

Adi Mahalel

New York City | amahalel@umd.edu

Summary

Columbia University educated Scholar of modern Jewish literatures specializing in Yiddish, Hebrew, and their intersections with European languages. Currently Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland. Author of *The Radical Isaac: I. L. Peretz and the Rise of Jewish Socialism* (SUNY Press) and translator of Hannan Ayalti's *Boom and Chains*, including a scholarly introduction (Wayne State University Press). Teaching focuses on Jewish culture, literature, languages, and film, with an emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and comparative approaches across linguistic and cultural-political contexts.

Education

Ph.D. in Yiddish Studies

May 2014

Columbia University, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, New York, NY

Dissertation: The Radical Period of Hebrew and Yiddish Writer I. L. Peretz

Advisors: Prof. Dan Miron (Hebrew), Prof. Jeremy Dauber (Yiddish)

Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Yiddish Studies

October 2011

Columbia University, New York, NY

Master of Arts (M.A.) in Yiddish Studies

February 2010

Columbia University, New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Joint Degree: Hebrew and Comparative Literature; Ofakim Honors Program

University of Haifa, Israel

June 2007

Academic Appointments

Visiting Assistant Professor of Yiddish Studies

August 2013 – Present

University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- Teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Yiddish language, Ashkenazic culture, and Jewish literature.
- Develop original curricula across a wide range of interdisciplinary topics, including Jewish literature, Yiddish culture, Jewish humor, film studies, and gender and sexuality in Jewish contexts.
- Lead Yiddish language instruction at all levels, using immersive and online pedagogies.

Instructor of Yiddish Literature (in Yiddish), YIVO Intensive Yiddish Summer Program

Summers 2011; 2022–2024

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York, NY

- Designed and taught courses in Intermediate I and II Yiddish Literature.

- Instruction integrated literary texts by male and female, Hassidic and secular, politically diverse, past and contemporary authors from Europe, Israel, and the Americas.

Lecturer, Yiddish Language

Germanics Department, Columbia University, New York, NY

2008 – 2010

- Contributed to development of refreshed interactive curriculum as participant in Columbia Curriculum Committee.
- Taught first-year Yiddish language (Beginner's I and II) in Yiddish, through texts, music, and film. Responsible for planning, lecturing, grading, and instruction in an immersion style program.

Research Assistant

Columbia University, New York, NY

2010-2011

- Researched, analyzed, and synthesized archival source material in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English for Professor Jeremy Dauber's book, *The Worlds of Sholem Aleichem*, (Random House, October 2013).

Publications

Books

Ayalti, Hannan. *Boom and Chains: A Yiddish Novel Set in Israel/Palestine*. Translation and Introduction by Adi Mahalel, Wayne State University Press, forthcoming 2025, <https://wsupress.wayne.edu/9780814351796/>.

The Radical Isaac: I. L. Peretz and the Rise of Jewish Socialism. SUNY Press, 2023, <https://sunypress.edu/Books/T/The-Radical-Isaac>.

Yiddish Idealists in Israel/Palestine: The Story of Two Writers. In development.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

"The Tunnels and Chains in the Hebrew and Yiddish Works of Ayalti." *Jewish Quarterly Review*, forthcoming 2025.

"Jerusalem and Underground: The Reflections of Holiness in Khonen Ayalti's First Yiddish Novel." (in Yiddish) *Jiddistik-Mitteilungen: Jiddistik in deutschsprachigen Ländern*, vol. 72, forthcoming 2024.

"Nit dos dorf nit di kretshme: Jewish Taverns in the Works of Sholem Aleichem." *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*, Summer 2020, <https://ingeveb.org/articles/speaking-about-jewish-taverns-sholem-aleichem>.

"Yiddish Scholarship and Neoconservatism." *AJS Review*, vol. 44, no. 1, Spring 2020, pp. 119-147.

"Revolutionizing the Means of Artistic Production and Radicalizing the Jewish Calendar in the Yontef Bletlekh." (in Hebrew) *Kesher: Journal of Media and Communications History in Israel and the Jewish World*, vol. 48, Summer 2016, pp. 59-64.

"Weaving the Revolution: Peretz the Social Protest Writer." *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*, May 2016, <https://ingeveb.org/articles/weaving-the-revolution-i-l-peretz-the-social-protest-writer>.

"Yiddish, Israel, and the Palestinians in Yosl Birshteyn's 'Between the Olive Trees'." *Israel Studies Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol. 30, no. 2, Winter 2015, pp. 71-91.

