

Gaul shows that Frankfurt am Main was the interior river port equivalent to Hamburg and Bremen. As the political capital of the 1848–1849 revolution, it also emerged as the most important financial center of continental Europe. Moreover, much of Frankfurt’s hinterland had been the source of German-speaking emigrants for more than a century and a half. During the 1860s, nearly two-thirds of Union securities traded in Europe were sold in Central Europe. Yet Gaul cautions that the prospect of financial gain was probably more important than “explicit sympathies for the Union” (295).

The Confederate surrender at Appomattox and Lincoln’s assassination six days later were celebrated and mourned in Central Europe. Gaul shows that hopes for a positive influence on German political unity did not materialize with the 1866 Seven Weeks’ War, also sometimes called the German Civil War. Instead, the emancipation of four million enslaved people and their new claims to civil rights in the U.S. contributed to the discourse of controlling and civilizing “racially inferior” workers in Central Europe and colonized peoples in Africa. Nevertheless, public memory of the American Civil War heralded the triumph of liberty over oppression.

Based on his dissertation at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, Patrick Gaul’s work is important because it offers new insights about the American Civil War in a Central European context. Gaul engages an enormous body of literature on two continents and in two languages. He may be forgiven for leaving out some of the latest scholarship by scholars such as Alice Baumgartner and Kevin Waite. Gaul’s book should be translated into English to make it accessible to a broader audience. Scholars wishing to learn more about his fascinating evidence and findings can read his concise English-language overview in a thirty-page article, “Trading in the Shadow of Neutrality,” published in the *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* in 2020.

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## **Zionism and Cosmopolitanism: Franz Oppenheimer and the Dream of a Jewish Future in Germany and Palestine**

**By Dekel Peretz. New York: De Gruyter, 2022. Pp. 304. Hardcover \$118.99. ISBN: 978-3110726435.**

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Dekel Peretz’s impressive book shows us how to write Jewish history as a transnational, multidisciplinary, and postcolonial history. Unpacking the life and work of Franz Oppenheimer (1864–1943) – one of the founders of German sociology and an early supporter of Zionist settlement – Peretz follows the creation of an organic discourse that stood at the heart of German race theory and Zionist colonial fantasies. The threads of Oppenheimer’s thinking together weave a Janus-faced shape that captivated the imagination of modern scientists and colonialists. Peretz’s discursive argument points out that a language of organic metaphors unites Oppenheimer’s dynamic career, from his days as a physician and his studies as a social economist, to his later roles as a social and political theorist.

Viewed in terms of ideology, Oppenheimer’s multiple interests and professional contexts form a complex and seemingly contradictory biography: adopting a eugenic language but rejecting race science; constructing a Jewish settlement in Palestine but promoting Jewish

and Arab integration; depicting a revolutionary “in-betweenness” (66) but supporting an explicit colonialist language are just a few of the inherent incongruities of Oppenheimer’s system of thought. Peretz’s discursive approach allays any fear of inconsistencies. His narrative follows Oppenheimer’s ideas and language – expressed in his articles and editorials – chronologically, showing that they return repeatedly to the notion of the “organic” wholeness of the individual and collective body and stress more generally an “in-betweenness”: between the German and the Jewish body, assimilation and Zionism, empiricism and utopianism, nationalism and socialism. Oppenheimer examined both sides of his different equations against a recurrent vitalist perspective. The dynamic force of life and “organic movement” was central to Oppenheimer’s support of *Rassenhygiene* in the colonies, at the same time as it supported the liberal Social Democratic institutions of the modern state. Oppenheimer maintained, Peretz explains, that “the role of race should become a matter of sociological research,” not biology, psychology, or politics (84). Here, the “organic” or vitalist was closer to a socialist than a colonialist model of utopia. At the same time, it served to support Oppenheimer’s conviction that German and Zionist love for the land would enable a national pride and a sense of rootedness that was missing from German urbanization and Jewish exile. Organic metaphors served, then, a utopian discourse of settlement and social cohesion: “in Oppenheimer’s utopian vision,” Peretz explains, “the organism metaphor replaced the need for a fixed model of the perfect society. It postulated a natural, primordial and healthy condition of society that could be reached organically” (34).

The most innovative sections of Peretz’s semi-biographical study are the analyses of Oppenheimer’s experiments in the agricultural settlement of Merhavia, in the Galilee, and his many interactions with well-known luminaries, from Theodor Herzl and Martin Buber to the lesser-known Hugo Bergmann or the editors of the Zionist colonial journal *Altneuland*. Much of the second half of the book is, indeed, a close reading of the editor’s language in the broader context of the journal’s editing and contributions. Oppenheimer and the other two principal editors believed Jews to be on both sides of the process, the revolutionary and the colonial; on the one side, “the elites of Northern Europe,’ to whom German Jews were aspiring to belong,” and on the other side, “the newly independent elites’ German Jews were aspiring to be in Palestine and its vicinity” (151).

