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Thinking Jewish Culture in America argues that Jewish thought extends our awareness and deepens the complexity of American Jewish culture. This volume stretches the disciplinary boundaries of Jewish thought so that it can productively engage expanding arenas of culture by drawing Jewish thought into the orbit of cultural studies. The eleven contributors to Thinking Jewish Cultures, together with Chancellor Arnold Eisen's postscript, position Jewish thought within the dynamics and possibilities of contemporary Jewish culture. These diverse essays in Jewish thought re-imagine cultural space as a public and sometimes contested performance of Jewish identity, and they each seek to re-enliven that space with reflective accounts of cultural meaning. How do Jews imagine themselves as embodied actors in America? Do cultural obligations limit or expand notions of the self? How should we imagine Jewish thought as a cultural performance? What notions of peoplehood might sustain a vibrant Jewish collectivity in a globalized economy? How do programs in Jewish studies work within the academy? These and other questions engage both Jewish thought and culture, opening space for theoretical works to broaden the range of cultural studies, and to deepen our understanding of Jewish cultural dynamics. Thinking Jewish Culture is a work about Jewish cultural identity reflected through literature, visual arts, philosophy, and theology. But it is more than a mere reflection of cultural patterns and choices: the argument pursued throughout Thinking Jewish Culture is that reflective sources help produce the very cultural meanings and performances they purport to analyze.

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