

“Funny, You Don’t Look Jewish”

Visual Stereotypes and the Making of Modern Jewish Identity

SUSAN A. GLENN

“If you want to compliment a Jew . . . tell him that he does not look like one. What a depth of degradation for a people to have reached,” observed the Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill in 1904.¹ Fifty years later, a popular joke among American Jews reveals the persistent preoccupation with the question of Jewish looks. In the joke, an older woman approaches a “dignified” looking gentleman on the subway and proceeds to unmask what she suspects are his ethnic origins. “Pardon me for asking,” she inquires, “but are you Jewish?” He coldly replies, “No,” he is not Jewish. A few minutes later she asks again. “Are you sure you’re not Jewish?” And he repeats that he is definitely sure. But the woman is not convinced, and she approaches him a third time. “Are you *absolutely* sure you’re not Jewish?” Finally, he breaks down and confesses, “All right, all right, I am Jewish.” “That’s funny,” remarks the woman. “You don’t look Jewish.”²

When sociologists Bernard Rosenberg and Gilbert Shapiro discussed this joke in their 1958 article on ethnic “marginality” and Jewish humor, they used it as an example of the “psychological ambiguity” that was characteristic of modern Jewish self-consciousness. To the sociologists, the joke suggests that although Jews are “quite literally everywhere,” they are often “in disguise” and can be detected “only if one knows the proper signs.”³ But what were “the proper signs,” and why did some Jews feel that it was imperative to know them? One answer of course was virulent antisemitism. Historian Sander L. Gilman suggests that turn-of-the-century European Jews were so fully “fixated” on the idea of their physical visibility that even after they began to “pass” in gentile society, they remained rightly skeptical about their capacity for “invisibility.” Since Jews in Europe were perceived to be a distinctive

and inferior "race," Gilman argues, neither genteel manners nor the alterations of plastic surgery that became available to Jews at the turn of the century could erase the taint of inferiority. The paradoxical effect was that each attempt at Jewish invisibility only created a new "sign of difference."⁴ Nevertheless, as I argue, risk and fear are not the only reasons that Jews have been historically fixated on the issue of bodily difference. Physical self-classification has also played an important part in the assertion of Jewish collective identity. Jews have historically defined the question of *who* is a Jew on the basis of "blood logic." The child of a Jewish mother was and still is "counted" as a Jew, yet the notion of physical difference has also played a part in how Jews have defined "what is to be counted as Jewish."⁵ For American Jews, and perhaps for Jews throughout the Diaspora, the idea of "Jewish looks" has been one of many sources of collective self-definition. Over the course of the twentieth century, notions of Jewish physical difference constituted a major source of anxiety for Jews who wished to normalize their status as Americans and also a central element of modern American Jewish ethnicity. The idea that Jews know what a Jew looks like became more and not less important as Jews gained entry into mainstream American society. Concepts of physical difference—in the case of Jews' facial features and "bodily practices" such as gesture—have not only shaped the history of racial and ethnic persecution, but have also helped Jews define what is "Jewish" and what is not.⁶

To study Jewish engagements with the question of Jewish physical differences is also to reconsider the question of Jews and racial identity in the United States. Historians and anthropologists have documented the process by which Jews—once considered racial others—came to be accepted as "Caucasian" and took their place on the white side of the American color line. But far less attention has been paid to the articulation of Jewish racial self-description, which has less to do with skin color than with the idea of difference itself—seen and unseen. As historian Eric Goldstein has shown, many Jews in the United States were not prepared to accept the "price" of whiteness if it meant the erosion of Jewish group solidarity. So they adopted the vague but emotionally powerful language of "race" to set themselves off from others who were also classified as "Caucasians."⁷ The Jewish discourses on "race" and "looks," while conceptually related, were not one and the

same. While few, if any, twentieth-century American Jewish commentators openly challenged the “blood logic” by which Jews historically defined group membership, the question of whether all or most Jews looked “Jewish” was much harder to resolve. And the very confusion and consternation that this effort produced were themselves important aspects of the way Jews publicly shaped a sense of Jewish group identity.

In this essay, I explore the continuous and shifting conversation about Jewish looks in the United States as it moved among formal social scientific theorizing, popular culture, and kitchen-table gossip. This conversation about looks, this very public effort to puzzle through the issue, is, I argue, one of the formative discourses of American Jewish identity. I am concerned with two related historical patterns and the paradox they produced. The first is the effort of Jews to dispel stereotypes about Jewish looks—not only physiognomy (facial features) but also the claim that “Jewish” postures and gestures were fixed at the level of genetics. The second is the way that Jewish understandings about the quality of looking Jewish and the gestural patterns associated with Jews came to be understood as an aspect of ethnic “authenticity” among Jews.

What interests me is the unresolved tension in secular Jewish public discourse—a tension produced by attempts to erase and the compulsion to acknowledge Jewish physical difference. The tension appears in several locations: folk discourse, popular media, and social science. In what follows, I examine three key periods of public discourse on the idea of Jewish looks. In the first period, from the 1910s through the end of World War II, Jews in the field of anthropology—most notably Franz Boas and his students—attempted to replace biological and moral concepts of Jewish physical difference with cultural and environmental explanations. They argued that there was no uniform Jewish physical “type” since Jews varied from locale to locale as a result of environmental influences. In the second period, roughly from the end of the 1940s through the 1960s, when psychological experts—many of whom were Jews—took over the field of anti-race science, Jewish and non-Jewish psychologists would make even bolder claims, insisting not only that Jews were virtually indistinguishable from non-Jews but that anyone who believed otherwise was probably racist at

best and, at worst, a proto-fascist. Fittingly, this was also a time when Jews were engaging in ever more deliberate attempts to conceal or minimize externally visible signs of ethnic difference, as both name changing and plastic surgery became common practices. During this same period, psychologists also began to consider the possibility that for Jews, the idea of "Jewish looks" had positive social value because it served as a physical common denominator that symbolized their distinctive group identity. In the third period, roughly from the 1970s to the present, when Jews found greater social acceptance and when groups promoting racial and ethnic pride began to dominate American cultural politics, the idea of "Jewish looks" reemerged in Jewish public discourse as a key signifier of ethnic authenticity. With a few exceptions, the tensions and transitions in social scientific and popular discourse remain largely unanalyzed by scholars; this essay is an occasion to revisit those issues.

