated the position that the Jews were a separate *Volk* from Germans. Buber argued that Zionists desire a national homeland because of their interests in serving all of mankind. Only by fulfilling its messianic dream of a national homeland would the Jewish religion be able to lead humanity into the messianic age (Engel 1986, 166). Both Buber and his friend Gustav Landauer proposed that a commitment to Jewish group membership was in the service of all humanity (Mosse 1970, 89–91).

This rationalization of Zionism as contributing to all mankind became common among American Zionists, including Louis D. Brandeis, Henry P. Mendes, Judah Magnes, Horace Kallen, and Henrietta Szold (Gal 1989). Thus in 1914 Brandeis accepted the chairmanship of the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs, explaining that Zionism was a key to preserving the unique qualities of Jews for all of humanity:

Experiences, public and professional, have taught me this: I find Jews possessed of those very qualities which we of the twentieth century seek to develop in our struggle for

justice and democracy; a deep moral feeling which makes them capable of noble acts; a deep sense of the brotherhood of man; and a high intelligence, the fruit of three thousand years of civilization. These experiences have made me feel that the Jewish people have something which should be saved for the world; that the Jewish people should be preserved; and that this is our duty to pursue that method of saving which most promises success [i.e., Zionism]. (In Gal 1989, 70)

Finally, beginning in the early 19th century Jewish apologists were again forced to defend the Talmud and other Jewish religious writings from charges that they were anti-Christian, nationalistic, ethnocentric, and as advocating a double standard of morality—a position for which there is indeed, a great deal of evidence (Hartung 1995; Shahak 1994; *PTSDA*, Ch. 6).⁶ In 1893 there was a four-day debate on the Talmud in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies which resulted in a declaration (condemned by Orthodox critics) by a group of rabbis emphasizing the nonbinding nature of many Talmudic opinions (Schorsch 1972, 109). Subsequently, Moritz Lazarus published “a classic apologia of Judaism under emancipation, successfully expunging every trace of the particular, the irrational, and the historical from what Lazarus held to be the essential unity of Jewish ethics” (Schorsch 1972, 73), again to the condemnation of Orthodoxy. In the Lazarus (1900) reconstruction, the essence of Judaism was its belief in “the oneness of God, the oneness of the world, and the oneness of humanity” (p. 191). “God acknowledged as One, beside whom there is no other, cannot be national. . . . [This concept of God] so illumined, with its purity and sublimity, the soul of the Jewish people that Israel was fitted to become a ‘light of the nations’ ” (p. 192).

Hartung (1995) notes that recent translations of Maimonides legal codes attempt to convert the text from its clear meaning as a document in which ingroup status is privileged into a document of universal ethical interests. Words referring to Israelites are translated as ‘human being,’ and clear references to the lowered status and rights of gentiles are simply removed. Shahak (1994, 22ff) provides several similar instances from the rabbinic literature in which offending words were altered in the interests of political expediency, only to be restored in more recent times in Israel because the rabbis had become confident that they would not result in persecution.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AS RATIONALIZATION AND APOLOGETICS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF JEWISH HISTORY

Obviously such a form of revision would involve a flagrant distortion of the truth. But historical truth was less important in their eyes than the consequences it entailed for the welfare of their group. (Netanyahu [1995, 660] describing the activities of the 15th-century New Christian chroniclers in falsifying history to serve group interests)

Politics [is] not merely a fierce physical struggle to control the present, and so the future, but an intellectual battle to control the record of the past. (John-

son [1988, 481], describing the philosophy of history of Walter Benjamin [1892–1940])⁷

Before Emancipation, Diaspora Jewry explained its Exile . . . as a punishment from God for its sins. After Emancipation, this *theodicy*, now turned outward to a new, Gentile status-audience, becomes an *ideology*, emphasizing Gentile persecution as the root cause of Jewish “degradation.” This ideology . . . was shared in one form or another, by all the ideologists of nineteenth-century Jewry: Reform Jews and Zionists, assimilationists and socialists, Bundists and Communists—all became virtuosos of ethnic suffering. . . . The point is that these Diaspora groups were uninterested in actual history; they were apologists, ideologists, prefabricating a past in order to answer embarrassing questions, to outfit a new identity, and to ground a claim to equal treatment in the modern world. (Cuddihy 1974, 177)

Living so long in exile and so often in danger, we have cultivated a defensive and apologetic account, a censored story, of Jewish religion and culture. (Walzer 1994, 6)

Interpretations of history have played a central role in the ideology of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy. We have seen that the Tanakh itself is vitally concerned with the interpretation of history, and, building on the Hellenistic-Jewish apologetic literature described above, self-serving interpretations of history continued in the Christian period: “History, not in its realistic record but in its mutually accepted homiletical and hermeneutic elaboration, became for centuries the main battleground between the rivaling Jewish and Christian denominations” (Baron 1952, II, 136).

Jewish historiography, written almost exclusively by Jews, has been characterized by a great deal of self-conscious case-making and defense of perspectives that portray Jewish behavior in a positive light. This phenomenon is by no means restricted to Jews. Although he does not mention Jewish historiography, Schlesinger (1993, 45ff) describes numerous examples where historical reconstructions have been used to advance political agendas by exculpating the expropriation of power or by compensating for failures by exaggerating the virtues and accomplishments of the oppressed.

While not characteristic of all Jewish historians, examples are commonplace. Indeed, the examples provided in this section cannot do justice to the many subtleties of nuance and style that, apart from the arguments themselves, indicate that the historian has an intense emotional commitment to the subject. Lindemann (1997, ix–x) mentions the impassioned, moralistic rhetoric and simplistic analyses in Robert Wistrich’s *Anti-Semitism: The Longest Hatred* and in the work of Holocaust historians Lucy Dawidowicz and Daniel J. Goldhagen. Perera (1995, 172) refers to the “almost mystical jeremiads against the Inquisitors” in Benzion Netanyahu’s (1995) recent book on the Spanish Inquisition. Moralism by itself is, I suppose, scientifically harmless, although one might reasonably assume that such moralism may well result in conscious or uncon-

scious biases in seeking out information and in interpreting historical events. From the standpoint of social identity theory, a strong sense of ingroup identity is expected to bias perceptions of events related to ingroup/outgroup conflict.

Strong personal statements reflecting deep emotional attachment to Judaism are frequently found in the historiography of Judaism written by Jews. Books often begin with emotionally charged dedications to victims of anti-Semitism, especially the Holocaust. For example, Gertrude Himmelfarb (1991) notes that David Abraham dedicates his controversial book *The Collapse of the Weimar Republic* “For my parents—who at Auschwitz and elsewhere suffered the worst consequences of what I can merely write about.” The point of such dedications is to show that the author stands in a morally privileged relationship with the subject matter. Abraham’s dedication becomes “part of a deep quarrel among the living, between a survivor’s son and elderly German businessmen or their heirs” (Himmelfarb 1991, 48; see also Novick 1988).⁸ Abraham has been accused of deceiving his readers in his use (and fabrication) of sources in an effort to show that elite gentile businessmen had a decisive role in undermining the Weimar Republic and facilitating the rise of National Socialism.

While German businessmen have been unfairly condemned, Mosse (1987, 8, 16–17, 219) describes a tendency among some historians to minimize Jewish involvement in the German economy (especially banking) or to propose that Jewish economic enterprises had become largely assimilated to gentile enterprises by the time of Weimar Republic. The apologetic purpose of these analyses is to falsify anti-Semitic charges related to Jewish economic behavior and, more broadly, portray Jewish behavior as irrelevant to anti-Semitism. Mosse’s data show that Jews were overrepresented in the German economy by a factor of approximately twenty, that there was no decline in Jewish economic importance, and that the Jewish economy was not assimilated to the German economy.

The 15th-century New Christian chroniclers of events leading up to the Inquisition fashioned a historiography that served their group interests. Thus the New Christian author of the *Crónica de Juan II* was “a staunch supporter of the conversos . . . [as] indicated by his endeavor to conceal any opinion, action, or relationship that could cast any aspersion upon the conversos.” Also, the New Christian author of the *Cuarta Crónica General* adopted a policy of concealment of charges of religious heresy and racial antagonism in order to control “what should, and should not, be presented for public discussion” (Netanyahu 1995, 645, 657). Similarly, the New Christian author of the *Abbreviation* went to great lengths to remove explicit references to tax collectors as “infidels and heretics,” because readers would identify them as New Christians (Netanyahu 1995, 635). For all of these historians, “the issues of Marrano heresy (Judaism) and converso racial inferiority, which formed one of the stormiest controversies that ever swept the kingdoms of Spain, were thus systematically forced into obscurity as if they had never been debated” (Netanyahu 1995, 658).

Modern historians of Judaism have also been accused of exhibiting ingroup biases. Much of this case-making is on issues central to an evolutionary ap-

proach—an extraordinary vindication of the fundamental accuracy of the evolutionary perspective. For example, there has been a great deal of polemical writing on the question of whether Judaism is properly viewed as a universal religion. This issue is of considerable importance for an evolutionary view and is discussed extensively in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4).

McKnight (1991, 11) states that “perhaps at no point has Christian and Jewish propaganda been more visible in biblical scholarship than in the discussion of Jewish missionary activity.” Christian polemics “were met in kind with counter-apologetics that attempted to prove that Judaism was not misanthropic in nature but was instead a universalistic and missionary religion.” Gager (1983) notes that a great deal of the debate on Christian-Jewish relations in antiquity as well as the general phenomenon of anti-Semitism has been guided by an awareness of the Holocaust and by a conscious attempt to show that Christianity was the primary source of anti-Semitism in the West (see review in Gager 1983, 13–23).⁹ The review of Hertzberg (1993a,b) indicates that attempts to portray anti-Semitism as a consequence of a uniquely pathological Christianity or Western culture continue to be common among Jewish apologists.

