Benjamin Balint

**Positions**

Research Fellow Bard College 2014-2016 Adjunct Professor Bard College 2011-2014

Herman Kahn Fellow Hudson Institute 2008-2010

Research Fellow Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem 2006-2007

Associate Editor *Azure*, Shalem Center 2004-2006

Assistant Editor *Commentary* 2001-2004

**Education**

University of Washington M.A., Philosophy 2001

 Yeshiva University B.A., Philosophy, *magna* *cum laude* 1998

**Books Authored**

*Kafka’s Last Trial* (WW Norton, 2018)

*Jerusalem: City of the Book* with Merav Mack, photography by FrédéricBrenner (Yale University Press, 2017)

*Running Commentary* (PublicAffairs, 2010)

In this eloquent and richly informed book, Balint both tells the story of *Commentary* as a magazine and reads it as an "American Talmud"--a great mass of position statements and debates, always passionate and sometimes contradictory, that illuminate the larger intellectual history of America’s Jews.
--Anthony Grafton, Princeton

This is intellectual history as it should be written: lucid, capacious and unfailingly readable.
--Daphne Merkin, *New Yorker*

**Books Edited**

*The Idols of ISIS* by Aaron Tugendhaft, Univ. of Chicago Press (forthcoming).

*Open Up the Iron Door: Memoirs of a Soviet Jewry Activist* by Avi Weiss, Toby Press, 2015.

*The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism* by Eliyahu Stern, Yale University Press, 2013.

*History of the Future* by Max Singer, Lexington Books, 2011.

*Subversive Sequels in the Bible: How Biblical Stories Mine and Undermine Each Other* by Judy Klitsner, Jewish Publication Society, 2009. (2009 National Jewish Book Award winner.)

*The Quest for Jewish Assimilation in Modern Social Science* by Amos Morris-Reich, Routledge, 2008.

*The Rise and Fall of Ethnic Transnationalism: The Case of the Alliance Israélite Universelle* by Moria Paz, Harvard Law School dissertation, 2007. (Awarded the Laylin Prize for the best writing in the field of international law.)

**Translations from the Hebrew**

* *Trembling of the City: Poems* by Hagit Grossman (Shearsman Books, 2016).

Featured in *Haaretz*, “Poem of the Week,” July 28, 2015.

* “On Friendship,” by Hagit Grossman, *New Yorker*, February 8, 2016.
* Screenplay: *Legend of Destruction*, directed by Gidi Dar, produced by Amir Harel, Eddie King Films, 2016.
* *Unbroken Spirit: A Heroic Story of Faith, Courage, and Survival* by Yosef Mendelevich, 2012.

“Compelling and engrossing.” –*Boston Globe.*

“Balint’s translation reads as fluently as one could wish, and helps to establish *Unbroken Spirit* as a classic of Soviet prison camp literature.”

–*Jerusalem Report*.

**Review Essays**

“A Genius for Self-Invention,” a review of *Disraeli: The Novel Politician* by David Cesarani, *Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2016.

“Here There is no Why,” a review of *The Complete Works of Primo Levi,* edited by Ann Goldstein, *Claremont Review of Books*, Spring 2016.

“Mr. Bellow’s Planet,” a dual review of *The Life of Saul Bellow*, by Zachary Leader; and *There is Simply Too Much to Think About: Collected Nonfiction*, by Saul Bellow, edited by Benjamin Taylor, *Books & Ideas*, February 1, 2016.

“Israel’s Laureate,” a review of *The Poetry of Yehuda Amichai*, edited by Robert Alter, *Weekly Standard*, January 18, 2016.

“Drama of Dislocation,” a review of *The Sound of Our Steps* by Ronit Matalon, *Haaretz*, August 12, 2015.

“The Nazi Jurist,” a review of *Carl Schmitt: A Biography* by Reinhold Mehring, *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2015.

“The Cave and the Classroom,” a review of *Teaching Plato in Palestine* by Carlos Fraenkel, *Wall Street Journal*, June 11, 2015.

“Israel’s Old Man,” a review of *Ben-Gurion: Father of Modern Israel* by Anita Shapira, *Weekly Standard*, March 9, 2015.

“The Rise and Fall of the New Republic,” a review of *Insurrections of the Mind: 100 Years of Politics and Culture in America* edited by Franklin Foer, *Claremont Review of Books*, Winter 2014-15.

“Uncommon Ancestor,” a review of *The Family of Abraham: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Interpretations* by Carol Bakhos, *Weekly Standard*, December 8, 2014.