Jewish Looks as an Anthropological Paradox

In the late nineteenth century Jewish anthropologists and physicians challenged antisemitic ideology about the diseased body and mind of the Jew. Yet as historian Mitchell B. Hart has shown, rather than abandon the idea of Jewish physical difference, the Jewish nationalists among them emphasized the positive value of an identifiable Jewish face as a symbol of ethnic unity and racial purity.⁸ Contrary to what the enemies of the Jews suggested, the appearance of "Jewish" features even in the children of mixed marriages signified "the superior tenacity" of the Jewish "racial type."⁹

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, however, Jewish social scientists increasingly insisted on the changeability of Jewish features. Cosmopolitan Jewish scientists, most famously, Franz Boas, a Columbia University anthropologist, and pioneering environmentalist Maurice Fishberg promoted Jewish assimilation by stressing the physical variety and plasticity of Jews. Both argued that the more Jews mixed in culturally, socially, and biologically with the surrounding non-Jewish population, the less "Jewish" they looked. To refute the most popular antisemitic stereotype—the idea of the "hooked" Jewish nose, which externalized the supposedly evil nature of the Jewish

character—Fishberg conducted his own visual ethnographies among Jews living in New York City, Western Europe, and North Africa. The most prevalent type of nose among Jews is not hooked but “straight, or Greek,” according to Fishberg, and, more important, he claimed that “it is not the body which marks the Jew; it is his soul.”¹⁰ Centuries of confinement in the ghetto, social ostracism, and persecution helped produce a characteristic psychic quality that manifests in the Jew’s “melancholy, thoughtful, piercing eyes.”¹¹ The cure, argued Fishberg, was assimilation, since “the peculiar Jewish expression disappears in Jews who have been out of the Ghetto for a few generations.”¹² In simultaneously verifying the idea that Jews looked Jewish and challenging the notion that Jewish looks were immutable, Fishberg produced a paradox that would continue to haunt liberal anthropology for the next forty years.

Although Boas, an immigrant from Germany, eschewed psychological explanations for differences among groups and races, he was equally committed to proving what he called the “instability of human types.”¹³ Boas was a physical anthropologist who cultivated a stance of cosmopolitanism and scientific detachment and insisted on being known as a German rather than a Jew, but he also worked hard to combat the biological determinism that undergirded anti-semitism, arguing that Jewish physical difference was a product of culture and environment, not genetic destiny. In 1912, in the context of growing calls for immigration restriction by eugenicists and others who believed that Jews could not assimilate, Boas published a study designed to prove that the physical traits associated with various groups and races were not fixed at the level of biology but responded to new environmental conditions.¹⁴

The triumph of eugenic thinking and the ominous implications of Nazi racial ideology in the late 1920s and early 1930s deeply disturbed Boas, and he used “every resource he could muster” to combat racialist thought.¹⁵ Yet that project, especially as it pertained to the issue of Jewish looks, was fraught with paradox. Like Boas, most of his Jewish graduate students were secular modernists who wrote about other “others” (such as Native Americans and Africans).¹⁶ However, some of these scholars also took an interest in the issue of Jewish race and the question of Jewish looks. In doing so, they both encountered

and produced contradictions. One such scholar was Alexander Goldenweiser, a Russian Jewish immigrant, who begins his 1927 article "The Jewish Face" with the observation that one thing Jews and anti-semites had in common was their certainty that "you can always tell a Jew." Although his purpose was to argue that Jewish looks and mannerisms "are not in-born but acquired, not biological but cultural," he clings to the notion that the Jew possesses a distinctive "physiognomy" characterized by his "hunched nose, the mobility of his face, his hair . . . the fact that he uses his hands . . . as a major means of conversation."¹⁷ Two decades later, when social scientific attacks on biological determinism and race science had reached their peak in the aftermath of the Holocaust, another former Boas student, the famous physical anthropologist M. F. Ashley Montagu, used almost identical language. In the 1946 volume of *The Jewish People: Past and Present*, Montagu insists that it is impossible to describe a universal "Jewish type." But then he concedes that "there undoubtedly exists a certain quality of looking Jewish," due to "certain culturally acquired habits of expression: facial, vocal, muscular, and mental," traits that may gradually disappear over generations in individuals who abandon Jewish culture.¹⁸

The work of the Jewish Boasians was clearly a refutation of the Nazis and other racist ideologues, who held that both looks and gestures were fixed at the level of the genes. Rabid nationalists and xenophobes on both sides of the Atlantic posited that Jewish behavior was governed entirely by genetics; hence Jews were incapable of becoming anything other than "Jews" and thus posed a threat to the cohesiveness of national culture. Yet even those Jewish social scientists who attempted to repudiate genetic explanations for the gestural repertoire of Eastern European Jews vividly described the ability to pick out Jews on the basis of their peculiar and easily identified bodily movements. The most famous was Boas's student, the Argentine-born Jewish anthropologist David Efron. In the mid-1930s Efron began a study that he and Boas hoped would provide the empirical evidence to refute the Nazi scientists who insisted that the peculiar gestural habits of the Jews were an inherited and immutable aspect of their "psycho-racial traits." Working in partnership with New York illustrator and muralist Stuyvesant Van Veen, Efron analyzed sketches and moving pictures of the body language of some twenty-eight hundred Eastern



The distinctive physical gestures of “ghetto” Jews in New York were illustrated by Stuyvesant Van Veen for David Efron’s study, *Gesture and Environment* (New York: King’s Crown Press, 1941). These are examples of what Efron described as the “gestural promiscuity” of Eastern European Jews, who touched, grabbed, and poked their conversational partners.

European Jewish and southern Italian subjects. His intention was to show that assimilated Jews and Italians resembled one another to a far greater extent than they resembled the members of their “traditional” group.¹⁹

Published in 1941 under the title *Gesture and Environment*, Efron’s book documented the differing gestural and postural repertoires of “traditional,” “semi-assimilated,” and “assimilated” individuals.²⁰ This project, which began as an attempt to refute the Nazi racialist claims, eventually took on a life of its own. In studying gesture from a cultural rather than a biological standpoint, Efron ended up amplifying rather than downplaying the issue of whether Jews looked Jewish. The pages of Efron’s book are filled with passages describing the characteristic postural “slump” and “turtle-like” head movements of the typical ghetto Jew.²¹ He provides elaborate detail on the “comic character” and “frequent puppetlike” movements of gesticulating ghetto Jews and attributes these to the “almost spasmodic” changes in speed within a single “gesture-pattern.”²² And he writes at length of the

“gestural promiscuity” of Eastern European Jewish men who could not converse without touching, grabbing, and poking their conversational partners.²³ Sometimes this took the form of “gestural fencing,” whereby two Jewish men “clamped” on to each other’s hands or coat lapels and fought out the battle “by means of head motions only.”²⁴ The most extreme display involved a conversation in which “the two interlocutors were enthusiastically talking and gesturing at the same time” and one of the speakers “not only grasped the arm of his impatient opponent, but actually gestured with it!”²⁵

Jews don’t look Jewish, but yes they do. The contradictions in the self-representations of Jews in anthropology in part reflected the ambivalent position of second-generation American Jews who were steeped in but struggling to distance themselves from traditional Jewish life. Immigrants and children of immigrants, they had learned to distinguish and perhaps to appreciate the sights and sounds of Jewish difference and to decipher the faces and gestures that separated the unassimilated Jewish “them” from the assimilated, cosmopolitan “us.”²⁶ More emphatic in rejecting notions of Jewish physical and gestural difference was anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits. In his 1949 essay “Who Are the Jews?” he emphasized both the physical heterogeneity and the diverse historical experiences of Jews, concluding that although “stereotypes die hard,” there were no typical “Jewish” characteristics.²⁷