During the 19th century, Christian and Jewish theologians developed self-serving views of historical events (Heschel 1994). On the Jewish side, Abraham Geiger presented a very positive account of Pharisaic Judaism and depicted Jesus as a Pharisee. Geiger’s account was vigorously challenged by Christian theologians like Julius Wellhausen, Emil Schürer, and Wilhelm Bousset. The Christian theologians portrayed early Judaism as a precursor to Christianity, as overly legalistic, and as a religion of “national particularism and soulless piety” (Schorsch 1972, 170). The result was that “the scientific study of the Jewish past was again summoned to defend Judaism and reassert the worthiness of Jewry” (p. 172). The result was a series of scholarly works intended to absolve Judaism of these charges, but “the underlying apologetic intention was beyond dispute” (p. 174). Thus a work of Leo Baeck is described as having “only an occasionally overt polemical aside,” but “the sum and substance of his reconstruction was determined by a deep aversion to Lutheran Christianity” (p. 174). These works were funded by the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Society for the Advancement of the Science of Judaism), which was itself associated with the *Verband der Deutschen Juden*, an association founded to combat anti-Semitism. During this period, the *Verband* developed an archive for material to be used in anti-Christian polemics, including areas in which Christianity was alleged to be inferior to Judaism.

Katz (1986b, 83) notes that the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* movement of the 19th century, although beginning as a movement dedicated to the scientific study of Judaism, developed into one that “would serve to foster greater spiritual identification with the totality of Jewish culture, thought, and experience.” The work of the premier Jewish historian of the 19th century, Heinrich Graetz, displays “a very strong national bias” (Katz 1986b, 96). (The 19th-century German historian Theodor Mommsen dismissed Graetz’s work by comparing it

to history written by Catholic defenders of the faith and their “historical falsifications” [in Lindemann 1997, 140]). In the contemporary world, Katz finds that academic departments of Jewish studies are often linked to Jewish nationalism: “The inhibitions of traditionalism, on the one hand, and a tendency toward apologetics, on the other, can function as deterrents to scholarly objectivity” (p. 84). The work of Jewish historians exhibits “a defensiveness that continues to haunt so much of contemporary Jewish activity” (1986b, 85).

A central theme of Katz’s analysis—massively corroborated by Albert Lindemann’s (1997) recent work—is that historians of Judaism have often falsely portrayed the beliefs of gentiles as irrational fantasies while portraying the behavior of Jews as irrelevant to anti-Semitism. For example, Endelman (1982, 11) states that “it can be argued that the history of modern anti-Semitism belongs more properly to the realm of American and European historiography than Jewish. Anti-Semitism, after all, reflects stresses and strains in the larger societies in which Jews live and mirrors actual Jewish behavior only in a limited, distorted way.” Katz comments that a principal motivation for such distortions is to preempt any possibility of endorsing the arguments of anti-Semites who, as we have seen, have consistently stressed particular features of Jewish behavior.

As a concrete example of this tendency, Katz discusses the work of Eleanor Sterling on the “Hep! Hep!” riots of 1819 in Germany. Katz pointedly notes Sterling’s associations with the Frankfurt School of predominantly Jewish intellectuals. I discuss this school as a highly politicized Jewish intellectual movement in *The Culture of Critique*, but it is noteworthy here that Katz (1983, 40) states that “the Frankfurt School, with its Marxist perspective, had not been notable for the accuracy of its evaluation of the Jewish situation either before the advent of Nazism or afterward.” Sterling accepts a theory of anti-Semitism as displaced aggression proposed by Frankfurt School leaders Max Horkheimer and T. W. Adorno. As Katz notes, the theory completely ignores evidence that the rioters were “responding . . . to incitements by the burgher class, which felt threatened by the entry of the Jews into its occupations during the Napoleonic period and wanted to return them to their previous ghetto status. The riots originated in cities like Würzburg, Frankfurt, and Hamburg where the problem of Jewish civil status was being passionately debated at the time.” A contemporary also complained about Jews “who are living among us and who are increasing like locusts” (in Dawidowicz 1975, 30), suggesting that reproductive competition as well as resource competition were important.

This lack of objectivity has often been the focus of comments by scholars. Lindemann (1997, 308) describes Howard Morley Sachar’s chapter on Romanian anti-Semitism as “a tirade, without the slightest effort at balance.” Kieniewicz (1986) emphasizes that Jewish history in Poland has almost exclusively been written by Jewish historians and that they have focused on “the importance of the Jewish contribution to both the Polish culture and economy, and the reprehensible discrimination against Jews by Christians” (p. 70). Lichten (1986) describes Heller’s (1977) influential study of Jews in Poland as

arriving “at conclusions not always based on facts; not as they really occurred but as she would like to see them” (p. 107; see also Mendelsohn 1986).

Mendelsohn (1986) notes a tendency for Jewish scholars to emphasize the virulence of anti-Semitism in pre-World War II Poland and the economic decline of Polish Jews. “The impression sometimes gained from reading the works of these authors is that Jewish life in Poland was a nightmare of almost daily pogroms, degradation and growing misery” (p. 130). Mendelsohn (1986, 132) favorably reviews the work of several historians (Bartoszewski 1986; Davies 1981; Marcus 1983; Tomaszewski 1982) who claim that “the Jews have tended to paint far too lurid a picture of their grievances.” Gutman (1986) reviews a debate between Jewish and Polish historians on Polish-Jewish relations in World War II, noting the “hypersensitivity” of some Jewish historians.

This type of apologetic conflict also relates to earlier Polish-Jewish relations. Several Jewish historians, including Yitzhak Schipper (see Litman 1984 for a review) have attempted to show that Ashkenazi Jews derive for the most part from the remnants of the Khazar empire, which converted to Judaism in the 8th century. Independent of the scholarly value of this hypothesis, Litman (1984, 105) notes that Schipper’s theories were “not merely an academic exercise in historical speculations. That they were also meant to serve nationalist Jewish causes of his time is evident.” Schipper’s theory of the early origins of Polish Jews implied that Jews had lived in Poland as long as the Poles, and further that they had had a civilizing influence on Poland. His theory of a powerful, independent Jewish state was also meant to be a model for a future Zionist state. His emphasis on the agricultural prowess of the Khazars implied that Jews engaged in farming unless prevented by others—a claim that was meant to counter the anti-Semitic charge that Jews avoided farming and were disloyal, alien economic parasites. Litman notes that this proposal outraged many Polish historians, including A. Marylski, who viewed it as an attempt “to put pre-historic Poland under Jewish feet” (in Litman 1984, 105). The Khazar hypothesis was also used by Samuel Weissenberg, a 19th-century Jewish racial scientist and political/cultural activist, in his attempt to prove that Jews were “an integral element on Russian soil” (Efron 1994, 106).

The theory of the Khazar origins of Polish Jews is highly speculative and has been rejected by many historians aware of the apologetic nature of the hypothesis (e.g., Dunlop 1967, 261–262; Weinryb 1972, 19–22, 27–29). A crucial difficulty is that Ashkenazi groups speak a German-based language (Yiddish) rather than a Turkish-based language. Moreover, it is very unlikely that the highly literate Ashkenazim would preserve no trace at all of their Turkish origins. The genetic data summarized in *PTSDA* (Ch. 2) also weigh strongly against such a view.

Nevertheless, the Khazars have become a sort of all-purpose device for those intent on making apologetic claims. Weiseltier (1976; see also Ankori 1979) documents the apologetic interests at work in Arthur Koestler’s (1976) revival of the hypothesis.¹⁰ Koestler uses the Khazar conjecture to argue against the

idea that the Jews are a single people. This in turn stems from his interest in defusing racial anti-Semitism (which on this view is misdirected, since the Ashkenazi Jews are not Semites), and as part of his attempt to make diaspora Jews more willing to assimilate, because they would abandon the belief that they have a common origin with other Jews.

Albert Lindemann's (1991, 1997) work shows a keen awareness of the role of Jewish interests in the construction of Jewish history. Writing of the Dreyfus Affair in *fin de siècle* France, Lindemann notes that "Jewish historians, especially those who wrote at the time of the Affair, have perceived a more central role for anti-Semitism and Gentile villainy, whereas non-Jewish students of the affair have tended to question such perceptions, although on both sides a wide range of opinion is to be found" (1991, 94–95).

Lindemann (1991, 131) finds similar biases in the historiography on Russian Jews written by Jews, who tended to view the situation as simply an example of irrational czarist brutality rather than spontaneous uprisings. (Judge [1992] shows that the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 was a spontaneous response to Jewish economic domination, and he shows that the Russian government viewed such pogroms very negatively because they were perceived as a sign of revolutionary activity.) Lindemann notes that these historians also fail to present the problems and dilemmas facing the czarist authorities attempting to deal with the problems presented by Jews during this period. A crucial issue for the Czarist authorities was their belief that the Russian peasants would not be able to compete with the Jews in open economic competition, a belief that is certainly justified by the extraordinary upward mobility of Jewish populations in post-emancipation Europe. Indeed, Jewish economic domination of Russian peasants was apparent even to Jewish socialist radicals of the period (e.g., Zhitlowsky 1972, 129; see Chapter 2). Lindemann (p. 154ff) also notes that Jewish historians of events in late-19th- and early-20th-century Russia tended to exaggerate Jewish losses as well as unfairly depict the pogroms as the result of conspiracies by the authorities rather than as having any popular roots or economic causes related to competition and the Jewish population explosion.¹¹ Finally, Lindemann notes that Jewish historiography of the Leo Frank Affair (see p. 191) has virtually assumed anti-Semitic conspiracies: "People then and later have in some sense wanted to find anti-Semitism. They have not been entirely disappointed in their search, but they have also been inclined to dramatize inappropriately or exaggerate what they found of it" (p. 236).

The most blatant example of ethnocentric bias among Jewish historians I have been able to find is José Faur's book on the Iberian inquisitions. Faur (1992), whose book was published by the State University of New York Press, begins by terming his work "autobiographic," since its origins lie in his grandfather telling him of "the glory of *Sepharad*" (p. ix; italics in text). He proceeds to show his deep commitment to Judaism and attachment to the Jewish culture of his childhood, and concludes by writing that "this book is written from the perspective of the 'other.' The story of the *conversos* . . . concerns the attempt

of the oppressed to break the silence imposed on them by the persecuting society, and transmit the perspective of the persecuted to future generations” (p. 8; italics in text).

