PALGRAVE STUDIES IN CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

AT THE EDGES OF LIBERALISM

Junctions of European, German, and Jewish History

Steven E. Aschheim

Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History

Series Editors

Anthony J. La Vopa, North Carolina State University

Suzanne Marchand, Louisiana State University

Javed Majeed, Queen Mary, University of London

The Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History series has three primary aims: to close divides between intellectual and cultural approaches, thus bringing them into mutually enriching interactions; to encourage interdisciplinarity in intellectual and cultural history; and to globalize the field, both in geographical scope and in subjects and methods. This series is open to work on a range of modes of intellectual inquiry, including social theory and the social sciences; the natural sciences; economic thought; literature; religion; gender and sexuality; philosophy; political and legal thought; psychology; and music and the arts. It encompasses not just North America but Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. It includes both nationally focused studies and studies of intellectual and cultural exchanges between different nations and regions of the world, and encompasses research monographs, synthetic studies, edited collections, and broad works of reinterpretation. Regardless of methodology or geography, all books in the series are historical in the fundamental sense of undertaking rigorous contextual analysis.

Published by Palgrave Macmillan

Indian Mobilities in the West, 1900–1947: Gender, Performance, Embodiment
By Shompa Lahiri

The Shelley-Byron Circle and the Idea of Europe
By Paul Stock

Culture and Hegemony in the Colonial Middle East
By Yaseen Noorani

Recovering Bishop Berkeley: Virtue and Society in the Anglo-Irish Context
By Scott Breuninger

The Reading of Russian Literature in China: A Moral Example and Manual of Practice
By Mark Gamsa

Rammohun Roy and the Making of Victorian Britain
By Lynn Zastoupil

Carl Gustav Jung: Avant-Garde Conservative
By Jay Sherry

Law and Politics in British Colonial Thought: Transpositions of Empire
Edited by Shaunnagh Dorsett and Ian Hunter

Sir John Malcolm and the Creation of British India
By Jack Harrington

The American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century
Edited by Sven Beckert and Julia B. Rosenbaum

Benjamin Constant and the Birth of French Liberalism
By K. Steven Vincent

The Emergence of Russian Liberalism: Alexander Kunitsyn in Context, 1783–1840
By Julia Berest

The Gospel of Beauty in the Progressive Era: Reforming American Verse and Values
By Lisa Szefel

Knowledge Production, Pedagogy, and Institutions in Colonial India
Edited by Indra Sengupta and Daud Ali

Religious Transactions in Colonial South India: Language, Translation, and the Making of Protestant Identity
By Hephzibah Israel

Cultural History of the British Census: Envisioning the Multitude in the Nineteenth Century
By Kathrin Levitan

Character, Self, and Sociability in the Scottish Enlightenment
Edited by Thomas Ahnert and Susan Manning

The European Antarctic: Science and Strategy in Scandinavia and the British Empire
By Peder Roberts

Origins of Modern Historiography in India: Antiquarianism and Philology, 1780–1880
By Rama Sundari Mantena

Isaiah Berlin: The Journey of a Jewish Liberal
By Arie Dubnov

Making British Indian Fictions: 1772–182
By Ashok Malhotra

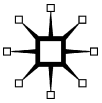
At the Edges of Liberalism: Junctions of European, German, and Jewish History
Steven E. Aschheim

At the Edges of Liberalism

Junctions of European, German, and Jewish History

Steven E. Aschheim

palgrave
macmillan



AT THE EDGES OF LIBERALISM

First published in 2012 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world,
this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited,
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies
and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States,
the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-137-00228-0 ISBN 978-1-137-00229-7 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137002297

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aschheim, Steven E., 1942– author.
At the edges of liberalism : junctions of European, German and Jewish history /
Steven E. Aschheim.
pages cm.—(Palgrave studies in cultural and intellectual history)
ISBN 978–1–137–00227–3 (hardback)—ISBN 978–1–137–00228–0
1. Jews—Germany—History—1800–1933. 2. Jews—Germany—Politics and
government—20th century. 3. Jews—Germany—Intellectual life. 4. Jews—
Cultural assimilation—Germany. 5. Liberalism—Germany—History—
20th century. 6. Germany—Ethnic relations I. Title.

DS134.25.A83 2012
305.892′404309041—dc23 2011047560

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: May 2012

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Robert Alter, Ezra Mendelsohn, and Jerry Z. Muller

Also by Steven E. Aschheim

Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923 (1982)

The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990 (1992)

Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises (1996)

*Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Time*s (2001)

In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews (2001)

Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem, ed. (2001)

Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad (2007)

Contents

Permissions

Steven Aschheim. "Reflections on Insiders and Outsiders," slightly revised in the present version, was originally written as the introduction to a volume in honor of Ezra Mendelsohn, *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry,* edited by Richard I. Cohen, Jonathan Frankel, and Stefani Hoffman (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010). Used by permission. (re: Chapter 12)

Steven E. Aschheim, "Toward a Phenomenology of the Jewish Intellectual: The German and French Cases Compared." From *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models,* edited by Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (2003), pp. 199–216. Reprinted by permission of Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. KG. (re: Chapter 13)

Steven E. Aschheim, "Reflections on Theatricality, Identity, and the Modern Jewish Experience." First published in *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre*, edited by Jeanette R. Malkin and Freddie Rokem; © 2010 by the University of Iowa Press. Used with permission. (re: Chapter 14)

1
Introduction

The essays in this volume seek to confront some of the charged meeting points of European history, especially German history, and Jewish history. All the chapters, in one way or another, explore the entanglements, the intertwined moments of belonging and estrangement, the creativity and destructiveness that occurred at these junctions. Significant energies went into negotiating the conditions of these engagements, participating in their seductions, rendering them tolerably workable, or undoing their promise and foiling their possibilities. These encounters typically unfolded within an uneasy continuum of conflict and cooperation, conformity and resistance, refashioning or maintaining personal and collective dimensions of identity. Clearly, they never allowed for the luxurious sensation of indifference. Yet it would be wrong to present meetings of this kind as exclusively confrontational, as stark either-or choices. Life at the junctions may be vulnerable and insecure, but it can also yield fresh angles of perception and new opportunities. If these boundary situations generated a modicum of friction, confusion, and anxiety, and at times even murderousness, they also produced new alliances, creative projects and novel fusions and formations of identity. These complex interconnections and mutual involvements have always interested me; over the years I have developed these themes in different ways. This volume reflects such ongoing concerns, but, I hope, in new and deepened fashion. It also deals with topics that I have not previously engaged, including reflections on insiders and outsiders, Orientalism, the nature and limits of empathy, French-Jewish and German-Jewish comparative analysis, and theatricality.

Beyond this, however, many of the present offerings also represent a certain additional turning in perspective and focus. It was only upon assembling these discrete pieces—written for various unrelated academic occasions—that I became aware of the nature and coherence of this shift. One is not always fully conscious of the impulses informing the choices of topics, the questions posed, and the emphases guiding one's work. Yet, upon reflection, it has become clear to me that almost all these forays into cultural and intellectual history explore aspects of the dialectical strains, critiques, and alternatives that late–nineteenth century and early to mid–twentieth century individualist liberalism engendered at its edges. This took place when liberalism was both at the defining normative center of European political and cultural life

and was, at the same time, undergoing recurrent crises. These nibbles—and sometimes larger destructive bites—at the edges were by no means limited to Jews. But given that Enlightenment humanism was the chief ideational agent enabling Jewish emancipation and participation within European culture, the Jewish role as participants in counterdiscourses at the edges of liberalism was particularly poignant. This, more often than not, presented a paradox, for these critics remained umbilically attached, and ambivalently attracted, to the very liberal sensibility and values they were questioning. Yet, in various forms and fashions, these were often broad, and sometimes nuanced and subtle, responses to the genuine frustrations and lacunae that bourgeois liberalism left in its wake. Still, as the section on "Evil at the Edges" and parts of Chapter 14 seek to demonstrate, when the assault against liberalism became virulent and direct, many of these same Jews themselves became the objects of the critique and, ultimately, its victims.

These dual themes—politics, culture, life choices at the junctions, and projects and ruminations (as well as abominations) at the edges of liberalism—thus constitute the framework of the present work. It attempts to explore various dimensions of these concerns as played out by various actors within diverse contexts and discourses. I do not want to summarize their contents here. What would be the point of reading these pieces if one knows in advance what they have to offer? Still, a word about this volume's organizational and conceptual structure may be helpful to readers. The section "On the Edges of Liberalism" presents three offerings that on the surface seem rather unrelated. The radical projects of idiosyncratic Weimar German-Jewish émigrés who became iconic figures of Western intellectual culture (Chapter 2), the fraught post-Enlightenment Jewish engagement with the "Western" and "Oriental" dimensions of their identity and experience (Chapter 3), and the history of a remarkable group of Central European Zionists who were acutely aware of the moral dilemmas of settlement in pre-Israel Palestine and sought a binationalist solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict (Chapter 4) appear to have little in common. Yet, as widely apart as they may seem, they all emerged out of an intense engagement with—and certain *fin-de-siècle* dissatisfaction with—the presuppositions of bourgeois individualist rationalism and, in varying ways, they all sought and developed postliberal alternatives and solutions to European mass modernity. In many ways these forays helped to shape not only the agendas of their own times but, for reasons that these essays hope to make clear, issues that have retained their resonance well into the twenty-first century.

Hannah Arendt, Gershom Scholem, and Victor Klemperer were all very much three German Jews at the junction, as the title of the second section would have it. In both her work and temperament, Arendt challenged ideological fixities and prized the complex, critical, indeed subversive, nature of her own intertwined commitments; Scholem, whose identity from a very early stage was defined in radical opposition to that of normative bourgeois

German Jewry, once paradoxically defined his distinctive brand of Zionism as "living securely on the boundary;" and Klemperer, whose long German life was tempestuously buffeted from the Kaiserreich through the German Democratic Republic, often described himself as uncomfortably sitting "between the stools." The portraits of each of these individuals (chapters 5 through 7), seek to provide illustrations of their intellectual endeavors and political and existential choices at the junctions of their German, Jewish, and liberal heritages. In Part 3, "Evil at the Edges," Chapter 8 brings Arendt, Scholem, and Klemperer together as they respectively and divergently confronted the trauma and implications of Nazism, a theme not treated in the individual essays. I have particularly concentrated on these individuals not only because I believe they are all intrinsically interesting and significant, if at times rather annoying twentieth-century intellectuals, worthy of separate analysis and attention, but also because they personify key responses to their common German-Jewish fate and the diverse roads taken to negotiate it. While none of them was an "ordinary" or "representative" figure, they were all emblematic, confronting the public cataclysms of their times and forging creative—and very different—answers to dilemmas that no twentieth-century German Jew had the luxury to evade.

Together with Chapter 8, Chapter 11, "The Ambiguous Political Economy of Empathy," deals mainly, but not exclusively, with National Socialism, indubitably the most pernicious moment in the history of antiliberalism. However, this section is less an exercise in historical documentation than it is an examination of some of the problematic implications and issues that confront us now in the light of that traumatic experience and later ones. Thus, in dealing with the barbarities of Nazi and other book burnings, Chapter 9 probes a perplexing tension that continues to plague even the most liberal cultures: should freedom of political and scientific expression, even if they be of deadly potential, be allowed to proceed without limits? In our own time, the most permissive humanists will necessarily have to confront a world in which censorship, or at least self-censorship, cannot simply be dismissed as evil, but may very well constitute a means of preventing it. "Imaging the Absolute" (Chapter 10), seeks to decode Western liberal figurations of this evil, and some of the Eurocentric biases attendant to it, while Chapter 11 attempts to flesh out the outlines of an always complex political economy of empathy, one that deals with the nature, structure, possibilities, and limits of our empathic capacities with regard to genocide and atrocities as well as with regard to the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict.

Part 4, "Encounters at the Junction: Jews and Western Culture," explores these meetings in a variety of contexts and from various viewpoints. Chapter 12 represents an attempt to reflect on the general categories of "insiders" and "outsiders" and to interrogate the ways in which we think of Jewish experience at the edges, and to consider the nuances and gradations of belonging and exclusion. Chapter 13 examines the differential ways in which French and German

culture channeled the creative energies and projects of Jewish intellectuals, as well as the areas in which, despite the differences, commonalities apply. In their different ways, chapters 14 and 15 treat the dilemmas of Jewish self-definition within the framework of modern, liberal, emancipatory society. There I try to illuminate a tension that has gone insufficiently remarked: that between overall "civilizing" pressures of *Bildung* and middle-class respectability, on the one hand, and a certain Jewish resistance to socialization and a stubborn desire to maintain some kind of an intimate ethnic distinctiveness on the other. The clash between formal restraint and expressiveness, conformity and difference, I suggest, was crucial to both the identity negotiations and creative cultural and intellectual history of German-speaking Jewry, and to this day it, represents a more general, ongoing and unresolved tension of Jewish life within advanced liberal societies.

I venture to suggest that many of the issues raised here remain as actual and unresolved today as when they were first articulated, as much the source of creativity as anxiety: the radical critiques of liberalism and mass modernity; the putative clash between, and desire to bridge, East and West; the tensions between "assimilated" and affirmative Jewish identities, between cultivated "respectability" and spontaneous ethnic expression; the selective nature, and the possible expansion, of our empathic capacities; the dilemmas of Jewish intellectuals "at the margins;" and the taut moral dilemmas of Zionism.

I do not know if this collection amounts to a singular worldview. Clearly, however, it is as much a work of autobiography as it is of scholarship. In subtle and sometimes not so subtle ways, the writing of history can assume relevance and vitality precisely because it is bound to present existential situations and contemporary quandaries. We delve into the past partly in order to better comprehend and deal with the present. Living as I do in Israel—very much at a critical junction and at the charged, fraying edges of liberalism—this work reflects the urgency and ongoing nature of my intellectual interests, political concerns, and ethical dilemmas. They continue to provide the animus for an always-stimulating personal and professional life.

