

George L. Mosse Program  
5231 Mosse Humanities Building  
455 N. Park Street  
Madison, WI 53706

**The Invisible Jewish Budapest:  
Assimilation and Urban  
Modernity in Central Europe**

The Mosse Lectures at the  
University of Wisconsin–Madison  
**September 14, 15, and 16, 2010**  
Chazen Museum / Elvehjem Building



## The George L. Mosse Lectures

The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Assimilation  
and Urban Modernity in Central Europe



### Mary Gluck

Professor of History and Comparative Literature  
Brown University

September 14–16, 2010, 4 p.m.

All lectures will take place in the Chazen Museum of Art /  
Elvehjem Building on the UW–Madison campus



# The George L. Mosse Lectures

Mary Gluck, Professor of History & Comparative Literature, Brown University

September 14–16, 2010, 4 p.m.

## ***“The Invisible Jewish Budapest: Assimilation and Urban Modernity in Central Europe”***

*The lectures recuperate the lost world of Jewish urban experience that flourished in Budapest between 1867 and 1914. The hypothesis is that Jews became secularized by reconstituting themselves as actors and spectators within the cultural public sphere of the emerging metropolis. In opposition to the well-known motto of assimilation, according to which Jews were “men like others on the street, but Jews at home,” the book suggests that urban Jews were by definition public selves who found their true homes on the boulevards, in the coffee houses, the Orpheums, music halls and cabarets of the city. The term “the invisible Jewish Budapest,” refers to the erasure of this Jewish-identified “low” culture from both Jewish and Hungarian historical memory, which tended to focus on ideological and high cultural concerns.*



Tuesday  
September 14  
Room L160  
Chazen Museum

## **“Public Spaces, Private Selves: Jewish Flâneurs in Fin-de-Siècle Budapest”**

As urban citizens, Budapest Jews assumed the role of “flâneurs,” or anonymous strollers in the city, who could no longer be identifiable by the external markers of race, religion or ethnicity. Flânerie, however, was always a contested activity, challenged by the intrusion of politics and anti-Semitic violence. A revealing example of such intrusion was a farcical duel in 1882, fought between a Jewish member of parliament and the leader of the anti-Semitic party, which ended up reinstating the legitimacy of the flâneur.

Wednesday  
September 15  
Room L140  
Chazen Museum

## **“Jewish Humor: Self-parody or Therapy?”**

Jewish jokes were the lingua franca of Budapest culture, propagated not only by word of mouth, but through performances in music halls, cabarets and, above all, in humor magazines such as the *Borsszem Jankó*. Such public enactments of Jewish humor and self-parody raise important questions about the cultural role of humor in the definition of Jewish identities in Budapest.

Thursday  
September 16  
Room L160  
Chazen Museum

## **“Parvenues and Pariahs: The Scandal of the Budapest Orpheum”**

The Budapest “Orpheum” was almost uniquely identified with the Jewish lower middle classes, but it drew its audiences from all segments of the population. Considered scandalous by the cultural elite, the Orpheum functioned as a specific type of bohemia, which helped transform Jewish artisans and petty clerks into urban consumers, even while providing the Hungarian nobility and gentry an alternative to the conformism of bourgeois life.



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