This is ethnocentric historiography with a vengeance. Faur completely rejects “objective,” “scientific” history, whose function “is to suppress alternative perspectives, particularly the perspective of the victim” (p. 183). “There will be no ‘Jewish history’ without Jewish historians establishing a specific Jewish perspective. Therefore, the rise of a Jewish historical consciousness is indispensable for a particular Jewish history. . . . Without a historical consciousness the destiny of the Jewish people will remain unfulfilled” (p. 184). History, he asserts, is at its basis subjective, and “the most awesome responsibility of the Jewish historian is to validate the authority of Jewish memory” (p. 210). Jewish history, as the history of the persecuted, is viewed as “Sacred History,” while the history of the gentiles is “Profane History”—the “primitive beastly fantasies written by brutes of an alien race” (p. 213). Faur rejects the Greek scientific perspective in favor of a perspective in which historical truth is pluralistic. Within this pluralistic framework, an essential function of Sacred History is to justify the moral and intellectual superiority of Judaism and the Jewish historical record.¹² Faur’s work is replete with instances in which any morally questionable behavior associated with Judaism, such as intolerance of dissent within the community or discrimination against outgroups, is considered so obviously traceable to evil Christian influences that the author deems no further comment necessary.¹³ Regarding the genesis of anti-Semitism, Faur cites with approval the views of a 17th-century Jewish writer who “validated Jewish memory” by attributing anti-Semitism to the beauty and preeminence of the Jewish people. “As with the falconers, it is the beauty of the bird—and nothing else—that prompts them to hunt and destroy it” (p. 210).

History as apologia is also seen in the work of S. D. Goitein (1974) on Jews in Arab lands. There is a clear agenda to indict Western culture and vindicate Arab culture and especially Judaism. Goitein finds that “in contrast to the neighboring early medieval civilizations of Byzantium and Sassanid Persia, Israel and the Arabs present the type of a society which is characterized by the absence of privileged castes and classes, by the absence of enforced obedience to strong authority, by undefined but nonetheless very powerful agencies for the formation and expression of public opinion, by freedom of speech, and by a high respect for human life, dignity and freedom” (p. 27). Such an opinion flies in the face of excellent evidence that Muslim societies (as well as Israelite society as portrayed in the Tanakh; see *PTSDA*, Ch. 8) conform very well to the typical Eastern pattern of a collectivist, authoritarian social structure in which there are pronounced social status differences and in which wealthy males have large numbers of wives and concubines (Weisfeld 1990). Indeed, Goitein’s view would appear to be a rather thoroughgoing inversion of the contrasts between Eastern and Western societies discussed in *PTSDA* (Ch. 8).

Goitein's apologetic stance can also be seen in his views that Jewish marriage in Muslim lands was monogamous, in contrast to the surrounding societies. Monogamy, which has been characteristic of Western societies throughout their history, is undoubtedly associated with a higher position for women and is essentially an egalitarian mating system for men (MacDonald 1983, 1990, 1995b; see *PTSDA*, Ch. 8). Goitein's view is thus an attempt to place Jewish marriage customs in a favorable moral light and is at variance with clear indications that polygyny is primitive among the Jews and that Jews practiced polygyny wherever it was legal (*PTSDA*, Chs. 3, 8). Indeed, Friedman (1989, 39) notes that in fact polygyny and concubinage with female slaves was "far from rare" among medieval Jews in Muslim lands, as indicated in the Geniza documents, and there were many discussions and legal rulings related to polygyny among them. Friedman also notes that Goitein and others have declared other practices common in the Jewish community on the basis of far less documentation than that related to polygyny; yet polygyny was said to be rare.

Goitein himself notes that Jewish scholars of the 19th century, such as Graetz (who described Muslim lands as an "interfaith utopia" [Cohen 1994, 5]), tended to portray the situation of the Jews in Arab countries in benign terms in order to contrast the situation with perceived European oppression of the Jews, thereby condemning European culture. Goitein takes a middle view, but there remains a strong desire to condemn the West: "Modern Western civilization, like the ancient civilization of the Greeks, is essentially at variance with the religious culture of the Jewish people. Islam, however, is from the very flesh and bone of Judaism." Anti-Semitism, including extreme "ritual degradation" of Jews, was a prominent characteristic of Muslim societies throughout their history, the exceptions tending to occur when Jews occupied the role of an intermediary group between a foreign conqueror and a subject Muslim population (see p. 30).

Finally, Raphael and Jennifer Patai (1989) in their book *The Myth of the Jewish Race*, combine historical interpretation with genetic analysis in an attempt to show that Jews have eagerly attempted and succeeded in converting other peoples to their religion and intermarrying with them. The stated agenda of the book is to counter the idea that Zionism is racism, as stated by the UN resolution of 1974, and the implication that Judaism itself is racist. Although the book is replete with inaccuracies and distortions of Jewish religious writings and the historical record, I note here only that researchers in the field of Jewish population genetics have gone out of their way to reject their conclusions (e.g., Bonné-Tamir et al. 1979, 71; Szeinberg 1979, 77).¹⁴

While Patai and Patai attempted to combat anti-Semitism by portraying Judaism as a universalist religion with no ethnic implications, earlier Jewish scientist/activists were intent on combating anti-Semitism and developing a positive conceptualization of Judaism within the context of *fin de siècle* race science. While having somewhat different political agendas, all of the Jewish race scientists profiled by Efron (1994) (i.e., Joseph Jacobs, Samuel Weissenberg, Elias Auerbach, Aron Sandler, Ignaz Zollschan) were strongly identified Jews

and were activists on behalf of Jewish causes. They were vitally concerned that Jews would continue to maintain their racial purity, and they combated anti-Semitism by emphasizing the cultural assimilability of Jews and stressing positive Jewish traits and accomplishments. Their work attempted “to engage the dominant discourse about race and the so-called Jewish question as well as to mount a sustained campaign of self-defense, self-assertion, and ethnic identity building. . . . Before scientific racism had run its course . . . Jewish scientists had risen on behalf of their embattled people, polemicizing the problem of Jewish ‘Otherness’ by using the contemporary methodologies of race science to either confirm or disprove claims of racial difference” (Efron 1994, 3, 5).

For example, Ignaz Zollschan’s writings were intended to appeal to various audiences, but the ultimate goal was to advance his perception of Jewish group interests. He emphasized Jewish contributions to culture in order to rebut the claims of anti-Semites. On the other hand, his message for Jews was that they were a unitary racial type and that cultural assimilation would not change the fact of Jewish racial distinctiveness. Only Zionism would solve the Jewish racial question, by allowing Jews to continue as a racial entity (see Efron 1994, 156).

Both Jewish and gentile racial scientists stressed the genetic purity of the Jewish gene pool and the close genetic relatedness of far-flung Jewish groups. However, Jewish racial scientists emphasized the moral superiority of Jews and also their intelligence, as indicated by a large cranial capacity. Unlike their gentile counterparts, however, Jewish racial scientists argued for the importance of the environment in shaping individuals, and their speculations in this regard fit well their general ideological agenda: Jews were a pure race, but their features, including their large cranial capacity and intelligence, were molded by the environment. Negatively perceived traits thought to be characteristic of Jews, such as weak physical constitutions and a tendency to neurasthenia, were ascribed to being forced to live in a ghetto environment or subjected to anti-Semitism. On the other hand, the strengths of the Jews, such as their longevity and low levels of infant mortality, were ascribed to “the structure of Jewish life as created for and by Jews” (Efron 1994, 177).

Besides the race scientists, other *fin de siècle* Jewish social scientists dedicated themselves to improving the image and lot of Jews by gathering statistics on them. “The gathering of Jewish statistics and the writing of a Jewish sociology or anthropology based on those statistics were impelled by political considerations. Although they were Zionist, they were also liberal and even assimilationist. These three post-emancipatory Jewish ideologies expressed widely divergent philosophies. Yet statistics gathering provided them with a common denominator in that the figures were always used to defend Jews against their detractors and to work for the improvement of Jewish conditions on the basis of those data” (Efron 1994, 169). These social scientists gathered data intended to refute the empirical claims of anti-Semites, for example, that Jews dominated certain sectors of the economy or were prominent in certain types of criminal enterprises. *The Culture of Critique* will discuss several

historically important examples where Jewish social scientists have developed theories, collected data, and created intellectual movements in the interest of promoting Jewish group interests.

We have seen that racialist rhetoric was used by Jewish racial scientists and Zionists to advance group goals. The situation in America is particularly interesting in this regard. Beginning in the late 19th century, the rhetoric of race served to clearly demarcate group boundaries for a community deeply concerned about defections resulting from intermarriage, especially of women (Goldstein 1997). Jews—both traditional and Reform (see discussion of Kaufman Kohler above)—developed a view of themselves as a race with characteristics—intellectuality and high morality—that made them uniquely qualified to live up to American ideals; indeed, they traced the ethical foundations of Western civilization to Jewish influences. Their ideas were explicitly tied to *fin de siècle* racial science; in the words of Reform intellectual leader Emil G. Hirsch in response to a critic who viewed Judaism as a purely spiritual force, “let him sneer at physiological Judaism! This demurrer and sneer prove only one thing, that he cannot have grasped the import of the most recent investigations in anthropology” (in Goldstein 1997, 52).

However, while racialist rhetoric was highly functional in cementing group ties, preventing intermarriage, and developing positive self-images of the ingroup, this rhetoric was abandoned when it was perceived to conflict with Jewish group goals, particularly with regard to Jewish immigration (Goldstein 1997). Whereas in the 19th century Jews saw themselves as members of the dominant white race in distinction to African Americans and Native Americans, Jews came to be perceived by some, such as Madison Grant in his influential *Passing of the Great Race*, as non-Nordics and hence as less desirable immigrants. At this point, the Jewish strategy shifted and Jews became leaders in the movement to delete the concept of race from science entirely. The prominent anthropologist Maurice Fishberg was recruited by Jewish leaders to cast doubt on the idea that Jews were a race, and Franz Boas developed the intensely politicized cultural determinism school of anthropology which came to dominate American anthropology from the mid-1920s to the present. The efforts of Boas and his followers are a major topic of *The Culture of Critique*. Here they serve as a reminder of the flexibility of Jewish strategizing in the intellectual arena as well as the ability of Jewish intellectuals to bend the language of the current Zeitgeist—in this case the language of science—to serve group interests.

CONCLUSION

The material reviewed here is highly consistent with the general point that Jewish ideology is highly malleable. Jewish intellectuals have been able to opportunistically develop ideological structures that serve immediate needs for rationalizing or disguising behavior within the Jewish community or among gentiles. When new philosophies or scientific theories of human behavior or

history are developed, Jewish thinkers have been able quickly to develop theories in which the fundamentals of Judaism are preserved and Jewish interests are achieved while being reinterpreted in the context of the new paradigms.