Part 1
On the Edges of Liberalism

2

Icons Beyond Their Borders: The German-Jewish Intellectual Legacy at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century

Legacies are typically constructed in extremely selective and often ideologically motivated ways. For some, the German-Jewish legacy is an intrinsically negative one, an object lesson in how *not* to behave as Jews, the story of a deluded, undignified, and spectacularly unsuccessful assimilation. This is a version that has had much popular appeal, both in the United States and in Israel.[1] The emphasis in this chapter is quite a different one. It is about a cultural and intellectual legacy that I believe we should examine critically, but that is nevertheless unique and admirable, and—in an appropriately modified way—also worthy of emulation.

To be sure, there is nothing particularly new in this positive version. For over a half-century now, fascinated scholars have been chronicling, mapping, and variously explaining—often in a highly sophisticated manner—the creative cultural and intellectual achievements of German Jewry. It would be no exaggeration to state that the study of German-Jewish culture and intellect has become something of an academic industry, a kind of counterhistory to the perhaps equally persistent derogatory narrative of German Jewry as demoralized, deluded, and disfigured.

There is, no doubt, a degree of quite understandable post-Holocaust idealization in the positive portraits. In many ways, the enterprise of its earlier historians has aimed to restore the dignity of its history to German Jewry. George Mosse's appreciation of the cultural and intellectual achievements of German Jews—as the product of a peculiarly Jewish appropriation of the distinctive German notion of *Bildung* that was built into the creative core of their newly acquired identities—is as much personal credo as historical analysis, transmuted into a goal, an "inspiration for many men and women searching to humanize their society and lives."[2] George Steiner repeatedly trumpets the prodigal creative genius of post-Enlightenment German-speaking Jewish intellectuals and creative artists steeped in the emancipated, secular, critical, humanism of Central Europe—and equates this with his own idealized conception of a

quintessentially diasporic Judaism.[3] And in Amos Elon's best-selling *The Pity of It All*, German Jewry is incarnated in its ongoing, even if ultimately tragically unsuccessful, attempt to tame nationalism and civilize other such exclusivisms.[4] Surprisingly, the Marxist Eric Hobsbawm presented a similar celebratory case in his London Leo Baeck Institute 50th anniversary address.[5] In all these versions, German-Jewish intellectuality serves as a metaphor for the critical yet always humanizing and autonomous mind.[6]

These, however, are all highly generalized declarations, familiar statements, the stuff of bar mitzvah books in which giants such as Freud and Einstein remain emblematic. What I want to analyze here is a far more specific, perhaps less recognized, and rather astonishing phenomenon, one that links whatever we mean by the German-Jewish legacy to a broader context. I am referring to the fact that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, certain Weimar German-Jewish thinkers—specifically, Theodor Adorno (1903–1969), Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929), Gershom Scholem (1898–1982), and Leo Strauss (1899–1973)—stand as central, virtually iconic, figures of Anglo-American, indeed, Western, intellectual and academic culture. All have been recognized as being, in some way or another, "Jewish" thinkers, but their thoughts, writings, and reception have far transcended those borders. Celebrated or castigated, canonized and critiqued, appropriated and interpreted in manifold ways, dissected in minute and often contested detail, they have all achieved remarkable prominence, well beyond the borders of their birth. With the passing of time, their resonance—their "actuality"—has increased rather than diminished.

For most educated readers, I assume, there is no need to elaborate upon the works and biographies of these distinguished thinkers. Here I want to focus on their current reception, eminence, and visibility. Some of this is truly remarkable. Thus, Leo Strauss, who by all contemporary accounts was an exceedingly shy and unworldly refugee figure,[7] has recently been celebrated[8] or reviled as perhaps the most positively or perniciously influential political thinker of our time. A lively, widespread, and often ridiculous discussion has been undertaken in fringe, popular, and more highbrow organs alike, as to whether or not Strauss—via his followers, many of whom occupied positions of power in George W. Bush's Washington—was the hidden power behind the throne, even the force propelling the Iraq War.[9] Of course, neither his devotees nor his many critics and adversaries will find any specific policy recommendations or endorsement of "a Judeo-Christian crusade against Islam," or an advocacy of a militant democratization of the world, anywhere in his writings.[10] On the contrary, throughout his life Strauss, the putative father of neo-conservatism remained an elitist and severe critic of liberal democracy, a theme to which I shall return.

Hannah Arendt, too, has been appropriated by any number of politically and internationally diverse circles.[11] In Germany there is an express train

named after her that runs from Karlsruhe to Hannover, and the postal services issued a stamp in her name. Her "actuality" is constantly invoked, as are attempts to creatively apply her thought and categories to contemporary crises of politics and civilization.[12] In the post-1989 climate, she has been, among other things, reinvented as the "political thinker of hope" and of free civil society, an inspirer of the East European "Velvet Revolution."[13] Like those of our other thinkers, Arendt's politics cut through conventional left-right distinctions. Her refusal to be simply classified no doubt encouraged such diverse readings. "You know," she told Hans Morgenthau, "the left think I am conservative, and the conservatives sometimes think I am left or a maverick or God knows what. And I must say I couldn't care less. I don't think the real questions of this century get any kind of illumination from this kind of thing."[14]

The public and political influence of Arendt and Strauss (who, ironically, could not abide each other) is most conspicuous, but a widespread cultural and intellectual mystique also adheres to all the other figures treated in this chapter, around whom entire academic industries have been created. It would be a mammoth task to register and analyze this in systematic fashion; indeed, it would be rather futile to render and grade their popularities in statistical or hierarchical manner. But a glance at the continuing attention—qualitative and quantitative—showered on all these thinkers (in the form of books, articles, novels, dramas, and even apparel) makes their appeal patently obvious. Walter Benjamin is cited over an astonishing range of topics, disciplines, and issues; manifold ideological and political currents regard him as authoritative; and his fame has moved beyond highbrow circles (where we would expect to find him) and percolated into surprisingly diverse areas of popular culture.[15] He is the only one of these intellectuals for whom a monument has been built—by the Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan—at Port Bou, the place of his suicide, which has become a site of pilgrimage.

In loose and complicated ways, Benjamin was affiliated with the Frankfurt School, especially with Theodor Adorno, one of the founders of "Critical Theory." Perhaps only a little less densely than Benjamin himself, Adorno has achieved similar fame. "Should we adore Adorno?" Charles Rosen has recently asked.[16] Despite dissenting voices, for many the answer has been a resoundingly positive one. Edward Said has valorized him as a "forbidding but endlessly fascinating man . . . the dominating intellectual conscience of the middle twentieth century . . . "[17]

Rosenzweig and Scholem, it is true, are best known to Jewish audiences, but their presence within the more general intellectual culture continues apace. "In terms of his depth, his originality, his immense learning, the power of his mind, and the compassion of his vision (not to mention his wide influence on non-Jewish as well as Jewish thinkers)," Hilary Putnam comments, Franz Rosenzweig ranks " . . . as one of the most important Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century."[18] Scholem has been compared to Freud;[19] he has been

invoked by such varied figures as Jorge Luis Borges, Paul Celan, and Harold Bloom.[20] Upon Scholem's death, Hans Jonas may well have been speaking for countless leading Jewish, German, European, and American thinkers when he wrote that Scholem "was the focal point. Wherever, *he* was, you found the center, the active force, a generator which constantly charged itself; he was what Goethe called an *Urphänomen* (archetypal phenomenon)."[21]

How are we to account for this rather extraordinary phenomenon, the centrality of these figures within Western intellectual culture? To some extent, no doubt, it can be attributed to an ongoing post-Holocaust commemoration and a rather romantic valorization of German-Jewish intellectuals and their legacy in general. In part, this is related to a general attraction to "European" thinkers and what we impute to them: passionate intellectuality, critical engagement, and formidable depth; for some readers, the very difficulty of their thought, the obscurity and occasional impenetrability of style, renders them more attractive and provides evidence of a certain intellectual magic, of secrets available only to initiates. But if these and other German-Jewish intellectuals are regarded as firmly embedded within the European intellectual tradition, they are also portrayed, as "a special type, distinctive and separate in character,"[22] as people, as Walter Benjamin put it, for whom "Jewishness is not in any sense an end in itself but the noble bearer and representative of the intellect."[23]

The particular mystique surrounding the Weimar Republic plays a role here. The thinkers in question all spent their formative years in the republic and their *oeuvres* stubbornly bear the creative and often problematic imprint of its culture, politics, and sensibility. Indeed, the fact that they were quintessentially Weimar thinkers constitutes an integral part of their charisma and canonization beyond the borders. The myth of that republic, to be sure, is double-edged. For it is half danger and warning, of failed democracy, social and moral breakdown, and the rise of Fascism. But it is also an idealized version of the daring experimental spirit, the dissenting temperament, the revolutionary burst of intellectual innovation and artistic creativity that characterized those years; in many accounts of the republic's history, the two halves are portrayed as integrally interconnected. Moreover, unlike other leading intellectuals of that period, such as Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt, as Jews our figures remain unblemished, victims rather than supporters of the Nazi regime. The fact that they were Jews rendered them relatively immune to the political temptations that so seduced people like Heidegger and Schmitt. This also makes their ongoing critiques of liberalism and of bourgeois modernity more acceptable and more palatable to Western audiences. These intellectuals could thus easily become representatives of the positive sides of the Weimar experience, makers and exemplars of a fascinating past.

The successful migration of their thought, the fact that they became icons beyond Germany's borders, may also be related to the fact that although they began their careers in Weimar Germany, most also physically left their first homeland and, in various ways and places, pursued their productive lives

elsewhere. Franz Rosenzweig was the exception. His tragic death in Germany in 1929 from a painful and progressive paralysis, and his heroic comportment before that, have become an integral part of his legend.[24] All the others traversed the German border. Walter Benjamin's 1940 suicide on the French-Spanish border has become emblematic of the Jewish intellectual who crossed, questioned, and was robbed of recognized borders. Terry Eagleton described him as "the dialectical Jew at a standstill, declaring the small hoarse sound of the Torah in the customs shed."[25] Scholem was the first to leave Germany; in 1923 he went to Palestine, where he went on to found the academic study of mysticism, all the while subverting the conventional ideological borders of liberalism, Zionism, and normative Judaism alike. Arendt and Strauss went on to highly successful careers in the United States. Adorno too went into exile in the United States where he lived—a little less happily—from 1938 to 1953, after which he returned to his native Germany. In America, these refugee thinkers remained recognizably foreign. Walter Laqueur has written that they had a very narrow view of American society because few of them could drive a car![26] The point is that, for many searching and critical educated people, these Weimar figures represented a kind of exotic Other—foreign, yet close enough to encourage a certain (if distant) identification, particularly given their own marginal status as Jews or victims or outsiders.

But, again, this generalized account only takes us so far. It does not really tell us why these particular Weimar German-Jewish intellectuals rather than others currently seem to embody that legacy, why they, rather than other figures of their time have, traveled so well. Why, for instance, do Scholem and Rosenzweig presently attract more respectful attention than, say, Martin Buber? Why is it that Arendt and Strauss are so much more audible than Hermann Cohen and Ernst Cassirer? Why, for that matter, do we hear far more today of Adorno and Benjamin than Ernst Bloch and even Herbert Marcuse? Of course, intellectual reputation always contains a degree of indeterminacy: there are heterogeneous audiences; the various parts of a writer's project may receive different ratings from different categories of reader; it is almost impossible to maintain a clear distinction between questions of merit and celebrity, fashion, and utility; and at any given moment, judgment will be affected by hearsay, selective recall, and the predilections of editors.[27] Clearly, no single account will suffice. For all that, reception and popularity do possess some political, intellectual, and contextual grounding.

Thus Buber, who was feted especially during the 1950s, now appears, however unfairly, too pious and pontificatory, too prophetic and "Christian," insufficiently "textual;" indeed, his reputation was sullied in no small measure by Scholem himself, and to some degree as well by Benjamin. Both Hermann Cohen (who died in 1918 and thus can hardly be considered a Weimar thinker) and Ernst Cassirer, though by no means entirely neglected,[28] are too classically "liberal," too conventionally "bourgeois" to excite broader interest. Marcuse and Bloch were unabashedly "political," prophets of clear and activist "hope." Their heyday occurred in the optimistic, heady 1960s. In our own

grayer, more ambiguous times, the more shaded, indeterminate ruminations of Adorno and Benjamin seem congenial. Walter Benjamin's vaunted messianism is celebrated precisely because it is a densely complex, qualified one. "I came into the world under the sign of Saturn," he wrote, "the star of the slowest revolution, the planet of detours and delays . . ."[29] Benjamin's project, his attempt to salvage doomed or forgotten pasts and defeated, oppressed communities necessarily came mixed with memories and intimations of catastrophe.

Beyond this, the iconicity of these thinkers, their present appeal, derives from a number of shared characteristics. To be sure, there were great differences among them, yet in many ways they constituted a kind of community of affinity. They chose different objects of reflection and distinct modes of self-definition and political hope—indeed, they insisted upon these markers of separateness—but the issues and dilemmas that plagued them, the categories in which they thought, were of one cloth. They were all heterodox thinkers. Orthodoxy of almost any kind, was not an option; even the apparent return to traditional Judaism of Rosenzweig was performed on the basis of a radical and immanent reconceptualization of its classical precepts. Their diverse projects are not easily pigeonholed: they all resisted simple ideological classification and were moved by radical impulses. Indeed, they were driven to go beyond the borders in both literal and metaphorical ways. They naturally gravitated to tactics of conceptual and critical displacement and sought to first subvert and then to remap accepted cognitive frontiers. These qualities, I believe, account for much of their ongoing attractiveness.