“We Will Not Be Silent: I.L. Peretz’s Bontshe the Silent vs. 1950s McCarthyism in America.” *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, vol. 35, no. 2, Fall 2015, pp. 204-230.

Book Chapters

“To Be a Fighter with Both Fists!': Peretz as a Radical Hebrew Writer.” In *The Trilingual Literature of Polish Jews from Different Perspectives: In Memory of I.L. Peretz*, edited by Alina Molisak and Shoshana Ronen, 2017, pp. 284-297.

“I. L. Peretz’s ‘In Postvogn’: Imagining the Jewish Woman and Creating a New Path for Yiddish Literature.” (Hebrew) *Peretz Book*, forthcoming.

Book Reviews

Review of Horizons Blossom, Borders Vanish: Anarchism and Yiddish Literature by Anna Elena Torres, In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies, October 2024: <https://ingeveb.org/articles/horizons-blossom>.

Review of Zionism and Melancholy: The Short Life of Israel Zarchi by Nitzan Lebovic, Israel Studies Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal, Spring 2021.

Review of Yiddish in Israel: A History by Rachel Rojanski, Israel Studies Review: An Interdisciplinary Journal, vol. 35, no. 3, Winter 2020.

Review of The Stage as a Temporary Home: On Dzigan and Schumacher’s Theater (1927-1980) by Diego Rotman, East European Jewish Affairs, Spring 2020.

Review of Hasidism Incarnate: Hasidism, Christianity, and the Construction of Modern Judaism by Shaul Magid, Identities: Journal for Jewish Culture and Identity, vol. 8, 2017.

“Yiddish Culture Peaked After 1945.” (in Hebrew) Review of Survivors and Exiles: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust by Jan Schwarz, Haaretz, 7 Aug. 2016, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/study/.premium-1.3024925>.

Review of Survivors and Exiles: Yiddish Culture after the Holocaust by Jan Schwarz, Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies, vol. 34, no. 2, Spring 2016, pp. 128-130.

“Crossovers: The Hasidic Master and the Jewish Jesus.” Review of Hasidism Incarnate: Hasidism, Christianity, and the Construction of Modern Judaism by Shaul Magid, H-Net Reviews, Sept. 2015, <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=43201>.

Additional Publications

"Peretz, Isaac Leib (Yitskhok Leybush)". *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception Online*, edited by Constance M. Furey, Peter Gemeinhardt, Joel Marcus LeMon, Thomas Chr. Römer, Jens Schröter, Barry Dov Walfish and Eric Ziolkowski. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2024.

Regular Contributor. *Yiddish Forward*, 2011-2024, in Yiddish <https://forward.com/authors/%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%99-%D7%9E%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%9C/> . Access additional contributions at <https://yiddish2.forward.com/taxonomy/term/7329ba9.html?page=3> , <https://yiddish.forward.com/authors/%D7%A2%D7%93%D7%99-%D7%9E%D7%94%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%9C/index.html> , in English: <https://forward.com/authors/adi-mahale/> .

The Journalist Warrior, Yitzhak Luden.” (in Yiddish) *Afn Shvel: Social-Literary Journal*, vol. 372-373, 2016, pp. 46-49.

“I. L. Peretz,” “S.Y. Abramovitch,” and “Yiddish Literature 1864-1939.” Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism, May 2016.

“Between Shavit and Omar in 2014.” (in Yiddish) *Lebns Fragn: A Socialist Monthly-Journal for Politics, Society, and Culture*, vol. 735-736, May-June 2014, pp. 19-20, www.lebnsfragn.com/bin/articles.cgi?ID=1412.

“Did Godot Expect the Jewish Mother-Tongue?” (in Yiddish) *Lebns Fragn: A Socialist Monthly-Journal for Politics, Society, and Culture*, vol. 731-732, Nov.-Dec. 2013, pp. 10-11, www.lebnsfragn.com/bin/articles.cgi?ID=1356.

“Kadia Molodowsky's Poetry About the Pogrom in Brisk.” (in Yiddish) *Lebns Fragn: A Socialist Monthly-Journal for Politics, Society, and Culture*, vol. 729-730, Aug.-Sept. 2013, pp. 15-17, www.lebnsfragn.com/bin/articles.cgi?ID=1331.

