

The Jerusalem Review of Arts and Letters

*A Journal of English-Speaking
Israelis*

A Proposal

by [Geoffrey Clarfield](#) (January 2024)



Intellectuals at the Cafe Rotonde– Tullio Garbari, 1916

An Israeli Perspective

Once again Israel has been attacked. This time from the Gaza and Gulf (Qatar headquarters) by Hamas Jihadis who are part of the nonstop and ever-evolving alphabet soup of countries and non-state organizations from the Islamic world dedicated to the destruction of the people and State of Israel.

For the umpteenth time in over one hundred years (since the

establishment of the League of Nations Mandate over Palestine, The Land of Israel, after WWI) Israel has been attacked by one of its Jihadist neighbors, Hamas, managed from Qatar, implemented from Gaza, and funded by the Arab and Islamic world. Israel was unprepared, largely because the ruling elites believed that their Jihadi neighbors were dolphins, where they were and are sharks.

Now friends of Israel must ask themselves how such an advanced, highly credentialed industrial society fell into such a poor perception of their neighbors. I have tried to explain this in an article that [I wrote recently](#) that explains that Israeli elites have come to see Israel through the Woke eyes of the “liberal” West.

But diagnosis is not enough, and Israelis must produce ways and means to see the world about them more clearly, without losing a distinctly Israeli outlook. This article proposes one such project from the perspective of an extremely successful immigrant minority in Israel, whose positive impact on the country has been much more powerful than its small numbers would suggest. They are Israel’s native English speakers.

Less than two decades ago, *New English Review* appeared on the Internet. Soon after, it began the New English Review Press, for publishing books. *NER* continues to distinguish itself as one of the most intelligent internet presences, defending the Western world and liberal democracies like Israel with bold essays that address problems in the decline of culture, the breakup of the family, and its relationship to poverty in various places, innovative essays on the history of Islam and the centrality of Jihad (holy war), as well as honest commentary on the conundrums of the Islamic world. For some years now I have had the privilege of being a contributing editor.

NER has offered regular background analyses of the intelligence community, and its recent failures. It has also

published reports that anticipated, and described in depth, the major immigration problems affecting Europe. *NER*'s writers are among some of the most learned, and courageous in the West.

NER shows that it is possible to get first-rank writers willing to give some of their best material, if they feel it will appear alongside other first-rank writers who cherish similar principles.

There is nothing like *New English Review* in Israel. And so, this is a proposal to create something as good as *New English Review*, based in Israel, highlighting writers who came there from the Anglosphere, including those born in Israel who can write like "natives." It will be designed to attract an international audience from the "Anglosphere," including English-speaking Israelis and readers in the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and South Asia.

We are proposing a journal that not only defends the idea of Western civilization through English speaking Israeli eyes, as an autonomous voice within the Anglosphere, but that can demonstrate to new young readers around the world the great cultural and intellectual products of human liberty, so that they can also benefit from those works.

Benefiting from, and enjoying these works was once the product of a university liberal education. But universities are no longer places of free inquiry (even in Israel) and exposure to the great Western and Jewish works of thought and art.

In what follows, we shall explain in detail why this focus on getting more young readers is the one through which the *Jerusalem Review of Arts and Letters (JRAL)* can most effectively accomplish its long-term goal of preserving human liberty, freedom of speech and freedom of thought while looking at the world from an Israeli perspective or better still, a perspective from Israel.

Attracting New People to Western Ideas; Addressing a Major Problem in Similar Media, and Filling a Void

On the basis of our analysis of the modern media that share similar concerns as does *New English Review*, such as the Western foundations of liberty, and the essential role of Israel and the influence of the Old Testament on the modern world, the importance of reason and dialogue in public discourse, insights into human nature, morality and culture, we believe there is an important problem with most of the news and commentary websites and online journalism.

Most are focused on policy issues, and the political issues of the day. In Israel, the English-speaking press is mostly responsive, responding to anti-Semitism, to domestic crises, to military situations etc. It is as if the larger world has Israel "on the defensive" and the English-speaking outlets there mostly reflect that.

This is because Israel and its growing number of conservative friends abroad, are driven by a well-founded anxiety and fear about the relentless passion of Jihadis to destroy Israel with help from other authoritarian regimes throughout the world such as China and North Korea (and their leftist fellow travelers in the West).

According to Freedom House, 9.9% of the world lives in pure democracies, such as Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia, Israel, India, and Western Europe. Three-and-a-half times that live in pure authoritarian regimes, and the rest, in only partly free regimes. In terms of population, most of those who live in free countries, live in countries where the English people, and the English language, culture and philosophy played and continue to play a formative and defining role.

Domestically these media outlets are driven by an anxiety born of the following. Except for times of war and famine, most

immigration to Europe and the West since the 1960s, has been from authoritarian, including many Islamic regimes to Western democratic regimes. This has given rise to “multiculturalism” in the West.

Ironically, this multiculturalism has also given rise, in many quarters (especially in the universities, which produce the bureaucrats of the future), to a political correctness, which disparages Western thought and culture and any hint of Jewish nationalism.