In that context, it is somewhat surprising to note that the only reference in Peretz’s work to the German colonialist massacre of the Herero and the Nama in German South West Africa – which occurred during the same period when German Zionists were pushing for German support for the Zionist movement – concerns only the cautious silence of the journal’s editors. Though briefly, Peretz does not try to smooth over the ethical implications: “Altneuland’s entanglement with German colonial and racial discourses blotted out whatever undermined the positive German self-image maintained through colonial fantasy” (170).

The force of Peretz’s analysis lies not only in his explicit historical claims and recounting of the historical narrative but also in its methodological innovation. A discursive reading of organic metaphors is as supported as it is suggestive. Peretz is not the first to analyze the role of organic metaphor at the heart of modern European history, but his topic helps to shed light on some of the earlier works in the field, even those he does not mention. Some classic works of intellectual history have dedicated much effort to the topic since the 1930–1940s. See, for example, Ernst Cassirer’s *The Problem of Knowledge* (1940), Anne Harrington’s *Reenchanting Science* (1999), David Channell’s *The Vital Machine* (1991), and more recently Lynn Nyhart’s *Modern Nature* (2009) and Donna Jones’s *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy* (2010). Each of these works did something slightly different with the idea of the organic, but none depicted it as a story of concrete (colonial) discourse or the meeting of political schools. Cassirer placed it, in the early 1940s, at the center of modern epistemology and the development of biology, and warned against reductive scientific (quantitative) analyses or a (fascist) political approach. Half a century later, Channell and Harrington engaged with organicism from the perspective of “a new relationship between technology

and organic life” (Channell, 3) and wholeness (*Ganzheit*) or the idea that individual and collective meet where “living forms and their connections swim before the soul” (Karl Ernst von Baer, in Harrington, 40). If Nyhart retraced the morphological roots of such connections between “form” and “reformer,” Donna Jones introduced a transnational angle, bringing together, on the one hand, the scientific imagination and the organic, living form – with “its ability to reproduce” and turn “a physical memory by means of which the present is bound to the past” (Jones, 6) – with national and racial assumptions. Dekel Peretz’s postcolonial and intellectual-biographical interpretation problematizes and concretizes the organic or vitalist as a “discursive interface between German colonialism and German Zionism” (13). By concretizing the story, he also helps us see the temptation of a utopian and hybridic discourse that changed European culture and political and social conditions in the Middle East. This is a book I will turn to again whenever I return to modern European intellectual history, modern Jewish studies, discursive analysis of colonialism and nationalism, and German-Jewish studies in particular.

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## **The Kaiser and the Colonies: Monarchy in the Age of Empire**

**By Matthew P. Fitzpatrick. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 416. Cloth \$115.00. ISBN: 978-0192897039.**

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The focal point of the book’s cover image is Kaiser Wilhelm II as he appears to be greeting a group of Ethiopians—likely part of an ethnographic show—in the Hagenbeck Zoo of Hamburg. Given this photo, and the title of the book, one might expect a narrative on how the Kaiser was the center of German colonial policy and imperial narratives, but both indicators bely the far more interesting project Matthew P. Fitzpatrick has developed: a global history of monarchy through the lens of German imperial encounters. Fitzpatrick makes use of media, memoirs, and archival sources from the German Federal Archives in Berlin, the Basel Mission Archives, and the Political Archives of the German Foreign Office to challenge the existing literature on the role of the Kaiser in colonial decision-making, adapt and modify anthropological and historical theories on monarchical purpose and display, and expand on discussions of the history of orientalism and indigenous agency. Fitzpatrick demonstrates the limitations of Wilhelm II’s personal power in policymaking and also demonstrates the forms and boundaries of royal cosmopolitanism in the interactions between the German Kaiser and monarchs, emperors, sultans, and paramount chiefs in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

Fitzpatrick divides the book into two parts: “Monarchy in the Metropole” and “Monarchy beyond the Metropole.” This, however, is an organizational schema that is not strictly logical, as the two categories blur in most chapters. Each well-crafted case study examines the violence of empire, examples of agency for non-European monarchs both within and without German imperial rule, the strains on the institution of monarchy in Germany, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, as well as the very real limits on the Kaiser’s authority in governance of the colonial empire.