

Resonance Across Rupture:
The Continuity of German-Jewish Thought in France
Sarah Hammerschlag and Cedric Cohen-Skalli on Translation

This paired lecture explores translation as a privileged site where rupture and continuity intersect in the transmission of German Jewish thought into the French intellectual landscape.

In her lecture “Styles of Concrete Existence: Levinas Translating Rosenzweig into a French Idiom”, **Sarah Hammerschlag** will consider Levinas’s use of Rosenzweig and its function in setting up the importance of religion as a category in his thought. Hammerschlag is the John Nuveen Professor of Religion and Literature, Philosophy of Religions and History of Judaism at the University of Chicago.

In “The French Reception of German and German-Jewish Thinking on Translation: Antoine Berman and Jacques Derrida”, **Cédric Cohen-Skalli** will reconstruct the intellectual and historical context in which German and German-Jewish thinking on translation reappeared in the 80s and 90s France through Berman and Derrida’s famous essay *Des tours de babel* (1980). Cédric Cohen-Skalli is Professor for early modern and modern Jewish philosophy at the Department of Jewish History at the University of Haifa.

Workshop organized by Julie Reich, Martin Kudla, and Rachel Pafe please rsvp for further information and location of lecture: kudla@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Rupture and Continuity: Currents in European Jewish Thought Between pre and postwar Germany and France Workshop

Date: **March 4 to 5 2026**

Location: Buber Rosenzweig Institute, Goethe University of Frankfurt, Germany

Organizers

Rachel Pafe, Julie Reich, Martin J. Kudla

This workshop invites contributions that examine the complex trajectories of Jewish thought as it moved across the ruptures of war, genocide, and exile. In particular, we aim to trace how the rich tradition of modern Jewish philosophy in prewar Germany — including figures such as Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, and Martin Buber — was transformed, interrupted, or reconfigured as it was taken up by postwar thinkers in France such as Hélène Cixous, Albert Memmi, Daniel Bensaïd, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida. This migration of thought occurred not only across borders, but also across historical wounds, often translating theological and philosophical vocabularies into new idioms. Not limiting ourselves to France and Germany as nation states but also including French and German-speaking thinkers in other contexts, we ask how the legacy of German-Jewish modernity was received, reinterpreted, or resisted. What were the implications of this transfer for the development of the discipline of modern Jewish thought?

Participants are asked to respond to the question of continuity and rupture via the lens of particular themes including 1) new traditions that emerged such as those including marginalized voices (queer people, women, Black thought, de- or post-colonial currents), 2) the translation of pre-war Jewish thought into secular and ‘post-secular’ contexts, 3) the legacy of socialism and/or exilic political structures in the transfer of modern Jewish thought from Germany to France, and 4) re-readings of canonical biblical and Rabbinic Jewish writings.

We seek a dialogical exchange rather than finished papers. In this spirit, we ask participants to select a 2–5-page passage from a text they are working on that responds to at least one of these questions. In the workshop, they will be asked to provide a short introduction to the context and issues of their text and lead a group discussion about it. Please submit a one-paragraph summary that describes the text selected and why it is significant by September 1st 2025 to Rachel Pafe (rachelpafe@gmail.com), Julie Reich (reich.juliea@googlemail.com), and Martin J. Kudla (kudla@em.uni-frankfurt.de).

Rupture and Continuity, Workshop schedule

Day 1, Wednesday 4 March 2026

Eisenhower room, 1.314, IG-Farben

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome & Opening Remarks
09:15 – 10:00	Rachel Pafe German legacies of socialism to French post-structuralism in Gillian Rose's writing on Modern Jewish Thought Text: Gillian Rose "Introduction" from <i>Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays</i> , 1993.
10:00 – 10:45	Matan Gurevitz Pariah Figures in French and German Jewish Thought: Between Hannah Arendt and Albert Memmi. Text: Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" in <i>A Hidden Tradition</i> , 1944 and Albert Memmi, <i>Portrait d'un Juif</i> , 1962.
10:45 – 11:00	Questions
11:00 – 11:45	Coffee Break
11:45 – 12:45	Laila Seri Benjamin and Derrida on divine violence in the story of Korah Text: The Story of Korah (selection of Talmud and Torah extracts), Walter Benjamin, <i>Toward the Critique of Violence</i> , 1921 and Jacques Derrida, <i>Force of Law</i> , 1990.
12:45 – 14:00	Lunch/Mensa
14:15 – 15:00	Benjamin Singer The Inner French Debate Text: Eliane Amado Lévy-Valensi, "Le judaïsme de Bergson" in <i>La Racine et la source</i> , 1965.
15:00 – 15:45	Lucile Salou "Slow and Steady wins the Race": an Approach Towards History Text: Emmanuel Levinas, "The Meaning of History" in <i>Difficult Freedom</i> , 1984.
15:45 – 16:00	Questions

16:00 – 16:15	Coffee Break
16:15 – 17:00	Quentin Le Gurun « Universal Question, Jewish Answer » – From Rosenzweig to Benny Lévy, through Sartre and Levinas Text: Benny Lévy, “Universal Question, Jewish Answer” in <i>Être juif</i> , 2003.
17:00 – 17:45	Alexia Levy Chekroun Beyond "totality". Reading Rosenzweig, Levinas and Derrida as attempted decolonizations of Europe. Text: Jacques Derrida, <i>Hospitalité. Volume II. Séminaire</i> , 1996–1997.
17:45 – 18:00	Small Break
18:00 – 19:30	Public Lecture Resonance Across Rupture: The Continuity of German-Jewish Thought in France Sarah Hammerschlag and Cedric Cohen-Skalli on Translation Sarah Hammerschlag: Styles of Concrete Existence: Levinas translating Rosenzweig into a French Idiom Cedric Cohen-Skalli: The French reception of German and German-Jewish thinking on Translation. Antoine Berman and Jacques Derrida
19:30	Dinner (Ristorante Armonia, Eschersheimer Landstr. 38)

Day 2, Thursday 5 March 2026
Change of room! seminar house (SH 4.105)

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:15	Arriving/ Open questions from the day before
09:15 – 10:00	Julie Reich Altneutradition: Butler’s anti-Zionist framing of Modern European Jewish Thought Text: Judith Butler, <i>Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism</i> , 2012

10:00 – 10:45	Sophie Pousette “The Act of Prayer” in Margarete Susman’s Reading of Bertha Pappenheim Text: Margarete Susman, <i>Epilogue (Nachwort) to Bertha Pappenheim’s Gebete</i> , 1936.
10:45 – 11:00	Questions
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:15	Martin J. Kudla Lost Without Translation: On postwar German-Jewish Thought in Switzerland Text: Hermann Levin Goldschmidt: Margarete Susmans Buch Hiob
12:15 – 13:30	Lunch/Mensa
13:30 – 14:30	Elad Lapidot or Christian Wiese
14:30 – 16:00	Closing Session & Feedback