All engaged in essentially Weimarian postliberal ruminations, posited on the ruins of, and a disbelief in, the old political and conceptual order. They all advocated a kind of "root" rethinking that variously explored novel ways in which to comprehend the disarray of post–World War I European civilization and the great trauma of Nazism (Rosenzweig, of course, excepted), and to provide radical solutions in the light of these unprecedented catastrophes.

Thus, Adorno and Benjamin formulated a culturally and theologically inflected "negative metaphysics" of critique and a revisionist, humanistically reconceptualized "Western" Marxism.[30] Hannah Arendt achieved fame not only as the analyst of totalitarianism, but for her thinking through of its implications for the Western philosophical tradition as a whole and her formulation of a postmetaphysical pluralist politics as the sphere of autonomous and spontaneous action.[31] Franz Rosenzweig interrogated and dismissed idealist metaphysics and realigned traditional "religious" and transcendental categories such as creation, revelation, and redemption within a temporal frame. His was a new "existential" understanding of immanent Jewish life, which by its nature was bound to operate beyond conventional physical and political borders: Jewish existence was ontologically separate from its surroundings.[32] Gershom Scholem, that "primordial" but entirely unconventional Zionist, was animated by an antinomian theologico-metaphysical

dream of the regeneration of Judaism, fueled by his single-handed embrace of the study of Kabbalah. He integrated into his radical philosophy of history sects and movements previously regarded as too obscure and obscurantist for serious consideration and decipherment and bestowed upon them a vitalizing function at the very heart of the Jewish historical project.[33] Leo Strauss reread classical politico-philosophical texts in a very idiosyncratic fashion, against the modern (and liberal) grain, privileged premodern rationalism. He sought to delineate the functions of everyday, cynical politics—he approved of Plato's "noble lies"—from truthful (though dangerous) philosophy. Not always fully convinced, he reasserted the claims of faith over Enlightenment reason, but was not able to surrender loyalty to his ancestral community or loyalty to the claims of a transcendent philosophical tradition. There are those who believe that perhaps, in the end, through his interpretation of the esoteric meaning of Plato, he conflated the two and Athens and Jerusalem became, as it were, one.[34]

There is another important commonality. In the turbulent and hostile circumstances of their time all, our thinkers were explicitly confronted with—and attempted to provide creative solutions to—what Leo Strauss has called the Jewish "theologico-predicament."[35] This entailed dealing, in one way or another, with the subtle tensions and ambiguities of their own Jewish and culturally hybrid identity. There is nothing new or surprising in this. But, given the later canonic status of these thinkers, it *is* rather startling to note that, with the exception of Adorno, these figures were all either profoundly involved in or at least in dialogue with or intimately aware of the world of German Zionism. This is surprising, because German Zionism, after all, was a rather fringe phenomenon. The Zionist engagement of so many German-Jewish intellectuals who were later to achieve international fame, and the creative energies it inspired, are rather astonishing, and a tale that awaits its historian (our own figures apart, names like Hans Kohn, Martin Buber, Erich Fromm, Leo Löwenthal, Hans Jonas, and Norbert Elias by no means exhaust the list).[36]

Perhaps Zionism's very fringe, marginal nature constitutes part of the explanation. It would be an exaggeration—but not a great one—to say that the alternatives for sensitive, dissenting, antibourgeois, postliberal youthful Jewish intellectuals of the Weimar Republic consisted of the choice between Zionism and Marxism, and sometimes a combination of the two, even if its proponents later moved beyond or refined both these positions. Rosenzweig was entirely exceptional for his devising a viewpoint that bypassed—and challenged—both.

Zionism, like Marxism, was a boundary phenomenon, a form of personal and intellectual displacement—and re-placement. At the time, Zionism appeared as a genuine regenerative option; its appeal and attractiveness derived in no small part from its advocates' perception not only of growing anti-Semitism, but from their critique of bourgeois Jewish hypocrisy. In a

sense, joining the Zionist movement was both a déclassé and an antipatriotic statement. Anyone who has read the diaries of Gershom Scholem or Kafka's *Letter to His Father* will be familiar with this. The case of Gershom Scholem's Zionism is familiar, as is Arendt's complicated and changing attitude to that movement; Leo Strauss's early and late writings are replete with both sympathetic and critical discussions of the movement. Through Scholem, Benjamin was intimately apprised of the Zionist issues of the day and—like Kafka—Benjamin constantly flirted with the idea of studying Hebrew and moving to Palestine (without, of course, ever seriously considering it). Rosenzweig's anti-Zionism, or at least non-Zionism, is well-known, yet his postliberal search for radical alternatives and the need for "a new thinking," and above all his configuration of the Jews as a living, separate (indeed organic) entity, made him an obvious *Gesprächspartner*, the relevant and most serious point of contestation for the Zionists, with whose leading intellectuals he was close friends and was in constant touch.

Weimar Jewish intellectuals in general were often linked by a dense network of relationships.[37] One wonders whether or not those who have internationally canonized our particular set of thinkers have any idea of the intellectually engaged and often charged personal relations that pertained between them. To be sure, at no time did they form an organized or institutional "group." Still, their interconnections went deep and encompassed the whole spectrum of relationships, ranging from close friendship to serious enmity. In fact, to the end, these figures were each other's real interlocutors, the relevant others, even—perhaps especially—when they were engaged in intense intellectual, personal, and ideological combat.

But the fact that these Jewish (and often Zionist) thinkers were acquainted with each other's works and person does not explain their present canonic status. The romance of personal exile, a certain marginality and even victimhood does, of course, play a role in their iconicity as does, in connected fashion, their drive to radically reshape contemporary modes of understanding.[38] The lives and thoughts of the figures considered here were conducted both literally and conceptually beyond their inherited geographical and normative borders. Their confrontations with Jewishness (and Zionism), their personal plights, indeed their projects themselves revolved around issues of displacement and re-placement.[39] If they left old borders behind, they also sought to recast the boundaries. Even Scholem, the ardent Zionist, was surprisingly aware and affirmative of this exilic dimension of intellectual creativity. Freud, Kafka, and Benjamin, he wrote, "did not fool themselves. They knew that they were German writers—but not Germans. They never cut loose from that experience and the clear awareness of being aliens, even exiles . . . I do not know whether these men would have been at home in the land of Israel. I doubt it very much. They truly came from foreign parts and knew it."[40]

Suffering and victimization do, of course, figure in the intellectual iconicity of the twentieth century; in this respect some of our thinkers have become exemplary. The pain, courage, and piety of Rosenzweig, the driven desperation

and suicide of Benjamin, have become integral to their reception; their personal, martyred fates are often indistinguishable from the ideas themselves. This may encourage commemoration, but is not always conducive to an equally necessary critique.[41] But displacement also entered the modalities and marrow of their thought: for Rosenzweig, exile was not antithetical to redemption but a condition for it; the later Strauss believed that the liquidation of exile would spell the end of genuine Jewish existence—exile was an essential binding force. Scholem dwelled endlessly on the dialectic transformations that Jewish mystics wrought on the notion of exile as a necessary component of creative Jewish political and spiritual economy. Benjamin's attempt to read and write "against the grain," his search for the lost, oppressed voices of history, surely belongs to this category. It has even been suggested that partly because Adorno was of mixed German-Jewish descent, his *Negative Dialectics* developed a critique of all essentialist forms of identity, including the Jewish one.

But important as this marginal Jewish condition may have been, this does not sufficiently account for a fame and canonicity that clearly also transcends Jewish and ethnic boundaries. Very often in the reception of many of these thinkers, Jewishness is not even mentioned; it is irrelevant. This is perhaps because, as Hannah Arendt noted (in a clearly autobiographical remark) the most clear-sighted intellectuals "were led by their personal [Jewish] conflicts to a much more general and radical problem, namely to questioning the relevance of the Western tradition as a whole."[42]

Little wonder, then, that Franz Kafka was seminal for most of our figures.[43] His depiction of writing as "an assault against the frontiers"[44] perfectly matches their endeavors. This was true even for those thinkers who remained more strictly within the Judaic orbit. Rosenzweig envisioned a Judaism of national belonging and redemption that essentially nullified place. Scholem's insistence upon the animating, dialectical role of the mystical impulse in Jewish life crucially entailed displacing the purported exclusive hegemony of Jewish normative law and was animated by an acute consciousness of "the fine line between religion and nihilism."[45] Indeed, in his youth Scholem defined Zionism as a life lived without illusions—at the boundary.[46]

The oeuvres and methods of all these figures resist classification and clear demarcation; they derive their energy from functioning "on the border of several areas."[47] "But really," Scholem asked Benjamin, "where could your work be placed?"[48] If this liminality, inhabiting the threshold, reflected their inherited historical situation, it also energized their creative vitality and is an important ground for our intrigued responses to them.[49] Their heterodox projects were simultaneously engaged, critical, paradoxical, despairing and—perhaps with the exception of Strauss—salvationary. Thus, in 1931, Benjamin justified his Communism by likening himself to "a castaway who drifts on a wreck by climbing to the top of an already crumbling mast. But, from here he has a chance to give a signal for his rescue."[50]

Acutely sensitive to the overall crisis of tradition and authority, contemptuous of the bourgeois present, wary of easy liberal duplicity, they were aware, as

Arendt put it, that there was no possibility of an unmediated "return" to either the German or European or Jewish tradition.[51] They all thus sought novel roads and unexpected sources for reconfiguring such traditions and finding renewed modes of relating to them, at a time when both their message and authority had come into question. They all rejected historicism and despised positivism. They abjured social science[52] for its false "value neutrality" and for a relativism that diminished both the actual and the potential human condition. They dismissed traditional idealism and approached their materials in anti-totalizing, anti-Hegelian ways;[53] many searched for cracks and fissures and the significances that could be ascribed to them; most were attracted by the fragmentary and the esoteric; Strauss even revived this as a guiding interpretive method. They were fascinated by the subterranean and the antinomian. "By its very nature," Scholem declared, "mysticism involves the danger of an uncontrolled deviation from traditional authority."[54] In one way or another, all were propelled, or at least fascinated, by what one observer has called "the heretical imperative."[55] No wonder Scholem defined the Frankfurt School, with which Benjamin was—albeit uneasily—associated, as a kind of Jewish heresy, a comment that members of the Frankfurt School did not particularly welcome.

Given all these characteristics, it is not surprising that one important force behind the lionization of these thinkers is associated with what, for lack of a better word, we call "postmodernism." Our icons were, after all, masters of interpretation and textuality—both of which postmodernism privileges. Their own dense, paradoxical, oracular, and often esoteric mode of writing demands complex decipherment and creative exegesis, perfect grist for the endless deconstructionist mill. Precisely because their projects were multifaceted and protean in nature, because they assaulted given frontiers and accentuated rupture, because they critiqued positivist and historicist reason, they have been depicted as among the forerunners of postmodernism, prefiguring or mirroring its concerns, or at least interpreted in terms of its guiding tenets. There is some truth to these perceptions. Nevertheless, the differences may be more important than the similarities and may account for the fact that these thinkers will probably outlast the deconstructionist moment. While postmodernists seem to play with and, ironically, to celebrate the absence of transcendent purpose and of meaning and coherence in the world, our figures dwell mournfully on the loss of tradition and, in way or another, long for ultimacy.

In complex, convoluted, paradoxical, and often highly problematic ways, they were in constant search for, and offered possible avenues of, evacuation and rescue from what they took to be the condition of fractured modernity. To be sure, they offered no neat Hegelian progression—the tablets have clearly been shattered. But in one way or another, they present us with considered and committed reconfigurations of the fragments,[56] signals, and directions for reconstituted meanings, whether of the premodern, dialectical, political,

or messianic variety. Like the postmoderns, their sense of displacement, of being "beyond the border," is constitutive. Yet their continuing iconicity consists perhaps in their attempt to go beyond that state. In one way or another they redefined the frontiers and provided us with new moral and intellectual maps, which the postmoderns, almost by definition, will not or cannot do. These maps, to be sure, are provisional and problematic. They are not definitive "Guides to the Perplexed," although Rosenzweig's work may have been intended as such, but rather, as Benjamin put it in another context, "the jagged edges which offer a foothold to someone who wants to go beyond that work."[57]

All, each in his or her own way, were riveted by the question of "origins" and the recovery of lost meanings, of truth as hidden, part of a greater structure waiting to be revealed, and the possibility of redemptive moments. Some were obsessed with the messianic dimension, and all recovered the politically loaded theological impulse; even Arendt, perhaps the least theologically minded, has been interpreted this way.[58] This passion for and return to—or, at least, intense engagement with—theology certainly did not involve a return to religion as traditionally conceived. The theological was now addressed in each person's idiosyncratic ways, transformed into a kind of metaphysics of the profane. Strauss turned to premodern rationalist esoteric readings and recoveries; Benjamin, to a qualified and oblique messianism; Scholem, to its apocalyptic and antinomian possibilities and dangers; Rosenzweig, to a conception of the transcendent that emerged from the temporally finite; and Adorno to theologically laced negative dialectics. This is a very dense and complicated theme, in which each thinker deserves separate treatment. Time and space prevents us from doing this. Adorno's comment must thus serve as exemplary of this tendency: "The only philosophy which can be responsibly practiced in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it with its rifts and crevices as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light."[59]

I stated at the beginning that these thinkers stubbornly bore the creative and often problematic imprint of their Weimar provenance. The creative nature and content of these projects should by now be evident. But in what sense are they problematic? In one way or another, all these thinkers consistently critiqued and at times indeed directly attacked liberalism and mass modernity. This is especially but not exclusively true of their earlier thought and is often most clearly expressed in their private comments. To mention only the most extreme, in a 1933 letter sent from his Roman exile, Leo Strauss wrote to Karl Löwith: "From the fact that Germany, which has turned to the right, has expelled us, it simply does not follow that the principles of the right are therefore to be rejected. To the contrary, only on the basis of principles of the

right—fascist, authoritarian, imperial—is it possible, in a dignified manner, without the ridiculous and pitiful appeal to the rights of Man to protest against the mean [Nazi] non-entity . . . There is no reason to crawl to the cross, even to the cross of liberalism, as long as anywhere in the world a spark glimmers of Roman thinking. And, moreover, better than any cross, the ghetto."[60]

None of our other thinkers, of course, ever went as far as this, but the critique of liberal-bourgeois instrumentality and mass modernity invariably informed the nature of their projects and the political positions they adopted—conservative, Zionist, Marxist, or religious. These sentiments were very much in the mold of Weimar intellectuals.[61] When they were not hostile, they were usually indifferent to the workings of constitutional democracy, to questions of parliamentary representation, to the various individual "bourgeois freedoms," to the messy everyday bread-and-butter politics of barter and negotiation. To be sure, there are a number of mitigating factors here. With the obvious exception of Rosenzweig, all these critics of liberalism in one way or another later became, even more famously, analysts and fierce opponents of Nazism and totalitarianism. Their experiences and status as Jewish victims, as exiles, and as refugees also somehow softened their critiques of liberalism, or at least rendered them more palatable. And for all their overt rejections, their various projects conserved a certain openness and humanizing core that was at the base of the *Bildungs* legacy that willy-nilly they inherited as German Jews.