This conclusion emerged in part out of experiments Herskovits and Boas had conducted a decade earlier, experiments designed to demonstrate that “Jewish” looks were largely in the eye of the beholder. In the mid-1930s, against the backdrop of the intensifying Nazi threat, Boas had designed a bold classroom experiment “intended,” in his words, “to show how far it is possible, for an *inexperienced* observer, to determine the race of an individual from a general impression.”²⁸ During the first week of class, each student, identified only by a number, stood before his fellow students, who wrote down “what they thought his origin to be, their degree of certainty in drawing this judgment, and why they classified him as they did.” In one of Boas’s experiments 40 percent of students tested at a New York college mistook Italians for Jews, and equal numbers thought Jews were Italians.²⁹ Herskovits duplicated this experiment at Northwestern University, where the majority of

the student body came from Northern European backgrounds and had little familiarity with people of “Mediterranean stock.” There the non-Jewish students mistook dark-haired gentiles for Jews and lumped the blond Jews in with the Northern European groups.³⁰ Moreover, their “Midwestern judgment,” led these students to classify one another simply as “American.”³¹

Although the social scientists used their authority as scholars to challenge racist stereotypes of Jews as biologically immutable and inferior, Jewish social scientific writings on Jewish looks were never fully consistent with their public agendas to deracinate and thus to “normalize” the Jewish image. The same could be said of literary and cinematic texts of the wartime and postwar eras that attempted, not always successfully, to challenge the idea that Jews bore a distinctive physical cast. Arthur Miller’s 1945 novel *Focus* showed how easily a gentile could be mistaken for a Jew. Laura Z. Hobson’s best-selling 1946 novel, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, which was made into an Academy Award-winning film the following year, explored the phenomenon of passing and attempted to invalidate the idea of “Jewish” looks. The plot of Hobson’s novel and the film revolves around a handsome gentile journalist called Phil Green who decides to pass as a Jew in order to write about how Jews experience antisemitism. Because he is new in town and nobody knows his actual background, Phil reasons that all he has to do to convey that he is “Jewish” is to just “say” that he is. In a critical scene, Phil calculates his chances of passing as a Jew by measuring his own physical characteristics against the stereotypes associated with Jewish looks. Phil was tall and lanky, his “nose was straight,” and therefore he “didn’t look Jewish,” but neither did “a hell of a lot of guys who were Jewish,” including his best friend, Dave. Phil “had no accent or mannerisms that were Jewish,” and therefore he did not “sound Jewish,” but “neither did a lot of Jews.” Further scrutinizing his own features, Phil excitedly concludes that, with his “dark eyes, dark hair,” and “a kind of sensitive look,” pretending to “be Jewish” for six weeks ought to be “a cinch.”³²

The intended message here is that gentiles can pass themselves off as Jews because not all Jews look “Jewish.” However, it does not hurt his chances that Phil has dark features and brooding looks (as opposed to blond hair and blue eyes). Conversely, Hobson’s novel suggested that Jews with certain stereotypically gentile features and a willingness to

change their Jewish-sounding names could easily pass as Wasps (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Phil's secretary at a New York publishing house successfully passes as gentile because she is blond, and "Scandinavian" looking, and because she has changed her name from Walovsky to Wales.³³ Waspish good looks and a name change also enable journalist Rick Dohen (formerly Richard Cohen) to pass as a gentile, allowing him to join "the best clubs, *The Social Register*, the whole routine."³⁴ Here Hobson comments negatively on what had become a widespread practice of attempting to conceal ethnoreligious origins behind a more neutral sounding moniker. Just a few years after the publication of Hobson's book, one researcher, who analyzed the patterns of name changing in the 1940s and 1950s, estimated that of the approximately fifty thousand people who applied to state courts to change their names, around 80 percent were Jews, more than half of whom were trying to adopt more "gentile"-sounding names.³⁵

To blend in, Jewish men changed their names; Jewish women changed their noses. As Gilman observed, it was no accident that the most significant increase in nasal plastic surgery began in the 1940s, a time when it became increasingly dangerous to be seen as a Jew.³⁶ In the 1940s and 1950s, more than half of those seeking rhinoplasties in the United States were Jews, most of them female adolescents hoping to attain a more "normal" American appearance without abandoning their Jewish identity. Non-Jewish women also had rhinoplasties to avoid being categorized as Jewish. And the trend continued over the next several decades.³⁷ By changing "the contour of their noses," observed anthropologist Frances M. Cooke Macgregor in a 1953 study of motivations for plastic surgery, they hoped to escape the stigma of minority group membership and to become "indistinguishable from other [white] Americans."³⁸

In *Gentleman's Agreement*, Hobson insisted that with or without name changes and plastic surgery, most Jews could not be easily distinguished from gentiles. However, like the writings of liberal anthropologists, Hobson's novel both advocated and undercut its own liberal universalism. It said, in effect, that there is no universal Jewish type. It maintained that because Jews and gentiles can and do share many of the same physical traits, they can physically pass, undetected, into each other's social milieu. At the same time, it verified that there was indeed some "quality

of looking Jewish.” For example, in an unguarded moment in the novel (but not in the film), Phil begins to study Dave’s face, asking himself, “Does Dave look Jewish?” Phil confesses, “Yes, he supposed he did, now that he asked it.” He could find nothing obviously Jewish about Dave, “no hint of hook or curve” in Dave’s “short,” even “stubby,” nose. “Yet if you thought, you’d know this man was Jewish. It was there somewhere,” perhaps, he speculated, “in the indented arcs of the nostrils,” the “turn of the lips,” or “the quiet eyes.” No matter, Phil abruptly reminds himself: “It was such a damn strong good face.”³⁹

However, not every Jewish face in the novel qualified as “damn strong good.” The phrasing itself suggests as much. The figure of Professor Joe Lieberman, a world-famous physicist, possesses “the face of a Jew in a Nazi cartoon, the beaked nose, the blue jowls, and the curling black hair.”⁴⁰ Yet it is this “Jewish”-looking Jew who adamantly adopts the stance of scientific universalism. “I have no religion, so I am not Jewish by religion,” he announces to Phil. As a scientist, he knows that “there’s no such thing as a distinct Jewish race” and “not even such a thing, anthropologically, as the Jewish type.” Joking about his new “crusade” to prove the point, the professor tells Phil, “I will go forth and state flatly, ‘I am not a Jew.’” “With this face,” he concedes, “that becomes not an evasion but a new principle. A scientific principle.”⁴¹ As cultural historian Matthew Frye Jacobson points out, the “new principle” proposed by Professor Lieberman is not the same as the new principle proposed by the author of *Gentleman’s Agreement*. In Hobson’s story as in Miller’s novel *Focus*, characters can “look Jewish” without being Jewish and “be Jewish” without looking Jewish. Yet both arguments are premised on the idea that “there is in fact such a thing as ‘looking Jewish,’” an idea that Hobson validates in Professor Lieberman’s unmistakably “Jewish” face.⁴²

Seeing Jews: “Bigotry” or Cultural “Survival”?