In such institutions, and in much of the media, western culture is not provided with an equal setting at the table of human cultures (See the works of Peter Wood, of the National Association of Scholars, documenting this quantitative change in the balance between Western and anti-Western subjects at universities).

Thus, a great paradox emerges: people leave authoritarian regimes, seeking freedom and democracy in the West, only to find, on their arrival, that many major Western institutions—at an intellectual level, or at the level of the multicultural ideology—seem to be supporting every kind of culture, except that which they chose to join. We believe the fact that Western societies can be a home to people from different cultures is a strength; but we also have observed, as have many others, that multiculturalism as an ideology is usually anti-Western, and that is deeply problematic.

Even in the so-called conservative media, a display of the riches of Western culture is very thinly represented. Indeed, it remains an irony that many such magazines and websites, which are characterized as conservative, explore little about what they wish to conserve.

The magazines and journals that do speak of culture, offer original fiction, book reviews, articles on music and travel, as does *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*,

Harper's, *The Guardian*, and newspapers like *Ha'aretz* in Israel, all proudly left-of-center. And so, ironically, the conservative media most devoted to Western ideas of liberty, have little to say about what is worth preserving in the West, being so understandably focused on immediate political threats.

Yes, there are Jewish push back magazines in the US such as *Commentary*, *Tablet*, and *Mosaic* but these do not start from the point of view of the English-speaking immigrant to Israel, who is rooted in the land and as a citizen should have no fear of political correctness. The *JRAL* could become their intellectual home.

Correcting a Generational Error

We believe there is a need for a media outlet that *both* deals with threats to Western and Jewish principles and ideas, and which demonstrates how attractive and compelling are the literary, cultural, philosophical, and foundational treasures of the West but seen from an English speaking, Israeli perspective. It is as though, a whole category of media in Israel, which might be of great practical use for conservatives and classical liberals (who value liberty) is missing. We believe not focusing on the positive is a political error, a psychological error, a cultural error, and a generational error, as we shall explain.

Media with a conservative, pro-Israel viewpoint, have so many real threats to deal with that they are, understandably, anxiety-laden, focused upon outing folly. They rarely have a positive feel. They are read exclusively by those who already sense there are problems. They are often painful to read even for enlightened people and, frankly, not attractive to young people who have yet to even understand the riches of the West and the Jewish intellectual tradition. These young people

simply were not exposed to them, and the Western Canon, which was watered down in the 1960s, and then openly attacked in the 1980s.

This is what we mean by a generational error: these magazines, journals and websites, which are largely run by people of our generation (baby boomers), who were exposed to these riches, and which seek to preserve Western ideals, have not found a way to attract the younger generations who have not been exposed to them, and are not alarmed at the loss of them, because they don't yet know how much of what they take for granted is dependent upon these ideals.

We will never preserve Western ideals and achievements if one cannot appeal to the next generation. Indeed, most of our media "preach to the choir," who are older now. In Israel they are still in "defensive mode."

The problem is this: Irving Kristol, was once asked, "What do you think of the culture wars now?" He answered, "They are over. We lost." We have digested this loss. We need to expand the choir as the media and universities in Israel lean left and the "right" does not yet have the intellectual voice of an independent country. It comes off as sounding "brutal," "nationalistic," and worse, "unsophisticated" (the greatest crime of the literary left). I am referring, for example, to the minimal civilizational and intellectual sophistication of spokespeople for the Likud party of Israel and its allies. No content there.

While it is true there are younger conservatives in the Israeli Anglosphere today, such as Caroline Glick, Mordechai Nissan and others like them however. political correctness is so extreme, that is it actually helping to form a new generation of people who value liberty. There are some that know these Western and Jewish treasures (such as Medieval Spanish poet and writer Yehuda Ha Levi who, in the early middle ages, wrote a poetic and theoretical defense of Judaism

called *The Kuzari* which is not taught in Israeli high schools) in depth, because most were raised in the aftermath of the culture wars, after major educational institutions had all but abandoned the Western canon. Yet it is these very books that form the deep foundation for liberty, and modern democracy.

The question becomes, why would such young people be interested in what we have to offer? One might answer that the longing for liberty exists in every human soul.

But the answer is more complicated. If it were that simple, human liberty would be universal and for all time; the fact that most people today still live in authoritarian regimes, shows that for some, that even if a longing for liberty has a basis in nature, it requires philosophical, traditional, and institutional support.

As well, for some, the responsibility that goes with freedom is frightening, and liberty might even be an acquired taste. For most of human history, authoritarian regimes were the norm; free, commercial republics arose only in a particular historical and philosophical context a mere few centuries ago. And much of the first and founding Israeli elites were and remain tainted by vestiges of Marxist thought.

Liberty rests on aspects of human nature that exist in every soul; the wish to move and speak freely; the universal wish to have a say in who one's rulers are (even tyrants share this wish); the wish to create and innovate and think one's own ideas; the indisputable marvels of art, learning, science and commerce, created by free societies that are free, or on the path to freedom, in a short period of time; and the fact that almost every human mind and heart recoils, and is sickened, by arbitrary restrictions and compulsions proposed by others.