These phenomena are excellent examples of the importance of general-purpose cognitive abilities in conceptualizing human adaptation to complex environments (MacDonald 1991), in this case the symbolic environment emanating from the gentile world. The very malleable ideological basis of Judaism is able to react to a wide range of unforeseeable contingencies in an adaptive manner and thereby attain the fundamental goal of furthering the group strategy (including ultimately the facilitation of genetic separatism). The ideological environment has changed continually, and non-functional conceptions of Judaism are constantly being rejected in favor of conceptions more compatible with the current intellectual *Zeitgeist*. When the need to develop a re-interpretation of Judaism in terms of Hegelian philosophy ceases, this ideology of Judaism is relegated to intellectual history and a more modern theory is substituted. Like military weaponry, ideologies are used to fight current battles and then discarded when there is a perceived need to adopt a newer technology.

However, Jewish intellectual activity in the service of group goals has not been confined to reacting to criticisms and interpretations emanating from the gentile intellectual environment. A major theme of *The Culture of Critique* is that Jewish intellectuals have also gone on the offensive; as in the case of the concept of race mentioned above, they have constructed intellectual movements (e.g., Boasian anthropology, radical political ideology, psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt School of Social Research) aimed at altering the fundamental categorization process among gentiles in a manner that is perceived by the participants to advance Jewish group interests.

APPENDIX: HISTORY AND APOLOGIA IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE IBERIAN INQUISITIONS

Although there is no question regarding the existence of crypto-Judaism on the Iberian Peninsula, there remains controversy surrounding the precise status of many of the New Christian descendants of forced conversions in Spain and Portugal. The standard interpretation is that indeed the vast majority of the New Christians were crypto-Jews (e.g., Cohen 1967; Freund & Ruiz 1994, 178), and there is no question that this was the popular perception of the time (e.g., Kamen 1965; Roth 1937). Consider, for example, the following statement by the 15th-century historian Andrés Bernáldez. Bernáldez charges the Conversos with religious heresy, continued peoplehood (note the appellation of “tribe”), as well as continuing to treat Old Christians as an exploitable and hated outgroup.

Those people who can avoid baptizing their children, do so, and those who have them baptized wash them off as soon as they return home. . . . [T]hey are gluttons and feeders, who never lose the Judaical habit of eating delicacies of onion and garlic fried in oil, and they cook their meat in oil, using it in place of lard or fat, to avoid pork; and so their

houses and doorways smell most offensively from those tit-bits; and hence they have the odor of the Jews, as a result of their food and their not being baptized. . . . [T]hey eat meat in Lent and on the vigils of feasts and on ember days; they keep the Passover and the Sabbath as best they can. They send oil to the synagogues for the lamps. They have Jews who preach to them secretly in their houses, especially to the women very secretly; and they have Jewish rabbis whose occupation is to slaughter their beasts and fowls for them. They eat unleavened bread during the Jewish holidays, and meat chopped up. They follow all the Judaical ceremonies secretly so far as they can.

The men as well as the women always avoid receiving the sacraments of Holy Church voluntarily. When they confess, they never tell the truth; and it happened that one confessor asked a person of this tribe to cut off a piece of his garment for him, saying, "Since you have never sinned, I should like to have a bit of your garment for a relic to heal the sick." There was a time in Seville when it was commanded that no meat be weighed on Saturday, because all the *Conversos* ate it Saturday night, and they ordered it weighed Sunday morning.

Not without reason did Our Redeemer call them a wicked and adulterous generation. They do not believe that God rewards virginity and chastity. All their endeavor is to increase and multiply. And in the time when this heretical iniquity flourished, many monasteries were violated by their wealthy men and merchants, and many professed nuns were ravished and mocked, some through gifts and some through the lures of panders, they not believing in or fearing excommunications; but they did it to injure Jesus Christ and the Church. And usually, for the most part, they were usurious people, of many wiles and deceits, for they all live by easy occupations and offices, and in buying and selling they have no conscience where Christians are concerned. Never would they undertake the occupations of tilling the soil or digging or cattle-raising, nor would they teach their children any except holding public offices, and sitting down to earn enough to eat with little labor. Many of them in these realms in a short time acquired very great fortunes and estates, since they had no conscience in their profits and usuries, saying that they only gained at the expense of their enemies, according to the command of God in the departure of the people of Israel to rob the Egyptians. (In Walsh 1930, 202–203)

Nevertheless, several historians (Henry Kamen [1985], Ellis Rivkin [n. d.], Norman Roth [1995],¹⁵ Cecil Roth [1974],¹⁶ and most notably, Benzion Netanyahu [1966, 1995]) have claimed that the New Christians were not really crypto-Jews, in order to avoid the charge that there is a certain "legitimacy" to Christian suspicions of these individuals with the consequence that the Inquisition itself would be given some legitimacy.

From the theoretical perspective adopted here, there are two points to keep in mind, either of which, if true, would render the Inquisition comprehensible within the present theoretical framework. First, the social identity theory of anti-Semitism implies that the major determinant of anti-*Converso* actions would be whether the *Conversos* continued to constitute an identifiable group within Iberian society, not whether their religious beliefs were sincere. In the case of the New Christians, there is a great deal of evidence that they retained a strong sense of group cohesion whatever their religious beliefs (see Chapter 6, pp. 184–86). Even if all of the New Christians developed sincere Christian beliefs but continued to form an endogamous, cooperative, and highly successful group

within Iberian society, it is expected that the outgroup would develop negative beliefs about them, including perhaps the belief that they were not sincere. After all, to be a true Christian might reasonably be viewed by the Old Christians as implying complete social intercourse and the breaking down of group boundaries within the society, to form a homogeneous Christian state. The view that society should be a corporate, seamless, and homogeneous entity was central to conceptions of the medieval state.

Second, from the perspective of social identity theory, an important contributor to anti-Semitism is the prevention of Type II errors (see p. 13). This would result in hypotheses about Judaism as a whole being accepted on the basis of even a few instances of negatively evaluated behavior. Thus if even a few New Christians were known to be crypto-Jews, it is expected that Old Christians would err on the side of over-inclusion in this negative category, because this would have a very low cost to the Old Christians and would result in very large benefits in their competition with the New Christians. That there were at least some crypto-Jews is acknowledged by all scholars, even Netanyahu: "That there were some Jewish pockets among the Marranos in the sixties [i.e., 1460s], and probably in the seventies too, may be taken for granted" (1995, 931).

It is also known that New Christians and Old Christians were engaged in resource competition throughout the period leading up to the Inquisition (*PTSDA*, Ch. 5). Given this state of affairs, an evolutionist could scarcely be surprised to find that Old Christians overattributed religious heresy to the Conversos in order to achieve their evolutionary goals. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that this is the whole story. Recently several historians have emphasized the heterogeneity of Converso religious beliefs, and this perspective, if true, not only validates the rationality of the Inquisition as an instrument of ethnic warfare but also provides it with a certain moral legitimacy. After all, heresy was indeed a crime worthy of official punishment in the eyes of virtually everyone during this period. (Netanyahu [1995, 660] terms heresy an "execrable crime.") As a result, no matter how odious such sentiments appear to the modern observer, the Inquisition was certainly acting within the moral and theological premises of the age.

Haliczer (1990, 212ff) notes that there were a variety of religious beliefs among the New Christians in Valencia, including a deep commitment to Judaism, a belief in both Judaism and Catholicism, and fervent Catholicism. At the onset of the Inquisition in the 1480s, the Converso community of Valencia is described as "close knit" and with a high level of affluence and political influence. In the early 1500s the Inquisition discovered a network of "dozens of interlocking families" (p. 225) of New Christians. In the 1720s there remained a "a tight-knit group of New Christian families who married among themselves or with other families of known Judaic sympathies" (p. 234). Haliczer recounts the example of a New Christian woman who was severely beaten by her father for secretly marrying an Old Christian. The woman then married a New Christian, but her behavior caused the New Christian families to ostracize her. Clearly,

whatever these individuals believed, the woman's exogamous behavior was a very grave offense against New Christian ethics.

Consistent with the present emphasis on behavior rather than beliefs, Haliczzer notes that the best evidence for being a true Christian was not what one said one believed, but one's actual behavior, such as associating with Old Christians, eating pork, and giving alms to Christian poor. "In an age when popular religion consisted of little more than a collection of rituals and social customs, there was no other way to judge, and it was the conversos' failure to conform to the behavioral patterns expected of a Catholic rather than any deeply held religious views that made him an object of suspicion and denunciation for his Old Christian neighbors, servants, and associates" (Haliczzer 1990, 219). The continued association of New Christians with each other (and, until 1492, with Jews), including continued endogamy, provided a rational basis for the Inquisition.

Indeed, one might note that New Christians who maintained group separatism while sincerely accepting Christianity were really engaging in a very interesting evolutionary strategy—a true case of crypsis entirely analogous to crypsis in the natural world. Such people would be even more invisible to the surrounding society than crypto-Jews, because they would attend church regularly, not circumcise themselves, eat pork, etc., and have no psychological qualms about doing so. As Trivers (1985, 1991) emphasizes, the best deceivers are self-deceivers because they do not show any psychological tensions or feelings of ambivalence. Psychological acceptance of Christianity may have been the best possible means of continuing Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy during the period of the Inquisition. While the rest of society would be led to believe that these individuals had completely assimilated and would be impressed with their devout practice of religion, the New Christians would be aware of a sort of subterranean group boundary which delimited mate choice and partners for economic cooperation and charity.

There is indeed a suggestion that at least some of the New Christians had altered their religious ideology while continuing to engage in genetic separatism. For example, Ortiz (1965, 76) mentions the philosopher Juan Luis Vives, who had four Jewish grandparents and was married to a *Conversa*, but nevertheless was apparently a sincere Christian. In Chapter 4 evidence was reviewed indicating that there were high levels of endogamy among at least some groups of New Christians for centuries after the onset of Inquisition. Reflecting the genetic purity of this group, Israel (1985, 203; see also Baron 1969, 100, 124–125, 149–150) notes that Jewish authorities assumed that marriage in the Iberian Peninsula had been entirely endogamous. The interesting point is that when these New Christians went abroad in search of a Jewish marriage, Jewish religious authorities made active attempts to convert them back to Judaism (Israel 1985, 203). The suggestion is that surface beliefs had indeed ceased to be a reliable cue for endogamy, and that at least a subset of the New Christians were sincere in their Christian beliefs but had managed to retain their ethnic purity for generations.