“Concerning Leyb Teller's Two Sorts of Textual Testimonies of the Pogrom in Brisk.” (in Yiddish) *Lebns Fragn: A Socialist Monthly-Journal for Politics, Society, and Culture*, vol. 723-724, Mar.-Apr. 2013, pp. 17-19, www.lebnsfragn.com/bin/articles.cgi?ID=1288.

“The War with the Jews That Still Is Not Over: A Look at Yosl Birshteyn’s ‘Between the Olive Trees’ and Its Broader Political Context.” (in Yiddish) *Afn Shvel: Social-Literary Journal*, vol. 356-357, Summer-Fall 2012, pp. 28-35.

“Divided Workers Burn Cold.” (in Yiddish) *Gilgulim: Yiddish Literary Magazine*, vol. 3, Spring 2012, pp. 52-53.

Translations

“About the Holy City and the Sinful Man.” Introduction and translation of an excerpt from the novel ‘Boom’ and *Chains* by Khonen Klenbort (Kh. Yalti), Yiddish to English, *Yiddish Book Center*, June 2023, www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/yiddish-translation/about-holy-city-and-sinful-man.

“Between the Olive Trees.” Translation of Yosl Birshteyn’s story, Yiddish to Hebrew, *Where the Sky and the Sea Meet: Israeli Yiddish Stories*, edited by Shachar Pinsker, Magnes Press, 2023, pp. 17–23, <https://iberzets.org/art-translation/%d7%a6%d7%95%d7%95%d7%99%d7%a9%d7%9f-%d7%90%d7%99%d7%99%d7%9c%d7%91%d7%a2%d7%a8%d7%98%d7%9f/>

“Qibya.” Introduction and translation of Yankev Glatshteyn’s poem, Yiddish to Hebrew, *Iberzets: Hamakom shel Yiddish Be’ivrit*, March 2023, <https://iberzets.org/art-translation/%d7%a7%d7%99%d7%91%d7%99%d7%90%d6%b7-2/>

“My Only Son.” Introduction and translation of Moyshe-Leyb Halpern’s poem, Yiddish to Hebrew, *Haaretz*, 13 June 2016, www.haaretz.co.il/literature/poetry/.premium-1.2972499.

“Qibya.” Introduction and translation of Yankev Glatshteyn’s poem, Yiddish to English, *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*, Feb. 2016, <https://ingeveb.org/texts-and-translations/qibya>

“Between the Olive Trees.” Translation of Yosl Birshteyn’s story, Yiddish to English, *Metamorphoses: Journal of the Five-College Seminar on Literary Translation*, vol. 23, no. 1, Spring 2015, pp. 27–33.

“Between Evening and Morning Prayers.” Translation of Lili Maylat’s story, Hebrew to Yiddish, *Afn Shvel: Social-Literary Journal*, vols. 364–365, Summer–Autumn 2014, pp. 38–40.

Research Interests

- Modern Yiddish and Hebrew literatures, with a focus on politics and cultural identity in Ashkenazic communities.
 - Intersection of modern literatures with cinema and visual culture, particularly in relation to representations of identity.
 - Gender and sexuality in Jewish literature and media.
 - Translation studies, particularly Yiddish to Hebrew/English and Hebrew to Yiddish.
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Selected Conference Presentations and Invited Talks