While there is a crucial role for websites and journals that highlight the threats to liberty and other Western ideals (and there are some in the Israeli internet Anglosphere), there is

also a role for a different kind of internet magazine, one that is uplifting, and which displays the riches of the West and Jewish civilization, and attracts people, especially the young.

With such additions, alongside the prescient analyses of problems that have been reasonably performed by *New English Review*, *National Review*, and, once upon a time, *The Weekly Standard*—to mention only three, we think the *JRAL* website will become even more powerful, as it will be embedded with, and associated with, life affirming ideas such as theism.

With an eye to the future, our goal is to reach out to a younger generation, not yet singing in the choir of Western civilization and its modern Israeli version. We believe they should not be “written off” just because they have been “ripped off” by their high school and university teachers, and education administrators who have deprived them of an exposure to the greatness of Western and Jewish thought, classics, and culture, or because the weapons of mass distraction, from modern internet culture, have compromised their ability to develop and sustain focus on complex ideas. Our experience is that this impoverishment of culture and ideas has left many young people hungry for deeper meaning, in Israel and the greater Anglosphere.

Reaching Out To Immigrant Populations in the Anglosphere

We are living in a time when record numbers of people from non-Western cultures are immigrating to the English-speaking world and who have come to Israel from Africa (Ethiopia) and eastern Europe (neither great centers of Western thought).

Sometimes, those people, and their children, can, at times be attracted by those Western postmodernist intellectuals, the media, and the left-wing professoriate, who voice grave doubts about the West’s purpose, and who encourage them to believe

that the cultures from which they came have a moral ascendancy or in Israel that somehow the Zionist paradigm is "suspect."

But we can encourage them to remember what drew their parents, or themselves, to the West and to Israel in the first place, and to better understand it, and the intuition that freedom could present a full life. Indeed, we have found many among them who are far more vocal defenders of the West, than those raised in Israel, who take it for granted.

Other people do not speak up, because, arriving on university campuses, or into a culture that is so anti-Western, they are confused. But when people do step forward, they raise their heads and their voices. For instance, when Professor Jordan Peterson in Canada defends free speech, visits Israel, and supports Israel's existence and right to self-defense in the international media, the people who are most vocal at his side in the West are often young men from multi-cultural and immigrant backgrounds whilst his mainly "white" colleagues are silent.

Understanding Recent Changes in Universities, Schools, and Government Programs, in Israel and Abroad

Jonathan Haidt, the world's most published social psychologist, has written that anyone who graduated before 2013, has no idea as to what is happening to or at North American universities. This is just as true of their Israeli counterparts in the social sciences and humanities, and the extent to which political correctness, and hostility to Western ideas and liberty has taken over campuses. The generation of professors who lived through, and fought in the Second World War, who know the value of liberty, have retired. Most are no longer alive.

Once the Israel Academic Monitor chronicled this near orgy of self-hate that is now mainstream in Israel's government funded

universities. Bar Ilan University is the only exception to the rule but is still sometimes compromised by the sheer implied opposition of the media and other institutes of higher learning and their local and international donors.

In the 1960s, a majority of academic and business leaders in the USA had military experience. By the 1990s, this had declined to less than 5%. Over 80% of academe, and in some cases over 95% represent themselves as of the left, and endorse harsh critiques of the West, while displaying limited knowledge of it, or, in fact, other cultures. This is inevitably linked to an anti-Zionist anti-Israel stance. This is a serious problem because universities produce many of the administrators and leaders who take over our other institutions such as media and government. What happens there, matters!

Thankfully in Israel most citizens serve in the military, and this will no doubt infuse our writing with a different perspective, one that will be welcome in the Anglosphere, which includes India, a growing Israeli ally. Yet even there the institutions of higher learning and the media (some of it government funded) lean to the left.

The "West" is not just a location on the map. It includes Israel. It includes the English-speaking Indians and Israelis, a self-selected group of highly educated, overachievers. The West is a group of books, films, music, drama, poetry, and related cultural achievements such as the novel and film, stemming from ancient Greek philosophy and science.

It includes Biblical morality and stories, the ethical monotheism of the founding fathers of the US and Israel, most European philosophers, and the writings of the American revolutionaries who made free societies possible. And yet, except for modern science, it is precisely these legacies that have few defenders left in the institutions set up to teach them.

It is often reflected in the concerns of the many “third world” novelists who have been nurtured on Western writers with their struggle over the concept of liberty and the “international development process” –which has been high jacked by Globalists and the left. Take the Algerian Muslim writer Boualem Sansal, for example; pro-Western and pro-Israel.

Today, the universities, which once taught these ideas, offer far more courses critiquing the West and its aims, and its handmaidens, nationalism of any sort and Zionism, that most late blooming national necessity. Postmodern deconstructionists have succeeded in making the humanities so unattractive (who should really be interested in studying an attack on Jane Austen, without having had the chance to read her?) that humanities department enrollments are crumbling throughout North America, being replaced by applications for professional schools and STEM fields.

Because of the Jewish tradition of study in Israel those who cannot go into science there go into social science and the humanities. They then man the media and government and turn Israel towards the radical left. This is culturally abetted political suicide and needs to be opposed in a creative manner, one of the goals of the *JRAL*.