In the decade after World War II popular understandings about Jewish racial difference persisted in spite of or, as one Jewish sociologist suggested, perhaps even because of the anti-race scientists’ “incessant concentration” on the question of group differences. That was the view of Melvin J. Tumin, who wrote in a 1949 essay that while science “emphatically denies the popular notion of race,” the public was still

more inclined to trust the "clear-cut evidence" of their own "senses," which told them that "it is often possible to tell a Jew from a Gentile, just by looking at him."⁴³

Such attitudes prevailed despite changes in the bodies, gestures, and outward appearance of Jews in the United States that would differentiate them from their European ancestors. Some of this was the result of changes in diet, dress, and cultural conditioning. Some of it was accomplished through plastic surgery. If Jews looked more "American" in 1949 and 1950 than they had in earlier decades, what then did it mean for American society, and for Jews, that many people continued to believe that one could "sense" who was a Jew, on the basis of looks? Was this necessarily a negative or a dangerous sensibility? Could it have some practical or valid purpose? These were questions that engaged the social psychologists who took over the field of anti-race science in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their debates are especially fascinating not only because they reveal the shifting paradigms within the sciences about the social meanings of physical difference, but also because popular Jewish attitudes about what makes Jews "Jewish" were also in turmoil. Ironically, even as the Boasians proved to be correct in their predictions that Jews would eventually become less easy to identify on the basis of looks, the postwar psychologists began to analyze why "Jewish" looks mattered both to Jews and to non-Jews. Rather than dismiss the notion that Jews looked Jewish, they began to take seriously the emotional underpinnings of racial and ethnic self-perception.

Initially, psychologists were determined to prove that seeing Jews was a figment of the bigot's imagination. Postwar psychological experts such as Gordon W. Allport designed "racial awareness" experiments that would demonstrate once and for all that physical differences between Jews and non-Jews were so minor and undetectable that the average well-adjusted individual would fail to detect them. Their experiments are revealing, not for what they prove or disprove about the psychological dispositions of the participants who saw or failed to see Jewish physical difference, but, rather, because they perpetuated both the question and the confusion about Jewish looks.

In keeping with postwar challenges to fascist and authoritarian ideological systems, psychologists incorporated new theoretical work

on the so-called authoritarian personality into their examinations of the relationship between extreme bigotry and racial perception. Unlike the “tolerant” and “unprejudiced” personality, psychologist Else Frenkel-Brunswik suggested, the “totalitarian personality” displayed “overly rigid” defense mechanisms—which manifested in a tendency to see the world in terms of absolute categories of good and evil and the need to make “conformity” an “all or nothing affair.”⁴⁴ Beginning in the late 1940s psychologists adopted Theodor W. Adorno’s “F[ascist]-scale” (a diagnostic instrument used to measure what Adorno called “the authoritarian syndrome”) to experiments testing the “racial awareness” of prejudiced and unprejudiced individuals. In 1946, for example, Allport and Bernard M. Kramer tested the ability of Harvard and Radcliffe students to identify Jewish faces in photographs. They found that students who scored high on the F-scale because of their strong prejudices against Jews, blacks, and Catholics also tended to judge more faces as “Jewish” than did less prejudiced students. They also found that the students with the highest degree of antisemitic prejudice also tended to be the most accurate in their selection of Jewish faces. The authors hypothesized that “the bigot apparently learns to observe and interpret both facial features and expressive behavior so that he can more swiftly spot his ‘enemy.’”⁴⁵ Although the test was designed to demonstrate that Jewish looks were a cultural myth, it actually verified the notion of Jewish physical difference. While the relatively unprejudiced individuals had failed to learn or detect the outward signs of Jewish difference, the bigots had become connoisseurs.⁴⁶

The behavior of Jews who participated as “judges” in these racial awareness experiments created the greatest interpretive challenge for psychologists trying to gauge the relationship between perception and racial bigotry. In some experiments, Jewish judges proved to be what one study called “unexpectedly incompetent” in identifying Jewish faces; however, in others they demonstrated extreme tendency to see Jewish faces. A good deal of hand-wringing ensued about the significance of these contradictory findings. Psychologist Hans H. Toch and his colleagues speculated that the allegedly “incompetent” Jews had strong egalitarian feelings and may have considered it an “affront” to be asked to distinguish “physiognomic differences” among Jews and

non-Jews.⁴⁷ Others suggested that assimilation had eroded their ability to detect their coreligionists by sight. One psychologist noted that when asked to judge photographs, young American-born Jews "hesitated at length, often made mistakes, and not infrequently insisted that the very division between Jewish and non-Jewish faces was a figment of the imagination."⁴⁸

Equally controversial, but for different reasons, was the behavior of Jews who proved especially competent in picking out Jewish faces. For example, in 1957, in an experiment using photographs, social psychologists Alvin Scodel and Harvey Austrin found that Jews taking the test judged more faces to be "Jewish" than all of the non-Jewish judges did.⁴⁹ The authors concluded that all Jews (and not just those who scored high on the F-scale) had picked out more Jewish faces because they had accepted the majority group's negative stereotypes of Jewish facial traits. As a consequence, Jews who may have felt anxious about being seen as Jewish had developed a "disposition" toward visual hypervigilance because they felt their own "security" as Americans would be "enhanced by this type of projective assimilation."⁵⁰

Other psychologists came to the opposite conclusion about Jewish accuracy. They argued that Jews had learned to tell the difference between the faces of Jews and non-Jews not only because of their greater level of social experience with Jews, but also because of the ethnic "survival value" of knowing how to make such distinctions. This was a position argued by Toch and endorsed by Polish-born psychologist Leibush Lehrer, who insisted that the "easy recognizability of the Jew" on the basis of physical traits, facial expressions, and gestures "fulfilled a major function in internal Jewish life" because it provided the Jew with "a sense of kinship and strengthened his sense of security."⁵¹ Lehrer's experiments, conducted in the late 1940s and early 1950s, led him to conclude that Eastern European-born Jewish participants more readily identified Jewish faces and seemed perfectly comfortable in being asked to make such distinctions because they had a stronger sense of "Jewish belongingness" than their American-born counterparts.⁵² In Lehrer's view, loss of Jewish knowledge about Jewish physical difference posed a threat to ethnic continuity.

Lehrer's perspective represented an important shift in Jewish public discourse about the question of Jewish looks. He and some of his

contemporaries provided the first attempts to theorize the larger significance of the Jewish folk practice of visually distinguishing Jews and non-Jews on the basis of presumed physical differences. Unlike the Boasian anthropologists who had tried to universalize Jews, the psychologists examined the question of looks from the point of view of Jewish emotions and emphasized the Jewish need to see Jews as an aspect of ethnic identity. In the late 1940s, Los Angeles psychoanalyst Anton Lourie argued that the “uncontrolled loud voices and . . . vehement gesticulations” of traditional Jews were important aspects of what Jews considered authentic Jewishness. He believed that “deep in their hearts, traditional Jews are proud of their emotionalism; they identify it with warmth and naturalness and consider it a necessary attribute of the genuine Jew.”⁵³ Terms such as “genuine Jew” and “authentic Jew” were themselves highly polemical categories among Jews in postwar America. Frequently deployed in intra-Jewish debates about promoting group “survival” and the proper and legitimate way of being Jewish in America, these terms pitted community leaders who demanded group loyalty against self-styled “free thinking” intellectuals who insisted upon individual rather than collective definitions of Jewishness.⁵⁴

