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Foreword to the Symposium: The Life and Work of Robert M. Cover

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SYMPOSIUM
THE LIFE AND WORK OF ROBERT M. COVER:
FOREWORD

*Samuel J. Levine**

On October 4-5, 2021, Touro Law Center, *Touro Law Review*, and the Jewish Law Institute hosted a national conference, "The Life and Work of Robert M. Cover."¹ More than thirty-five years after his untimely passing, Cover remains a central and influential figure in the legal academy and beyond.² As both a scholar and advocate, Cover exemplified many of the ideals and aspirations of the American legal system, and in the course of his career he developed a number of groundbreaking legal theories.³ In addition, throughout both his life and his work, Cover distinguished himself in drawing upon a commitment to Jewish law and tradition.⁴ Accordingly, building on the

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¹ See *Conferences*, TOURO COLLEGE JACOB D. FUCHSBERG LAW CENTER, <https://www.tourolaw.edu/Academics/1229> (last visited Mar. 18, 2022); *The Cover Conferences*, TOURO COLLEGE JACOB D. FUCHSBERG LAW CENTER, <https://www.tourolaw.edu/AboutTouroLaw/Featured-Content/306/Spotlight> (last visited Mar. 18, 2022).

² See, e.g., *Symposium, Rethinking Robert Cover's Nomos and Narrative*, 17 YALE J.L. & HUM. 1 (2005); *A Commemorative Volume for Robert M. Cover*, 8 CARDOZO STUDS. L. & LITERATURE 1 (1996); 45 CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM 1 (1993); 7 J.L. & RELIGION 1 (1989); *Tributes to Robert M. Cover*, 96 YALE L.J. 1699 (1987). See also Andrew Jensen Kerr, *The Law According to the Most-Cited Law Review Articles of All Time*, 20 GREEN BAG 2d 371, 377 n. 45 (2017). Additional tributes to Cover are included in NARRATIVE, VIOLENCE, AND THE LAW: THE ESSAYS OF ROBERT COVER (Martha Minow et al. eds., 1993).

³ See sources cited *supra* note 2.

⁴ See, e.g., Bernard J. Hibbits, *Making Sense of Metaphors: Visuality, Aurality, and the Reconfiguration of American Legal Discourse*, 16 CARDOZO L. REV. 229, 339

success of past Jewish Law Institute programs,⁵ the conference explored, amongst and amidst other themes, the relevance of the Jewish legal experience to American law, legal practice, and legal scholarship.

In exploring Cover's legacy, the conference included presentations by leading scholars from across the United States and Israel, incorporating a wide range of disciplines and perspectives. Conference speakers relied upon both their research and their personal reflections to address a broad variety of topics, including: Legal Pluralism and Religion; Law and Justice; Violence and the Law; Limits of Justice; *Nomos*, Jurisgenesis, and Communities; Rights, Obligations, and Justice; Cover and Judaism; *Nomos* and Jurisgenesis in American Law and Society; and *Nomos* and Jurisgenesis in International Law and Society.

Among many other highlights, the conference proceedings featured keynote addresses delivered by the Honorable Guido Calabresi, Senior United States Circuit Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and former Dean of Yale Law School, and by Robert Cover's son, Professor Avidan Y. Cover.

The articles published in this Symposium Issue of the *Touro Law Review* provide a sampling of the papers presented at the conference, illustrating the abiding relevance of Cover's scholarship and activism to vital issues, both timely and timeless, that continue to confront the American legal system. Moreover, taken together, the articles demonstrate the variety of topics examined and the range of disciplines and perspectives represented at the conference. As such,

(1994) (describing Cover as “the prime mover in the reintroduction of Jewish values to contemporary American legal discourse”); Samuel J. Levine, *Halacha and Aggada: Translating Robert Cover's Nomos and Narrative*, 1998 UTAH L. REV. 465 (1998), reprinted in 2 SAMUEL J. LEVINE, *JEWISH LAW AND AMERICAN LAW: A COMPARATIVE STUDY* 1 (1998); Suzanne Last Stone, *In Pursuit of the Counter-Text: The Turn to the Jewish Legal Model in Contemporary American Legal Theory*, 106 HARV. L. REV. 813 (1993); Steven L. Winter, *The Cognitive Dimension of the Agon Between Legal Power and Narrative Meaning*, 87 MICH. L. REV. 2225 n.3 (1989) (acknowledging “the liberating effect” of Cover's work on the author's “sense of my own past,” showing how the “intellectual abundance of (Jewish sources) can be a profound source of analytic insight”); Stephen Wizner, *Repairing the World Through Law: A Reflection on Robert Cover's Social Activism*, 8 CARDOZO STUD. L. & LITERATURE 1 (1996).

⁵ See *The Jewish Law Institute*, TOURO COLLEGE JACOB D. FUCHSBERG LAW CENTER, <https://www.tourolaw.edu/Academics/jewish-law-institute> (last visited Mar. 21, 2022).

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this Symposium Issue will serve as an important resource for future endeavors dedicated to the study and further exploration of Cover's remarkable life and legacy.