All this leads to a final, intriguing question. In an intellectual and academic milieu that conceives itself to be essentially a liberal one, why do we elevate as icons thinkers that seem so critical of—or at best, indifferent to—liberalism? Perhaps we can best answer this by shifting our perspective somewhat. At the beginning of this chapter, I asked why it was these specific thinkers, rather than others, who have undergone present canonization. Now I want to compare them to another intellectual who *has* achieved that status and who presently occupies a remarkably iconic position precisely because he *is* a liberal. I am referring, of course, to the greatly celebrated Isaiah Berlin.

Berlin is canonic because in his person and writings he most quintessentially incarnates an updated liberalism's positions and values. It is he who most compellingly articulates and reflects our cultures' idealized individualist, liberal, and pluralist self-image. Berlin certainly did not regard himself as having much in common with our countericons (although, strikingly, he too expressed both a passionate interest in, and support of, Zionism). In a private letter to Jean Floud, he expressed his real opinion and feelings about many of these Weimar-bred exiled intellectuals and the milieu that had produced them, noting that it was: "the terrible twisted Mitteleuropa in which nothing is straight, simple, truthful, all human relations and all political attitudes are twisted into ghastly shapes by these awful casualties who, because *they* are crippled, recognize nothing pure and firm in the world."[62] Damaged people, Berlin argued, produced damaged ideas.

If our intellectuals were restless, crossing real and conceptual borders, Berlin—that Riga-born Jewish refugee from the Bolshevik Revolution—was in both literal and cognitive ways deeply at home. Ensconced and revered in his cosy, beloved Oxford, he probably would have found Adorno's dictum, "It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home," exceedingly distasteful. Berlin's liberalism and pluralism are decent and comforting; decisions are left to the individual and, indeed, part of his appeal consists in his critique of the dangers of an overarching conception of a single common good, an all-encompassing civic virtue. Our German-Jewish icons, on the other hand, refused to let this quest go. Unlike Berlin, they did not feel conceptually at home. Rather, they lived and thrived on the jagged edges, all the while struggling to reach a new landscape, to reach a conception of a greater good.

Apparently, our culture needs both these visions. They are, so to speak, necessary mirror opposites. They give voice to the two poles of an ongoing creative tension: on the one hand, the affirmation of a decent, humane liberalism, soberly aware of the limits of social and political action and the dangers of the Utopian temptation and, on the other, the radical impulse that expresses a continuing critique of the compromised modalities and inequities of modern life and the search for (usually profane) splinters of transcendence. We want both to stay at home and to wander abroad, torn between the desire to step out of our own frontiers and experiment with alternative and perhaps better worlds and at the same to cherish the familiar, to carefully chart our boundaries and feel safe within them. We iconize both, we need both, and should be glad that we are not always forced to choose between them. Perhaps, in the end, this may not be necessary, for the choice may not be quite as stark as we think. Berlin's empathic understanding of romantic, nonliberal currents is well-known[63] and his Zionism—the understanding that it addressed a powerful need for Jewish belonging—perhaps reflected an enduring personally experienced nagging unease, even in Oxford.[64] And, in many respects, the radical, postliberal projects enunciated by the subjects of this chapter can also be seen as attempts to rescue rather than merely to critique aspects of the damaged Enlightenment inheritance and its tradition of critical inquiry.[65]

The figures we have considered here constitute only a part of the German-Jewish intellectual adventure and that at its end point, rife with both crises and challenges. They certainly should not be romanticized. There was much in their ruminations that, no doubt, was overheated and obscure, wrongheaded and infuriating. Their strengths, as well as weaknesses, reflect their Weimar origins and its subsequent fate. Intellectuals are occupationally impelled to test assumptions and limits, to go beyond the borders, but the circumstances of our figures rendered their quest particularly intense and animated their diverse, volatile attempts at novel modes of prescriptive understanding. Their thought remains resonant because in sophisticated

ways they identified and diagnosed still-current predicaments and provided guidelines toward possible personal and collective alternatives. To paraphrase Jürgen Habermas, it is a part of a German-Jewish sensibility which, had it not existed, "we would have to discover . . . for our own sakes."[66] In an increasingly conformist civilization, it is a legacy we should take care not to lose.

3
The Modern Jewish Experience and the Entangled Web of Orientalism

> My heart is in the East and I am at the ends of the West.
> —*Yehuda HaLevi (1085–1141)*

Politics and the writing of history have always been interconnected realms. It is clear that the great political question of the present day—the so-called "clash of civilizations"—has highlighted and rendered us more sensitive to themes and problems of historiography that previously were not regarded as particularly central or urgent. This may explain why so much of contemporary post-9/11 scholarship is so intent on studying the origins, conflicts, connections, and constructed nature of categories such as Islam, Europe, the "Judeo-Christian" tradition, the "secular" and the "religious." In related fashion, the study of Jewish history is increasingly focusing on the critical interplay of "East" and "West" as both a formative and problematic force in the multivalent Jewish engagement with the modern world. Much of this work has been characterized by shrill polemics and dogmatic ideology, but new, often provocative, perspectives have also been opened up by viewing these matters through postcolonial paradigms. Rather than engaging this debate in partisan manner or seeking to smooth out the ambiguities, I want to examine the ways in which these frameworks help us to illuminate the continuing complex ironies and tensions of the Oriental–Occidental dichotomy and the seminal role that notions of the "East" and the "West" have played in modern Jewish politics, culture, and identity.[1]

The Oriental-Occidental divide is, of course, a general ontological and epistemological cut that runs through millennia of Western history. The power-driven stereotype of the distinction between Asia and Arabia, the decayed, voiceless Orient and the progressive, articulate Occident—a paradigm inextricably associated with the work of Edward Said and which, despite many critical necessary qualifications and modifications, retains some essential truths—has its origins as far back as antiquity.[2] As a major (though certainly not exclusive) binary marker of identity, of self and Other, its roots go back deep into ancient times.[3] Despite its *longue durée* and apart from present political conflicts, its contemporary sting, our own particular inscriptions and encodings of the East-West

dichotomy, cannot be comprehended without reference to the Enlightenment, in all its magnificence and biases.

It is against this larger backdrop that much of the modern Jewish experience can be framed as one of multiple contradictory negotiations with Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses that were—and continue to be—constructed both for and against the Jews. In numerous ways, Jews internalized and deflected these narratives as variously self-defining, self-deprecating, and self-asserting instruments. Aziza Khazzoom has suggestively labeled these strategies and responses as "the great chain of Orientalism,"[4] in which respectively "Westernizing" Jewish groups constructed and affirmed their own modern identity by appropriating secular, Enlightenment norms and creating negative mirror opposites, foisting "Oriental" stereotypes and characteristics upon other Jewish groups, putatively lower in the "civilizational" line.

There is much to be said for this scheme, but it leaves little room for other more subtle deployments, the ways in which these discourses could be transformed, mediated, undermined, or resisted.[5] I would therefore prefer the image of an Orientalist web, a kind of all-enveloping thematic in which modern Jewish history in almost all its permutations has been and continues to be entangled and which has produced any number of ironic and debilitating but also creative moments.

Why is this so? It flows almost inevitably from the ambiguous status of Jews in the Western world. Jews were seen to inhabit a kind of liminal, hyphenated condition, regarded, as Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar have perceptively pointed out, "variably and often concurrently as occidental *and* oriental."[6] Here I want to examine a few major strands of this dialectical tension.

Let us begin with the Age of Emancipation. As Western and Central European Jews were allowed to leave their ghettoes, they were regarded in many ways as local foreigners, emerging from dark, mysterious, and precivilized cultures. It would not be too great an exaggeration to state that as "French" or "German" Jews sought to enter into society, they were often represented as a species of internal Orientals. Their integration was predicated upon the demand that their alien Jewish traditions, their exclusive ghetto mentality, and their ugly disposition and manners undergo radical reform and regeneration in a manner consistent with progressive modern standards and the moral and aesthetic refinements of *Bildung*. There were, of course, many components to this transformative imperative, but it was also certainly informed by an extant and broader Orientalist discourse: Jews, could easily be represented as strangers to Europe, backward, Eastern and Asiatic. Their own account, of course, located their origins in the biblical lands of the Middle East.[7]

These were widespread convictions. Jonathan Hess has recently shown that the anti-Semitic notions of the late eighteenth-century Christian theologian Johann David Michaelis and his Orientalist scholarship on Mosaic law were inseparable from his colonialist vision that Jews—as an unmixed, degenerate, southern race, products of the climate of the ancient

Orient—could not be temperamentally or physically Germanized and were essentially fitted for work in German-controlled sugar plantations in the West Indies.[8] Similarly, much of Christian theology was bent on severing the threatening connections between "Oriental" Mosaic law and Jesus's Christianity.[9] Such attitudes were similarly shared by some leading Enlightenment and Romantic thinkers. Thus, Herder called Jews "the Asiatics of Europe;"[10] Voltaire designated the ancient Jews as "vagrant Arabs infested with leprosy;" and even the champion of Jewish rights, Christian Wilhelm Dohm, spoke of Jews as "Asiatic refugees."[11]

It can be fairly said that, by and large, modernizing German Jewry sought to overcome being designated as Easterners because, given its noncivilized, foreign connotations, this excluded them from the designated homogeneous national polity.[12] The internalization of cultivating "Westernizing" attitudes became a systematic self-conscious project of integration, made all the easier and powerful by the fact that they emerged from the mainstream of that putatively liberating force, Enlightenment humanism. Indeed, at times the moral, aesthetic, and even corporeal self-criticism of the modernizing German Jews, their dissatisfaction with their own insufficient Occidentalization, was expressed in explicitly Orientalist terms. In 1897, writing under a pseudonym, Walther Rathenau wrote that his fellow German Jews, with their weak, uncoordinated bodies, constituted an "Asiatic horde," a hopelessly conspicuous, foreign organism in the middle of German life.[13] If Jews were to become proper Europeans, they had to decisively shed their Asian being and carriage. Some were even more radical than that. As one indignant participant-observer declared: "Submerge yourselves, disappear! Disappear, along with your Oriental physiognomies, your character that is so incongruous with its surroundings…"[14]

Yet there were ways in which the notion of the Orient was redirected, turned on its head, and transformed into a Jewish virtue, a marker of Jewish pride, even superiority. Benjamin Disraeli is only the most famous exemplar of this trend. This too followed a more general European nineteenth-century Romantic fashion which, while still reproducing the essentialist East-West distinction, idealized the Orient and rendered it exotic. Jewish versions replicated many of these themes, but also took their own interested turn. In these circles, "The Orient" ("*Der Orient*") was not necessarily a term of opprobrium. Indeed, this was the proudly emblazoned name of an elite nineteenth-century German-Jewish liberal journal devoted to the scientific study of Jewish tradition, literature, and culture, its Middle Eastern roots, and the period of great Jewish cultural creativity under Islamic rule.[15] In this way, Jewish *Wissenschaftlers* provided the tools to uncover a respectable and usable past, able to counter Christian and anti-Jewish narratives[16] and provide what one author has called "a multiplicity of Jewish subject positions."[17]

As Ismar Schorsch has shown, the emergent German-Jewish bourgeoisie—seeking models for its own "respectability" and cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual creations—turned to what they presented as the superior legacy of

rationalist Sephardic Jewry and the Golden Age of Moorish Spain, which also furnished an implicit critique of both Orthodox Judaism and medieval Christian fanaticism. It served as an exemplary model in numerous fields such as liturgy, synagogue architecture,[18] literature, philosophy, and scholarship and fitted perfectly the new integrative ideals of an enlightened emancipation. If broader German Enlightenment culture looked to the classical ancient Greeks and Romans for their inspiration,[19] Spanish Jewry in the Moorish age served to supply modernizing Jews with their own classicism.