Modern Rituals of Jewish Visual Connoisseurship

Despite their theoretical and ideological differences, social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s agreed upon one thing: whether or not gentiles viewed Jews as marked by physical differences, Jews themselves not only believed in the concept of “Jewish looks” but attached significant positive and negative social meaning to the notion. The social scientists who analyzed jokes such as “Funny, You Don’t Look Jewish” viewed this humor as reflecting the anxieties of assimilation. “The mannered punchline” of Jewish identity jokes, Rosenberg and Shapiro suggested in their 1958 article on humor and ethnic marginality, “demonstrates that the leopard’s spots remain unchanged.” They argued that jokes such as this one helped mediate the conflict between assimilation and “traditional loyalty” by conveying the idea that “Jewish identification is permanent” even for converts, because for Jews “the real unalterable self remains intact.”⁵⁵ To the antisemite, the “secret Jew” posed a

threat, observed Rosenberg and Shapiro. To assimilating Jews, he was a potential ally, who held out the possibility of "mutual support" in the Jewish "fight for survival" as a distinctive group.⁵⁶

For Jews in the postwar decades, the various versions of "Funny, You Don't Look Jewish" worked both as a cautionary tale about the taboos of passing for gentile and as a meditation on the growing importance of Jewish visual connoisseurship to the development and maintenance of an ethnic Jewish identity. In each of the midcentury versions of the joke, a "persistent" woman variously described as an "old lady," a "lady," or a woman with a Jewish-sounding name such as "Mrs. Moskowitz" or "Sarah Finkel" represents the authentic or more traditional Jew. The younger well-dressed male she encounters on a train, a bus, or a subway symbolizes the assimilated Jew whose hidden ethnic identity she seeks to unmask. He is variously described as "distinguished looking," "handsome looking," "cultured," or "blond, blue-eyed"—all synonyms meant to suggest that he is a successful individual who could physically pass for a gentile. Her task in each case is to use her Jewish powers of visual discernment to properly guess his true ethnicity and then to force him to confess it in front of a social audience.⁵⁷ Although the joke suggests that *looking* Jewish and *being* Jewish may or may not be one and the same, it simultaneously reinforces the Jewish folk belief that "you can always tell a Jew" just by looking at him.⁵⁸ For Jews, in other words, Jewishness can be read on the body.

Jewish rituals of visual connoisseurship were not new in the postwar era, but they took on new meaning as Jews began to assimilate culturally and geographically.⁵⁹ As American Jews continued to move out of their immigrant ghetto communities into the wider American society, often by relocating to the suburbs, and as intermarriage was increasingly perceived as a threat to a stable Jewish community, developing a "visual epistemology" that allowed them to divide the world into "genuine" Jewish looks, surgically altered "Jewish" looks, and non-Jewish looks gained a new urgency. In the early twentieth century, Jews may have taken for granted their ability to sort out the members of their own so-called tribe, but by the late 1950s and 1960s, as looks and social locations had changed, the practice took on a new urgency.⁶⁰

These visual games were accompanied by what anthropologists in

the 1970s called the rituals of Jewish “ethnic signaling”—whereby Jews peppered conversations with Jewish colloquialisms and incorporated Jewish gestures into social interactions to determine if a stranger, perhaps with a Waspish-sounding name or “Nordic” looks, would positively respond to the ritual cues of a fellow Jew.⁶¹ “How to Tell a Jew,” an article published in the 1986 newsletter of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, summed up the pattern by concluding that the best way to tell who is a Jew “is if he is looking for other Jews.”⁶² “Jews are excellent cryptographers,” remarks another writer, a young Jewish woman who was interviewing subjects for a story on the same theme almost fifteen years later. She wondered about why “we spend our days proffering and receiving a vast melange of shibboleths as a way of announcing our existence to one another, but not to the rest of the world,” and interviewed a man who told her confidently: “If I meet a woman with Jewish looks. . . . If she’s got the nose, her name is Rachel, and she’s from Long Island, you’ve got a 90% chance [that she is Jewish].”⁶³ Thus looking and seeing “Jewish” was itself a form of Jewish identity.

By the 1970s, when the ethnic pride and feminist movements made physical “difference” a symbol of identity politics, “Jewish looks,” became a highly politicized issue as women were urged to “take back their noses and their names” in a rebellion against the Wasp standards of physical attractiveness.⁶⁴ In the late 1970s, for example, Berkeley psychotherapist Judith Weinstein Klein tried to “heal the wounds” of “Jewish self-hatred” by conducting “ethnotherapy” workshops where women and men were encouraged to value rather than to disdain physical qualities associated with Jewish looks.⁶⁵ For some, flaunting Jewishness—whether culturally or physically—became a badge of ethnic pride. It also became a source of intra-ethnic connection. “I liked being marked that way,” writer Lisa Jervis says of her “Jewish” nose; it made her “instantly recognizable to anyone who knew how to look.”⁶⁶

Postmodern Jewish artists, many of them influenced by feminist and gay subcultures, have been especially confrontational in their presentation of images associated with stereotypical Jewish faces, often by “exaggerat[ing] the exaggeratedness of the rude stereotype.”⁶⁷ In the catalogue for the deliberately controversial 1996 art installation “Too

Jewish?" at the Jewish Museum in New York City, curator Norman Kleeblatt explained that the work of several artists who played with stereotypes of "the Jewish nose" confronted the social pressure "to negate or eradicate" images of Jewish difference.⁶⁸ No stereotype received as much attention from Jewish artists in this show as the "Jewish nose" did. Creating a parody of the classificatory systems of racial science, artist Dennis Kardon made and painted forty-nine sculptures of the noses of Jewish artists, curators, and collectors and labeled them with the names of his models. Adam Rolston produced a series of highly technical drawings depicting the surgical procedures of rhinoplasty.⁶⁹ An attempt to explore how Jews have been represented in American popular culture and how they represent themselves, the "Too Jewish?" exhibit used parody and humor to reiterate and then to critique physical stereotypes of Jews. In doing so, argues art historian Carol Ockman, the artists in this show were "calling bigotry's bluff in order to expose it as reductive." Equally important, the "Too Jewish?" show demonstrated what Ockman labeled as "the mired relationship between identity and stereotype."⁷⁰ Yet to dismiss Jewish engagements with stereotypes of Jewish physical difference as "mired" or to equate them, as some have, with "Jewish self-hatred" is to ignore a more complex and contradictory set of meanings that American Jews have attached to the idea of "looking Jewish."⁷¹

Take the example of *Heeb*—a contemporary magazine that encourages ethnic pride among young readers, in part by claiming as "Jewish" unconventional images and individuals on the margins of Jewish (and gentile) society, from punk rockers to pimps, from queers to tattoo artists.⁷² *Heeb* traffics in Jewish insider-knowledge, playing with well-worn stereotypes not only to debunk them but for their nostalgic effect. In "The Goy Issue" (one of a series of themed issues), an advertisement for the magazine used "before" and "after" photographs of a silhouetted young woman that completely reversed normative expectations about the desirability of Jewish versus gentile looks. The "before" photograph had a somber-looking young woman with a small, upturned nose (presumably the result of rhinoplasty), while the "after" photograph showed the same woman with a large (presumably "Jewish") nose and a happy smile on her face. The caption read: "Be the way you want to be. Heebmagazine.com."⁷³