An Opportunity, and a Plan

This latest life and death crisis is sadly an ideal moment for a conservative site to display the attractions of what the Western traditions, including the Jewish one, and modern Israeli culture needs to conserve and champion. We will make a concerted attempt to attract our ideal new reader who is someone who can be attracted to liberty and can be interested in wanting to understand it better, learning how to cultivate it, and flourish within it. The future of liberty lies with

these people, and not us.

We will give much thought to attracting readers such as someone 35 years or younger, born in or having moved to the English-speaking West or Israel, or coming from another tradition, such as India and who wishes to understand the West. We are aware they are coming from left-leaning educational institutions, but that does not mean their deep-seated wish for freedom has been obliterated. Our ideal new reader is someone who can be attracted to liberty, and wants to understand how to cultivate it, and flourish within it.

Today there is an opportunity to seriously challenge the mainstream media because it is in such decline. In my birthplace of Canada alone, "Between 2009 and 2016, more than 200 weekly newspapers and 36 dailies closed their doors" (*Globe and Mail*, Jan 27, 2017)." That figure is ten times that in the USA. Book review sections are completely a thing of the past. Serious cultural coverage is rare. With a small number of exceptions, major print media are in a death spiral, struggling for existence, paying a pittance to freelancers, and cycling through constant buyouts.

We are proposing that the *JRAL*, attract excellent Israel based writers willing to write for free and to share a podium with other equally excellent thinkers, on a website that will bring high quality writing to the public. Today the Internet allows us to witness a return to a model of writing that characterized the 18th Century. Then, public writing was a voluntary, self-publishing activity. Today, the internet is, in ways, the equivalent of the 18th Century broadside, which was used by the likes of Voltaire, Franklin, Paine and Madison. As Mark Twain is reputed to have said, history does not repeat itself, but it often rhymes.

The *JRAL* will "cover" the great books of the West and the Jewish tradition, as well as , food, music, ethnomusicology,

travel, and the anthropology of different cultures. In an age when administrators, academics, and politicians use the word "diversity" as an empty, plastic buzzword to signal their own virtue, we will have writers and thinkers who truly understand different cultures, in depth, and not as projections of some simple idea, that "we are all the same." We are not all the same. Cultures are important, and different one from the other. We will also provide anthropological analyses about the current hotspots in the world.

To buttress our coverage of the classic texts of Western and Jewish Civilization, we propose some kind of affiliation with the few remaining networks that center around the study of core texts that have promoted liberty and free societies, and writers who know how to write muscular, clear prose, to interest young people in these books.

We would draw heavily on Israeli institutions such as the Shalem Center and Bar Ilan University, which share our world view in many respects. We are also persuaded that in the mainstream leftist dominated Israeli universities, there are writers who would like to exercise their freedom of thought in an intellectual journal that will be read both in Israel and abroad.

We will also have regular "guest contributors," colleagues vetted by our writers, and as voices in the Anglosphere having something to offer readers that resonates with our overall editorial policy.

YouTube and Video

The collapse of much meaningful education at universities has increased the hunger for top-notch lectures among students from those who are first-year students, to those who seek continuing education. In addition to writing, we will have our most media savvy and well-spoken authors do video interviews

and lectures and build a *JRAL* podcast and YouTube channel. It will have our own lectures, and links to outstanding ones by others by our affiliates. We hope to increase viewership, add a paying account for subscribers, and include advertising.

We have had recent successes in this area. I recently organized two public lectures in Canada called "Political Correctness or Freedom of Speech" with world-famous authors Jordan Peterson and Norman Doidge, attended by millennials (our ideal new reader). The talks were posted on YouTube and within the first week there were already over 160,000 views of the 3-hour event. The numbers are rising by minute and have topped 200,000 a while back.

By comparison, Madison Square Garden holds 20,000 people; the entire student body of Columbia University is 30,000 people, University of Virginia, 22,000, and Yale, 12,000. These lectures should be pitched to millennials, deal with the classic arguments for freedom of speech, and Western and Jewish classics. Properly crafted events, even ones of high intellectual caliber, can have an extraordinary reach using this new medium.

There are now in-depth podcasts and YouTube lectures that go on for three hours, and which have attracted millions of listeners, such as the one by Jordan Peterson on Joe Rogan, discussing free speech. This speaks to an unsatisfied public appetite. We believe we are just at the beginning of sorting out what YouTube can do.

The reach of YouTube is quickly outstripping major print media. Consider that a major metropolitan newspaper, like *Globe and Mail* (which is Canada's most established paper) might have 200,000 readers; one of the largest and most established newspapers in a major US city, *The Chicago Tribune*, claims to have 400,000. But does that mean every major article in it is read by 400,000 people?

Not at all, most people will only read a handful of articles in that paper, and there is no guarantee they will read the op eds that are thought of as so important by editors. It is for this reason, we will develop a YouTube and Podcast library, in which those of our writers who have a good presentation style can be recorded, and we will be able to provide links to major lectures, and even courses, about topics of interest providing a true education in liberty.

