Sherman Conversations 2017 'Gender and Jewish Studies'

Monday 4 September 2017; 10.00 – 17.00

University of Manchester Graduate Centre, Ellen Wilkinson Building, conference room C1.18

Theme: Five decades of gender-sensitive research and teaching in Jewish Studies

Focus: achievements, challenges, changes over five decades and future outlook; personal and public significance within academy, community and wider society.

Programme

9.30-10.00	*Registration and Refreshments*
10.00	Welcome and Introduction
10.10	Interview Judith Baskin, Respondent 1 and discussion
11.30	Refreshments
12.00	Ruth Gilbert, Respondent 2 and discussion
12.50	Lunch
13.50	Lisa Fishbayn Joffe, Respondent 3 and discussion
14.45	Melissa Raphael, Respondent 4 and discussion
15.35	Refreshments
16.00	Final session: Four main speakers' reflections on the conversations and plenary discussion
17.00	Thanks and End.

Panellist biographies

Judith Baskin, who received her Ph.D. from Yale University, recently retired as the Philip H. Knight Professor of Humanities at the University of Oregon. A past president of the Association for Jewish Studies (2004-06), her books include Pharaoh's Counsellors: Job, Jethro, and Balaam in Rabbinic and Patristic Tradition (1983), Midrashic Women: Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature (2002), and the edited collections Jewish Women in Historical Perspective (2nd Edition, 1998), Women of the Word: Jewish Women and Jewish Writing, and The Cambridge Dictionary of Judaism and Jewish Culture (2011). Professor Baskin also co-edited Gender and Jewish Studies: A Curriculum Guide (1994) with Shelly Tenenbaum, and The Cambridge Guide to Jewish Religion, History, and Culture (2010) a National Jewish Book Award winner, with Kenneth Seeskin. As an associate editor of the 2nd edition of the Encyclopedia Judaica (2006), she added two hundred new and revised entries on women and gender.

Ruth Gilbert is Reader in English Literature at the University of Winchester. She has published a number of articles on contemporary British-Jewish writing and is author of Writing Jewish: Contemporary British Jewish Literature (Palgrave, 2013). She is co-convenor of BJCC (British Jewish Contemporary Cultures), an interdisciplinary research network. Current projects include research into Irish-Jewish literature and a book about Jewish ghosts.

Dr. Lisa Fishbayn Joffe is Director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Brandeis University. The mission of the HBI is to support the study of Jews and gender. At HBI, she founded the Project on Gender, Culture, Religion and the Law that explores the tension between women's equality claims and religious laws. She is the author of Gender, Religion and Family Law: Theorizing Conflicts Between Women's Rights and Cultural Traditions (2012); The Polygamy Question (2015); Women's Rights and Religious Law, (2016) and the guest editor of a special issue of Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues on New Historical and Legal Perspectives on Jewish Divorce (Volume 31, 2017). She is co-editor of the Brandeis University Press Series on Gender, Culture, Religion and the Law and is a co-founder of the Boston Agunah Task Force, devoted to research, education and advocacy for women under Jewish family law. She holds three law degrees, from Osgoode Hall Law School and Harvard Law School, served as law clerk to Justice Iacobucci of the Supreme Court of Canada, and was called to the bar of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Melissa Raphael is Professor of Jewish Theology at the University of Gloucestershire and teaches modern Jewish thought at Leo Baeck College, London. She has delivered the Sherman Lectures in Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester and been the Hussey Lecturer in the Church and the Arts at the University of Oxford and the British Government's delegate to the International Taskforce on Holocaust Remembrance and Research. Professor Raphael is the author of numerous articles and books. Her books include Thealogy and Embodiment: The Post-Patriarchal Reconstruction of Female Sacrality (Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Rudolf Otto and the Concept of Holiness (Oxford University Press, 1997); The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust (Routledge, 2003); Judaism and the Visual Image: A Jewish Theology of Art (Continuum, 2009), and The Feminist Idoloclast: Religion, Women's Liberation and the Becoming of the Self (forthcoming, Routledge, 2018).

Process

Interview (total 1hr 20mins)

Judith Baskin interviewed by Katja Stuerzenhofecker on the day's theme (see overleaf, agreed interview outline); other participants invited to pre-submit questions for JB (via KS). *40 mins.*

Participant reflection and discussion:
1. formal response to interview (based on agreed interview outline) *10 mins*;
2. small groups (see below for composition) *10 mins*;
3. plenary *20 mins*.

Panel discussions

Three panellists: Lisa Fishbayn Joffe (law); Melissa Raphael (theology); Ruth Gilbert (Literary Studies).

Starter paper summaries *10 mins each*. Focus on 'gender and your discipline': achievements, challenges, changes over five decades and future outlook.

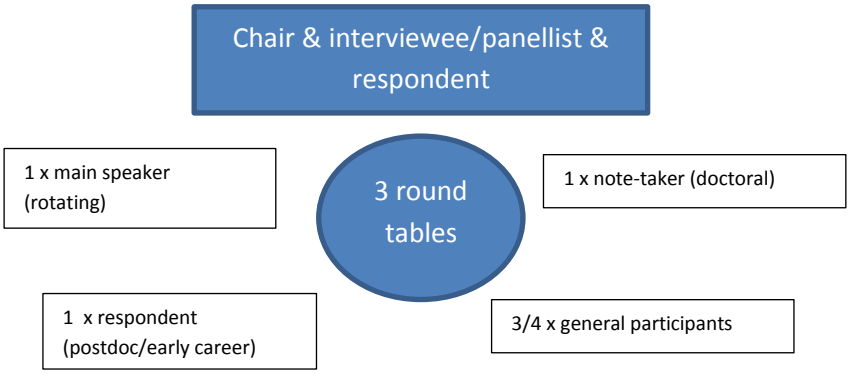
Participant reflection and discussion: formal response to each starter paper *10 mins each*; small groups (see below for composition) *10 mins* and plenary *20 mins each*.

Starter papers available to all participants from late July.

Small group composition (total 3 groups; each group max. 7 members)

One of the four main speakers to join each small group when they are not speaking; rotating through small groups so that each group is joined by all four main speakers for one part of the day.

1 x respondent.

2 x 3 and 1 x 4 general participants (total 10).

1 x note-taker (doctoral) in each small group.