The recent coinage of the term “Jewdar” (a variant of the term *gaydar*) suggests that “Jewish looks” remain a salient aspect of Jewish self-definition.⁷⁴ According to one “urban dictionary,” this word implies that Jews have a visual radar that enables them to pick out other Jews in a crowd, even those who do not conform in any obvious way to stereotypes of the Jew.⁷⁵ Illustrating this idea in a piece of autobiographical self-confession, Jewish writer Baz Dreisinger discusses Jewdaring as a “favorite mall sport.” She and her sister, a recent graduate from a yeshiva high school, have devised a list of “unofficial rules and regulations” for the game they call “Spot the Jew”: “A sampling: Jewish = frizz; Goyish = the glossy stuff of Pantene commercials. Jewish = long skirt with sneakers; Goyish = Juicy sweat suit. Jewish = breast reduction; Goyish = breast implants. Jewish = bumpy nose; Goyish = button nose. Jewish = five-foot-seven for men; Goyish = five-foot-seven for women.” Dreisinger, who insists that the “essence of my Jewish identity . . . lies in my [ample] breasts,” which were “handed down to me from my maternal grandmother,” speculates that the “insuppressible nature” of “Jewishness” is having something that is “out-of-proportion”: “something that maybe sticks out a bit too much, is too dark, hairy, bulbous, or bulging—something you long ago pinpointed which marks you as a Jew . . . or some highly inconvenient feature you’re vastly relieved you don’t have.”⁷⁶

Yet as the controversy surrounding a now-famous comedy sketch on the long-running television show *Saturday Night Live* attests, these rituals of Jewish life have different implications when played out on a larger American public stage. Brandon Tartikoff, the former head of NBC entertainment, recalled that no comedy sketch caused him as much “grief” as the “Jew / Not-a-Jew” game show, written by Al Franken and aired in 1988.⁷⁷ In the sketch, emcee Bob Tomkins (played by Tom Hanks) shows the two pairs of contestants—the Knutsons and the Johnsons—photographs of famous people and asks them to guess if the person is Jewish. Before the game begins, Hanks interrogates the couples about their own ethnic and religious lineage. When the dark-haired Greg Knutson says that he is Swedish and Lutheran, Hanks replies, “Gee, I thought all Swedes were blond.” His wife, Deborah, announces that she is “hard-core Protestant.” The Johnsons proclaim, “We’re both Wasps.” When the first photograph

on the screen shows the blond actress Penny Marshall, the Knutsons debate for a few seconds and then decide to go for "Jew." Wrong, corrects Hanks, she's really Italian Catholic. The last photograph belongs to the former mayor of New York City, Ed Koch. And with no debate, the Johnsons immediately identify him as a Jew. Ironically, even those Jews who complained that the sketch was antisemitic acknowledged that privately they also played the game. Tartikoff's mother reportedly expressed her distress over the airing of the sketch on national television, but then added: "Besides . . . I always thought Penny Marshall was Jewish."⁷⁸ Likewise, a representative from the Anti-Defamation League who contacted Franken in response to complaints about the sketch explained that he personally understood the humor because "he did the same thing in his house. . . . tried to figure out which of the performers on TV was Jewish."⁷⁹

Rather than deny the idea that Jews look "Jewish," social critics in the contemporary period have come to terms with how real and imagined physical differences both mark Jews as stereotypically other and serve as symbols in a shared ethnic identity. Jews have been deeply invested in the idea of their own physical difference, but the terms of that engagement have shifted over time in response to both external and internal pressures. Whether trying to prove to racists and xenophobes that Jews would eventually cease to look stereotypically "Jewish," or seeking plastic surgery to normalize their appearance, or playing the game of visual connoisseurship, American Jews have acknowledged and even embraced physical difference as an aspect of what makes Jews "Jewish." In a society that now mainly classifies Jews as "white" and "Euro-American" and in an era where many people who call themselves "Jews" have no tangible connection to religious institutions or organized ethnic community life, games like "Spot the Jew" and the centuries-old practice of "Jewhooring"—the naming and claiming of Jews by other Jews on the basis of biological descent—are part of the secular rituals that help maintain a sense of uniqueness and historical connectedness among Jews.⁸⁰

Jewdaring, like Jewhooring, has a continuous but changing history, a history that has been shaped and mediated by secular institutions, at least some of which have been devoted to disproving the idea of Jewish physical difference. This essay suggests that the more than cen-

ture-long Jewish fixation on the idea of Jewish looks was not simply a result of internalized stereotyping. The continuous but shifting discourse on the question of whether Jews look “Jewish” was both a product of social scientific inquiry and a manifestation of the struggle over Jewish ethnic self-definition in an era when Jews began to enter “white” society on an equal footing for the first time. A central irony of Jewish self-definition has been the tribalistic perspective of a group that has also been committed to the idea of liberal universalism. Jews have defined themselves tribalistically, relying upon the concepts of ancestry, descent, physical difference, and historical memory as the basis of belonging and obligation. But Jews have also played a pivotal role in the development of institutions and ideas that have championed the value of universalism and cosmopolitanism: social sciences such as anthropology and psychology, the publishing industry, the arts, literature, and Hollywood. These secular institutions promoted the idea of universal commonality among human beings of different backgrounds and races. Paradoxically, they also helped legitimate the social practices through which Jews would attempt to maintain primordial concepts of Jewish identity. “Funny, you don’t look Jewish” plays on both sides of the divide, invoking both universalism and tribalism in an anxious ritual of Jewish connoisseurship.

Notes

1. Quoted in Maurice Fishberg, *The Jews: A Study in Race and Environment* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 178. See also John Efron, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), 97–98.

2. This version of the joke appears in Bernard Rosenberg and Gilbert Shapiro, “Marginality and Jewish Humor,” *Midstream* 4, no. 2 (1958): 70.

3. *Ibid.*, 77–78.

4. Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 192, 193, 236. For other perspectives on the “problem of the body” in Jewish history, see Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, ed., *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

5. I borrow the who/what framework from Virginia Dominguez. Although she does not address the issue of looks or phenotype, she offers a compelling analysis of the practice and significance of ethnic group self-classification. See Dominguez, *People as Subject, People as Object: Selfhood and Peoplehood in*

Contemporary Israel (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 3–20, 128, 190–91. On Jews and blood logic, see Susan A. Glenn, “In the Blood? Consent, Descent, and the Ironies of Jewish Identity,” *Jewish Social Studies* 8, nos. 2–3 (2002): 139–52.

6. Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (New York: Sage, 2004), 135. Paul Connerton discusses the importance of “bodily practices” to the shaping of cultural memory and group identity in *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–4, 72–75, 79–82, 104; quotation on 104. Anthropologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett remarks that studies of embodied notions of Jewishness have provoked considerable anxiety in the Jewish Studies field, where the traditional emphasis has been the study of texts and ideas. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Corporeal Turn,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 95, no. 3 (2005): 447–61.

