

Ochoa conducted fieldwork in Venezuela during 2002-2003, a period of political crisis and conflict over Chávez's "Bolivarian Revolution" that threatened to cancel the annual Miss Venezuela pageant. But if Venezuelans' attention has shifted toward the traditional realm of politics, Ochoa presents a case that marginal populations—as they "[make] survival out of impossibilities" (p. 245)—both expose the contradictions of modernity in Venezuela (and beyond) and invent political possibilities for change. *Queen for a Day* makes important contributions to our understanding of how colonial legacies at the local, national, and international levels—along with contemporary mass media and other technologies—shape cultural politics and the possibilities for change in our post-modern, global world.

Susan Besse *City College of New York and the Graduate Center, CUNY*

ALEJANDRO DUJOVNE: *Una historia del libro judío: La cultura judía argentina a través de sus editores, libreros, traductores, imprentas y bibliotecas.* Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2014.

Years ago, Alejandro Dujovne found himself in possession of a box full of Yiddish books, given to him by a Jewish couple from a small town in the Argentine province of Córdoba. The books became the starting point for a doctoral dissertation and resulted in the work we are reviewing. This story is not purely anecdotal. It shows that a book itself is actually a riddle hiding the processes and conditions that allowed it to exist and circulate.

In the absence of both previous research on the history of the Jewish book in Argentina and relevant databases, Dujovne had to uncover appropriate sources on the basis of heterogeneous archival resources. The meticulous reconstruction of catalogues and trajectories remains one of the most impressive contributions of this book.

From a theoretical perspective, this work has important precedents in the fields of the history and sociology of book publishing, both throughout the world and in Argentina. The articulation of these fields with that of Jewish studies results in an original depiction of 20th-century Argentine Jewish culture through the lens of Jewish book publication. This analysis permits the recovery of actors' trajectories and voices largely forgotten by historiography.

Dujovne states clearly that the production and circulation of Jewish books in Argentina must be understood within a transnational perspective, and that language is essential to understanding the logic of the world of Jewish books.

Therefore, the introductory chapter helps the reader situate the object of study within the larger picture.

Transnational geography is concretely reflected in the case of Yiddish book publishing in Buenos Aires, as analyzed in the second chapter. Buenos Aires remained a secondary center of Jewish publishing until after the Second World War. With the disappearance of Eastern European publishing centers as a consequence of the Holocaust, Buenos Aires became a new center of Yiddish publishing, importing texts and exporting books throughout the Americas and beyond. Polish-born cultural activists such as Samuel Rollansky and Mark Turkow are central to understanding the rise of Buenos Aires as a new publishing center.

A key concept pervades the book: the catalogue as “the first expression of a political, cultural and/or commercial project of a publishing house” (p. 201). Indeed, every catalogue promoted different images, values and ideas of Jews and Jewish culture. Book catalogues of pioneer Jewish publishing ventures in Spanish (1919-1938), studied in the third chapter, show how a new literary corpus of works was introduced into the Spanish language through the act of translation. This period was marked by a liberal integrationist ideology, embodied in the figures of publishers Manuel Gleizer, Salomon Resnick and other founding members of the *Sociedad Hebraica Argentina*. “Jewish books” or “books of Jewish interest” dating from this period aimed at legitimizing the Jewish presence in the country and simultaneously sought to transmit Jewish culture to coming generations.

The changing historical scenario of the thirties brought transformations as well in the definition of the function of the book. Indeed, the period treated in the fourth chapter (1938-1974) was profoundly marked by the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. The five main publishing houses of Jewish books in Spanish founded in this period (Israel, Sigal, Acervo Cultural, Candelabro and Yehuda) were private undertakings intimately linked to the political and cultural motivations of each publisher. Analysis of the catalogues shows a shift toward the topics of Jewish national character, the new Jewish State, and tradition.

However, a fragment of Editorial Israel’s catalogue is transcribed and analyzed in detail in the fifth chapter, in relation to the trajectories of its two publishers, José Mirelman and Máximo Yagupsky. The fruitful methodology displayed in this chapter illuminates how these two unique personal stories led to particular decisions determining the catalogue’s final form.

All the above is enriched in the sixth chapter, offering a very original analysis of the space in which the book’s cultural universe was rooted. The reconstruction of this universe incorporates other crucial mediating institutions, such as bookstores, Jewish public libraries, and printers, and all the social actors mak-

ing up this micro-universe. Locating dozens of institutions linked to the Jewish book on a city map, Dujovne observes that they all coexisted within a range of a few blocks in the neighborhood of Once, the very nodal point of the Jewish presence in Buenos Aires.

The importance of the multiple mediators' roles is illustrated by the analysis of Jewish Book Month in the seventh chapter. This yearly book fair, a central event in Jewish life for two decades starting in 1947, showed the extent to which availability and consumption of books were promoted by the *Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina*. Moreover, the AMIA effectively decided what could be considered a "Jewish book" and what should remain outside this definition.

The author reminds us in the end that Argentine Jews' great willingness to invest in the book was a direct function of their viewing it as a vehicle for embodying and disseminating political and cultural values. A final rhetorical question posed by Dujovne—whether this statement would still be valid today—warns us about the precariousness of Jewish cultural life in Argentina today, and the subsidiary place granted to culture as opposed to entertainment.

Alejandro Dujovne's book came out in 2014, the same year as Emmanuel Kahan's *Recuerdos que mienten un poco. Vida y memoria de la experiencia judía durante la última dictadura militar*. Both publications received honorable mention in the most recent book competition of the Latin American Jewish Studies Association. This cannot be considered mere coincidence. Thanks to Dujovne's methodological approach, we can conclude that the geographical locus of Jewish studies is widening, and that Buenos Aires is in the process of becoming an internationally recognized center for innovative academic production within this field.

Malena Chinski

Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento

SEBASTIÁN CARASSAI: *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence and Memory in the Seventies*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.

Sebastián Carassai's *The Argentine Silent Majority* is an insightful account of the attitudes, perceptions and forms of self-understanding held by the Argentine middle classes with respect to the social and political environment of the 1970s. Through an examination of what he calls "middle class sensibilities," the author develops a multi-layered analysis of the middle classes as a ubiquitous (and yet always difficult to grasp) political subject. He explores the sources of alleged