More Details on the *JRAL* Website: The Look and The Sections

Policy based websites, and so much of the English-speaking press in Israel often have a serious, sometimes academic, and sometimes stodgy look, and appeal to those who are already "onside." We want to create a website that has the feel of a one-stop generalist magazine, looks both intellectual and entertaining (in the highest sense of the word), and that will, as part of its front page feature produce the most penetrating coverage of the most brilliant developments in the modern world in the two cultures-the sciences and the humanities, alongside existing penetrating political and social analysis (One of the most interesting and poorly publicized group of writers are the Union of Orthodox (Jewish) Scientists. For many decades now they have engaged in the major intellectual issues of our time, but few outside their own network read them).

It will be necessary to fundraise for a budget to work with graphic artists to revitalize the graphics, and with podcasters and YouTube experts to build that portion of the page.

We will not follow the usual tack of struggling newspapers which want to enlarge readership by appealing to the young, which is to put younger authors in music, art, and leisure activities, and leave the politics to the "grown-ups." We aim

to have some of our most mature, advanced writers in the country, writing about cultural matters, and will look for new young writers, some of whom may have something to say about politics, such as those children of immigrants from authoritarian countries who speak out against authoritarianism.

As Theodore Herzl envisioned (and he was a journalist by profession) we will commission articles from the points of view of English-speaking Israelis in a normal but extraordinary country.

A) Food

Food is essential to life, our choices influenced by our culture, and yet so many people give it little thought. It is one of the distinguishing features of ethnic groups, regions, and nations. What and how a people eat is a living culinary expression of their history and values. Who does not want to read about the best French restaurant in New York City, or Paris for that matter? And who does not want to feast like a Sultan in the restaurants of Istanbul which have kept up sumptuous traditions of the former Ottoman rulers? All this is worth writing about.

But there is another aspect to food. Our democracies aim to be science-based and therefore our scientists have continuously shown a linkage between diet and disease and that certain foods prevent us from living the good life first outlined by Socrates and the ancients. And so we live in an age of "diet wars" with various experts battling over our culinary choices. Israelis follow a Mediterranean diet which doctors believe creates longer lifespans.

But we can also take an intellectual approach to food, reviewing exciting books, such as Tristram Stewart's marvelous *The Bloodless Revolution*, which deals with the last 400 years

of argument about vegetarianism in the West—conflicts about food and vegetarianism that emerged from the trauma of the English Civil War, mixed with tales from India of long lived meat abstaining Brahmans!

We can cover the economic aspect of food, such as the various Green revolutions (and their organic farming critics) that have reduced starvation in the developing world but at the same time introduced damaging and highly subsidized GMOs whose long term health side effects are unknown.

Then there is the challenge of the rise of the mega companies that dominate the production of our staples, such as wheat and corn and the almost byzantine institutions which protect the interests of the producers who are well represented among lobbyists in Ottawa and Washington DC, pushing an agenda that may or not be in our own best interests.

We can also explore how Israel is or is not a willing participant in this world system of agriculture and food processing, or can it find its own way. Should it not be food independent?

It is the left as well as multi nationals who have been allowed to exclusively frame the arguments for and against today's food chain, and these issues must be carefully explored from a variety of perspectives.

B) Music

A mere 60 years, ago educated people made the distinction between high and low culture, between literature and comic books, between Mozart and Madonna. That is why President Trump rightly characterized the West as a culture that “writes symphonies” and justly so.

Today these distinctions have disappeared because of a

concerted onslaught by cultural Marxists and postmodernists. The world has been turned upside down. Folk and popular music are now “privileged” in ways that symphony orchestras were once supported by governments of the Western world after World War II.

We must therefore recapture Matthew Arnold’s dictum to rediscover and focus on the best of that which has been created, so that we can be enriched by it and share it with our children. This does not mean that we turn our back on song.

The nature of song and melody is such that we may never know where its genius of expression will come next. American songwriter Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize for his eclectic integration of the multiple streams of American roots music, with lyrics that have been inspired by the Bible and various streams of modern literature and poetry. Song will never disappear, and its form keeps changing. We can show how Dylan’s power comes from having digested Elizabethan English, the Bible, Dylan Thomas, and classic lyric and poetic forms.

At the same time, while few have been noticing, the Western classical musical tradition has gone through its own revolution. More and more people, interested in this thousand-year-old high cultural artistic tradition, want to hear what the great art music of the past actually sounded like, at the time of its creation.

We want to hear Bach on instruments that were contemporaneous with his time. We want to hear harpsichords not pianos. We want to hear Viola da Gambas and not modern violas and therefore, we want to follow what is now called HIP, “historically informed performance” to better understand the Western musical tradition, which in its diversity is unique among all civilizations, given that it has a notated timeline of more than a thousand years.

And then there is the “classical” music of the great sister civilizations and their court music-The Arab World, Ottoman Turkey, Persia, China, and the wondrous ragas of North and South India. Jews were major participants in the Pan Islamic versions of these classical traditions.

Israel is unique in this regard. The Jews adopted European classical music during the Italian Renaissance and once again in the 19th century. In Israel European Classical music is alive and well as is Jazz. Israel also has the music of its immigrant ethnic groups, an avant garde of modern composers, pop music and a *chansonierre* tradition that is one hundred years old.