7. On the process by which Jews attained white racial status, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998). On Jewish racial self-description, see Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

8. Mitchell B. Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 176–79, 181–91; Hart, “Racial Science, Social Science, and the Politics of Assimilation,” in *Science, Race, and Ethnicity: Readings from Isis and Osiris*, ed. John P. Jackson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 99–128; Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 7–8, 63–65, 81–90.

9. Fishberg, *The Jews*, 102, 220. For further discussion of nationalist uses of photography, see Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity*, 181–91. In the 1917 study *The Jewish Child*, W. M. Feldman presented a photographic genealogy to show that the mating of racially pure Jews with Jewish “hybrids” (children of Jewish and gentile parents) produced offspring who were just as likely to be “Jewish-looking” as “non-Jewish looking.” W. M. Feldman, *The Jewish Child: Its History, Folklore, Biology, and Sociology* (London: Bailière, Tindall and Cox, 1917).

10. Fishberg, *The Jews*, 79, 165.

11. *Ibid.*, 169.

12. *Ibid.*, 171.

13. See Leonard B. Glick, “Types Distinct from Our Own: Franz Boas on Jewish Identity and Assimilation,” *American Anthropologist* 84, no. 3 (1982): 545–65.

14. See Melville J. Herskovits, “Franz Boas as Physical Anthropologist,” in *Franz Boas, 1858–1942*, ed. A. L. Kroeber et al., *American Anthropologist*, n.s., 45, no. 3 (1943): 43–49; and Gelya Frank, “Melville J. Herskovits on the African and Jewish Diasporas,” *Identities* 8, no. 2 (2001): 177–79.

15. Herskovits, "Franz Boas as Physical Anthropologist," 45.

16. The most comprehensive study of the Jewish Boasian anthropologists is Karen Ann Russell King, "Surviving Modernity: Jewishness, Fieldwork, and the Roots of American Anthropology in the Twentieth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2000).

17. Alexander Goldenweiser, "The Jewish Face," *Reflex*, October 1927, 10.

18. M. F. Ashley Montagu, "Race Theory in the Light of Modern Science," in *The Jewish People: Past and Present* (New York: Jewish Encyclopedic Handbooks, Central Yiddish Culture Organization, 1946), 1:8.

19. David Efron, *Gesture and Environment: A Tentative Study of Some of the Spatio-temporal and "Linguistic" Aspects of the Gestural Behavior of Eastern Jews and Southern Italians in New York City, Living under Similar as Well as Different Environmental Conditions* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941), 1-4, 40-42. On the origins of the study, see the collection background description in the David Efron Gesture Research Collection, Stuyvesant Van Veen Illustrations (1930-40), National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. See also "Interview with Stuyvesant Van Veen" by Emily Nathan, May 5, 1981, in the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett ("Corporeal Turn," 456) describes Efron's book as "the richest account ever of the gesture system of East European Jews."

20. Efron, *Gesture and Environment*, 40-42, 130-31.

21. *Ibid.*, 56. The Jewish "slump" when sitting and the "stooped posture" of standing Jews are described in David Efron, "Some Observations on the Conversational Bodily Postures of 'Traditional' and 'Assimilated' Jews and Southern Italians in New York City," typed manuscript, in David Efron Gesture Research Collection. Along with this original manuscript, the collection contains extensive study notes and numerous illustrations.

22. Efron, *Gesture and Environment*, 61.

23. *Ibid.*, 64-65, 123, fig. 21. See also Anton Lourie, "The Jew as Psychological Type," *American Imago* 6 (June 1949): 123-25, 144-45.

24. Efron, *Gesture and Environment*, 65.

25. *Ibid.* (italics in original); see also 143, fig. 19.

26. This was not unique to Jews and in fact may be characteristic of all minority groups and all multicultural societies.

27. Melville J. Herskovits, "Who Are the Jews?" in *The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), 2:1166-67.

28. Franz Boas to Melville J. Herskovits, September 12, 1934 (italics added), Professional Correspondence of Franz Boas, microfilm reel 37, University of Washington Library, Seattle (hereafter cited as Boas Correspondence). Originals are located in the library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

29. Herskovits, "Who Are the Jews," 2:1167-68.

30. *Ibid.*, 2:1168.

31. On the “American” look, see Herskovits to Boas, October 24, 1934, Boas Correspondence, microfilm reel 34. On mistaking Jews and non-Jews at Northwestern, see Herskovits, “Who Are the Jews,” 2:1168. None of these experimental studies was ever published, and Herskovits makes only brief references to them in “Who Are the Jews.” Herskovits’s lecture notes from Boas’s 1922 course on Anthropological Methods contain detailed discussion on the question of “what makes for change” in the physical characteristics of humans. See especially the notes from November 22, 1922, box 164, folder 1, Herskovits Papers, Northwestern University. I am grateful to anthropologist Kevin Yelvington for sharing copies of Herskovits’s methods notes with me.

32. Laura Z. Hobson, *Gentleman’s Agreement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946; New York: Dell, 1962), 63–64. Citations are to the 1962 edition.

33. *Ibid.*, 96–97.

34. *Ibid.*, 196–97.

35. J. Alvin Kugelmass, “Name-Changing—and What It Gets You: Twenty-five Who Did It,” *Commentary* 14 (August, 1952): 145–50; Werner Cohn, “The Name Changers,” *Jewish Digest* 30 (September 1984): 16–22.

36. Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 193.

37. *Ibid.*; Elizabeth Haiken, *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 184–89, 192–93; Richard B. Aronsohn and Richard A. Epstein, *The Miracle of Cosmetic Plastic Surgery* (Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1970), 37.

38. Frances M. Cooke Macgregor, *Facial Deformities and Plastic Surgery: A Psycho-social Study* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1953), 66.

39. Hobson, *Gentleman’s Agreement*, 125 (*italics in original*).

40. *Ibid.*, 117.

41. *Ibid.*, 199. See also Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 130–31.

42. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 196.

43. Melvin J. Tumin, “The Idea of ‘Race’ Dies Hard,” *Commentary* 8 (July 1949): 81.

44. Else Frenkel-Brunswik, “Summary of Interview Results,” in *The Authoritarian Personality*, by Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford (New York: Harper, 1950), 281–86.

45. Gordon W. Allport and Bernard M. Kramer, “Some Roots of Prejudice,” *Journal of Psychology* 22 (July 1946): 17. See also Gardner Lindzey and Saul Rogolsky, “Prejudice and Identification of Minority Group Membership,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 45, no. 1 (1950): 37–53. Several other studies found little or no relationship between antisemitic attitudes and ability to identify Jews in photographs. See, e.g., Donald N. Elliott and Bernard H. Wittenberg, “Accuracy of Identification of Jewish and Non-

Jewish Photographs," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 51, no. 2 (1955): 339–41; Launor F. Carter, "The Identification of 'Racial' Membership," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 43, no. 3 (1948): 279–86.

46. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), 119–20.