A critical point in evaluating apologia such as that of Netanyahu (1995) is that he does not attach any moral importance to the central fact of the situation—that the New Christians constituted an endogamous, highly successful, and even dominating group within Spanish society, with high levels of within-group cooperation and patronage.¹⁷ It is interesting that in discussing the attitude of the 15th-century apologist Fernán Díaz regarding intermarriage, Netanyahu (1995, 420) states that the New Christians had an ideology that intermarriage was “the ultimate solution” of the problem, but he comments that this ideology coexisted with a powerful sense of group affinity and group pride.

Nor, despite the official ideology of New Christian apologists, did it lead to much actual intermarriage, apart from providing dowries to restore the fortunes of the gentile nobility—a practice that resulted in a one-way flow of genes from the New Christian to the Old Christian population (see Chapter 4). That the New Christians remained a definable, endogamous group is independent of whether they secretly believed and behaved as Jews. It is also independent of the opinions of Jewish religious authorities living abroad regarding their orthodoxy or whether they were still Jews.¹⁸ As Cohen (1967, 181; see also Contreras 1991, 129–130) notes, “no matter how Christianized the Marrano way of life may have become, and was giving evidence of becoming further, they need not—and apparently, did not—cease to be a Jewish group historically, sociologically or even religiously.” As Netanyahu (1995, 996) himself notes, the New Christians were perceived by all concerned as a separate group in Spanish society (see Chapter 6, pp. 185–186). Indeed, a remarkable fact about all of the apologies for the New Christians that emerged in the 15th century is that they took for granted that the New Christians constituted a “nation” with a particular genetic lineage—that is, that New Christians were a different race. Thus the famous *Instrucción del Relator* is written “a favor de la nación Hebrea,” and its New Christian author speaks of “our race.” The *Instrucción* is directed at absolving Jews as a race whether or not they have converted to Christianity (Netanyahu 1995, 406). Not surprisingly, the anti-Conversos, such as Alonso de Espina, also viewed them as members of the “Jewish race” (Netanyahu 1995, 847).

Besides his emphasis on the “groupness” of the Conversos, Netanyahu (p. 1044) also agrees with the dominant view among scholars that social, economic, and political conflict between New and Old Christians was basic to the Inquisition, and these views fit well with the present perspective.

Netanyahu’s own analysis therefore is quite compatible with the following overall scenario: The Conversos remained as a separate unassimilated racial/national group in Spanish society well into the 15th century and indeed up through the period of the establishment of the Inquisition and at least the following 250 years. This group, freed from the economic and social constraints placed on Jews, rose quickly to a position of dominance (or near dominance) and was correctly perceived by the Old Christians as a competitor for resources and as an outgroup—precisely the general condition that has led to anti-Semitism repeatedly throughout the history of the Jews. Because they were

unable to use racial/national group membership as a category of social discrimination, in some cases the Old Christians exaggerated the extent of the Conversos' religious heterodoxy to attain their social and political aims.

Netanyahu's interest in asserting the non-culpability of Judaism for the events surrounding the Inquisition is also apparent in an article he wrote opposing the views of Américo Castro on the origins of the concern with purity of blood in Spain (see Netanyahu 1979–1980). As described in Chapter 4, Castro (1954, 1971) proposed that the Spanish concern with purity of blood was a reaction to previously existing concern with purity of blood among Jews. This is a critical issue in my proposal that major Western anti-Semitic movements develop as a reaction to Judaism and mimic key aspects of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy (see Chapters 3–5).¹⁹

The first part of Netanyahu's rebuttal focuses on the interpretation of the biblical evidence. Netanyahu criticizes Castro for relying on Deuteronomy 7:6 which refers to the chosenness of Israel, to support his proposal that the Israelites were concerned with purity of blood. Netanyahu neglects to discuss the context of Deuteronomy 7:6; this context, although not quoted by Castro, clearly supports of the connections between the chosenness of Israel and fear of exogamy. The preceding passage (Deut. 7:2–5) contains God's instructions to the Israelites to completely destroy the seven nations to be found in the promised land in order to avoid intermarriage.

And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them; then thou shalt utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For he will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and He will destroy thee quickly. But thus shall ye deal with them: ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be His own treasure, out of all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 7:2–6)

Passages like this give rather obvious support for the general associations among the idea of chosenness, the fear of exogamy, and the Israelite god as representing the interests of the ethnic group emphasized in *PTSDA* (Ch. 3). However, Netanyahu claims that the text resists any possible interpretation of a concern for purity of blood. In the passage referred to by Netanyahu (Castro 1971, 67ff), Castro goes on to cite Ezra's condemnation of intermarriage and his pronouncements about the "Holy Seed," and he discusses the elaborate sections on establishing descent from Aaron required by priestly families, and the genealogies of all of the tribes of Israel in 1 Chronicles 1–9. (Indeed, 1 Chronicles 1–9 is a remarkable document, purporting to be a complete genealogy of Israel up to the Babylonian captivity.) Netanyahu completely ignores the very clear

concern for genealogy in these writings, and expresses amazement that anyone could interpret the Tanakh as concerned with racial purity.

As part of his argument, Castro cites a passage from a letter of the Converso Hernando del Pulgar (late 15th century) that “*These people [the Jews] are now paying for the prohibitions that Moses made to his people, that they should not marry gentiles*” (Castro 1954, 531; italics in text). The passage indicates a perception about the Jews at the time as being concerned to avoid intermarriage with gentiles, and this is how Castro interprets it: “We must now try, insofar as possible, to see things as he saw them; With a free spirit he told the cardinal, a great aristocrat far removed from any sort of plebeian suspicion, that the exclusiveness of his contemporaries, their concern over purity of blood, was a reply to that other hermeticism of Pulgar’s own ancestors” (Castro 1971, 80).

The thrust of Netanyahu’s rebuttal, however, focuses on the truth of Pulgar’s statement, a point that is clearly irrelevant to the importance of 15th-century Spanish perceptions of Judaism whether or not they are true. The indications are that Pulgar viewed Jews as concerned to avoid intermarriage, and the material summarized throughout this volume and *PTSDA* indicates that, despite Netanyahu’s objections, there is substantial truth to Pulgar’s belief.

Further, Netanyahu states that the biblical strictures on ethnic intermixture

are religious, moral, historical, or cultural; but they have a common denominator in that they are not racial. . . . Like Pulgar, however, Castro ignored this ideology as if it were of no significance, assuming perhaps that it merely served as cover for a distasteful racial policy. Even so, it is obvious that this ideology of the Bible is vital for determining the issue at hand. For what we seek to establish is a *medieval* attitude, and the impact of the Bible on its formation, and it is clear that the Bible’s justification of its laws—a justification which was taken at its face value in the Middle Ages—was far more influential in shaping views and attitudes than any contradictory fact it may have hidden. (1979–1980, 404; italics in text)

An evolutionary perspective certainly agrees that biblical rhetoric is racialism in religious disguise. To claim that this rhetoric is somehow moral because it is phrased in religious terms is clearly an attempt to avoid a negative moral judgment upon his religion. But the point here is that Pulgar’s views on this matter are indeed critical, whether or not they are true. Netanyahu in no way casts doubt on the idea that Pulgar and others viewed the 15th-century Jews as highly concerned with racial purity and that they believed that this Jewish concern was clearly articulated in Jewish religious writings.

Castro (1971, 71) then quotes the 15th-century gentile chronicler Andrés Bernáldez as saying that the New Christians “had the presumption of arrogance; [they thought] that in all the world there were no people who were better, or more prudent, or shrewder, or more distinguished than they because they were of the lineage and condition of Israel.” Netanyahu does not mention Bernáldez, but Castro is correct in using him as evidence that the Old Christians had the view that Jewish ancestry mattered a great deal to the Jews themselves.

Netanyahu then asserts (pp. 405–406) as an obvious fact that the Jews in the ancient world had an intense interest in proselytism from Hasmonean times (2nd century B.C.) onward and were very successful in their efforts. Some of the flavor of the battle between Jewish and Christian scholars over this issue has been provided in this chapter, and the evidence is discussed at length in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4). The evidence indicates that such a view is highly problematic. (Indeed, Netanyahu’s invocation of this interpretation is another indication of the theoretical usefulness to Jewish apologists of the belief that Judaism was highly successful in attracting converts in the ancient world.) Interestingly, Netanyahu is not able to point to any substantial number of converts during the medieval period in Spain, or to any evidence that Jews were intensely interested in proselytism during this period. Yet it is surely this period, during which the *aljamas* (Jewish communities) were hermetically sealed from the gentile community, which would have given rise to Spanish perceptions of Jewish attitudes toward intermarriage. Instead, Netanyahu points to the possibility of conversion in Talmudic law. As indicated in *PTSDA* (Chapter 4), the writings of the Talmud hardly show unanimous enthusiasm for converts, and, in any case, even though the Talmud does indeed make allowances for conversion, there is no evidence for Jewish proselytism or for a substantial numbers of converts at any period of Jewish history in traditional societies.

Netanyahu then criticizes Castro’s assertion that Cardinal Siliceo “purged the Cathedral of Toledo of impure priests [i.e., New Christians] on the model of Ezra and Nehemiah” (Castro 1971, 69). Netanyahu replies that Castro

was well aware of the fact that from time immemorial it was established in Israel, and in the Law of Israel, that no one could be a member of the priesthood unless descended from a priestly family; and thus it was quite natural for Ezra and Nehemiah—in that period of transmigration and resettlement—to check the records of all those who claimed to be priests. But of what interest could such a procedure be to a Catholic archbishop? Christianity did away with the hereditary principle as far as the Church hierarchy was concerned. . . . What led him [Cardinal Siliceo], then, to apply hereditary considerations to Christians of Jewish origin? There is a question here, of course, but it cannot be answered by Ezra and Nehemiah. (Netanyahu 1979–1980, 408)

If Castro is suggesting that Cardinal Siliceo’s motives in checking the ethnic ancestry of priests were explicitly inspired by Ezra and Nehemiah (although this is not at all clear), he does indeed go beyond the evidence. I interpret Castro as pointing to a formal similarity between these two activities—a formal similarity that is entirely compatible with Castro’s view that Spanish behavior was fundamentally a reaction to and a mirror image of previously existing Jewish practices. However, it is hardly irrelevant that the New Christians had retained a strong sense of group identity, that they constituted a distinct faction within the Church, and that many of them were reasonably suspected of being crypto-Jews. The analogy with the behavior of Ezra and Nehemiah, whether consciously perceived by the cardinal, is quite apparent: in both cases there was a conscious

attempt to rid one's own group of an alien group by looking for genealogical cues. The cardinal's racialism, whatever his personal ideology, is thus reasonably construed as a rational response to the continuation of a group strategy by the New Christians, at least some of whom were known to be crypto-Jews. As indicated in Chapter 4, the obvious phenotypic cue for recognizing crypto-Jews was simply their Jewish ancestry; there were often no other clues available. Even if not all of the New Christian ecclesiastics were really crypto-Jews or did not continue to identify with the New Christians as a separate group within Spanish society, it was still reasonable to avoid the possibility that at least some of them were indeed continuing to engage in a group strategy that was antithetical to the interests of the gentile Christians.