After all, was not Maimonides the great exemplar of secular knowledge and the rational exposition of Judaism—and thus in so many ways the exemplification of the image that German Jewry sought to project of itself? These medieval Jews from Arab-Muslim society, Eduard Gans pointed out, were marked by "morality, purer speech, greater order in the synagogue, and in fact better taste."[20] There was nothing negatively Oriental about Spain's Arabs and Jews—on the contrary, paradoxically, both were the *guarantors* of rational Western culture. As the great scholar, a Prussian expatriate writing from Paris, Salomon Munk put it: "Jews unquestionably shared with Arabs the distinction of having preserved and disseminated the science of philosophy during the centuries of barbarism and thereby having exercised on Europe for a long time a civilizing influence."[21] In this context, the work of Leo Strauss, who turned to medieval Arab-Jewish rationalism as a redemptive ideal and a means of critiquing Western relativism and instrumentality, seems less surprising than at first blush.[22]

In 1854 Heinrich Heine developed the theme thus: "In Northern Europe and in America, especially in the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries, among the Germanic peoples . . . the Palestinian way of life has prevailed . . . The genuine, the ageless, the true—the morality of ancient Judaism will bloom in these countries just as acceptably to God as once in the lands by the Jordan and the heights of Lebanon." In a characteristically idiosyncratic manner, Heine reproduced but inverted the usual Oriental-Occidental dichotomy: "Judea has always seemed to me a fragment of the West which has somehow gotten lost in the East."[23] However one wanted to figure the Jews, the East-West web was somehow implicated.

This was also true for non-Jews. Thus Heine's great admirer, Friedrich Nietzsche, utilized the same binary but subverted it in even more stark, radical ways, rendering Jews as quintessential Europeans and Christians as Asians. Jews, he declared, not only "had the most grief-laden history of any people" but had produced

> the noblest human being (Christ), the purest sage (Spinoza) and the most efficacious moral code in the world . . . in the darkest periods of the Middle Ages, when the cloud of Asia had settled low over Europe, it was the Jewish freethinkers, scholars and physicians who, under the harshest personal constraint, held firmly to the banner of enlightenment and

> intellectual independence and defended Europe against Asia; it is thanks not least to their efforts that a more natural, rational and in any event unmythical elucidation of the world could at last again obtain victory and the ring of culture that now unites us with the enlightenment of Graeco-Roman antiquity remain unbroken. If Christianity has done everything to orientalize the occident, Judaism has always played an essential part in Occidentalizing it again . . .[24]

But what about specifically Jewish appropriations? It has by now been well established that for scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums,* far less of the patronizing Saidian brand of Orientalism was to be found.[25] Indeed, at times very close identification rather than supercilious distance applied. The rather eccentric and brilliant Hungarian semitic scholar Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921) wrote of his 1890 stay in Damascus: "I truly entered in those weeks in the spirit of Islam to such an extent that ultimately I became inwardly convinced that I myself was Muslim and judiciously discovered that this was the only religion which, even in its doctrinal and official formulation, can satisfy philosophical minds."[26] Islam, in this case, became the basis for his critique of Judaism.[27]

Goldhizer did not "cross over," but some highly colorful (if statistically unrepresentative) characters in modern Jewish history *did* convert to Islam, and literally "Orientalized" themselves.[28] Perhaps the first of these was the prolific Hungarian-born Catholic-educated Orientalist Hermann Bamberger (1832–1913) or Ármin Vámbéry, alias Reshit Efendi, who was intrigued by the Ottomann Empire, became a full *Osmanli* (Turk), published—among various other things—a Turkish-German dictionary in 1858, and, disguised as a Sunnite dervish, was the first West European to travel the entirety of Central Asia from the Black Sea to Constantinople. Bamberger converted to Islam in Turkey. True, he then later converted to Protestantism (an opportunist move, enabling him to be admitted to the Catholic University of Budapest in 1865!) and is remembered as a double dealer and double agent—he was employed as a spy by the British to combat Russian attempts at gaining ground in Central Asia. He even dabbled in Zionism, promising (but not delivering), in return for payment, to arrange a meeting for Theodor Herzl with the Sultan. Symbolically, his letterhead consisted of a Crescent and Star of David.[29]

Yet another figure was Kurban Said, the author of the best-selling novel *Ali and Nino*, an enchanting love story about a Moslem boy and Christian girl set in the tolerant world of old Azerbaijan. Kurban Said went by the name of Essad Bey, and was actually the mysterious adventurer and ultimately tragic Lev Nussimbaum, a Jew born in Baku in 1905, who died in 1942. Among other things, he was the biographer of the Russian czar and of Stalin, a Weimar media star, a prominent Hollywood figure in the 1930s, and a shadowy figure who courted Mussolini. He converted to Islam in 1922; it had attracted him from childhood (after all he was actually from the "East") and, in addition to

his desert romanticism, he regarded it as the most inclusive and tolerant of all religions. He presented himself as a Muslim prince and, in one of the many delectable ironies of the Orientalist saga, wrote his Middle East work, *Allah is Great: The Decline and Rise of the Islamic World,* with Wolfgang Weisl, a militant right-wing Zionist and close associate of the revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky.[30]

This would have been unthinkable for another equally fascinating but far less mercurial figure, the Galician-born scion of a long line of rabbis, Leopold Weiss (1900–1992) who, working as the young Middle East correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* wrote in 1923: "In its political aspect, Jerusalem (and Palestine) is the land of uneasy conflicts, which work their way into the lungs like a fine dust, stifling all breath; Zionism has bound itself irrevocably to outside, western powers; and, as such, is a wound in the body of the Near East."[31] He then traveled throughout the Middle East, became entranced with, and in 1926 converted to, Islam—"a perfect work of architecture . . . nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking . . . a structure of absolute balance and solid composure"—and changed his name to Muhammad Asad. A great supporter of national liberation movements and especially Pakistani independence, he became that country's first ambassador to the United Nations and drafted the preamble to its Constitution. His translation of the Koran into English has been highly acclaimed. Always pleading for rationality and plurality in Moslem law—which he regarded as the real legacy of its founders—towards the end of his life he became disillusioned by the emerging fundamentalism and fanaticism of fellow Muslims and moved to Spain, where he died in relative obscurity.[32] (It is perhaps not accidental that all these Jewish converts tended to liberal interpretations of the Islamic faith.)

It was our last, exotic figure, the Dutch-born Jacob Israel de Haan, who was instrumental in obtaining for Leopold Weiss his journalistic assignment in the Middle East. The flamboyant De Haan did not convert to Islam, but he certainly can be considered as a kind of radically idiosyncratic Orientalist. Born in Smilde in 1881, raised in an Orthodox Jewish home, he was a journalist, legal scholar, schoolteacher, Social Democrat, and author of some scandalous homoerotic novels, which rendered him notorious and virtually unemployable. Perhaps as a result, he turned to Zionism and in 1919 was among the first Dutch Jews to immigrate to Eretz Israel. Very soon he became disillusioned with Zionism and its treatment of Orthodox Jews and Arabs, joined the virulently anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Agudat Israel, and sought a legal basis for Jewish communal existence and protection under Arab jurisdiction. Indeed, his exposure of dishonest deals related to purchase of Arab lands, his negotiations with Arab elites, and his attempt to reconceive the Orient as an enclave for pious Jews, under the tutelage of British colonialism and/or in close communion with the Palestine Arabs, rendered him the first victim of Zionist political assassination in 1924. This was violence perhaps rendered more "respectable" because of de Haan's explicit homosexual Oriental poetry,

the accusation of being an "Arab lover" stemming directly from his poetry concerning Arab boys.[33]

Although these are merely marginalia, exotica at the extreme fringes of mainstream Jewish choices, I have spent some time discussing them not only because they are intriguing cases but because they illustrate a certain openness and fluidity of identitarian possibilities rather different from our own hardened ideologically driven times.[34]

We must now, however, turn to yet another, far more central and equally complex, chapter of Jewish Orientalism. This too sprung out of and paralleled more general tendencies, while taking on its own peculiar turns. For while, as we have seen, emancipating Western Jewry romanticized Spain's Golden Age, this was a narrative taken from the relatively distant past. Jews who lived in contemporary Islamic countries were dismissed as primitive, products of a decayed and stagnated civilization. Under the aegis of colonialism, Western and especially French Jews would employ the universal principles of emancipation and the French Revolution to undertake what they themselves had previously undergone—"the revolutionary transformative process of 'regeneration,' a requisite for citizenship." As Daniel Schroeter has pointed out, as the disparity of power between Europe and the Islamic world grew ever greater, emancipated West European Jewry began to regard the previously venerated Sephardi Jews of Africa and Asia not in terms of their Spanish heritage but as "Orientals," victims of the unenlightened, oppressive societies in which they lived.[35] Enlightened, civilized Jews would have to lift the Jews in the colonies up by their bootstraps. This was most visible in the case of Algeria and the work of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, whose patronizing attitudes mixed with a sense of responsibility exemplified precisely the Jewish Orientalist turn.[36]

But Asia and Africa were very much on the periphery. Of far greater and more immediate concern for modernizing West European Jewry were their putatively threatening, traditional, unemancipated brethren on the "East" of their own continent. We should not forget that the Enlightenment map of civilization did not merely apply to the traditional distinction between Arabia and the civilized Occident, but equally to the internal division between Europe's "backward" Eastern and "progressive" Western components. Here was a relatively new disjunction. (During the Renaissance, we should remember, the essential European division was between north and south.) But in the second half of the eighteenth century, Western Europe essentially invented Eastern Europe as its complementary negative mirror image.[37] Tellingly, many in the French Enlightenment labeled Eastern Europe as *l'orient de l'Europe*, the "Orient of Europe." There too, the East and the "Orient" served as a generalized kind of metaphor for the alien Other, configured as the dark, backward symbolic antithesis, the necessary opposite for the identity and self-conception of the more powerful, progressive, civilized West.[38]

As Jewish "Germanization" or "Westernization" proceeded, the not-yet-emancipated Polish "ghetto" Jewry increasingly became the convenient foil upon which to externalize and displace what were previously regarded as the German Jews' own negative "Eastern" characteristics. At the same time, it became a kind of psychological repository onto which modern Jews could deflect anti-Semitic sentiments.[39] With the passing of time, the very definition of being a German Jew or West European Jew was dependent upon the distinction between modern and what was called backward and ignorant East European "Asian" forms of Judaism.[40] This common rendering by German Jews of their East-European (especially Galician) brethren as *Asiaten*[41]—their attempt to deflect and pass on negative characteristics previously attributed to them—does indeed fit Khazzoom's metaphor of a "chain" of Orientalism.[42]

Yet this does not quite capture the ongoing weblike entanglement of the discourse, nor its much more complex and occasionally even ironic character. For, while Western and Central European Enlightenment Orientalism labeled Eastern Europe as a cradle of barbarism and thus also legitimized German-Jewish negative images of the *Ostjuden*, they also provided the basis for their ongoing sense of (albeit patronizing) responsibility for their Eastern Jewish cousins. Western Jews would now assume the task of civilizing their brethren and taking them out of their misery on the basis of their own newly acquired *Bildung* and Enlightenment. (The same applied too, as we have seen, to the Jews of Islamic countries, except in those cases the frame was explicitly colonial.) To be sure this patronizing, didactic moment—viewing other cultures through the spectacles, standards, and narratives of one's own putatively superior, society—is an essential component of the Orientalist impulse. Yet here it was mediated and complicated by an ongoing dialectical tension between dissociation on the one hand and a nagging sense of solidarity, responsibility, and identification, even nostalgia, on the other hand—aspects clearly absent from the conventional Orientalist paradigm.[43]

This complexity is even evident in the work of Karl Emil Franzos, the person who perhaps articulated the liberal post-Enlightenment German-Jewish stereotype of the *Ostjude*, the East European Jew, in its most definitive literary, cultural, and political form. On the one hand, Franzos articulated a clear brand of German cultural colonialism. Jews, like other peoples in Galicia and elsewhere, were products of what he called "half-Asia."[44] This was not merely a geographical designation but more a cultural state of mind, a strange amalgam of European forms and Asian barbarism. Franzos's Jews lived unmistakably narrow, repressed, and dirty lives. His writings clearly reflected the Enlightenment distaste for "ghetto" life. There was no possibility of an equal relationship here—these poor creatures had to be educated and elevated to Franzos's own condition of *Bildung*.[45]

This fitted both into a classical Orientalist mind-set *and* into a specifically Jewish commitment. That commitment implied certain differences from more generalized forms of Orientalism. Jews, for Franzos, were "half-Asian" because

they lived within the larger oppressive cultural and political boundaries of Eastern Europe and were victims of their circumstances. Thus his much-quoted, deliciously ambivalent dictum: "*Denn—jedes Land hat die Juden, die es verdient.*"[46] ("Every country gets the Jews it deserves.") Moreover, through all this paternalism, his work does occasionally betray a certain identifying sympathy with his subjects, an empathy that threatens to crack his own putative ideological and conceptual framework. Perhaps this derives from the fact that Franzos's own identity and position was itself unclear and unstable, "not comfortably in the middle of the German and the Jewish, the Western and the Eastern."[47]

This, indeed, was a more general plight. Any kind of acknowledged Jewishness necessarily placed limits on a wholly stigmatizing Orientalism, because for such Jews it entailed working out the complexities of an explicit ethnic or religious relationship and responsibility with their Eastern brethren. Indeed, the complicating, differentiating factor here derived from the emotional and existential dimension, the sense of family affinity, however ambivalent it may have been. Thus Franzos justified his activities regarding Eastern Jews as saving "our unfortunate *brothers* in faith"[48] [my italics]. Perhaps the most profound source of both attachment and resentment was contained in the statement of one observer, who claimed that for Western Jews, Eastern Jews were simply "the images of our own fathers."[49]

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, for some dissenting sections of Central European Jewry, there was not only a kind of reluctant acknowledgment of kinship, but rather a serious countermovement, in which East European Jewry and the category of the "Oriental" itself seemed to merge in an impulse of radical affirmation. This Jewish turn, as always, paralleled a more general antipositivist fashion of the time, one that sought inspiration in the mystic, the mythical, and the occult, in the warm wisdom of Eastern religions that had been putatively lost in the soulless, bourgeois, overrationalized West.[50] The "cult of the Ostjuden"[51]—which involved mainly second-generation Zionists, but also such non-Zionist luminaries as Franz Kafka, Gustav Landauer, and Franz Rosenzweig—similarly inverted the negative stereotype of the East as backward, narrow, obscurantist and now portrayed *Ostjuden* as the embodiment of authenticity, community, and spirituality. These now were the "genuine" Jews, as opposed to their deracinated, superficial Western Jewish cousins. Eastern Jewish life in the ghetto was whole and organic, not torn, tortured, and fragmented, as were the assimilated Central European Jews.[52] Such post-liberal romantic idealizations were common to the positive side of other Orientalisms as well.