47. Hans H. Toch, Albert I. Rabin, and Donald M. Wilkins, "Factors Entering into Ethnic Identifications: An Experimental Study," *Sociometry* 25 (September 1962): 298, 299.

48. Leibush Lehrer, "Jewish Belongingness of Jewish Youth," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 9 (1954): 137, 139; quotation on 139.

49. Alvin Scodel and Harvey Austrin, "The Perception of Jewish Photographs by Non-Jews and Jews," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 54, no. 2 (1957): 279.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Toch, Rabin, and Wilkins, "Ethnic Identifications," 298; Lehrer, "Jewish Belongingness," 161–62.

52. Lehrer, "Jewish Belongingness," 137, 139–40. See also Lehrer, "The Dynamic Role of Jewish Symbols in the Psychology of the Jewish Child in America," *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 6 (1951): 72. On Lehrer's background and career, see Milton R. Konvitz, "YIVO Comes to Morningside," *Commentary* 3 (January 1947): 53–54.

53. Lourie, "The Jew as Psychological Type," 125, 144.

54. See Susan A. Glenn, "The Vogue of Jewish Self-Hatred in Post-World War II America," *Jewish Social Studies* 12, no. 3 (2006): 95–136.

55. Rosenberg and Shapiro, "Marginality and Jewish Humor," 72.

56. *Ibid.*, 78.

57. The various collected versions can be found in Richard Raskin, *Life Is Like a Glass of Tea: Studies of Classic Jewish Jokes* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1992), 213–15. See also William Novak and Moshe Waldocks, eds., *The Big Book of Jewish Humor* (New York: HarperCollins, 1981), 7.

58. Novak and Waldocks, *Big Book of Jewish Humor*, 7.

59. Historian Aviva Ben-Ur describes how Ashkenazim in early twentieth-century New York City often misrecognized Sephardic Jews, mistaking them for non-Jewish immigrants from the Mediterranean and Middle East. See Ben-Ur, "Funny, You Don't Look Jewish! 'Passing' and the Elasticity of Ethnic Identity among Levantine Sephardic Immigrants in Early Twentieth Century America," *Kolor* (Brussels), no. 2 (November 2002): 9–18.

60. Martin S. Jaffee, "Jewish Radar: A Superannuated Technology" (unpublished manuscript, in the author's possession, 2007). Jaffee uses the term "visual epistemology" to discuss the radar he developed to tell Jews apart from Italians and other non-Jewish ethnics in his Long Island suburb in the 1950s. See also Jaffee, *The End of Jewish Radar: Snapshots of a Post-ethnic American Judaism* (2009), <http://www.iuniverse.com> (accessed August 28, 2009).

Nancy K. Miller comments on how the "Funny, You Don't Look Jewish" joke played out in her family's anxieties over the issue of intermarriage with gentiles. See Miller, "Hadassah Arms," in *People of the Book: Thirty Jewish Scholars Reflect on Their Jewish Identity*, ed. Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky and Sheller Fisher Fishkin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 154–56.

61. Leon Plotnicov and Myrna Silverman, "Jewish Ethnic Signalling: Social Bonding in Contemporary American Society," *Ethnology* 17, no. 4 (1978): 414. See also Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 101, 114. Citations are to the 1986 edition.

62. Robert Sloan, "How to Tell a Jew," *Keeping Posted* 31, no. 5 (1986): 13–15.

63. Tilia Klebenov, "Chai There: Subtle Ways Jews Tell Other Jews They're Jewish," *Jewish Magazine* 29 (February 2000), <http://www.jewishmag.com/29mag/chai/chai.htm> (accessed June 17, 2005). Others reported the anxiety of being misrecognized by Jews because they lacked the stereotypic traits associated with Jews. See Laurel Richardson, "Looking Jewish," *Qualitative Inquiry* 9, no. 5 (2003): 815–21; Daria Vaisman, "My Life as a Shiksa Jew," *Jewish Student Press Service*, June 9, 2005, <http://www.shmoozenet.com/jsps/stories/0998Daria.shtml> (accessed June 17, 2005); Susan Schnur, "As an Adopted Child, All I Wanted Was Real Jewish Hair," *Lilith* 20, no. 1 (1995): 15.

64. Miller, "Hadassah Arms," 161, 166.

65. Judith Weinstein Klein, *Jewish Identity and Self-Esteem: Healing Wounds through Ethnotherapy* (New York: Institute on Pluralism and Group Identity, American Jewish Committee, 1980), 18–19; quotation on 24.

66. Lisa Jervis, "My Jewish Nose," in *Adiós Barbie: Young Women Write about Body Image and Identity*, ed. Ophira Edut (Seattle: Seal Press, 1998), 66.

67. The phrase in quotation marks is one I borrow from Naomi B. Sokoloff, "Jewish Character? Stereotype and Identity in Fiction from Israel by Aharon Appelfeld and Sayed Kashua," in this volume.

68. Norman Kleeblatt, "'Passing' into Multiculturalism," in *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities*, ed. Norman Kleeblatt (New York: Jewish Museum; New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 8. Contemporary Jewish cartoonists have also flaunted the "too Jewish" body. See Andrea Most, "Re-imagining the Jew's Body: From Self-Loathing to 'Grepts,'" in *You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture*, ed. Vincent Brook (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

69. Kleeblatt, "'Passing' into Multiculturalism," 10–11, 13.

70. Carol Ockman, "'Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities': Jewish Museum," *ArtForum* 35, no. 1 (1996): 106.

71. Following the lead of Gilman, Elliott Horowitz suggested that the exhibit was meant to explore "an internal category of Jewish self-hatred." See Horowitz, "Too Jewish? And Other Jewish Questions: A Review Essay," *Modern Judaism* 19, no. 2 (1999): 195–206.

72. My thanks to Sarah Lindsley for sharing her astute observations on Heeb's engagement with the outrageous and unconventional.

73. Rebecca Weiner, "In the Beginning," in "The Goy Issue," Heeb 15 (Winter 2007): 6. The before/after images follow on 74.

74. Joseph Epstein, "Funny, but I Do Look Jewish: The Photos of Frédéric Brenner's 'Diaspora,'" *Weekly Standard* 9, no. 14 (2003), <http://www.weeklystandard.com> (accessed June 17, 2005).

75. *Urban Dictionary*, s.v. "Jewdar," <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=jewdar> (accessed June 17, 2005).

76. Baz Dreisinger, "Spot the Jew," in *The Modern Jewish Girl's Guide to Guilt*, ed. Ruth Andrew Ellison (New York: Dutton, 2005), 173–75 (italics in original).

77. Quoted in David Zurawik, *The Jews of Prime Time* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England/Brandeis University Press, 2003), 2. *Saturday Night Live*, season 14, episode no. 247, first broadcast October 8, 1988, by NBC; the sketch is also available on *Saturday Night Live: The Best of Tom Hanks*, DVD (Santa Monica, Calif.: Lions Gate Entertainment, NBC Universal, 2005).

78. Quoted in Zurawik, *The Jews of Prime Time*, 3.

79. *Ibid.*

80. On "Jewhooping," see Glenn, "In the Blood."