Further, Netanyahu seems to be quite content to view the hereditary nature of the priesthood among the Israelites as simply a very ancient practice which has no theoretical interest whatever. Netanyahu views the concern of Ezra and Nehemiah for genealogy as "quite natural" given this practice, and there is the implication that these practices are a sort of harmless and arbitrary superstition—perhaps on analogy with wearing a certain style of clothing or driving on the right as opposed to the left side of the street.

From the present perspective, however, and in defense of Castro, the concern with genealogy is indeed quite natural, but only if one is concerned about racial purity. Otherwise, it makes no sense at all. Indeed, modern evidence indicates that indeed the priestly families of Judaism (i.e., the *Kohanim*) have the same Y-chromosome and are indeed the lineal descendants of Aaron (Skorecki et al. 1997). Netanyahu fails to grasp the deep significance of these practices for conceptualizing Judaism or for how gentiles have reacted to Judaism.

Although it is not a central part of Castro's argument, he refers in a footnote to a biblical commentary by the 15th-century Jewish scholar Rabbi Moses Arragel, who interprets Ezra as admonishing the Israelites as follows: "The uses of this chapter [of the Book of Ezra] are to make us understand that he who takes a wife of an alien nation gives great sorrow and anger to God; it notes of Solomon that he took wives of alien nations, and that caused all the woe of Israel, and the falling into captivity. . . . And [Ezra] said that this sin of sleeping with women of other nations was alone sufficient that no one should remain in Israel" (in Castro 1971, 69n). Castro comments that "it is clear that long before Christian literature talks of "purity of blood," the concern over maintaining that purity was consubstantial with the very existence of the Hebrews."

After questioning Arragel's competence as a scholar, Netanyahu asserts that Arragel's concern is not with purity of blood but with purity of religion, since converted Christians could marry Jews. First, we do not really know Arragel's thoughts. Netanyahu would have us believe that Arragel interpreted Ezra in this manner while at the same time having very positive views about conversion and subsequent intermarriage with converts, views which he suppressed only out of fear of Christian antagonism to conversion to Judaism. There is no evidence for

this, and in light of the generally negative views on conversion characteristic of Judaism throughout its history, it is extremely unlikely that this is the case.

Rabbi Arragel goes beyond a concern with marriage to a concern with even “sleeping” with gentiles and begetting “alien” offspring upon them. In this regard, Netanyahu correctly notes that Arragel’s interpretation goes beyond the literal meaning of the Book of Ezra, and I agree with Netanyahu that Arragel has an agenda of preventing all sexual contact with gentiles. Netanyahu also notes that the offspring of a gentile woman and a Jewish man would not be accepted as Jews according to Jewish law. As reviewed in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4), this concern with preventing any sexual contact with gentiles was a prominent feature of the *aljamas*, and evidence reviewed there indicates that indeed Arragel was far from alone in having these concerns. For example, some *aljamas* even developed Jewish prostitution in order to prevent sexual contact between the groups. The evidence indicates that the motivations for the periodic upsurges in concern about sexual relationships with gentile women had nothing to do with fears of Christian antagonism, but rather with internal concerns that the Jews were straying from their religious law. Netanyahu acknowledges as much but maintains that this religious rationale frees Arragel of the charge of being concerned with race. Moreover, Netanyahu argues that since the offspring of a Jewish woman by a gentile man were considered to be Jews, the rejection of the offspring of a Jewish man and a gentile woman could not have been based on race, and indeed Maimonides clearly viewed such behavior as a religious crime, not a racial transgression.

Again, however, as emphasized throughout this volume, the historical instantiation of Judaism was co-extensive with ethnic differences between Jews and the surrounding society. However Arragel conceptualized the matter, his pronouncements clearly advocated a continued separation between ethnic groups. Given these practices, it would not be in the least surprising that gentiles would conceptualize Jews as greatly concerned with preventing sexual contact between the groups and developing the idea that the Jews themselves were concerned with purity of blood. This is the crucial point. Whatever the religious ideology, Castro is simply saying that Christians were aware that a major impetus for preventing sexual contacts between Jews and gentiles came from the Jewish community. That this impetus was cloaked in religious ideology is irrelevant.

Moreover, the fact that the offspring of a gentile and a Jewish woman were considered to be Jews while the offspring of a Jewish man and a gentile woman were not is hardly evidence that ethnic purity was not a motivation for this aspect of Jewish religious law (see p. 144). Normatively, the most common situation in which a Jewish woman in a traditional society would have sexual contact with a gentile was via marriage into the upper levels of gentile society combined with dowry payments, with the resulting children lost to the Jewish gene pool. As indicated below, a Jewish woman who had an affair with a gentile in this period was sentenced by two rabbis to having her nose cut off, a punishment far more severe than the punishments given to Jewish males who con-

sorted with gentile women (see *PTSDA*, Ch. 4). Indeed, the latter practice appears to have been quite common and subject to very weak, informal sanctions, since there were periodic efforts, emanating from fundamentalist factions within the Jewish community, to prevent it, while there is no evidence for analogous behavior as common among Jewish females.²⁰ For example, the 15th-century Kabbalistic author of *Sefer Ha-Kanah Sefer* and *Ha-Peliah* decried a Jewish courtier who “was a lover of gentile concubines” (Cutler & Cutler 1986, 285). The contemporary Rabbi Solomon Ibn Verga attributed the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 to, among other things, the Jewish “jealously” of gentile women (Roth 1995, 291). These comments indicate that Jewish males were often consorting with gentile females and they indicate a concern within the Jewish community that this involvement was a source of gentile hostility.

Netanyahu (1979–1980, 434) then makes much of Castro’s (1971, 73) claim that Arragel believed that lineage was the greatest advantage of the Spanish Jews. Netanyahu may be correct in supposing that Arragel did not think lineage was the *most* important advantage, but Netanyahu does not deny that lineage is one of the virtues of Spanish Jews according to Arragel. The only question is where it ranked on the list of virtues; wherever it ranked, it was clearly viewed by Arragel as of considerable importance. As we have seen, it was not at all uncommon for the 15th-century New Christians to show great pride in their Jewish lineage. I have already noted (see Ch. 4) that the Converso Bishop of Burgos wrote, “Do not think you can insult me by calling my forefathers Jews. They are, to be sure, and I am glad that it is so; for if great age is nobility, who can go back so far?” Netanyahu’s claim (p. 437) that Arragel had a non-genetic concept of lineage seems incredible, but in any case it would be very difficult to argue this in the case of such New Christians as Burgos. (Recall that during the 15th century the New Christians openly acknowledged their ancestry and commonly believed that their ancestry was superior to that of gentile society.)

Netanyahu (p. 437) then notes that a concern with lineage was common also to gentiles of the period and indeed among the nobility everywhere. I would agree that there was a similar concern with lineage (but not racial purity) among the gentile nobility.²¹ Castro’s point still stands: purity of blood and a concern with racial contamination on the part of the Old Christians became a concern only in the 15th century, when the New Christians continued their group behavior and their endogamous practices while outwardly at least behaving as Christians. Prior to this phenomenon, Jewish marriage into the Spanish nobility was uncontroversial. Castro’s proposal that the New Christian concern with their lineage was linked to the continuation of New Christian endogamy is eminently reasonable. Indeed, even if one dismissed all of Castro’s claims on the long history of Jewish concern with purity of blood prior to the 15th century, the events of that century by themselves would result in a heightened consciousness of race on the part of the Old Christians. Since there is substantial agreement among historians that the New Christians remained as an endogamous, cooperating group within the society whatever their beliefs, the Old Christians of

necessity utilized the only cue available to them in combating this cryptic continuation of an oppositional group strategy: Jewish genetic ancestry. Thus their concern with race.

Netanyahu then mentions the famous early 14th-century case, discussed in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4), in which the rabbinical courts ruled that a Jewish woman who bore children to a gentile man should have her nose cut off. Netanyahu argues that the Jewish courts were merely imitating Christian courts of the period. Moreover, for the Jewish courts to be lenient would be to “arouse contempt, since their own penalties for such offenses were extremely severe” (p. 439).

Such an attribution of Christian contempt appears rather gratuitous. One might equally suppose that the Jewish courts should show their leniency in this matter, and thus give a signal that interethnic sexual relationships with Jewish women (apart from marriage via dowry) were tolerated by the Jews. Interestingly, Netanyahu shows that there were severe laws enacted by Christian communities against Jewish males having sexual relationships with gentile women, but he cites no laws restricting gentile men from having relationships with Jewish women. This suggests that Christians would not have viewed these latter relationships as particularly threatening, and an evolutionist would expect exactly such a pattern. As also occurred toward the end of antiquity in the Roman Empire (see Chapter 3), the Christian community was concerned that Jewish males would exploit Christian females, and an exacerbating situation may well have been that the Jewish community was quite wealthy compared to the vast majority of Christians. There would be no reason for Christians to enact similar penalties preventing Christian men from seducing Jewish woman, since this would result in a genetic benefit to the Christian community. Similarly, Bosworth (1982, 49) notes that in Muslim societies a Muslim could marry a *dhimmi* wife (e.g., a Jew or Christian) but not vice versa “for this would put a believing woman into the power of an unbeliever,” and he goes on to comment that the same logic applied to the lack of symmetry in laws regarding slavery: Muslims could enslave Jews but Jews could not enslave Muslims. The rabbis who sentenced the woman to have her nose removed for this transgression were, on the face of it, similarly concerned that a Christian man might have power over a Jewish woman. Jewish men who casually consorted with Christian women were never punished so severely by the Jewish community.

Moreover, whatever the relative severity of the penalties and whatever the beliefs of those involved, two important points are that during this entire period the Spanish Jews in fact constituted an impermeable ethnic group, and that both Christians and Jews looked upon intergroup sexual relationships with hostility, especially when they involved the women from their own group. We have seen that more or less complete group impermeability has been a feature of Judaism throughout its history in traditional societies, and that one response of gentile societies during periods of heightened between-group competition has been to erect similar barriers to prevent contact with Jews (Chapters 3–5). These ten-

dencies are entirely comprehensible from the perspective of an evolutionary interpretation of social identity theory as discussed in Chapter 1.