“A Story Told in Twilight,”a review of *The Impossible Exile: Stefan Zweig at the End of the World* by George Prochnik, *Haaretz*, June 13, 2014.

“Queen of the Crusaders,” a review of *Defending the City of God: A Medieval Queen, the First Crusades, and the Quest for Peace in Jerusalem* by Sharan Newman, *Wall Street Journal*, June 9, 2014.

“Philip Roth’s Counterlives,” a review of *Roth Unbound: A Writer and His Books* by Claudia Roth Pierpont, *Books & Ideas/ La Vie des Idées*, May 5, 2014.

“Walter Benjamin: Under the Sign of Saturn,” a review of *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* by Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, *Books & Ideas/ La Vie des Idées*, March 20, 2014.

“A Stenographer for His People’s Soul,” a review of *The Worlds of Sholem Aleichem* by Jeremy Dauber, *Haaretz*, January 5, 2014.

“Sacred Topography,” a review of *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottoman*s by Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *Weekly Standard*, November 11, 2013.

“He Used His Suffering Wisely,” a review of *Dossier K.* by Imre Kertész, *Haaretz*, June 21, 2013.

“Blasphemer,” a review of *Joseph Anton* by Salman Rushdie, *Claremont Review of Books*, winter 2012/2013.

“Keilson’s Kaddish,” a review of *Life Goes On* by Hans Keilson, *Haaretz*, February 2013.

“When History is Written by the Loser,” a review of *A Jew Among Romans: The Life and Legacy of Flavius Josephus* by Frederic Raphael, *Wall Street Journal*, January 19, 2013.

“Witness to History,” a review of *Patagonian Hare* by Claude Lanzmann, *Weekly Standard*, Oct. 8, 2012.

“Rival Owners, Sacred Text,” a review of *The Aleppo Codex* by Matti Friedman, *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2012.

“That Most Jewish of Books,” a review of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Z. Brettler, *Haaretz*, April 2012.

“Disjecta Membra,” a review of *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* by Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, February 5, 2012*.*

“Treacherous Texts,” a review of *The Prague Cemetery* by Umberto Eco, *Haaretz*, November 2011.

“City of Faiths,” a review of *Jerusalem: A Biography* by Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Weekly Standard*, Oct. 24, 2011.

“Sickness unto Death,” a review of *A Lethal Obsession* by Robert S. Wistrich, *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2011.

“Jerusalem Fever,” a review of *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* by James Carroll, *Haaretz*, May 2011.

“Flesh and Blood,” a review of *To the End of the Land* by David Grossman, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, April 27, 2011.

“The Courage To Be an Absolute Nobody,” a review of *J.D. Salinger: A Life* by Kenneth Slawenski, *Haaretz*, March 2011.

“Fine Jewish Whine,” a review of *Saul Bellow: Letters* edited by Benjamin Taylor, *Haaretz*, January 2011.

“Day of Dignity,” a review of *The Sabbath World* by Judith Shulevitz, *Haaretz*, April 2010.

“The Pearls of Hoffmann,” a review of *Curriculum Vitae* by Yoel Hoffmann, *Haaretz*, October 2009.

“Come to Life,” a review of *Hebrew Writers on Writing* edited by Peter Cole, *Weekly Standard*, May 9, 2009.

“Signs and Wonders,” a review of *Good Book* by David Plotz, and *The Murmuring Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious* by Avivah Zornberg, *Wall Street Journal*, April 8, 2009.

## Selected Articles

“Die Angst vergiftet unseren Alltag,” *Die Zeit*, July 24, 2014.

“Jerusalem’s Measure of Beauty and Suffering,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 2014.

“Feindbilder Abschaffen,” *Die Zeit*, October 18, 2012.

“Imaginative Assault,” *Tablet Magazine*, May 28, 2010.

“Good Samaritans: How Israel's Smallest Religious Minority Offers Jews a Glimpse of What Might Have Been,” *Tablet Magazine*, May 18, 2010. (Published in German as “Gute Samaritaner,” *Merkur/ Die Zeit*, Dec. 30, 2010.)

“In the Holy Land, a Rebuilding for the Generations,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 10, 2010.

## “A Campaign of Persecution Against a Faith of Tolerance: The Bahai,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 2008.

## “Mother of all Churches: The Holy Sepulcher,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 2007.

“Hatred: A Comparative Perspective,” and “Charity,” *Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions*, edited by Yehudit K. Greenberg, ABC-Clio, 2007.