It is also important to understand that ethnomusicology, the exploration of the rest of the world’s music, during the last hundred years, is a uniquely Western tradition. It was first spurred on by the invention of the phonograph, and after World War II by the invention of the tape recorder which amplified the rise of ethnomusicology. This field has also been hijacked by the left. It needs to be reclaimed.

C) Architecture and The Built Environment

Architecture and the built environment comprise two overlapping domains. Since World War II most North Americans, Europeans and Israelis live in cities or suburbs and connect to each other through highways. There is very little left of wild nature that is part of modern daily life for those who do not seek it out. Modern men and women live an urban existence.

We therefore believe that our lead writers on architecture will not only have to understand the history of architecture, but will have to understand the role of the built environment in various cultures and in the developing world, which is

currently in the midst of a clash of architectural cultures: the so-called functionalism of the West, which they have imported, and which are being foisted upon their traditional scaffoldings. This is an ongoing process.

As our cities are turning into mega cities and the core of our cities are being transformed before our eyes, we must take a step back and ask, "Are cities designed for people?" And if not, what can we do about it? We must remember that famed urbanist Jane Jacobs was not a Marxist! Israel is a small but growing country and is an innovator in high density housing. This debate needs to be widely shared.

D) Travelers Tales-Travel and Anthropology

The 21st century and the 20th century before it has become ages of mass travel (a secularized version of past pilgrim routes). In the past, travel was mostly the luxury of the elite, the burden of the rare trader, risking his life on the high seas or in the wild or that of the impoverished, other worldly pilgrim. As for the elite, we recall the 18th century "grand tour" of the sons of the British aristocracy who felt it was essential for them to see the elegance of France, Central Europe and the Mediterranean before they returned to their lives in the North.

One might fear that because of this and the Western media onslaught, all cultures are merging into an amorphous 21st-century "world culture" but this has not happened. South Asians are modernizing but not westernizing. In some respects, the Chinese are Westernizing without modernizing. Africa remains tribal, while Islamic countries are hurtling backwards. Latin America still seems turbulent and is a victim of "big man" regimes as we still see in the dictatorship of Maduro's Venezuela. And so, after considering all of this, one

may want to give up travel.

However, there are still remarkably different landscapes around the world, there are different architectural traditions, every culture still has its own soundscape, traditions of cuisine have not been wiped out, foreign languages are still spoken, and the feel of foreign places is still unique. Disneyland cannot replicate these.

There is no substitute for the Parthenon, the streets of Rome, London, or the still Biblical landscapes of the land of Israel and the classical hinterlands of rural Greece. Istanbul, Delhi, and Kathmandu still maintain their distinctiveness. Travel sections in major dailies have all but atrophied. We want to produce articles that will go viral on interesting places, and which will also bring new readers to the *JRAL*.

People still live according to different rhythms, with different values in different styles. The modern frontier is the frontier of exploring different cultures, and ethnographically sophisticated travel writing at its best is a translation of a different cultural world into a language we can understand. It is not just about where to stay in Marrakesh, or Budapest, but how to understand the mind and soul of their inhabitants.

Israelis are amongst the most widely traveled people in the world. But they bring a different perspective to the places they go. They see the world through Jewish eyes, through Israeli eyes, and sometimes as out and out secularists, and this is a difference that has yet to be shared with the English-speaking world.

E) The Natural World-Reading the "Book of Nature"

Although most of us live in cities, due to the very nature of our evolved bodies, we long to be in non-urban environments.

Luckily, the world is still filled with game parks, natural reserves, untouched coastlines, and remote mountains where nature and animals still dominate man, and where we can reconnect with our biological nature that evolved on the savannas of east Africa 100,000 years ago. Yet, we enter these environments at our own risk. We need a guide, and our writers will be that first guide.

It is only a small percentage of the population who spend long periods of time in these wild places but many visit. Many of us do so frequently and the experience lives within us as we return to our jobs in the city. At the same time, these wild places protect the biodiversity of the world and bring us towards a more holistic understanding of our place in nature.

Some of the greatest literature in the United States has come from the contemplation of nature. *Walden Pond* was not the beginning nor was it the end of its own genre. The land of Israel is a Biblical land, but it is also a land of natural variety, and these images are often the visual building blocks of so much Euro American literature-just think of the term "crossing the Jordan."

F) Religion

For those over the age of sixty, many of us remember the pseudo-euphoria of the sixties when young, unmarried, and childless men and women repeated (and misunderstood) Nietzsche's phrase "God is dead." Soon after, many of these people married and had children and discovered quickly that God, divinity, spirituality, and the world religions were alive and well, reinterpreting themselves for the 20th and 21st century.

While today's "intellectuals" may think religion dead, during the last one hundred years there has been an explosion of

independent cults in North America and Europe, as well as Israel (about seventy in the Galilee alone) which have included various importations from India and the Far East, especially during the 60s and more recently, local variations.