However, historians such as Netanyahu then attribute any exclusivism on the part of the Jews as an imitation of gentile practices or as resulting from a fear of gentile reprisals; any failure to attempt to convert gentiles is the result of fears of gentile aggression, etc. These hypotheses serve to exonerate Judaism for any blame because it is always difficult to determine the exact dating of exclusivist practices, or to determine whether Jews or gentiles originated the practices or which side was more vigilant in prosecuting offenders.

However, while doubts that are difficult to resolve may be raised in particular instances, as Netanyahu does here, it stretches credulity to suppose that the uniform pattern of Jewish sexual exclusivism and cultural separatism apparent in so many societies and over so long a period always resulted from gentile sources, especially when we have seen, in *PTSDA* (Chs. 3, 4), that these practices have a firm foundation in Jewish religious law and that both Christian and Muslim governments have often attempted forcibly to convert Jews or have exerted other forms of pressure on them to convert. Indeed, as noted in Chapters 3–5, a common sequence has been for societies to attempt to convert Jews or forcibly convert them, but then resort to violence, deportation, or exclusionary policies when this inevitably fails.

There is no need to deny that indeed gentile behavior may result in Jewish responses that exacerbate the problem by intensifying Jewish behavior which provokes anti-Semitism—resulting in a “feed-forward” process in which anti-Semitism spirals out of control. A good example in the case of the Inquisition is that the *limpieza* laws may well have made many New Christians intensely conscious of their Jewish ancestry and feel that they had little choice but to retain their Jewish identities (Yerushalmi 1971, 40). Nevertheless, the cohesive community of New Christians existed long before the concern with *limpieza* became enshrined in a powerful set of legal disabilities. As Yerushalmi (1971, 41) points out, the claim that the Inquisition preserved crypto-Judaism is a version of the old theory that anti-Semitism is responsible for the persistence of the Jewish people. He notes that despite the same level of external pressures applied by the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, crypto-Judaism was more persistent in Portugal, indicating that factors internal to the Jewish community must have been important (p. 41n.62). I have also noted (Ch. 6, p. 180) that the recent decline of anti-Semitism has resulted in intensive efforts within the Jewish community to heighten Jewish identification and prevent intermarriage.

Netanyahu often invokes Jewish religious law as justifying Jewish exclusivism, as if that law itself were obviously beyond rational discussion: “The hermeticism of the Jews on the issue of intermarriage was not *racial* but *religious*, precisely as was the hermeticism of the Christians with respect to the same issue” (Netanyahu 1979–1980, 452). To repeat the point made in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4), one must then examine why a religion continued this separatism *even though failure to erase genetic and cultural segregation resulted repeatedly in resource*

and reproductive competition, accompanied by a great deal of intrasocietal violence and social division between genetically segregated groups.

Netanyahu discusses another famous case from the late 13th and early 14th century, mentioned also in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4), in which a family went to great lengths to show that its genealogy had not been contaminated with the blood of a slave. Netanyahu points out that freed slaves could become Jews by conversion, so that the taint of slavery in one's background, whatever its purpose, was not intended to prevent genetic admixture. Netanyahu's implication is that the finding of the rabbis that there had been "no admixture of impure blood" would have been compatible with finding that the progenitor was a freed slave who converted to Judaism before the conception occurred. The references to "impure blood" in this responsum, however, would, on the face of it, appear to indicate that it was the doubt about genetic relationships that resulted in the intense emotions raised by this case. Moreover, as noted in *PTSDA* (Ch. 4), offspring of female slaves received "grudging social recognition and tolerance," the master freeing the slave, converting her to Judaism, and then engaging in a "semi-marriage" (Neuman 1969, I, 11), presumably similar to concubinage. This strongly suggests that being the descendent of a slave would have been a taint on one's ancestry even if the slave had been freed and converted.

In conclusion, I agree with Castro: the Spanish were indeed racialists, but the Spanish racist mirror-image response was a response to a Jewish racialism that long pre-dated the events of the 15th century and thereafter.

NOTES

1. In Chapters 3–5, it was noted that anti-Semitic movements are often mirror images of Judaism. In 1891 the Pan-German League, a nationalistic organization with powerful anti-Semitic overtones (Pulzer 1964, 226ff), made the following "light of the nations" statement which is a mirror image of similar declarations that have been a staple of Jewish self-conceptualization throughout the ages and particularly among Reform intellectuals: "We believe that in working for the preservation and expansion of the German spirit in the world our people most effectively promotes the construction of world morality. For our German *Kultur* represents the ideal core of human intellect [*Denkarbeit*], and every step which is taken for Germanism belongs therefore to humanity as such and to the future of our species [*Geschlecht*]" (in Stern 1961, 169).

2. A similar phenomenon occurred during the 19th century when some Reform congregations intent on making their services more like Christian services eventually accepted the use of the organ but traced the instrument to a Jewish instrument used during biblical times. On the other hand, the organ was anathema to Orthodox Jews, precisely because it was seen as a gentile import (Meyer 1988, 169–170).

3. Acknowledging the ethnic nature of Judaism was viewed by many as the key to preventing assimilation. The prominent theologian Solomon Schechter, in his "Epistle to the Jews of England," argued that Jews are bound together by "common blood" and that despite the danger of acknowledging this fact because of its possible use by anti-Semites,

“the contrary standpoint leads to assimilation, which is more dangerous to Judaism than any device the anti-Semites may invent” (in Panitz 1969, 56n). Despite this reference to common blood, Schechter’s (1909) *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* regards Israel as a “universal kingdom” to which sinners and gentiles are invited. Schechter’s epistles indicate a clear sense of Jewish nationalism and of powerful ties among Jews throughout the world. Jews are not Germans or Anglo-Saxons of the Jewish persuasion, but “Jews of the Jewish persuasion” (p. 5). Schechter accepts the idea of a Jewish mission to the gentile world, but this mission can only be accomplished by the “closest communion” of Jews throughout the world: “All our thought and sympathies will have to be placed irrespective of country, among Jews” (p. 7).

4. Kohler also reconciled Reform Judaism with Darwinism by stating that evolution implies the survival of the morally superior (Meyer 1988, 274)—a rather ironic notion from the perspective of current theory and certainly one that Darwin himself would have had immense difficulties with. The fact that Israel had survived for so long was viewed by Kohler as proof of its moral fitness and an objective sign of the moral superiority of Judaism. Kohler saw the selection of Jews as the Chosen People as completely analogous to Darwinian selection in the natural world.

5. Mordicai Kaplan’s (1934) highly influential *Judaism as a Civilization* recognizes the ethnic, nationalist aspects of Judaism as historically important in the beliefs and motivations of Jews. However, ethnic aspects are de-emphasized in favor of the much more palatable interpretation of Jewish behavior as a religious, spiritual, and ethical civilization. However, Kaplan explicitly advocates intermarriage and indeed, he views intermarriage as the key to making Judaism tenable within American society. Nevertheless, the achievement of this ethical, spiritual, and religious agenda requires the reconstitution of the Jewish people into an organic community, and, as Woocher (1986, 176) notes, Jewish peoplehood itself achieves religious significance in this formulation. Once again, Jews must retain their distinctiveness from the surrounding culture in order to fulfill their destiny to humanize and civilize all of humanity.

6. Hartung (1995) describes data from 1966 showing that 66 percent of Israeli school-children presented with accounts of the fall of Jericho from Joshua 6:20–21 responded with “total approval” of the genocidal actions described there. Of the remainder, even some of the 8 percent who totally disapproved of the action did so for racist reasons. Almost half the children who “totally approved” Joshua’s actions agreed that similar behavior would be warranted if the contemporary Israelis conquered an Arab village. On the other hand, 75 percent of a control group presented with a passage in which a Chinese general was substituted for Joshua totally disapproved of the genocide.

7. Benjamin was a member of the Frankfurt School of Social Research, discussed extensively in *The Culture of Critique*. Regarding Benjamin’s strong Jewish identity, see Lilla (1995) and Scholem (1965).

8. Novick (1988, 341) attributes the negative view of American populism held by some American Jewish historians (Hofstadter, Bell, Lipset) to the fact that “they were one generation removed from the Eastern European *shtetl* [small Jewish town], where insurgent gentile peasants meant pogrom.”

9. “Even a cursory reading of works in this area, whether popular or academic, reveals great depths of passion and personal involvement” (Sevenster 1975, 9). Regarding the work of J. Isaac (*Genèse de l’Antisémitisme* 1956) Sevenster notes that “sometimes Isaac

gives the impression of representing that ancient pagan anti-Semitism is as unimportant as possible, so that he can let the blame for the later anti-Semitism fall with full force on the Christian Church" (p. 7; see also Simon 1986, 398).

10. Koestler (1971) also wrote *The Case of the Midwife Toad* defending Paul Kammerer who committed suicide in 1926 after some of his specimens purportedly confirming Lamarckian inheritance were shown to have been faked. As discussed in *The Culture of Critique*, many Jewish intellectuals accepted Lamarckian inheritance during this period, quite probably as an aspect of their ethnic agenda.

11. Exaggerations of Jewish losses during the Russian pogroms of 1881 and the extent to which the Russian government was responsible were apparent to contemporaries during the 19th century. Historian Goldwin Smith (1894) noted that a publication distributed by the Jewish community in England in a successful attempt to gain British sympathies contained claims of many atrocities for which there was no evidence. These alleged crimes included roasting infants alive and mass rapes, including some in which Christian women held down Jewesses being raped by Christian men. Regarding property losses (including claims that entire streets had been razed and entire Jewish quarters put to the torch), Smith states that based on reports of British consuls in the area, "though the riots were deplorable and criminal, the Jewish account was in most cases exaggerated, and in some to an extravagant extent. The damage to Jewish property at Odessa, rated in the Jewish account at 1,137,381 roubles, or according to their higher estimates, 3,000,000 roubles, was rated, Consul-General Stanley tells us, by a respectable Jew on the spot at 50,000 roubles, while the Consul-General himself rates it at 20,000" (p. 243).