But what again set the Jewish variety apart, as the journal *Ost und West* put it, was the primordial conviction that all Jews "shared the same inherited characteristics."[53] Franz Rosenzweig indignantly insisted that "the cultural mania of emancipation" could not erase "something inside the individual that

makes him a Jew, something infinitesimally small yet immeasurably large, his most impenetrable secret, yet evident in every gesture and every word—especially in the most spontaneous of them."[54] The most important figure in this transvaluation, Martin Buber—who rendered the previously despised mystical Hasidism as the fount of the spiritual and genuine,in keeping with other *Völkisch* ideas of the time—now developed the idea of the "community of blood," one that, far from differentiating between Jews, would unite them all (especially the deracinated Western ones) in a "deeper-reaching" unity. The *Ostjuden* were to be perceived "not merely as our brothers and sisters…every one of us will feel: these people are part of myself…My soul is not by the side of my people; my people *is* my soul."[55]

Buber portrayed Hasidism with its fervor and dedication as revealing "anew the limitless power of Oriental man," an exemplar of "Asiatic strength and Asiatic inwardness." Yet he went even further than that. In seeking a suitable counte-narrative of positive Jewish identity, he presented the whole of Judaism as emerging out of "the spirit of the Orient:" The "supreme sublimation of the Oriental's motor character, the pathos of a divine command, attained its greatest intensity in Judaism." The Jew, Buber, insisted, had been driven out of his land and dispersed throughout the Occident, "yet despite all this, he has remained an Oriental."[56] Here was an invaluable gift that Jews could bring to an increasingly mechanized, soulless Europe.

Freud's photographic collection of "Oriental" types includes a striking portrait of his cousin Moritz in Arab garb. Keeping this, Leo Lensing has argued, may have been part of Freud's interest "in the ways in which modern Jews could experiment with or at least fantasize about hybrid identities that undermined the rigid categories of anti-Semitism."[57] At any rate, in the face of increasing Weimar anti-Semitism, Orientalist rhetoric became more widely diffused, even for people who were far removed from the organized Jewish community, let alone from Zionism. Thus famous, rather perplexed writers such as Jakob Wassermann[58] and Lion Feuchtwanger[59] loudly declaimed the privileged virtues of Orientalism and their own identity as in some way embodying "Oriental" wisdom. This consciously mythologizing self-definition served as a rather nonpersuasive and vain strategy, a consolatory alternative *Völkisch* source of identity in a society that increasingly rejected them and that, in turn they could use as a means of either critiquing the West or asserting their unique contribution to, or even superiority over, it. The paradox of all these Orientalisms consists in the fact that they were essentially European countermyths, ideas conceived with a European context and in European categories and hardly meant as serious calls to actively de-Europeanize and "Orientalize" themselves.

While all these manifestations belong to the history of Jewish Orientalism, we must now turn our attention to where these issues remain urgently contemporary, at the fault line of international geopolitics and root existential dilemmas. For, clearly, it is with the ideology and practice of Zionism and the State of Israel that the problematic threads of Occidentalism and Orientalism

were—and continue to be—most thickly, dangerously, and dialectically entangled.

We should begin by saying that from the outset, political Zionism's relationship to both Europe and the "Orient" was dense and deeply ambivalent.[60] Zionism, after all, is inconceivable outside the contours of European history. It was not only a reaction to that continent's virulent outbursts of anti-Semitism; it derived the very model of its nationalism and related ideals and categories from Europe. It incorporated both the negation *and* the emulation of the variously interpreted European experience. It represented the simultaneous desire to leave its shores and yet, in many ways, to recreate and perpetuate Europe.[61]

Political Zionism's founding father, Theodor Herzl, embodied these tensions. Jews, he believed, had to be rescued from the insufficiently recognized barbaric potential of a murderous European anti-Semitism. Most Jews would have to get out of Europe.[62] Yet his vision of national liberation had very little traditionally Jewish or "Oriental" about it. His new society was to be an improved liberal, scientific, and technological version of Europe, not a negation of it. German, not Hebrew, was to be the privileged future language, and society was to be organized not along clerical lines but as a kind of blend between progressive capitalist and collective principles.[63] Additionally, the perception of Israel as a kind of colonial Western outpost derives partly from this vision and Herzl's politicking with Imperial powers.

It was precisely the resentment of Herzl's putatively "assimilationist" attitude that provided the pretext for early Zionism's internal disjunction between *Ostjuden* and *Westjuden*. The leading East European Zionist, Achad Ha'am, voiced fears that Zionism had been so permeated with the standards of foreign culture, "that in the end the Jewish State will be a State of Germans or Frenchmen of the Jewish race."[64] In his angry, unabashed reply—made at a time before Eurocentricism was frowned upon—Max Nordau, Herzl's most famous ally, inverted Heine's previous comment that "Judea has always seemed to me a fragment of the West which has somehow gotten lost in the East" by proudly proclaiming that "Altneuland is a piece of Europe in Asia." "Achad Ha'am," Nordau acidly commented, "might see European culture as foreign—we will make it accessible to him." The future Jewish state was to be a liberal one, part of the cultural framework of Western and Central Europe, not derived "from an anti-cultural, wild *Asientum* as Achad Ha'am seems to desire."[65]

Although the first generation of Western Zionists sought to unite all Jews in a single nation, they also replicated the Orientalizing distinction. As Franz Oppenheimer made utterly clear: "We cannot be Jewish by culture because the Jewish culture, as it has been preserved from the Middle Ages in the ghettoes of the East, stands infinitely lower than modern culture which our [Western] nations bear. We can neither regress nor want to . . . Eastern Jews . . . must be Jews by culture for the medieval Jewish culture stands exactly as far above East European barbarism as it is beneath the culture of Western Europe."[66]

One of the later great ironies of this entangled story is the fact that it was these very East European Jews who constituted the driving force in the creation of a new state with Western, secular norms and institutions. As one observer caustically put it, "the Asians of Europe" became the "Europeans of Asia."[67] This of course naturally emerges from the fact that Zionism was constituted as essentially a modernizing movement. But from the perspective of the Orientalist paradigm, *Ostjuden* (or, as they became known, Ashkenazim) now presented themselves, and were perceived, as quintessential Europeans. It is these Ashkenazim who were the founding fathers, institution-builders and tone-setters of the new society.[68]

As a result, many of the negative, backward characteristics that were previously applied to the East European Jews themselves were now directed at the Jewish masses from Arab countries who after 1948 poured into the new State of Israel. Of course, it was not difficult to ascribe "Oriental" characteristics to these new immigrants, because they *were* from Arab and Islamic countries. Moreover, as we have already seen, prior to their coming, there already existed a crystallized stereotype of what were taken to be decayed and nonproductive Asian and African societies. These immigrants were thus stigmatized as rather primitive people who were rescued from inferior cultures and in need of transformative "civilizing" measures according to Western norms.[69] As Abba Eban put it: "the object should be to infuse [the Sephardim] with an Occidental spirit, rather than allow them to drag us into an unnatural Orientalism."[70] There is, indeed, a growing radical literature that argues that these Sephardim constitute the *Jewish victims* of Zionism.[71] Their patronizing resettlement at the periphery, the cutting off of earlocks, the humiliating treatment as possibly infectious creatures—including DDT delousing—remains a deep scar in their collective memory.

Yet, again, the web of Jewish Orientalism differed from and was thicker and more complex than the more general Orientalisms, which were based upon a superior brand of identity-defining distance. For "backward" as these Jews may have been held to be, they were still considered to have the same roots and heritage and were slated to become part of the nation, integrated into the Jewish collectivity.[72] Here was a politics both of belonging and difference. Once again numerous hybridic moments in the East-West categorization applied: although Oriental Jews were regularly regarded as a rather backward non-European Other, a Levantinizing threat unless educated in higher Western ways, for different purposes they were also portrayed as the authentic ancient Jews, primordial embodiments of a long historical textual tradition, exemplifying continuity and still colorful folkways and folklore.[73] Most critically, however, if Jews from Arab countries were regarded with patronizing Orientalist eyes, it was also deemed necessary, given the Israel-Arab conflict, to radically "de-Arabize" them, to decisively mark the gulf, the ontological differences between them and the Arabs, Zionism's ultimate Other. Of this "in-between" status of the Mizrachim (Easterners), Yehouda

Shenhav and Shohan Melamed have provocatively noted: "They were caught between promises of inclusion and practices of exclusion, between the Zionist West and the Arab East, between conflicting perceptions of them as 'authentic' Jews and primitive 'others.'"[74]

To be sure, Mizrachim are far more integrated today in Israeli society than they were twenty or thirty years ago. Many are—often indistinguishably—to be found at the commanding heights of the polity and the economy. Mizrachi music, which before was a suspect, virtually underground phenomenon, has deeply penetrated Israeli popular culture. Yet, despite these great integrative strides, at a more general level a certain "in-betweenness" persists. The Orthodox Shas party—a party that explicitly purports to represent the traditional and underprivileged Mizrachim—is determinedly neither Mizrachi nor Ashkenazi.[75] Still, if certain tensions and resentments against Ashkenazim remain, far more powerful is the felt, urgent need to distinguish these so-called "Arab Jews" from the Arabs themselves.[76] In the spirit of the deflective chain of Orientalism, it should come as no surprise that it is this sector that explicitly voices some of the most anti-Arab political attitudes in the country.[77] Indeed, the leader of the right-wing Orthodox "Eastern" Shas party, Eli Yishai, has recently taken this even further and, ironically, has applied to immigrant workers the same attitudes previously foisted upon "Oriental" Jews themselves. These migrants, he declared, bring with them a "profusion of diseases: hepatitis, measles, tuberculosis, AIDS and drug addiction."[78] (One does not, however, want to leave the wrong historical impression. As Noah Gerber has observed, present attitudes do not accurately reflect the positions of numerous Sephardi intellectuals who sought to bridge the widening gap between Zionist and Arab territorial designs in Palestine. Contrary to accepted wisdom, Brit Shalom, which in the 1920s and early 1930s advocated some kind of an equal binational solution to the conflict, was not made up entirely of Ashkenazi Jews. Moreover, the radical Mizrachi Black Panther movement of the 1970s had a very conciliatory attitude towards Israeli Arabs.[79])

Regardless of the mixed attitudes towards them, Jews from Arab countries were to become part of the nation, integrally absorbed into emerging Israeli society. But what can be said about the native population, the Arabs of Palestine? Perhaps surprisingly, significant aspects of early Zionism were negatively Occidentalist in the sense that their image of the Middle East and Arab society was based upon an idealization of the spiritual, fresh, and emergent East and a radical rejection of Europe and the West as decadent, exhausted, materialist, and alienated.[80] Of course, these schemes inverted but nevertheless retained the terms of the ontological and epistemological dichotomy between the Oriental and the Occidental in the starkest way.[81]

Mainly (but not entirely) before World War I—when the Jewish presence in Palestine was still insignificant and before the Arab-Jewish divide had hardened and solidified into virtually hermetic categories of enmity—a kind of Zionist pan-Asian or pan-Semitic message emerged.[82] As one figure put

it, Zionism was about de-Europeanization, the transformative return of the Jew to his healthy, authentic Eastern essence, based upon the mystical power of the land common to Jew and Arab alike.[83] Thus, admittedly marginal figures such as Eugen Höflich radically rejected the Zionist colonial attempt to recreate Europe in Palestine—what he described as the attempt to create a "foreign body," a homeland for "de-orientalized Orientals"—and proposed a kind of geographical and brotherly "anarchic" spiritual union of Asian cultures (Judaism, Arabia, India, China, and Japan), in which there would be an "Arab-Jewish *Brüderstaat*." In 1917 he wrote, "I have dogged myself in the idea of an unconditional Asiatism of Judaism." Höflich's Zionism differed from the aesthetic and mythical character of other Orientalisms and its symbolically cosmetic definitions of identity; it did not seek to "save" Europe or to argue for a mediation or fusion between Oriental and European virtues, but rather preached actual existential transformation and real political action.[84] For all that, it also reproduced the archetypal East-West cut, and its effectiveness was ultimately negligible.