- “Yerusholaim un untergrunt: Di opshpiglungen fun heylikayt in Khonen Ayalti’s ershtn roman.” (in Yiddish) 27th Symposium for Yiddish Studies in Germany, Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf (2024), and (in English) at Weltliteratur: Contemporary Readings of a Contested Concept, Katholische Akademie Berlin (2023).
- “The Tunnels and Chains in the Hebrew and Yiddish Works of Ayalti.” Invited Talk, at The University of Texas (2022), the World Union of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem (2022), and BIAJS Annual Conference, London (2022).
- “The Radical Peretz: Voyages of a Yiddish Intellectual.” Invited Talk, LMU München (2018), and at Tradition and the Avant-garde: Trilingual Literature of Polish Jews, 100th Anniversary of I. L. Peretz’s Death, Warsaw (2015).
- “Neoconservative Yiddish Scholarship.” At MLA Annual Conference, New York (2018), AJS 48th Annual Conference, San Diego (2016), and Yiddish Scholarship in Past and Present, Jerusalem (2015).
- “The Tavern in the Works of Sholem Aleichem: A Place for Just Bohemians and ‘Goyim’?” *Sholem Aleichem 1916-2016: Writing Place*, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, May 2016.
- “Revolutionizing the Means of Production and Radicalizing the Jewish Calendar in Peretz’s Yontef Bletlekh.” *I. L. Peretz and His Circle*, Warsaw-Zamość, Sept. 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--CcEns2hss>.
- “Between Liberal Satire and Socialist Roots: I. L. Peretz’s Hasidic Creations of the 1890s.” AJS 46th Annual Conference, Baltimore, Dec. 2014.
- “Heine’s Political Influence on I. L. Peretz.” The Xth Congress of the EAJS 2014, Paris, July 2014.
- “Beating Their Heads Against the Wall: I. L. Peretz Satires in Hebrew and in Yiddish against the Choveve Zion.” AIS 30th Annual International Conference, Sede-Boqer, June 2014.
- “The Socialist Yiddish Poetry of I. L. Peretz.” AJS 45th Annual Conference, Boston, Dec. 2013.
- “Ambiguous Relations: I. L. Peretz and the Hebrew New Wave.” The Sixteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, July 2013.
- “A Skeptical Mystical: I. L. Peretz’s Two 1897 Takes on the Revolution.” AJS 44th Annual Conference, Chicago, Dec. 2012.

“The War with The Jews That Had Not Yet Ended: Yossel Birstein’s Israeli Yiddish Story ‘Between the Olive Trees’ and Its Broader Political Context.” (in Yiddish) at XV. Symposium für Jiddische Studien in Deutschland, Universität Düsseldorf, Germany (2012), (in English) at AIS 28th Annual International Conference, University of Haifa, Israel (2012), and (in Yiddish) at YIVO Yiddish Language Seminars (2012).

“Between Liberal Satire and Socialist Roots: Peretz’s Hasidic Creations of the 1890s.” *Jewish Spirituality in Eastern Europe — A Textual Perspective*, University College London, England, June 2012, <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/jewish-spirituality/abstracts/liberal/>.

“In Postvagon: Imagining the National-Feminist and Creating a New Path for Yiddish Literature.” *The New Colloquium*, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Israel, June 2012.

“The World of Sholem Aleichem... But What Would It Be Without Peretz? ‘Bontshe the Silent’ on the English-American Stage and Screen.” Symposium International Yiddish Theater Festival, Segal Center, Montreal, June 2011.

“Eyn pogrom, tsvey lider: A farglaykhiker kuk oyf Telers un Molodovskis poezye vegn dem pogrom in Brisk.” (in Yiddish) Symposium für Jiddische Studien in Deutschland, Universitaet Triers, Sept. 2009.

Selected Courses Taught

University of Maryland, College Park

- *Jewish Humor from the Shtetl to Seinfeld*: A course examining the evolution of Jewish humor in literature, press, and media.
- *Sexuality in Jewish Culture*: Interdisciplinary course focused on Jewish perspectives on gender and sexuality in literature and film.
- *Introduction to Jewish Literature*: Survey of Jewish literature from Europe, America, and Israel.
- *Yiddish Language I–III*: Beginner to Advanced, immersive Yiddish courses incorporating cultural texts.

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

- *Intermediate Yiddish Literature I, II*: Exploration of Yiddish literary works in an immersion environment, with attention to socio-political contexts.

Professional Experience

Book Reviews Coordinator

2016–2020

EEJA East European Jewish Affairs, Napa, CA

- Coordinate reviews for scholarly books in Hebrew.

Columnist

2011–2017, 2023–2024

Yiddish Forward, New York, NY

- Regular contributor of feature articles on cultural, political, and social issues, published in Yiddish.

Languages

- **Hebrew:** Native
 - **Yiddish:** Fluent
 - **English:** Fluent
 - **German:** Good
 - **French:** Basic
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Selected Fellowships and Awards

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| • Award for Faculty Publications , Littauer Fund | 2024 |
| • Translation Fellowship , Yiddish Book Center | 2021-2022 |
| • Yiddish Pedagogy scholarship , Yiddish Book Center | 2018-2019 |
| • Honorary Fellow , YIVO Institute for Jewish Research | 2013–2014 |
| • Dissertation Fellowship , National Foundation for Jewish Culture | 2012–2013 |
| • Irene C. Fromer Fellowship in Jewish Studies , Columbia University | 2009 |
| • Yiddish Pedagogy Seminar , Yiddish Vokh | 2009 |