12. While Jewish culture is viewed as morally and intellectually superior, Faur exhibits extreme hostility to Western culture, seen as fundamentally racist and as intolerant of diversity. An important agenda is to reinforce the sense of Jewish intellectual superiority by attempting to show that Western intellectual movements can be traced to Jewish sources. However, Faur asserts that these intellectual structures then collapse under the criticism emanating from Jewish sources as a result of the persecution of the Jews. In a remarkable example of self-deception, the moral superiority of Judaism is said to result from the greater individual freedom and lack of group identity said to be characteristic of Judaism, in contrast to the corporate character of medieval Christianity. Faur depicts Christianity as fundamentally intolerant, but he develops an elaborate casuistry to justify instances of intolerance among Jews. Faur also provides a highly apologetic attempt to vindicate the morality of Jewish moneylending. Faur is not alone in his apologetic tendencies regarding Jewish moneylending; Stein (1955) refers to a modern Jewish apologetic literature by historians in the area of moneylending to Christians.

13. Similarly, Neuman (1969, II, 120) writes that when Solomon of Montpellier "anathemized the writings of Maimonides, interdicted the sciences and pronounced the sentence of excommunication against those who engaged in the study of profane literature or who treated the Bible allegorically and dealt too freely with the aggadic portions of the Talmud . . . one can see in it the unfortunate Christian influence on Judaism."

14. Despite a nod in the direction of possible genetic and eugenic causes of higher Jewish intelligence, Patai and Patai argue that such causes are "not necessary" (1989, 156), since environmental explanations are available. They take the indefensible view that if environmental influences are possible or are demonstrably of some influence, there is sufficient reason to reject genetic mechanisms completely. When they discuss the

eugenic hypothesis of Jewish intelligence, no mention is made of the central position these practices have had in Jewish religious writings. Eugenic practices are simply noted rather than discussed as a highly conscious effort sustained over many centuries. Thus they hope the reader will conclude that (1) if there are genetic influences, they are either due to gentile evil—the Gentile Selection Hypothesis reviewed in *PTSDA* (Ch. 7), or to a sort of adventitious cultural practice (the eugenic hypothesis); (2) however, since there may be environmental causes of these findings, one can safely ignore genetic hypotheses.

15. Roth's work, published by the University of Wisconsin press, is patently apologetic and has been devastatingly reviewed (see Meyerson 1997). His main strategy is simply to aggressively deny the truth of the accusations of the Inquisition. For example, in recounting a charge based on very detailed statements describing Conversos at a Yom Kippur service, Roth states that "these details, and the fact that the witnesses testified that they did not understand all the prayers, which were in Hebrew, and that they described the prostration which is part of the Yom Kippur service, the wearing of white robes, washing of hands, etc., *might* appear to prove the 'accuracy' of the charges. In fact, of course, all of these charges are patently false and simply derive, again, from Inquisition manuals and general knowledge of the most important of Jewish holidays." Roth repeatedly uses the phrase "of course" and "patently false" to make assertions that are at least open to considerable doubt, as if his views are so obviously true that no one could dispute them. An often-repeated argument is that a certain sameness to the charges made against the Conversos is evidence that the charges are illusory (e.g., p. 248). Roth also states that the testimony of the Converso Pulgar, who asserted that some Conversos secretly observed Jewish rites or practiced a melange of Jewish and Christian rites, is "believable" but then provides no evidence for his assertion that the situation described by Pulgar was unique to Toledo and should not be extrapolated to the rest of Spain (p. 241). Roth also notes without comment that some members of the prominent Coronel family converted to Judaism when they left the Peninsula (p. 130). The suggestion is that while in Spain they were true Christians who just happened to convert to Judaism when they left Spain, and that moreover those members of the family remaining in Spain were true Christians—suggestions that I find difficult to believe.

Roth concludes, "There is no doubt whatever, therefore, that the *overwhelming majority*, nearly all, of these accusations are totally false. Only the extreme bigot, or the most zealous apologist for the conversos, can possibly continue to maintain otherwise" (p. 268). Presumably people who view the Inquisition as at least partially understandable as a medieval response to religious heresy or as resource competition between the Old Christians and New Christians are in the "extreme bigot" category, while historians who accept the reality of crypto-Judaism but view the phenomenon in positive terms would be in the latter category.

Roth almost completely de-emphasizes the continued "groupness" of the Conversos and implies several times that there is no ethnic basis to Judaism or to the Conversos (e.g., p. 272) despite the evidence he provides that they were very concerned to marry each other (p. 70). In this regard, therefore, his work is even more one-sided than Netanyahu's. To Roth, the Jews were a completely religious, non-ethnic entity; they had no group ties that influenced their marriage decisions or economic and political cooperation; and almost all of the Conversos were true Christians.

16. Roth's 1932 book took a highly romanticized view of the Iberian crypto-Jews (see above). However, in the third edition, Roth (1974) argues that the New Christians were sincere in their religious beliefs but emigrated to Protestant lands for economic rather than religious reasons; they then adopted Judaism in their new surroundings for economic reasons. He then proposes (without evidence) that by becoming Jews they avoided isolation in their new surroundings and avoided alienating their new Protestant neighbors because, as Jews, they could not join guilds; or they adopted Judaism purely for intellectual reasons (fulfilling the messianic promise of the Old Testament). This rather incredible view is also found in the introduction to this same book by Salomon (1974).

17. Netanyahu's book has received devastating reviews. Kagan (1995, 16), interprets Netanyahu's passions as a reaction to the Holocaust—an interpretation that is problematic given the apologetic tendencies in Jewish historiography going back to the ancient world but that nevertheless emphasizes the political nature of his writing: "Mr. Netanyahu's expansive, highly personal and emotive style carries us back to another era, to a mode of polemical discourse rarely practiced among professional historians today. More poignantly, this book illustrates the lasting intellectual repercussions of the Holocaust on historical scholarship about the Jews." Another reviewer, Berger (1995, 56) describes the work as "devoid of nuance" in its unitary portrayal of the New Christians, and as reconstructing "motives and intentions through a series of inferences based on slim evidence."

18. Although the opinions of the rabbis cannot decide this crucial question, they are of interest in their own right, since they show considerable concern with the extent to which the New Christians intermarried with the Iberians. Rabbi Simon Duran argued that since the admixture with the gentiles was "insignificant," all those who repent should be considered of Jewish origin" (Netanyahu 1966, 65). Clearly, Duran, writing almost a century after the forced conversions of 1391, did not believe that intermarriage had been extensive. In fact, Netanyahu notes that Duran emphasized the fact that the New Christians kept meticulous records in order to retain family purity by shunning mixed marriages. "The insignificant minority that intermarried with the gentiles is considered by them as an abomination" (in Netanyahu 1966, 65).

Further, the 15th-century rabbi Solomon Duran (Rashbash) and his son Zemah Duran emphasized that an individual with Jewish ancestry (descent from a Jewish mother) was a member of the Jewish people even if that person did not follow religious observance. Later, Rabbi Ibn Danan stated that they should be considered "wicked Israelites," and not gentiles "so long as they are separated from the gentiles and are recognized as the seed of Israel" (Netanyahu 1966, 61). Lineal descent therefore became crucial in the absence of religious observance; while gentile converts could not become priests, New Christians who had repented could do so.

On the other hand, rabbis who rejected the New Christians as Jews emphasized that intermarriage had been significant: Jacob Barav regarded the New Christians as gentiles partly because "intermarriage with gentile women had assumed sufficient proportions among them as to place in doubt the ethnic purity of every single Marrano" (Netanyahu 1966, 70). Significantly, New Christians who had not intermarried were also considered gentiles "except with regard to relations between the sexes" (p. 70).

Thus there was disagreement among the rabbis as to the racial purity of the New Christians. However, racial purity was of supreme importance for all involved in decid-

ing the question. Indeed, Shaw (1991, 47) emphasizes that while the Jewish status of returning New Christians was highly controversial among rabbis in the Ottoman Empire, the criterion adopted by most rabbis was whether both parents had been Jewish. Thus the offspring born to a Jew and a gentile slave were never accepted as Jews, and these individuals formed “a highly disputatious and divisive group demanding their rights and inspiring heated argument in consequence.”

Further attesting to the concern for ethnic purity among the New Christians, Baron (1973, 364) notes that the “the disproportionate share of women among the New Christian martyrs [in the Inquisition in Goa during the 16th century] may have been owing to the anxiety of many Marranos to avoid exogamy, a concern which caused them to travel in family groups, or to have their wives follow them in larger numbers than was the case among their Old Christian compatriots.”

Interestingly, a 17th-century responsum describes a Converso who was encouraged by other Conversos to flee the Peninsula but who refused because he wanted to stay with his Christian wife and children (Yerushalmi 1971, 30). For this individual, the choice of an open Jewish identity in a foreign land meant abandoning his gentile family, since the latter would not have been admitted to the Jewish community. Another 17th-century responsum referred to the practice of ostracizing New Christians who married Old Christians (Yerushalmi 1971, 20n.29).

19. Contraras (1991, 133) notes that despite criticisms of Castro’s thesis, “yet today, when many historians, whether they are Jewish or not, investigate these themes, they arrive at hypotheses quite similar to those formulated earlier by Américo Castro.”

20. A common mechanism for Jews begetting “alien offspring” would have been via gentile slaves. It is interesting that while there is no prohibition against having intercourse with a female slave, Maimonides disapproves of having intercourse with a slave because “it causes a man’s son to depart from following after the Lord, since that bondwoman’s son is likewise a slave, and is not of Israel; the man thus causes the holy seed to become profaned and reduced to slavery” (p. 83). It is interesting that Jews have been greatly concerned to prevent other Jews being enslaved by gentiles. Great efforts were expended to redeem Jews who had been enslaved or captured (see *PTSDA*, Ch. 6); it was a religious obligation to redeem a slave “so that he may not become intermingled with the heathens” (*Code of Maimonides*, Book XII, *The Book of Acquisition*, Slaves, 247). Moreover, priests were obliged to divorce their wives if their wives had been enslaved or taken captive, because of the possibility that they had had sexual relationships with their masters. The law of slavery as presented in Maimonides is an excellent example of ingroup morality as discussed in *PTSDA* (Ch. 5): there are completely separate laws for heathen and Israelite slaves, much to the detriment of the former.

21. In the case of the European nobility there was no similar concern for marriage within the ethnic group. Because of the Church’s rules on consanguineous marriage, the European nobility in the medieval period was forced to search far and wide for permissible partners (MacDonald 1995b; *PTSDA*, Ch. 8).