Höflich, to be sure, was hardly a representative figure. Still, pan-Semitic Zionism was not an exclusively fringe phenomenon. As late as 1923, a key establishment figure, Arthur Ruppin, the great land-settlement authority, imagined the nascent Jewish commonwealth as destined to become an integral, vital part of the modern flowering of a greater Arab civilization on the basis of a common Semitic bond. "We must place ourselves again in the Oriental circle of peoples and together with our racial brothers, the Arabs (and Armenians) create a new cultural community of the near East. More than ever, it seems to me that Zionism can be justified only in terms of the racial belonging of the Jews to the peoples of the near Orient."[85] 0ther bi-nationalist figures such as Rav Binyamin (Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann) concocted numerous future models upon the notion that the Jews were essentially an Eastern *Volk,* quite indigestible to the West, and Hans Kohn's early desire to "overcome" Europe and his critique of European imperialism envisaged a major role that Jews in Palestine could assume within the nationalist "awakening of the Eastern peoples".[86]

Some variations consisted of a strange blend of romanticism and hard-boiled political assessment. Thus the right-wing militant Zionist Wolfgang von Weisl—who often wandered in the desert in Muslim dress and who was dubbed "the Jewish Lawrence of Arabia"—recognized the upcoming force and vitality of the Moslem world, the decline of Europe, and advocated a community of interests, dreaming early on of converting the Arabs to Zionism.[87]

Indeed, this was the period where it was not uncommon to see young Zionists clad in Arab garb and *kaffiyot*.[88] But this alleged appropriation of nativeness had its darker side. For rather than union and identification with the autochthonous population, as one critic has pointed out, this was a kind of claim to indigenousness that left little voice "for the Arabs themselves, their contemporary reality and their rights."[89] Indeed, key Zionist leaders—such

as Itzchak Ben Zvi, David Ben Gurion and Ber Borochov—insisted that the "native" fellahin of Palestine/Eretz Israel were not of Arab origin, but were derived from the original Jewish agricultural inhabitants and thus bore witness to the Jewish claim to the land.[90] Even Buber's Orientalism—despite his later admirable binational vision of Arab–Jewish cooperation—was based upon a particular vision of the distinctive historical-ethical nature of the Jewish people.[91]

There were those who immediately grasped the unrealistic and romantic nature of many of these visions. Thus, the humanist Zionist Shmuel Hugo Bergman pointed out that actually the rise of Arab nationalism was a product of Western capitalism and modernization, not of native Eastern thought. Given their peculiar placement, the role of Zionists, Bergman argued, was to act as a mediating bridge between East and West.[92] Moses Calvary most clearly articulated the middle ground. He was, he wrote, aware of the force of both the mindless influence of German nationalism on Zionists, on the one hand, and of an exaggerated Orientalism, on the other. What was needed was a critical and rational relationship balance between them. "It is clear," he wrote, "that we are distinct from the German essence, but similarly in the modes that we have chosen as Jews, we also appropriate and perpetuate Western values as part of the European legacy."[93]

But these critics too remained poised within the Occidental-Oriental web and sought in some way to negotiate between the poles of "East" and "West."[94] In the insightful words of Arie Bruce Saposnik, early Zionism in multiple ways envisaged itself essentially as "a blend of East and West, members of a composite nation originating in the East, but now deeply influenced by the western civilization in which they had resided for so many centuries . . . intermediaries in a multi-directional tangle of the disparate and often conflicting meanings of East and West in European and Jewish discourses."[95]

Yet, clearly, all the Jewish Orientalisms we have been discussing ultimately and paradoxically sprung from predicaments and experiences that originated in Europe and were based upon Western categories. The young Gershom Scholem recorded his frustration with this entanglement thus: "It seems to be a paradox," he wrote in 1916, "that I, a complete and untransformed enemy of Europe (*Europafeind*) and a devotee of the new Orient, who wants to be the bearer of a new Juda, must be content with making the move precisely as the teacher of European knowledge (*Wissenschaft*)."[96]

The dilemmas and ironies remain with us to this day, thoroughly entangled in the perhaps un-resolvable Occidental-Oriental myths and realities of our own time. Situated in the heart of the Middle East, Israel today stands at the very epicenter of the putative "clash of civilizations." For some it represents the embodiment, the most conspicuous outpost, of the colonizing West in the oppressed, sullen and resentful, East. For others it stands as a beacon of democratic light in a dark sea of semifeudal, authoritarian regimes. Indeed, these dichotomies have become even more stark in view of the apparently

intractable Israel-Palestine conflict and the wider confrontation between the Arab-Muslim world and the "Judeo-Christian" West (this increasingly articulated notion that there is an intractable conflict between East and West is also an ideological construct designed to exclude the Muslim Orient from the legitimate Occidental sphere). It is still too early to tell in which way the "Arab Spring" will influence the outcome of these conflicts and perceptions.

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has correctly pointed out that "real" Arabs could not be "included in the Zionist vision of redemption, and from the outset were considered alien, an opposition in relation to which the Zionist self-image took shape"[97] It is important to point out this was not purely the result of an inherent Orientalism, but rather the fact that the Zionist brand of ethnic nationalism was oriented to further the interests, specifically, of the Jewish people (just as Palestinian or Arab nationalism has great difficulty in incorporating Jewish interests) and that from the outset Arabs regarded this as an invasive violation of their land and natural rights. At its base, the conflict may indeed be territorial, one of two warring national entities, perhaps even soluble through some kind of rational compromise, but, clearly, at a time of deepening global East-West conflict and the bitter continuation of Palestine-Israel hostilities, Orientalist stereotypes reinforce the gulf in order to portray Arabs and Jews as implacable enemies and religious foes, essentialist symbols of the East and West.

I am a historian, not a politician or moralist. My task here, therefore, has been to map some of the major and complex ways in which the archetypal Oriental-Occidental, East-West axis has been constitutive, deployed, resisted, and negotiated within the Jewish experience, rather than to attempt to provide solutions to the conflicts and problems to which it gives rise. What needs to be noted, however, is the degree to which its framework is shaping questions and positions that have taken center stage, both within the international academy and within Israel itself. It is a debate that precisely reflects constant tensions of the wider Zionist inheritance, tied to fundamental dilemmas and quandaries regarding the identity and self-understanding of the State of Israel itself. In its light, some young scholars have radically questioned the prevailing national narrative: "Many of us still dream, as did Theodor Herzl in his time, of a petit-bourgeois Central European colony that just happens to be located in the Levant…Since Orientalism is basically a tool for defining identities, it enables us to imagine ourselves as part of the 'Western, democratic, enlightened' world which is locked in constant and irresolvable confrontation with the 'Eastern, Islamic and primitive' world and thereby entrenches itself and justifies the surrounding of Israel with walls that isolate and separate it from, its immediate surroundings."[98]

Today, many of these Eurocentric assumptions are under question and, while they do not seem to have much immediate political impact, any number of mediating or more-or-less radical rival narratives are being proposed. In the last few years—and quite obviously related to contemporary political

debates—there has been a clear revival of the thesis of the "culture of tolerance" in the Spanish and Islamic world and of the Jewish contributions to it: "a counter-history to either the notion of Muslims and Jews as implacable enemies, or the 'clash of civilization' model, the supposed fault line between major civilizational entities in which Islam and the West figure most prominently, especially 'post-9/11.'"[99] Recently, historians have been emphasizing that the Western stereotype of the Muslim Orient has been inextricably connected with images of the Jews and that this mutual "Otherness" constitutes another deep structural affinity.[100] The medieval "classification of the Jews together with the Muslims," Jeremy Cohen has written, means that they were merely "subsets in a larger genus of hermeneutically constructed *infideles* who undermine the unity of Christian faith."[101] There has even been a recent attempt—by Gil Anidjar—to reread the entirety of European history as being structured by its relation to both Arab and Jew, in which the construction of its enemies, the Jews as theological enemy, and the Arab as political enemy, becomes inscribed into the very marrow of Europe's self-definition. Europe is the site in which the two figures, "Arab" and "Jew," emerge as enemies of the continent—but also of each other.[102] There is no doubt that contemporary events have helped to sharpen such narratives, just as the ideological counter to this has been the recent insistent assertion of a symbiotic and venerable "Western Judeo-Christian" tradition in which Muslims are conspicuously absent, implicitly or explicitly figured as the indigestible Other .[103]

Radical rereadings of and challenges to the hegemonic Zionist narrative have of late also emerged in Israel. Raz-Krakotzkin argues that Jewish history "must be written from the place where the Jews were defined as such: from the Orient, from that ambivalent place that combines the perspective of the colonizer with that of the colonized. This means liberating the dialectics of East/West and colonizer/colonized from their binary prison."[104] Whether or not such a rereading will take place, the very borders, cultural as well as geographical, the political directions, indeed the root self-definition of Israeli society remains more than ever in basic contestation[105]—as variously (and sometimes exclusively) "Jewish," as a state of all its citizens, as multicultural, as a "Mediterranean society," as an integral part of the Middle East,[106] and as a Western liberal democracy.The stakes are enormous and no quick or simple resolution is in sight. What is clear, however, is that the entanglement within the Occidental-Oriental web is as powerful as ever and that regardless of the many attempts to undermine, soften, mediate, bridge, celebrate, or reinforce the East-West dichotomy, it seems to remain at the contested, defining heart of the modern Jewish experience—and perhaps unwittingly, at the storm center of world political conflict.

4

Bildung in Palestine: Zionism, Binationalism, and the Strains of German-Jewish Humanism

> "…the last flicker of the humanist nationalist flame, at a historical moment when nationalism became amongst all the nations an anti-humanist movement."
>
> —Hugo Bergman[1]

When we think of twentieth-century German-speaking Jewish intellectuals abroad, beyond their borders, we tend to think of them largely as exiles, refugees from Nazism. Our present subjects, however, consist of a group of Central European thinkers who, with one or two exceptions, departed from Europe well before the Nazi onslaught. During the first three decades of the twentieth century, the center of their attention moved to Palestine. As second-generation Zionists, to be sure, they rejected Europe (and Germany in particular) as the site in which their Jewishness, as they conceived it, could be authentically validated. Yet this physical and ideological move beyond the borders of their birth did not mean that they necessarily wanted to, or indeed could, unload the fraught mental baggage they brought with them. The mixed European experience—for it was both negatively and positively conceived—marked and defined, molded, them for life. Some of its less noble ingredients—its intolerance, integral nationalism and chauvinism—served as a negative foil for their own model of a spiritual, enlightened nationalism. At the same time, they also carried with them the positive values and nuances of a European tradition that could remain still relatively authoritative, because the Nazi experience had not yet rendered so much connected to that past sullied and questionable. They brought with them the sensibilities of what they took to be an amalgam of European and Jewish humanism and sought to apply it within and reshape their new reality—a reality which inevitably tested and strained it to its outermost limits.

This small circle of German-speaking Zionist intellectuals—all three labels are equally pertinent—sought to subvert conventional notions of national identities and state-political boundaries. This was rather unique because their skepticism of political "ethno-nationalism" and a majoritarian state

proceeded from *within* a deeply felt nationalist commitment—and at a time when almost all nationalists belonged to the more militant, integral variety. From an early stage of Zionist settlement, they devoted themselves to the cause of Arab-Jewish understanding and advocated a binational, common state or federative solution to the emerging conflict, producing, over the years, any number of detailed blueprints as to how this purportedly could be put into practice. Throughout, and to the chagrin of others within their camp, they identified this issue as *the* central moral and political challenge to Zionism.

Not all German-speaking Zionists, of course, were binationalists, nor were all binationalists Central European intellectuals and university professors.[2] Nevertheless, over time, the circle's Germanic provenance and preponderance was evident and was significant both to themselves and to their many derisive opponents, who mockingly referred to "all these Arthurs, Hugos and Hanses."[3] Although always a very small minority—Brit Shalom never had much more than a hundred members—their influence was palpable because many of the leading proponents of the binational idea were or became distinguished thinkers and scholars in their own right. Its most famous exemplars include the Prague-born Hans Kohn (1891–1971), the pioneer of the theoretical and historical study of nationalism, who eventually severed his ties with the Zionist movement; Gershom Scholem; Martin Buber (1878–1965), the philosopher and theologian, who was a corresponding member from Germany, and at the time the most influential figure of the group and whose writings endowed its positions with the stamp of moral authority; and, albeit at a later stage from afar and in a more peripheral manner, Hannah Arendt.[4] Albert Einstein too was in touch with members of Brit Shalom.[5]

Other activists of the group are perhaps less well-known but no less interesting for that. Most prominently these included the founder of Brit Shalom, perhaps the least radical of the group and one who also became increasingly skeptical of the possibility of a peaceful, amicable compromise, the Posen-born Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), a creator of Jewish demography and sociology and a key figure in Zionist immigration, settlement, and land acquisition policies, activities that he constantly sought to square with his changing views on Jewish-Arab relations; the philosopher, librarian, and first rector of the Hebrew University, Shmuel Hugo Bergman (1883–1975); Robert Weltsch (1891–1983), the writer and editor, among other things, of the German Zionist organ, the *Jüdische Rundschau*, and author of the renowned "Wear the Yellow Star with Pride" article penned upon the Nazi assumption of power; and Ernst Simon (1899–1988), the philosopher and educator.

Their role and status were inherently paradoxical. If, in certain ways, they were "outsiders" they were also "insiders." We should not forget that, for all the differences, they were part of the intellectual and institutional Zionist establishment, both within and outside of Palestine. Their ideological dissent notwithstanding, this was possible because it was only in the 1940s that

political statehood became the official goal of the Zionist movement. Until then the conceptually rather vague notion of a "Jewish National Home," which permitted a degree of interpretive flexibility in a still historically open situation, prevailed. It was only the Revisionists—the avowed enemies of Brit Shalom—who openly proclaimed a majority Jewish state as the goal; Labor Zionism, of course, shared this desire but officially maintained a pragmatic neutrality in this regard. It was only just prior to, and obviously after, the creation of the Jewish state that opposition to it appeared tantamount to treason. In that sense the study of the binationalists may serve as a counterfactual exercise: it provides us with an alternative foundational perspective when not only was statehood not a certainty, but when other options did not seem to contradict historical reality and when it was possible to envisage alternative future social orders.

Yet, if these intellectuals constituted part of the elite of the *Yishuv* (Jewish settlement in pre-state Palestine), they also acted as its gadflies, a source of constant critical irritation. This was dissent that proceeded from within.[6] Indeed, they very closely fit Michael Walzer's description of the "connected critic."[7] As highly committed Zionists, they articulated positions based upon a sense of belonging and intense identification. This rendered their discontent and objections particularly relevant and irritating for, unlike enemies, their criticism possessed standing.[8]

Binational Zionism has been rather thoroughly researched. Here I want to limit the focus and explore the manifold, sometimes contradictory, ways in which the German-speaking contexts and cultures informed the ideas and biases of these binationalists; the modes in which they both perceived and sought to remold the new reality into which they had been transplanted; and the strengths, strains, and limits that were entailed in such border crossings.