This is not a new phenomenon for there is an aspect of Western culture which embraces the occult and which in many ways seems to be part of the creativity and heritage of democratic cultures. This phenomenon has been well charted by Mitch Horowitz in his remarkable study, *Occult America*. While American Jews raised in the Reform and Conservative traditions have been intermarrying in droves those that came to Israel are either Orthodox or practice a Judaism that is "traditional." It makes for a very different worldview.

At the same time, we have seen the rise of Jihad in the Islamic world and among Muslim immigrants to the West the likes of which we have not seen before, fueled by modern technology and modern communications. We are now living in the age of Jihad by Facebook. Both the pernicious attempt of the Muslim Brotherhood to penetrate North American society and the endless spiritual creativity of North Americans needs to be better explored on a monthly basis. We may find Muslim writers in Israel or the region who are able to counter this trend and who do not yet have a voice.

G) Literature

Reading has not died out although it is quite possible that there are fewer readers of serious literature, per capita, in the world than there were 50 years ago. Israelis are voracious readers, and this country may prove the exception to the rule.

Great writers continue to emerge throughout the world, and the novel, like modern technology, has spread all over the developing world and has been adopted as the primary mode of expression of urbanizing elites there.

There are three hundred million speakers of English in the Indian subcontinent alone and they have produced writers of great power and creativity. As someone who lived and worked in sub-Saharan Africa for 17 years I can attest to the great beauty and insight in the work of the growing number of African writers and novelists.

Each month we will highlight a writer from somewhere around the world, including those outside the English tradition. This is not about preferring writers from any one culture. This is about the simple bald fact that Third World writers, where oral storytelling is very traditional, have now taken on a Western literary form of narrative, and adapted it to the ups and downs of their own modernization process.

Other Third World literary traditions, such as the Chinese prose tradition, include massive novels, and are largely unknown in the West. To understand China, our readers would do well to understand these literary developments. Literary criticism in recent years has been dominated by left leaning post modernists, who take apart literature, instead of having the intellectual humility to learn from it. We want to use literature to better understand ourselves and the rest of the world.

H) Visual Art

Before there was film, there was photography and before there was photography there was engraving, before engraving, drawing, painting, and sculpture. It was Ezra Pound who in his book *The ABC of Reading*, argued that a new art form such as film, has incorporated and in some sense, superseded earlier forms.

But he did not point out that the old art forms, which were freed from some of their original representational needs, began to develop in new ways. With the rise of photography,

painting, for example was freed from being our sole medium of colorful visual representation, and modern art was born. It was also recognized that with photography one could work surreal wonders in the lab through the lighting tricks of the development room. Likewise, sculpture has become more abstract.

And while all these art forms became more abstract during the 20th century, they also became linked to the discovery of the dynamic unconscious, explored by Freud, Jung, and others, and which has brought this most abstract and technical world back to our search for archetypes and mythologies.

Today' s art world is often one of fraud and counterculture, and resentment of authority, such as seen in much "performance art," but even this must be explained. Jacques Barzun believed that we are living in "an age of decadence," an interregnum between two cultural periods, one which may be over, and one which may only be dimly glimpsed over the horizon. And as Pamela Langer once argued, the arts reflect the "felt life" of a period. Even performance art says something about nihilism and the retreat from Western values. We have yet to find a place where English speaking Israelis can share their insights on this domain. The possibilities are endless.

I) Film

It is quite possible that we live in an age where more people read more, but that the quality of their reading and what they read has declined. People somnambulistically read whatever is posted on Facebook. People "follow" Twitter, short cryptic statements, often ambiguous or downright misleading. Yet many have no idea how to critically think about or confirm the truth of what they read.

This is complicated by an explosion of documentary film,

seemingly a “realist form,” and dramatic films that claim, by implication, to represent historical truth, such as the pseudo-historical explorations of Oliver Stone dramas. Nevertheless, “doc” film and TV are growing in quantity. The number of foreign films, which are easily accessed in the West has also grown.

There is therefore a need to look at film from the point of view of both history and literature, for the storylines of “documentary film” are so often drawn from fiction, and the storylines of fiction are drawn from mythology, and mythology is embedded in different religions and worldviews.

And so a writer on film for the *JRAL* will not simply be writing about what he or she likes, as we see in the herd-like behavior of writers from aggregated American websites like Rotten Tomatoes or their Israeli equivalent. The persons reviewing these documentary and dramatic films will not only be experts on film, but will be well read in history, able to distinguish history from pseudo-history, and will have an understanding of the cross-cultural nature of narrative. They will know enough about religion and mythology, to be able to identify these themes and bring them to the attention of the reader in an arresting manner.

An English-speaking Israeli watching *Fauda* or *House of Cards* will have a completely different take on these productions than someone living in New York, LA, or London.

J) Science, Medicine, and Technology

Modern science is only three to four hundred years old. Some argue that modern medicine is only one hundred years old and arose with the discovery and use of antibiotics (there are some powerful anthropological arguments that the herbarium of the pre antibiotic era was stronger and more effective than we think). There are almost daily breakthroughs in the field of

medicine, and they are very difficult to interpret. Likewise, there are daily breakthroughs in the field of science and their meaning and social impact is often hard to interpret or predict.

We will look for scientific, medical, and technological writers who are not only experts in their own field, but curious enough to explore related fields and thus be able to persuasively explain their significance to the intelligent layperson.

