

The Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff
Center for Jewish Studies
University of Maryland

Presents

HEBREW IN THE CRUCIBLE
ISRAEL ZANGWILL'S THE MELTING POT



Hana Wirth-Nesher
Tel Aviv University

Wednesday, September 25, 2013
12:30pm to 2:00pm

3105 Susquehanna Hall (inside International Affairs Room 3101)

Although Israel Zangwill's play *The Melting Pot* popularized the concept of America as a fusion of ethnicities, languages, and religions, little attention is paid to the role of language in the dramatization of this idea, in particular the representation of Hebrew and Yiddish. I will discuss the linguistic dimension of the play in its historical and social context and will examine how the representation of sound (dialect, accent and music) and image (stage props, alphabet, and collective memory) challenge prevailing ideas of the melting pot from a Jewish American perspective.

Prof. Hana Wirth-Nesher occupies the Samuel and Perry Haber Chair on the Study of the Jewish Experience in the United States at Tel Aviv University. She is also a professor of English and American Studies and directs the Goldreich Family Institute for Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture.