Like many of his peers, Louis Sullivan (1856–1924) spent the majority of his career trying to establish an authentic American architecture. His interpretation of architectural style was symptomatic of nineteenth-century theories that presupposed that national characters were reflected in the material details of regional architecture, but he raised fundamental questions about how an indigenous American architecture might be produced. Unlike revivalists who relied on the cultural associations of historical ornament, Sullivan believed he could communicate national character directly with nonhistoricist ornament. He conceptualized style as the result of a rational process of design that was as immanent as nature itself and used geometry to create a verisimilitude between nature and architecture. In political terms, his architecture promoted national identity in direct and indirect ways: its spatial program fostered the development of national character in American citizens, while the buildings operated as physical embodiments of national characteristics. Sullivan also believed that his botanically inspired ornaments established a vernacular expression of the sociological context of the nation: they represented the importance of nature in maintaining frontier life and spiritual connections between people and their surroundings, even in urban settings.

Since the 1970s, architectural historians have successfully challenged the functionalist interpretation of Sullivan’s oeuvre by recovering the poetic and spiritualist themes of his writings and architecture. Yet this literature has not fully accounted for how Sullivan’s work inflects the cultural debates of his day. This article builds on recent studies of Sullivan’s writings and buildings to more fully account for the cultural biases he absorbed from his social and political contexts. I seek to place Sullivan’s design practice in conversation with nineteenth-century nationalist discourses in order to reconstruct the tacit racial assumptions underlying his work. To this end, I use the concepts of character and physiognomy to locate the racial content implicit in Sullivan’s architectural representations of American character. Sullivan believed that the common man would produce an indigenous local culture that was reflective of democratic ideals. However, his assimilationist conception of American citizenship and the universalism of his theory did not automatically pertain to new immigrants and nonwhite peoples then living in the United States.

In his efforts to understand American character, Sullivan had to contend with changing social and political factors in American society as well as the racial and ethnic divisions of his native Chicago. Westward expansion, new waves of Eastern European immigration, and the emergence of unionized labor produced an ethnically and economically segregated city. The unregulated industrialism of the Gilded Age brought into doubt which public figures were best positioned to contribute to American culture and define its general character. In a period when Irish Americans fought for social acceptance, Sullivan’s own inclusion as a luminary of American arts and letters was no foregone conclusion. Anthropological theories on the inferior moral and intellectual status of nonwhites persisted beyond the Civil War, affecting the public’s reception of foreign immigrants and recently freed slaves. Religion also played a role as Jews and Catholics challenged the religious monopoly of Protestants within the political elite.

Physiognomic theory deepens our understanding of the implicit racial content of Sullivan’s architecture by explaining the strategies and techniques he employed to concretize the
ephemeral qualities of personal and national character. During the nineteenth century, biologists introduced “scientific” criteria for the base temperaments of race groups, extending the visual principles that eighteenth-century artists used in representing national characters. In this intellectual context, physiognomic theory served as a conceptual hinge between the racial descriptions contained in Sullivan’s writings and drawings and his subsequent architectural representations of American character. Sullivan employed physiognomic language in his writings to describe the inner character of people as well as the essential qualities of inorganic entities, such as the natural landscape and buildings. He also sketched representations of human character throughout his career, illustrating traits of both individuals and entire nationalities. These practices prepared him to transform the interpretive strategies of physiognomic theory into a projective technique for translating the qualities of American character into material forms. By the mid-1880s, Sullivan rejected the historical motifs of traditional building styles, which he found semantically impoverished as a means to express American character, and replaced them with his own form of botanical ornament. He also extensively revised the exterior massing and profiles of historical precedents to push his architecture further from an imitation of the past. His aesthetic strategies amalgamated the essential features of European architectural styles into an idealized representation of American character. I argue that Sullivan’s writings on the amalgamation of the American race and the amalgamation of European architectural precedents in his architecture can be understood through a theory of architectural physiognomy. I propose to link this theory to the ethnographic content of his architectural expression of cultural nationalism.

In examining Sullivan’s physiognomic translations of American character, I will focus on the case study of Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue (Figure 1). Sullivan and his business partner, Dankmar Adler, began to design Ma’ariv
Synagogue in 1889 to accommodate the first Jewish congregation to settle in Chicago’s South Side. This congregation was one of the first to disseminate the religious tenets of Reform Judaism in the United States, which incorporated modern secular principles into traditional Jewish practices. In 1921, the synagogue was purchased and renovated by Pilgrim Baptist Church, a black congregation that fostered the rise of gospel music in Chicago’s South Side. As I will show, the black congregation’s acquisition of Ma’ariv Synagogue altered Sullivan’s representation of American character as it was concretized in the synagogue building. To accommodate a gospel choir, the members of the church modified the organic synthesis Sullivan maintained between the choir booths, the building’s structural framing, and the ornamentation of the synagogue’s interior auditorium. To understand how Ma’ariv Synagogue reflects Sullivan’s ideas of character and physiognomy and how the building’s later history contests these theories, it is important first to explore the intellectual and political basis of Sullivan’s writings.

Sullivan’s Study of American Character

According to James B. Salazar, in the nineteenth century character was “understood as a theory of self-formation” by writers and social reformers intent on developing modern forms of social capital. The ideological function of character building was “to inculcate those forms of economic agency and social discrimination essential to the formation and regulation of a liberal, democratic public sphere in the United States.” One of the most influential theories of national character in the mid-nineteenth century emerged from the philosophy of American transcendentalism. As architectural historians Sherman Paul, Robert Twombly, Narciso Menocal, and Lauren Weinhard have documented, Louis Sullivan’s writings were indebted to this school of thought. Transcendentalism began as a religious reform movement within Unitarianism, but its practice quickly expanded to encompass the reformation of civic affairs. Ralph Waldo Emerson, a key spokesman of the movement, proposed that democratic culture would expand only if citizens embraced the credo of self-reliance and individualism. His essay “The Poet” (1844) outlines a key role for the arts in this task and asserts that through the observation of nature, individuals can train their intellectual capacities for direct action. Emerson popularized a pantheistic interpretation of nature that suggested that “God”—or nature as the material exponent of divine law—was embedded within the human soul. This spiritual connection enabled individuals to see the divine operating in their surroundings without the use of revelation or other external aids. This democratization of sacred knowledge enabled everyday people to produce artworks that expressed their oneness with nature.

Sullivan’s writings bear the influence of transcendentalist attitudes toward American character, race, and nature. According to Twombly, Emerson’s influence on Sullivan dates to Sullivan’s brief tenure in Frank Furness’s office in Philadelphia in 1873. Furness, an ardent abolitionist and Unitarian, translated Emerson’s poetic study of nature into a new form of architectural organism. During his internships and travels, Sullivan continued to read the works of American transcendentalists and poets, developing a personal interpretation of these theories in the 1870s and 1880s. For Sullivan, the highest calling of the architect was to construct poetic essays in brick and mortar capable of expressing Emerson’s principle of oneness with nature. In 1887, he even wrote a letter to the prominent American poet Walt Whitman in which he praised Whitman’s poetry collection *Leaves of Grass* for providing a rhetorical model for creating an authentic American architecture.

In a frequently cited passage from *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman depicted himself as a slave to illustrate the injustices of the Fugitive Slave Act. While in his poetry Whitman portrayed a sympathetic embodiment of blackness and recognized the humanity of enslaved Africans, in reality, he was never convinced of black Americans’ equality with whites. According to literary critic Martin Klammer, Whitman’s writings are split between poetic ideals of an inclusive amalgamation of the American race and journalistic diatribes on the amoral and lowly subjectivity of nonwhites. Whitman’s expositions on black character left little doubt of his views on the inclusive amalgamation of the American race. For example:

> Who believes that the Whites and Blacks can ever amalgamate in America? Or who wishes it to happen? Nature has set an impassable seal against it. Besides, is not America for the Whites? And is it not better so? As long as the Blacks remain here how can they become anything like an independent and heroic race? There is no chance for it.

This bifurcated view of black racial character—optimistic in principle but pessimistic in reality—was the product of white working-class anxieties over labor competition from blacks. Whitman was a member of the Free Soil Party, a political party that advocated the containment of slavery to Southern states, which constituted an effort to protect white working-class Americans from competing sources of labor. Sullivan’s writings suggest that he shared Whitman’s view of American character as an amalgam of different nationalities, and he explicitly related the poor state of white labor to the political precedent of slavery in the Southern states.
Sullivan was also aware of the political themes of Emerson's writings, in which the interpretation of Anglo-American character reveals the tacit racial assumptions of this period. During the 1840s and 1850s, Emerson wrote several works that associated American character with the global development of "Englishness" to dispel claims that the untamed environments of North America's wilderness directly caused physical degeneration in the continent's inhabitants. His most concise explorations appear in the book English Traits, first published in 1856, in which Emerson records the findings of two research trips to the United Kingdom, the first in 1833 and the second in 1847–48. In this work, Emerson traces the evolution of English culture from the primitive migrations of Anglo-Saxon nomads in the British Isles to the earliest British settlers in North America. His broad constructions of English character present the New World as the transatlantic edge of a robust diaspora of British migrants. According to Emerson, the hard life of the Western frontier revivified the "virility" and "masculinity" of the Anglo-Saxon spirit in a way that promised to give North Americans an advantage in twentieth-century affairs.

Emerson continued to use the term race in his theory of Anglo-American character, but he departed from the strict physiological criteria used by biological race theorists of the period. He spent considerable time familiarizing himself with the findings of race science, but he was never fully convinced that a consensus had emerged regarding the empirical basis of biological race types. Instead, he found greater consistency in the stability of national cultures over time, an idea he applied in describing Indian, Celtic, Saxon, Jewish, and Negro peoples. This criterion transferred the analytical value of biological race types, and the hierarchies they produced, to a comparative analysis of national cultures, leading Emerson to attribute the final causes of character to a synthetic constellation of biological and sociological factors. The only time he buffered this analysis with biological assessments of racial genius was in the most negative cases, such as in his analyses of the American Negro and other nonwhite minorities. This explains how Emerson could claim that nonwhites were naturally burdened by fixed deficits in moral, spiritual, and intellectual character, and yet still predict a great future for the development of the American race: he believed that the nation's fate was in the hands of the very best of the nation's racial stock.

The political themes of Sullivan's writings parallel several aspects of Emerson's theories. Sullivan emulated Emerson's geographical construction of American character by considering Chicago the frontier of Western civilization. Emerson influenced Sullivan's romantic depiction of the West as a decisive context for America's future and the culture and institutions of continental Europe as remnants of a feudal past. Sullivan also studied the findings of evolutionary science in the 1870s and 1880s, claiming that "in Darwin he found much food." He ultimately rejected the notion that biological race types alone can account for the progress of cultural history. Instead, he found that Herbert Spencer's and Thomas Henry Huxley's applications of biological theory to sociology "seemed to fit his own case." Using their principles of social organization as a guide, Sullivan analyzed the modern social typologies that emerged from the amalgamation of U.S. national peoples in his book Democracy: A Man-Search. In Democracy, Sullivan outlined the range of typologies he believed were hampering and propelling the contemporary development of American democracy. In this work, written in 1908 but not published until 1962, decades after Sullivan's death, he explicitly rejected all forms of slavery as latent remnants of Old World feudalism. This progressive was common in the post–Civil War years, but it was also consistent with a belief in determined racial character, another common refrain of the time. Nor was this position an endorsement of political pluralism or the social or biological hybridization of white and nonwhite racial groups. In Democracy Sullivan adhered to the assimilationist boundaries he had established in earlier essays by focusing almost exclusively on the establishment of a common culture constructed through white ethnic assimilation. Like Emerson's English Traits, Sullivan's view of American character reframed the racial hierarchies of biology in sociological terms. This is evident in his use of physiognomic language in Autobiography of an Idea (1924): people's taxonomic traits become visible signs of their level of cultural assimilation, which is negatively determined by racial identity in the most extreme cases. As the son of an Irishman, Sullivan would have found a saving grace in a sociological interpretation of amalgamated genius that allowed him to escape the attitude that nonwhite minorities, including the "white negroes," or Irish, were unfit for self-governance.

From Taxonomy to Architectural Physiognomy

Beginning in the 1870s with his Beaux-Arts studies at MIT and in Paris, Sullivan was exposed to the principles of physiognomic theory. Some of his freehand drawings from this time demonstrate his growing interest in representing individual and national characters, especially in the form of caricatures. In order to familiarize himself with the language and customs of France, he made copies of drawings found in the satirical French magazine Journal Amusant (Figure 2). The illustrations in this magazine circulated cultural stereotypes of social minorities such as "the Jewish banker," depicted as a suit-wearing man with an exaggeratedly prominent nose, and the "Wandering Jew," a man roaming the city in ragged clothing (Figure 3). Around this same time, Sullivan experimented with documenting the characters of the buildings and
peoples he visited in his travels. In one image, he sketched a modest country cottage in a pastoral landscape above caricatures of local residents in the style of *Journal Amusant* (Figure 4). This parallel depiction of human and architectural characters suggests an interdependence of personal identity and place, while Sullivan’s use of caricatures powerfully illustrates the range of social types that might inhabit this region. In this one image, Sullivan begins to explore a conceptual relationship between the legibility of human physiognomy and the potential semantic function of architectural physiognomy. I would even speculate that the lively depictions of people in this image represent the typologies that Sullivan later textually critiqued in *Democracy* for preserving the feudal institutions of the past. The image thus constitutes a visual critique of the social limitations of Old World habits.

According to the catalogue created for the 1909 auction of Sullivan’s personal library, he owned several books on physiognomic theory, including Johann Caspar Lavater’s *Essays on Physiognomy* (1804), Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* (1895), and an eight-volume illustrated set of Alfred E. Willis’s *Treatise on Human Nature and Physiognomy* (1880). It is difficult to determine when Sullivan originally purchased these items, although it is clear from the number of titles that he maintained a persistent interest in the subject. Lavater’s writings were seminal in popularizing the principles of phrenology within the general public. Nordau applied Cesare Lombroso’s criminal anthropology to his readings of artistic character, which he described as a “positive” form of social degeneracy. Willis’s handbook consists of illustrations of racial and ethnic character types that outline the importance of the shape and placement of the eyes, ears, and nose. The
illustrations are accompanied by short textual explanations of the cultural meaning and psychological import of each physical trait. Among the traits discussed are Florentine and Jewish noses, two physiognomic forms explicitly referenced in Sullivan’s Autobiography of an Idea in his description of his mother, Andrienne List, and his business partner, Dankmar Adler, respectively (Figures 5 and 6).36 Throughout Illustrated Physiognomy, Willis maintains that the general laws of physiognomy can be applied to readings of both organic and inorganic objects.37 His sentiment that “geology was really the physiognomy of the earth” might have influenced Sullivan’s response to the natural environment.38

Sullivan elaborated an organic interpretation of architectural style as early as 1885, in an address to the Western Association of Architects titled “Characteristics and Tendencies of American Architecture.”39 In this speech, he outlined the complementary functions of “type” and “character” in the design process. In so doing, he borrowed the biological terms used by scientists to refer to immutable physical characteristics common among all peoples (type) and to the psychological, moral, and intellectual capacities of specific persons or groups of people over time (character). In the speech, Sullivan claimed that architectural style could not be passed down through history as a ready-made formula of formal types; rather, it must emerge organically from its historical moment by expressing the essential character of a people. This type/character epistemology persisted in Sullivan’s later works, most succinctly in his Kindergarten Chats, which was first published serially in 1901–2 and then revised for publication in book form in 1918. In this text, Sullivan produced a comparative analysis of the elements of architectural form in order to explain their organic relationship to their cultural contexts. He considered the formal
models of historical typologies to be soulless, or literally without character, because they were expressive of “no time, no people, [and] no race.” The abstract masses and profiles of historical styles were meaningless when disconnected from particular places and times. Once the architect made specific use of these typologies, however, the changes introduced would begin to express the architect’s subjective character and reflect the local context that informed this intellectual development. In this sense, the design and construction of abstract forms were not possible in Sullivan’s architecture theory—only characteristic expressions of contemporary life were possible:

From the character of a pier may we not discern the character of a race: and from the slowly changing character of a developed pier may we not discern the temperamental changes taking place in a race: its growth, its fulfillment, its decay! Has man at any time, can man at any time, can he now lay his hand upon anything, can he focus his mind upon anything, without leaving upon that thing the impress of his character?

In Sullivan’s view, the organic principles that inherently link the artist to his or her culture establish an anthropological basis for a living architecture that continuously evolves in the present. Sullivan’s belief that an artist cannot help but materially communicate an inner life through creative activities constitutes what I would call his theory of architectural physiognomy.

In the terms that I have outlined above, architectural character is an organic extension of the universal laws that regulate social character and racial variation in nature. It mirrors the “organic” principles of natural evolution and guarantees the authenticity of an indigenous material culture in the present. The parallel status of human character and architectural character continues in Sullivan’s later works as well. In his autobiography, Sullivan uses physiognomic language to personify inanimate objects, including the buildings and landscapes recorded during his travels. In the third person, he notes his adolescent response to the physiognomy of Gothic architecture and natural phenomena such as mountains and wooded terrain: “As they moved into the little harbor of Dieppe, what was left of Louis gazed at the quaint city with acceptance and delight. How different from England. What a change in physiognomy.”

The unique qualities of American physiognomy are colorfully depicted in the very personage of Louis Sullivan. He describes himself as a “mongrel” of French, Swiss, German, and Irish heritage to exemplify the amalgamation of his family’s lineage into a unique racial identity. To contrast the essential qualities of European and American character, he relies on ethnic stereotypes that indict the social mores of Old World figures, placing these against a generous description of the artistic genius of second-generation Americans. This contrast highlights the perfectibility of citizens with an amalgamated identity compared with first-generation immigrants, who are tied to tradition.

A low estimation of Irish character is evident in Sullivan’s portrayal of his father, Patrick, and his Irish nanny, Julia Head. He uses physiognomic descriptions of native ethnic features to depict the relatively low status of Irish Catholics, such as in this notorious description of his immigrant father:

|His medium size, his too-sloping shoulders, his excessive Irish face, his small repulsive eyes—the eyes of a pig—of nondescript color and no flash, sunk into his head under rough brows. . . . Naturally enough he had not found time to acquire an “education,” as it was then called and is still called. . . . He was no gentleman as that technical term went, but essentially a lackey, a flunkey or social parasite. Perhaps it was for this reason he revered book-learning and the learned. He knew no better.|

Sullivan’s biographers have struggled to account for this aggressively negative depiction of Patrick Sullivan, especially since there is no empirical evidence of actual discord between him and his sons during his lifetime. A principled distrust of Old World traits, however, provides a clear basis for interpreting this negative description of native Irishness. Sullivan goes to great lengths to distance himself from his native Irish heritage: in a poetic attempt to represent his father’s cultural failings, he employs taxonomic descriptions that verge on a caricature of the pig-like Irishman. This exaggerated portrait communicates his father’s stubborn maintenance of Old World traits.

The portrayal of Julia Head, the nanny employed by Henri and Anna List (Sullivan’s maternal grandparents) on their country farm, also contains stereotypical depictions of pastoral Irish character. Julia’s lack of education is linguistically marked by mannered speech inflections and her recollection of Gaelic phrases and traditional Irish yarns. In his autobiography Sullivan constructs a comparative characterization of native Irish and Irish American stock, with Julia typifying first-generation immigrants and young Louis illustrating the second-generation citizen’s path toward assimilation. In one passage, young Louis asks Julia about a recent parade held for Irish soldiers returning from the Civil War. In a frenzy of Irish pride, Julia makes an explicit reference to black emancipation:

|From the shawls the women wore and the dirty childer, I know the whole crowd was Irish and poor; and as everyone knows, the Irish won the war. Think of it! Holy Virgin!—the Irish fighting for the naygers! What will it be next time?|

Julia’s negative perception of freed black Americans conflicts with Sullivan’s indictment of slavery as a feudal institution in Democracy. This split, however, repeats the ideological
divide in Whitman’s and Emerson’s writings on American character. While it is tempting to view Sullivan’s support of abolition as evidence of a principled stand on racial equality, I interpret his references to black slavery as a reflection of the social and class antagonisms that conditioned the lives of Irish immigrants.

The comparison of Old World and New World traits in Sullivan’s autobiography clarifies the substance of his personal views of American character. Reinforcing the critique of feudal institutions launched in earlier writings, he outlines the negative characteristics exhibited by first-generation immigrants that prevent them from adopting the dominant conceptions of American culture. Patrick Sullivan and Julia Head represent poor Irish immigrants who are ultimately unable to efface their ethnic characters and assimilate to an Anglo-American standard of citizenship. In this sense, Patrick's economic pursuit of individualism deviates too sharply from Emerson’s spiritual principles of self-reliance. By comparison, Sullivan’s mother, Andrienne List, was successful in becoming a cultured subject. Her intellectual promise was evident in her more desirable European pedigree (French, Swiss, and German), the Anglicization of her Irish family name, and her artistic sensitivity to nature, which she passed on to young Louis, who later developed it in his architectural practice. Only the right kinds of acculturation are rewarded in Sullivan’s textual descriptions of American character.

Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue, 1889–1921

Sullivan’s studies of character and physiognomy bore fruit in his design for Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue (1889–90) on Chicago’s South Side. Dankmar Adler was a lifetime member of Ma’ariv and the son of a prominent Orthodox rabbi at Ma’ariv, Liebman Adler (1861–80). The firm of Adler & Sullivan received regular commissions for Reform synagogues on Chicago’s South Side. Adler was responsible for determining the structural and spatial schemes of the firm’s designs for Jewish synagogues, leaving Sullivan to determine the overall massing of the exteriors and the decorative schemes of the buildings.48 Adler & Sullivan’s first 1889 proposal for Ma’ariv Synagogue was for a modern, secular building in Richardsonian style (Figure 7). In physiognomic terms, the Romanesque profile of this proposal expressed the volumetric massing of the main worship space contained

Figure 7 Adler & Sullivan, Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue, 1889, perspective of first Richardsonian scheme (Art Institute of Chicago, Richard Nickel Archive).
within the building. The north, south, and west façades were relieved with deeply set semicircular openings at the second-story and clerestory levels. The external massing and profile of the building’s form outlined the main volume of the worship hall inside. The rendering of the 1889 scheme portrays a heavy rectangular base clad in granite with an intermediary hip roof connecting to a clerestory level above. The entire composition is capped by a pyramidal hip roof clad in terracotta. The façades of this design emulate those found in medieval watchtowers and nineteenth-century urban armories. Despite Sullivan’s claims that his building had “no historical style,” historians have located a twelfth-century precedent for the Romanesque-style synagogue in Worms Synagogue (1174–75) (Figure 8). Identifying this precedent is important because it suggests that Sullivan’s design was the result of a synthetic formal operation: Sullivan transformed the architectural elements and symbolic emblems of the traditional Jewish synagogue in order to make a new statement about the contemporary function of religious spaces.

Sullivan’s business partnership with Adler prospered in response to their firm’s ability to address the cultural needs of its German Jewish clientele. Adler & Sullivan collaborated with Rabbi Isaac S. Moses and the building committee of Ma’ariv to respond to the practices of Reform Judaism. Sullivan’s 1889 design represented an expression of this religious movement that idealized Reform Judaism’s secularism and gave it an assimilationist form. The Jewish Reform movement first flourished in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century under the leadership of Rabbi Abraham Geiger. Geiger and his supporters introduced a gradualist model of divine revelation that aligned religious practices with emerging modern practices. Reform leaders consciously experimented with secularizing religious principles for moral behavior to arrive at a universal standard capable of binding believers and nonbelievers. They turned to German Enlightenment principles such as Bildung (self-education) to liberalize Jewish political identity. By the 1840s, German-speaking migrants brought Reform ideals to Chicago. The Reform movement expanded in the United States as part of a broad search for appropriate forms of worship within American culture.

The cultural politics of the Jewish Reform movement affected the character of the design and construction of American synagogues in the nineteenth century. While prominent Reform leaders were ideologically motivated to find architects capable of expressing their secularizing philosophical beliefs in visual terms, congregants conceived of synagogue architecture primarily as a means of easing social tensions between themselves and other community members. Turn-of-the-century Reform synagogues consisted of three interior zones: the main worship hall, a nearby school or educational center, and a vestry for social activities. In Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv, the entry does not lead directly into the worship hall as might be expected, but to the vestry and classroom spaces on the ground floor that support the public functions of this building typology (Figure 9). The worship hall is situated a half story above grade, overlooking the street below, and is accessed by side stairs connecting the ground floor and the first floor (Figure 10). In addition, the location and orientation of key interior elements of the worship hall, such as the bimah (platform for reading the Torah), the ceremonial ark for holding the Torah, and the platform for sermons, reveal much about the shifting role of the rabbi in Reform Judaism. In Orthodox synagogues the bimah is centrally located to situate the rabbi within the flock, elevating the reading of scripture as the most important activity of the men in the congregation. By contrast, Reform synagogues locate the bimah and the ark on or near a central stage and a podium reserved for the rabbi or cantor to deliver sermons, as in Adler & Sullivan’s design for Ma’ariv (Figure 11). To accommodate a choir at Ma’ariv Synagogue, Adler & Sullivan created recessed alcoves on either side of the stage, integrating all the sound elements of the interior (i.e., organ and singers) into the physical framework of the auditorium. In the late nineteenth century, the most progressive Reform congregations eliminated the bimah and ark from their worship halls entirely, as was the case in Adler & Sullivan’s 1892 renovation of Sinai Temple in Chicago (Figure 12). The new visual focus on the podium reflected the growing importance of rabbis, who had become modern scholars leading the way toward enlightened forms of contemporary worship. As Jeanne Kilde notes, such theater-like arrangements were becoming popular among congregations in both Reform synagogues and Baptist churches because of their egalitarian leveling of sight lines between attendees and the rabbi or preacher. The sense of community formerly built by a common reading of texts among the men of an Orthodox congregation was now created between men and women engaged in building a contemporary Jewish worship.
Two contemporaneous Adler & Sullivan designs for Reform synagogues—Zion Temple (1884–85) and Sinai Temple (1892)—used the same floor plan and building section as Ma’ariv, but they differed in ornament and articulation. In both the renovation of Sinai Temple and the construction of Zion Temple, Sullivan used Moorish ornament to denote Judaism (Figures 13 and 14). These Orientalist motifs had been popular in the 1830s because they recalled the prominence of Jewish culture in medieval Spain and the Middle East. Adler & Sullivan used the Star of David, the tablets of the Mosaic Law, and other religious emblems at Zion and Sinai Temples to designate the Jewish liturgical function of the buildings’ interior spaces. For example, the Star of David marks the main worship space on the façade of Zion Temple (see Figure 13). Such symbols also brought these buildings closer to Anglo-American religious spaces by emulating some of the compositional features of Protestant churches in the area. For example, Adler & Sullivan’s centrally planned worship hall for Sinai Temple did away with the central nave and side aisles of traditional Protestant churches. On the façade, however, the design maintained a tripartite organization that echoed the paired tall, ornamented towers that fronted many Gothic designs in the neighborhood.

In contrast to these designs, Sullivan’s 1889 scheme for Ma’ariv Synagogue altered the religious associations of the Reform synagogue by purposefully omitting the overt display of key religious emblems and Moorish ornamentation from the building’s exterior (see Figure 7). A comparison between Sullivan’s Ma’ariv Synagogue and Henry Hobson Richardson’s Trinity Church in Boston (Figure 15) reveals that Sullivan emulated Richardson’s constrained massing for urban civic spaces.

I interpret the secular character of Sullivan’s Romanesque design as an embodiment of the civic function he believed religious spaces could perform in America if they shed their historical referents. The association of the religious with the civic in the synagogue design aligns with principles in Jewish Reform literature. Reform leaders such as Isaac Mayer Wise believed that Judaism could serve as the fundamental basis of a contemporary ethics that would demonstrate to all American citizens the political value of religious thought. Interdenominational cooperation became common among Jewish Reform and Christian leaders, exemplified by Ma’ariv’s custom of inviting Christian preachers to speak to the congregation on ceremonial occasions.
In March 1890, the Ma’ariv building committee requested significant changes to Sullivan’s Romanesque design that would make more explicit the correlation between the external character of the building and the liturgical function of its interior spaces (Figure 16). The architectural massing of the resulting design featured two distinct compositional forms: a strong rusticated base that preserved the original Richardsonian design and a wood-framed, copper-clad clerestory level that expressed the religious nature of the worship hall within. The structural framework and visual detailing of the clerestory referred to the Ark of the Covenant, which Jewish congregants would have known was made of wood and inlaid with precious metals. The combination of the copper banding along the monumental frieze, which prominently displayed the Star of David, and the perimeter molding above and the Chinese railing of the parapet appeared to imitate the lid to the Ark. Four metal piers on each corner completed the rectilinear geometry of this referent. Architectural historian Joseph Siry has described the tripartite windows of the clerestory as abstractions of the tablets that contain the Law of David. The hip roof could be seen as an emulation of the two inward-facing cherubs that crowned the original Ark. Although Sullivan cited building costs as the primary reason for these aesthetic changes, the religious iconography seems far too coordinated to have been accidental. It is possible that the congregation used negotiations over costs to introduce another set of cultural meanings to the final design. Whatever the final motivation, these alterations reduced the secular connotations of the 1889 design. While direct correspondence between Adler and Sullivan and the building committee is sparse and contains no discussion of the reasons for these changes, the overtly secular character of the 1889 scheme may have provoked them. Newspaper accounts substantiate that Sullivan’s secular treatment of Chicago religious structures had as many critics as champions. Montgomery Schuyler, for example, was critical of the secular character of Sullivan’s design for Ma’ariv Synagogue: “It is an interesting scheme but it cannot be said to have been fairly carried out on the exterior, which not only fails to convey any ecclesiastical impression, but which appears rather as a sketch than as a completed design.”

While the exterior of the 1890 scheme for Ma’ariv did not create an organic whole out of the structural and ornamental elements of the building as Sullivan initially intended, the disjunctions of its final form better expressed the tensions that existed between the nationalist and religious tendencies within the Reform movement. Historians have long noted the compositional dissonance within this second design, but most
have considered it only in terms of Sullivan’s idealized view of an organic architecture. However, I interpret the second scheme as a revision of Sullivan’s ideas of American character and its translation into his architecture. This was a moment when the architect seems to have rethought his conception of an amalgamated American character and rendered a representation of a marginal people’s hybrid identity. Ironically, the earlier Orientalist façades of Chicago’s Reform Jewish synagogues also expressed the hybrid identity of this ethnic minority, although these were still associated with an exoticism that characterized Jewish Americans as “other.” Sullivan’s organic solution of 1889 overcorrected this situation with an architecture that emulated the anonymous character of Worms Cathedral—a precedent completed during an intolerant regime in Europe—in order to help them fit in. He represented Jewish American character through both sacred and secular components of the building program instead of assimilating the components into an expression of a unified national character.

The Afterlife of Ma’ariv Synagogue

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, demographic shifts and white flight from Chicago’s South Side transformed the area surrounding Ma’ariv Synagogue into a predominantly black enclave. Ma’ariv Synagogue became the focus of one effort by the area’s new residents to make the neighborhood their own. According to articles
published in independent black newspapers, after Booker T. Washington’s death in 1915, a committee of eight prominent black and white civic leaders created a subscription fund with the Chicago Title and Trust Company to purchase and renovate the synagogue. They intended to create a vocational center for school-age black children in honor of Washington, with the aim of spreading his ethos of racial uplift in Chicago. Dr. William A. Venerable of the Lincoln-Lee Institute of Chelsea, a branch of a temperance society created after the Civil War, was to serve as the director of the school. This renovation project would have established a “practical memorial” to Washington’s pragmatic legacy of vocational training and self-reliance by providing “a social center and industrial training school for Negro children in Chicago.” In keeping with Washington’s racial politics, this new institution would not achieve these aims through racial integration. Despite the rise of public schools at the turn of the century, primary and secondary educational institutions were generally segregated. If it had been realized, this transformation of Ma’ariv Synagogue might have fulfilled Sullivan’s desire to turn religious institutions into secular spaces, in this case in support of a free black community. The members of the Ma’ariv congregation were involved in this effort, offering to sell the building and the land it sat on for $85,000, a sizable discount from their original cost of $130,000.

In his political writings, Washington interpreted the value of monumental buildings for uplifting the character of the black race and improving public perceptions of his people. In an essay in his collection *Character Building* (1902), he summarized the moral lessons that students and faculty gleaned from designing and constructing the campus buildings at...
Tuskegee Institute. Washington praised the utilitarian aesthetic of these buildings, many of which were Romanesque in style, for communicating what he called “the virtue of simplicity” to a generation of laborers just out of slavery:

We do not expect to have fine, costly buildings, nor do we want to have them. But we do expect to have well-constructed buildings, and attractive buildings; and, if we can go on in this simple, humble way, the time will come when we shall have all the buildings we need. Just in proportion as our friends see that we are worthy of these good things, they will come to us.65

Washington believed that the humility of civic buildings should be expressed through simple and functional detailing, which was equivalent to the simple grooming and dress he promoted for rural Southern migrants. He even suggested that community buildings must embody the labor and values of their communities. Speaking of the parallel construction of individual and architectural characters, he said: “We can succeed in putting up good buildings only in proportion as everyone performs well his part in the erection of each building.”66

Offering praise for the rise of the “Anglo-Saxon race” in New England, which he took as a model for uplifting the black race, Washington outlined a conservative path for social stability in the South. If it had been constructed, the practical memorial to Washington would have produced a major public institution instantiating the principles of his Tuskegee lectures.
Although a public subscription for the memorial was started, the project never materialized. It is not clear why the project stalled, as newspapers from the time are silent on the subject and no building plans for the renovation project have ever been located. Instead, an African American Baptist congregation became the final stewards of Ma’ariv Synagogue, giving the community an unexpected engagement with Sullivan’s American architecture (Figure 17). The Baptist Executive Council for Pilgrim Baptist Church purchased the synagogue on 12 January 1921, and later that year the property was turned over to the congregation’s building committee for renovation and occupation. The committee made two noteworthy physical changes to the structure to accommodate its new function as a black Christian church: the area in front of the altar was extended to accommodate a gospel choir, and the Jewish ornamentation was removed from the interior of the

Figure 17 Congregants leaving Pilgrim Baptist Church, Chicago, on Easter Sunday, 1941 (photo by Lee Russell; Farm Security Administration Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.).

Figure 18 Pilgrim Baptist Church, Chicago, undated view of the enlarged stage area (Art Institute of Chicago, Richard Nickel Archive).
auditorium and from the exterior clerestory. By the mid-1930s, Pilgrim Baptist Church became known for its gospel choir.69 The excellence of the choir brought the former Ma’ariv Synagogue into the national spotlight as a symbol of black culture in Chicago. However, the celebration of gospel music required the Reverend Junius C. Austin to modify the content and character of religious services to navigate the class differences that emerged within his congregation as well as the form of the church. The progressive expansions of the stage made the clergy and the gospel choir equally central (Figure 18). Pilgrim Baptist’s leaders covered up the recessed alcoves on either sides of the stage that Adler and Sullivan originally reserved for the choir (see Figure 11). This departure disrupted the seamless integration of spatial and material elements that were unified by Sullivan’s design. These spatial changes were accompanied by a concomitant modification of the racial identity of key biblical figures. In her study of William E. Scott’s murals for Pilgrim Baptist Church, Kymberly Pinder notes that the partition covering the right alcove was painted with a mural depicting the Last Supper in which Jesus is shown as a black person (Figure 19).70 Revisionist African American biblical imagery replaced most of the original Jewish iconography of the interior hall.

Over time, Pilgrim Baptist Church saved money by covering the clerestory with the asphalt shingles commonly used in residential structures in the area, transforming the clerestory into a mere extension of the hip roof above (Figure 20). Removing the external religious ornamentation of Adler & Sullivan’s original design introduced another architectural character to the building. These changes repressed the clerestory level in an expressly nonmonumental gesture. In an imaginary bird’s-eye view of the church, its asphalt roof cladding would have been continuous with the field of shingle rooftops in the surrounding neighborhood. This condition, which reflects the ontological reality of religious life at Pilgrim Baptist Church, reaffirms Sullivan’s secular interpretation of religious spaces by creating a visual equivalence between the church and the domestic buildings around it. I interpret these changes as the congregation’s way of striking an aesthetic balance between monumental forms and the ubiquitous features of vernacular design, an approach consistent with church members’ pragmatic attitude toward balancing different demands in their musical, spatial, and liturgical practices.

A damaging fire in 2006 necessitated yet another reconsideration of the building’s exterior expression (Figure 21). In the restoration proposal designed by architects Johnson & Lee, Ltd., a skeleton frame in steel evokes Adler & Sullivan’s clerestory and hip roof. The rebuilding committee decided to restore the building to its condition when it was Pilgrim Baptist Church in the 1920s and 1930s, rather than the period when it served as Ma’ariv Synagogue, inaugurating another phase in the history of Sullivan’s building.

Conclusion

Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue and its history form a case study of the racial politics of Louis Sullivan’s vision for American architecture. Sullivan’s initial design for Ma’ariv (1889) provided a secular image of assimilationist national belonging for the synagogue’s congregation. However, his vision did not completely resolve the contradictions inherent in the sacred and secular aspects of the synagogue’s architectural
program. It was only after the building committee demanded changes to the façade that Ma’ariv Synagogue represented the hybrid identity of Reform Jews in the United States.

The transformation of Ma’ariv Synagogue into Pilgrim Baptist Church in the 1920s changed the building’s political and aesthetic meaning. The leadership of Pilgrim Baptist Church introduced three prominent changes to the building, expanding the stage area in the main worship space, adding racialized murals of biblical scenes on the interior, and removing ornamentation and Jewish imagery from the exterior clerestory. The spatial changes precipitated by the need to accommodate a gospel choir created a gradual weakening of the formal separations Adler & Sullivan had established between the clergy and the laity in the original design. Alterations to the clerestory reflected the vernacular aesthetic of surrounding neighborhood housing, which paralleled the “make-do” ethos of black homeowners and of the Pilgrim Baptist congregation. These shifts subtly destabilized the synthetic integration Sullivan desired among the spatial, structural, and ornamental elements of his organic architecture. The modifications made to Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue and Pilgrim Baptist Church complicate our understanding of Sullivan’s assimilationist interpretation of American character. While Sullivan’s focus on the shifting boundaries of whiteness may have limited the scope of his architectural vision during his lifetime, the physical use and transformation of this building over time have expanded the operative definitions of American character that pervaded his work. It is only by recovering the lost voices and influences of Chicago’s Jewish and African American congregants that we can fully assess the historical impact of Sullivan’s architectural legacy.

Charles L. Davis II’s research examines the critical integrations of race and style theory in modern architectural discourse. His forthcoming book, Building Character: The Racial Politics of Modern Architectural Style (University of Pittsburgh Press), traces race and style in “architectural organicism,” movements that modeled design on the generative principles of nature. Charles.Davis@uncc.edu

Notes
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3. Patricia Morton uses the phrase “architectural physiognomy” to account for the ethnographic content of colonial pavilions and museum displays in the 1931 Colonial Exposition held in Paris, France. My use of this term extends her reading to Sullivan’s attempts to develop an architectural expression for white cultural nationalism outside the immediate context of world’s fairs and colonial expositions. See Patricia Morton, Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000).

8. Lawrence Buell notes: “Still another strand of influence was republican-democratic political theory. This especially shaped Emerson’s conviction that though everyone falls short of self-realization much of the time, everyone has self-transformative capacity. . . . Not that Emerson was an unqualified egalitarian. Like Jefferson, Adams, and other founding fathers, he believed in de facto natural aristocracy. He can sometimes sound like a patrician snob on the subjects of mobocracy and the benightedness of the mentally or socially unwhashed.” Lawrence Buell, Emerson, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003, 62–63.

9. Twombly, Louis Sullivan, 40–41. Menocal provides a brief chronological explanation for Sullivan’s uses of architectural ornament, noting that Sullivan’s initial approach was “picturesque” insofar as it involved the application of ornament onto the surfaces of buildings without fully integrating it into the underlying geometries of the building. This included ornament applied to building surfaces and contained within frames in interiors. A synthetic framework for integrating form and ornament did not emerge in Sullivan’s work until he began to apply Emanuel Swedenborg’s theory of correspondences, which Menocal claims was most directly related to Sullivan through Emerson’s lectures of the 1850s. See Menocal, Architect as Nature, 24.


16. For example: “Now it is clear why and how the powerful and eminently unscrupulous few were growing richer, while the weaker but likewise unscrupulous many were passing into acquisitive slavery—for, historically, their black slavery was but the prophet of the present white serfdom.” Louis Sullivan, Democracy: A Man-Search (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), 88.

17. For an examination of the racial discourses operating within Emerson’s political writings, see Buell, Emerson, 242–87.

18. Fears of degeneration were widespread in the nineteenth century, with many scientists speculating on the fate of European immigrants in the United States. For example, in 1850, Robert Knox argued that European race types would not change upon geographical relocation, asserting that “races, transplanted to the New World would endeavor to carry out their destinies as they had done, and are engaged with, in the Old World; and that nationalities, however strong, could never in the long run overcome the tendencies of race.” Robert Knox, The Races of Men (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850), 212. This belief in the immutable quality of racial character over nationalism provides an important backdrop for a consideration of Sullivan’s critique of European immigrants on American soil, as Emerson directly cited Knox.


21. Ibid.

22. At least two book-length studies of Emerson’s race theory have been published, as well as several chapters within edited volumes. Most of the arguments hinge on interpretation of Emerson’s English Traits and the longevity of the viewpoints expressed within this study. For discussion of Emerson’s elevation of a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant ideal for American democracy, see Nicoloff, Emerson on Race and History; Nell Irvin Painter, The History of White People (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 151–89. These studies view Emerson’s turn toward Anglo-Saxonism as a permanent aspect of his post-British travels. For a contrasting opinion, see Daniel Koch, Ralph Waldo Emerson in Europe: Class, Race and Revolution in the Making of an American Thinker (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 167–78.

23. The materials Emerson consulted included the writings of Robert Knox, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Samuel Morton, and the American anthropologists Josiah Nott and George Gliddon. See Koch, Ralph Waldo Emerson in Europe, 171.

24. In English Traits, he asserts: “It is race, is it not? that puts the hundred millions of India under the dominion of a remote island in the north of Europe. Race avails much, if that be true, which is alleged, that all Celts are Catholics, and all Saxons are Protestants, that Celts love unity of power, and Saxons the representative principle. Race is a controlling influence in the Jew, who, for two millennia, under every climate, has preserved the same character and employments. Race in the Negro is of appalling importance.” Emerson, English Traits, 30. He cites Robert Knox’s 1850 study on race as a reference for his understanding of racial aptitudes. Ibid., 211–2.

25. For a discussion of Emerson’s thoughts on poor black citizens, see Painter, History of White People, 184–89.


28. Ibid., 255.

29. Sullivan, Democracy, 261–337.

30. This was especially true for Irish immigrants to the United States, as they were considered to be “white negroes,” or the social equivalent of blacks, upon their arrival. However, given their lack of value as a source of labor, the Irish were often derided by Southerners with slaves. See Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White (New York: Dover, 1993), 34–55.


33. Catalogue at Auction at Our Salesrooms, No. 185 Wabash Avenue, Monday, Nov. 29, 10:30 A.M.: Household effects, library, Oriental rugs, paintings, etc. of Mr. Louis Sullivan, the well-known Chicago architect, at unreserved sale (Chicago: Williams, Barker & Severn, 1909), see entries 18 and 27 under the subheading “Books.”

34. Lombroso’s racial anthropology has also been connected to the theories of Viennese architect Adolf Loos. See Jimena Canales and Andrew Hersher, “Criminal Skins: Tattoos and Modern Architecture in the Work of Adolf Loos,” Architectural History 48 (2005), 235–56.

35. Alfred E. Willis, Illustrated Physiognomy (Chicago: Alfred E. Willis, 1879), 3.
has favored me, and which are summarized above, Mr. Adler writes, that since
him free to devote himself to the engineering problems involved in the modern

40. Louis Sullivan, Kindergarten Chats (1918; repr., New York: Dover,
1979), 124.

41. Ibid., 127.


43. Ibid., 11.

44. Ibid., 14.

45. Robert Twombly presents more evidence of Louis Sullivan’s disagree-
ments with his brother Albert than with his father. See Twombly, Louis
Sullivan, 1–3.


47. Sullivan, Democracy, 88.

48. This division of labor is described in a letter from Dankmar Adler to Mont-
gomery Schuyler. As Schuyler writes: “A Critique (with Illustrations) of the
Architectural Record, Great American Architects Series, no. 2 (Feb. 1896), 15.

49. See Joseph Siry, Beth Shalom Synagogue: Frank Lloyd Wright and Modern

50. The quote, taken from a November 1890 article in the Chicago Tribune
headlined “Church Spires Must Go,” appears in Robert Twombly’s edited
edition of Louis Sullivan’s essays, Public Papers, 73.

51. Dana Evan Kaplan, American Reform Judaism: An Introduction (New

52. Reform theorists referred to this belief as ethical monotheism. See ibid.,
14–18.

53. The congregations of Jewish synagogues routinely formed Verein, or so-
cial clubs, to facilitate all forms of self-improvement. See Alan Silverstein,
Alternatives to Assimilation: The Response of Reform Judaism to American Culture,

54. “A typical plan of the older American synagogue was to have the worship
hall as the major floor area of the structure. It was generally raised half a story
above the street and designed to contain seating for the entire congregation.
Its decoration was as elaborate as means allowed. Below was a large, low-
ceilinged room, the ‘vestry,’ used for social functions, lectures, and the like.
Flanking it were permanent and semi-permanent classrooms. The building
was designed to serve a well-knit neighborhood, placed on a minimum-sized
plot, often surrounded by commercial properties.” Peter Blake, The American
Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow (New York: Union of American Hebrew
Congregations, 1954), 89.

55. Ibid.

56. Jeanne Halgren Kilde, When Church Became Theatre: The Transformation of
Evangelical Architecture and Worship in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford

57. Dana Evan Kaplan discusses Wise’s argument: “As the purest form
of monotheistic religion, Judaism was therefore the strongest theologici-
anal argument for ethical behavior. As such, it deserved to be taken seri-
ously as a way of thought and a way of life by all individuals committed
to finding a true understanding of God and God’s place in the world.
This allowed Reform leaders such as Wise to declare that Judaism
was destined to become the faith of all mankind, or at least of all
Americans who held liberal religious beliefs.” Kaplan, American Reform
Judaism, 16.

58. Siry notes this detail in his recent study of Jewish synagogues. Siry, Beth
Shalom Synagogue, 46.

59. Schuyler, “Critique,” 39–40. An equal amount of praise and criticism can be
found in response to Sullivan’s designs for religious spaces. For example,
complaints by congregants of the Moody Tabernacle were quelled only by a
word from John Moody, the reverend of the church. Twombly notes, in
regard to the tabernacle, that “when the frescoes went up, they caused a sen-
sation within the congregation. Anticipating traditional religious motifs, sev-
eral Moody followers found Sullivan’s offerings much too secular.” Twombly,
Louis Sullivan, 87–88. Siry also notes negative critiques. See Siry, Beth Shalom
Synagogue, 38.

60. Schuyler’s comments are typical of this opinion. See Schuyler, “Critique.”
His criticisms are echoed by Rachel Wischnitzer in her 1955 survey of Ameri-
can synagogues: “The overall pattern used here by Louis Sullivan was the
same as in Henry Hobson Richardson’s Marshall Field warehouse in Chicago
(1885); but if the formula was effective there because it provided a device for
tying together the seven stories of a commercial building, here it produced an
awkward monotony, not to speak of the unresolved problem of the treatment
of the front.” Rachel Wischnitzer, Synagogue Architecture in the United States:
History and Interpretation (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of
America, 1955), 91.

61. See Drake and Clayton’s discussion in their canonical study of black
Chicago, especially their explanation of the external forces that created a black
segregated enclave in the South Side. St. Clair Drake and Horace Clayton,
Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City (New York: Harper


63. One of the board members for this venture was Jesse Binga, a conserva-
tive black businessman who was president of the only black-owned bank in Chi-
ago’s South Side. Binga’s real estate speculations made him familiar with the
representational role of black civic structures in Chicago. His 1905 purchase
of the Bates Building at 3635–3637 State Street initiated a gradual black in-
migration to this block that changed “the whole complexion of the neigh-
borhood.” According to a newspaper profile of Binga’s career, this expansion
opened the way “for colored people to reside on every street and avenue from
State Street east to Lake Michigan.” “The Opening of the Binga State Bank,”
Broad Axe, 23 Dec. 1922, 12. Binga later placed a storefront bank in the same
building in 1908 and marked the corner with a painted wall sign advertising
the presence of this black institution.

64. “Afro-American Callings,” 2.


66. Ibid.


68. Kehilath Anshe Ma’ariv Synagogue, Historic American Buildings Survey
report, 1965, 2, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress,
Washington, D.C.

69. See Michael W. Harris, The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas
Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church (New York: Oxford University Press,

70. “To the right of the altar, a Christ clearly of African descent, displaying
dark brown skin, a broad, flattened nose, and black, wavy hair, presided over
the Last Supper and his disciples including the youthful John and the brood-
ing Judas. Scott painted the disciples in varying skin tones that ranged from
light beige to medium brown.” Kimberly Pinder, “Painting the Gospel Blues:
Race, Empathy and Religion at Pilgrim Baptist Church,” American Art 25,
no. 3 (Fall 2011), 80.