One of the drivers of technological change and related social policy is the ingenuity of inventors, and the effect that these inventions have on science, medicine, government policy and legislation, for one feature of the age we now live in is that so much policy and law is driven by science and technological innovation. We would cultivate ties with the world's foremost neuroscientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists who from the viewpoint of science are exploring our "inner worlds."

As Israel is the "startup" nation par excellence, we believe our writers will have unique insights to share that will attract readers from around the world as Israel is a leader in scientific innovation.

K) Politics-Living During a Clash of Civilizations

The *JRAL* might also focus on the following.

Lawfare beneath the Radar: Today we are living through a period of judicial activism which is unprecedented in the history of the world. Collectivists, Marxists, cultural Marxists, radical feminists, both in and outside of Israel (so many of whom in the judiciary tilt towards anti-Zionism) and a whole range of growing self-created identities are using law to undermine the Constitution of the United States, English

common law, freedom of speech and the Jewish nature of the State of Israel. These must be exposed, and we must return to a more nuanced description of law and governance.

There is very little good and clear writing that shows how governments work, how issues emerge, how they are made into law and how these laws are enforced. It is as if sociology, law, and government live in separate worlds. Yet anyone who thinks about it, must recognize that culture influences politics, politics influence law and law can change the culture we live in.

Finally, there is foreign policy. Anyone familiar with the 20th century will understand that the focus here must be about the opposition between the two abiding political options, tyranny, and freedom. So far, one of the best paradigms for this kind of writing was laid out in 1996 by Huntington's classic work *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. How Israel does or does not fit into this paradigm, given the massive influence of the Muslim Brotherhood and their near continuous war with Israel, declared and undeclared.

9) Putting it Back Together-Liberal Education and the Great Books

Before World War II, it was always a minority of society who managed to go to University. Universities had a very different task in those days. The core undergraduate curricula were the study of a series of great books of our Western tradition. The great books begin with the Bible and Homer and continue through Hellenistic and Roman times, through the rise of Talmudic Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the Renaissance, the scientific revolution, the enlightenment, Philo Hellenism and Philo Hebraicism, through the romantic era and into our own unfinished modern period.

Educated people during these periods have produced new works, but they have always based them on their reading of earlier writers. And therefore, educated people until recently, internalized this tradition.

Except for a few enclaves, cultural Marxists, political correctness, the ideal of specialization, and the turning of the university over to careerism and job education, and the destructive DEI movement have all but destroyed this once common heritage. This common heritage drove the rise of science, the study of ethics, the invention of the novel and related literary forms, the writing of history and all those things that used to contribute to the building of character.

We are now like the characters in the novel *Fahrenheit 451* by the prophetic American science fiction writer, Ray Bradbury. The great books have been banned. In Israel, the Shalem Institute is the only college that makes them part of their core curriculum alongside classics of Jewish thought. These books now live, as far as they do, among marginal men and women in marginal communities where they teach them to a select group of young men and women who become the oral repository of the written tradition. That is the case today. And yet, it is worse, because people graduate from universities, without any exposure to them, and yet believe they are well-educated.

We can no longer write and assume people have knowledge of the Bible. We can no longer write and assume that they know who Thomas Aquinas or Maimonides was. We can no longer write and assume that what people knew at universities before 1945, is still the common heritage of Western educated people. We know it is not. The left leaning Ivy Leagues have destroyed Liberal Education, and they are widely imitated in left leaning Israeli institutions of higher learning.

We must therefore find ways of reintroducing a younger generation to the more than 100 or so greatest classics of

religion, philosophy, history, literature and science which were once the common intellectual language of educated men and women and which has until recently, supported the way of life that prevailed against Nazism and Communism both movements which not so curiously, were antagonistic to Zionism and would have liked to see the Jews disappear.

We will have to find writers of exceptional quality who cannot only write about the great books and the role of Jewish civilization in the world, but who do so from the understanding that the majority of those who have not read them are hostile towards them, and must be gently and perhaps dramatically brought back to reading them. For in reading them, we invest in our own and in our children's liberty.

When Israel's younger generation are risking their lives to fight Hamas in the fall of 2023, it may seem inappropriate to outline in such detail, yet another Israel based writing project. That would only be true if ideas do not matter. Today most of Israel's government funded media and institutions of higher learning lean dangerously left. Some of them are Marxist in spirit and some are thoughtlessly so. This cannot stand.

It will take a generation to liberate younger Israelis and their supporters around the world from the intellectual blindfolds of their leaders and teachers. These powerful and "self-anointed" elites will not change their worldviews, but their children may. That is why this project needs to be brought to life. It is not a minor issue on the margins of a Hebrew speaking nation for English has become the Latin of the 21st century. So many Israelis who were born in the West are its masters and they have a perspective that is unique and worth sharing.

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Geoffrey Clarfield is an anthropologist at large. For twenty years he lived in, worked among and explored the cultures and societies of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. As a development anthropologist he has worked for the following clients: the UN, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Norwegian, Canadian, Italian, Swiss and Kenyan governments as well international NGOs. His essays largely focus on the translation of cultures.

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