What then are the links between an idealist binational Zionism, the rejection of "political" ethnonationalism and the German-Jewish legacy abroad? Recently, scholars have correctly noted that generalized and rather abstract notions of the "influence" of a vaguely defined and positively conceived "German culture," leave much to be desired. After all, normative German nationalism was more integral than cosmopolitan, and its dominant political culture cannot be labeled as liberal humanist.[9] This, then, was hardly a direct, unmediated influence. Moreover, these researchers point out that while these binationalists were indeed largely products of the German *Kulturbereich*, they came from politically and socially distinctive parts of Central Europe. The diverse realities of, and reactions to, the experiences of Prague (from whence hailed Bergman, Kohn, and Weltsch), Posen (Arthur Ruppin) and, presumably those from Germany (Buber, Scholem, Simon, etc.) cannot be simplistically reduced to one.

Indeed, Yfaat Weiss has suggested that the varying inspirations behind Zionist binationalism did not emanate necessarily from culturally elevated

notions and positive experiences: the binationalists, she declares, could hardly derive their ideas from a tradition of tolerant "liberal Central European moderation, because no such thing existed."[10] Local knowledge and experience of a differentiated and mainly negative kind, she argues, was a crucial factor in the genesis and relocation of such views. Thus, the more mainstream (and later disillusioned) binational position of Arthur Ruppin was a translation into Palestine of the distinctively illiberal settlement model of the Prussian colonization of his native Posen. Ruppin, Weiss argues, projected the Posen experience, and replicated its German-Polish division, onto Palestine and envisaged the coexistence of the two groups (Arabs and Jewish) as proceeding within quite separate territorial, spatial frames. "I see as the only solution in the future," he wrote in 1923, "the territorial limitations of the Jews with autonomy on the plains, the Arabs in the mountains and the lower Jordan valley."[11]

Moreover, as Weiss points out, in making his early move from Germany to Palestine, Ruppin's baggage included few classic liberal precepts. He imbibed much of the eugenic and racial discourse of his time, which he believed would provide the tools for combating what he took to be the real dangers of Jewish assimilation and even "degeneration,"[12] which hardly heralded the classical precepts of liberalism.[13] But Ruppin's racial views of the Arabs had nothing to do with doctrines of hierarchy and domination. Indeed, at least initially, he dreamed not so much of Jewish-Arab separation but of an ultimate and higher integration. In certain moods, he imagined the nascent Jewish commonwealth as destined to become an integral part of the new Near East, a vital part of the modern flowering of a greater Arab civilization. "We must place ourselves again in the Oriental circle of peoples," Ruppin declared in 1923, "and together with our racial brothers, the Arabs (and Armenians) create a new cultural community of the near East. More than ever, it seems to me that Zionism can be justified only in terms of the racial belonging of the Jews to the peoples of the near Orient."[14]

An examination of Ruppin's early writings indicates that his notions of division, as much as they may have been predicated upon the illiberal Posen model, were also based upon the conscious desire not to trample upon the rights and needs of the Arabs. Early on—his optimism was later dashed—his hopes for accommodating both groups (conditioned on the good behavior of both sides) were based upon the fact that through World War I the population of Palestine (750,000) was sparse, and available unused arable land was still relatively plentiful. "There need not be a struggle over shortage of land between Arab and Jew—there is place for all."[15]

Ultimately, it is true that Ruppin came down on the increasingly pressed side of an equitable territorial division, while the more radical binationalists developed a cultural rather than a physical conception of separation and coexistence. They too, Weiss argues, forged their ideas not via any native humanist liberalism but as responses to the essentially negative experiences

of ethnonationalism in Central and Eastern Europe. The maltreatment of minorities, the intolerance of ruling national majorities—apart from anti-Semitic instances, the Czech-German, Italian–South Tyrol, and Polish-Ukrainian examples were most often invoked—these were all incidences that they wanted Zionism to avoid. Thus Hans Kohn, witnessing the escalation of distrust and conflict between Czechs and Germans and the move from what he took to be an inclusive to an exclusive nationalism, sought to avert this fate and save Zionism by means of a binational solution, which would facilitate mutually respectful separate cultural national existences and shared political power.[16]

In the view of this new scholarship, then, Zionist binationalism, as it moved beyond its originating borders, was hardly the importation into Palestine of a European-based liberalism and humanism, but rather the negative projection outwards of problematic local models and situations. Clearly, there were also wider deleterious continental developments. The shock and lessons of the brutalizing Great War, in which unrestrained nationalisms had gone murderously berserk, must be considered as a crucial animating force. Most of the people who were later to form the binational nucleus shared the initial overall enthusiasm for the war, but eventually understood its disastrous magnitude. Gershom Scholem's opposition to the war from the beginning was an honorable exception though, it must be said, his stance derived not so much from humanitarian as nationalist reasons—this was not a "Jewish" war, he declared, and thus a dividing line between Europe and the Jews had to be drawn.[17] At any rate, out of the ashes of war, it was clear, a more refined, positive counterconception of nationalism—one that was less oriented by power politics and more ethically anchored—had to be formulated.[18] This postwar reformation, as Hans Kohn put it in 1921, would usher in an age "when national sovereign independence, the goal of the age of political nationalism, will vanish because mankind will have realized that, just as individual men can never be fully sovereign and must be bound by myriad dependencies and obligations and, for the sake of solidarity, must put up with restrictions . . . so national independence, the nonintervention of the 'foreigner' in 'our' affairs is a dangerous phantom."[19]

The new scholarly emphases on "negative" models and the critique of previously rather unexamined assertions as to the unmediated transmission of European humanist influences do, indeed, provide valuable correctives. Yet another important contribution to the debate, by the young scholar Dimitry Shumsky, also insists on the centrality of the local as a molding force of the binationalist outlook but, contrarily, insists on the "positive" dimensions of that experience. He argues that in the case of the early twentieth century Bar-Kochba Circle (to which Bergman and Kohn enthusiastically belonged and whose central inspiring force was Martin Buber) the specific "in-between" situation of Prague Jews, the quest for a cultural negotiation between the Gentile (Czech and German) and Jewish cultures, rendered the search for

a kind of everyday multicultural accommodation both natural and necessary. This accommodatory impulse, Shumsky argues, animated their critique of ethnonationalism and thus also their subsequent binational approach to Zionism. This was no retreat into idealistic, deterritorialized thinking, but was grounded in the prosaic realities of the Czech-German experience. It resulted, he claims, in an open national identity whose content was not threatened but enriched by a plurality of cultural affinities and was informed by a cosmopolitan belief in the ultimate unity of mankind.[20] Towards the end of his long life, Hugo Bergman essentially articulated this thesis:

> More and more do I regard this synthesis as the specific task of Jews for humanity. We grew up in the city of Prague, in which three peoples, the Czechs, Germans and Jews lived and despite all the differences lived *together*. It was the greatest service of the Bohemian Jews to the two other people to act as *bridges*... We took Prague into our hearts as a bridge city and assumed the function of trying to overcome the antagonisms. It is probably no coincidence that Bohemian Jews were the carriers of the Brit-Shalom ideas. That, it seems to me, is the teaching that we should pass on to our descendants.[21]

Yet, when all is said and done, "local" emphases of either the negative or positive variety can go too far. Despite all their differences, these men were shaped within a recognizably similar cultural universe; in many ways they shared a common worldview and outlook. If they cannot be said to emerge from a generalized "German" culture, their intellectual formation did take place within the contours of a specific, historically conditioned German-speaking Jewish world, characterized, more often than not, by its common ideals and sensitivities. Broadly speaking, the Zionist binationalists, while rejecting the domestic liberal, integrationist impulses of their fellow German Jews, shared other parts of their normative and conceptual baggage. This consisted of a set of rather rarefied Enlightenment attitudes and *Bildungs* values and biases that George L. Mosse has argued—for reasons associated with their struggle for emancipation—were built into the core of a new German-Jewish identity: a belief in critical reason; a certain moral, humanist posture; the cultivating centrality of "culture;" an idealist bias; a downplaying or underestimation of the power-political realm; and so on.[22] Not a hypostasized German culture in itself, but rather the historically specific Jewish appropriations and emphases of that culture played into their binationalist sensibilities.

If these Zionists rejected what they took to be the "assimilationist" drive of the original *Bildungs* idea, they retained its cultivating ethical and spiritual dimensions and rendered its humanist impulses central to their nationalism. In the *Yishuv* it was these propensities that were integral to their self-definition, which tied them together as a social group; indeed, they marked them off. Here it was of little importance if one hailed from Prague, Rawitsch,

Berlin, or Heppenheim. In a curiously ambiguous way, half-admiring and half-contemptuous for those who observed it, this German *Kultur* and language constituted a kind of mental and social border.

These borders were palpable to both sides. Many of their mainly East European *Yishuv* contemporaries regarded these German intellectuals as stiff, buttoned-up "Yekkes,"[23] unworldly, professors perched in their ivory towers at the Hebrew University and closely and comfortably concentrated in the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Rechavia and Talbieh. To be sure, this perception often went together with a certain bemused attraction. Nowhere has this been better captured than in S. Y. Agnon's classic novel *Shira*, with its gentle mingling of satire and respect, its ironic rendering of these putatively overrefined, distant subjects by endowing them with everyday carnal desires.[24] Yet this separation also expressed itself in hostile political terms. Adherents of Brit Shalom and the Ichud, an organization with similar aims, formed in the 1940s, were often portrayed as deracinated and irresponsible elitist intellectuals, seeking to import alien and naively utopian schemes to Palestinian shores (a prevalent image to this day). The official organ of the Labor party, Dvir, declared that these Germans had no "part in the people; they are atomized, individualized, confined to their small groups . . . [they] fear everything associated with the masses, power, force."[25] In a 1930 attack on what he took to be their meddling unpatriotic politics, Menachem Ussishkin simply conflated "Brith Shalom" with "the Germans," arguing that the organization reflected a peculiar "criminal" mentality.[26]

One does not want to make too much of it, but such attitudes were in many ways a surprising carryover of the old *Ost-Westjude* tension, within a new context and with the power-relation reversed—the *German Jews*, not the East European Jews, were now a kind of misplaced cultural minority.[27] Both sides were aware of this. "I have the feeling," one binationalist wrote in 1928, "that we are all too negatively integrated . . . We are not positively enough engaged with the country and bound to Hebrew culture etc. We are really . . . 'uprooted' (*Entwurzelte*). We live spiritually/intellectually (*geistig*) in Germany and not here . . . Hebrew is alien to us, thus we are able to follow Hebrew literature only through the daily press and not the literature itself . . . we know far better about an article in '*Tagebuch*' or the '*Weltbühne*' than an article in '*Ketuwim*.'"[28] Even the most mainstream member of this circle, Arthur Ruppin, well after he had moved to Palestine, confided to the novelist Emil Ludwig (who was visiting in 1924): "My whole personality is tied into the German language. I can be effective in German, not another language. It occurs to me that recently people have the wrong impression of me and [because of this] I can't make friends even if I want to."[29] Moreover, after four decades of life in Israel/Palestine, Hugo Bergman still associated intolerance with Eastern European Jewish attitudes to the non-Jew. In 1964, after listening to a particularly chauvinistic sermon, he returned home and told his wife Escha, "I went to such lengths to integrate myself into *Ostjudentum*, and in the end I feel entirely foreign. How

can the Jewish people cure itself of all this? And can we exist at all as a Volk and also as a religion, without this chauvinism?"[30]

At any rate, the nationalism of Brit Shalom was guided essentially by inner cultural standards and conceptions of morality, rather than by considerations of power and singular group interest. Its exponents were united—as many saw it, in hopelessly naïve fashion—by their opposition to Herzl's brand of "political" Zionism,[31] both because they had a distaste for his strategy of alliances with external and imperial powers and because they did not hold the political realm or "statehood" to be an ultimate value: their main goal was the spiritual and humanist revival of Judaism and the creation of a moral community or commonwealth in which this mission could be authentically realized.

Ernst Simon typified this approach. "The Jewish State," he declared in 1943, "means Jewish domination over the Arabs, just as an Arab State means domination over the Jews."[32] While he affirmed "the vitality of Jewish politics and the building up of the country that is connected with it," he insisted that these actions would be judged "by a moral-religious standard that is over and above politics itself."[33] As Hans Kohn put it in 1929, the Zionism he championed was not political in the conventional sense of power: "I and a group of my friends regarded Zionism as a moral cum spiritual movement within which we could realize our most fundamental humane convictions, our pacifism, liberalism and humanism."[34] Men like Bergman were convinced, as it turns out, rather naively, that a *Bildungs* insistence on personalizing relationships could humanize the harshness of prevalent nationalist politics and conflict. Indeed, it is not surprising, that—the study of Arabic apart—Bergman regarded the common acquisition of these sources of *Bildung* to be a crucial component of Arab-Jewish understanding. In 1926 he reported upon the "small joy" he experienced when the director of the Arabic teacher's seminary and some of his students came to the University Library in Jerusalem in order to borrow books by Freud and Jung: "So I sometimes have the feeling that we are tearing down the walls that separate people and in this place of fanaticism creating a human abode…"[35]

There were of course major differences among these fascinating binationalists—all merit separate but thus far unwritten biographies—yet most were characterized by an inbred distaste for chauvinism and intolerance. This certainly includes the allegedly "illiberal" Arthur Ruppin. If his policy of separation appears, at least in retrospect, to be more "realistic," it was also explicitly opposed to domination and expropriation. His diaries are shot through with such concerns, indeed they constituted the reason for his founding of Brit Shalom (as a study circle rather than a politically activist group) in 1925: "The Arab question lies heavily on my soul. I am no chauvinist and do not dream of Jewish rule (*Herrschaft*) or a Jewish State in Palestine. I want the Jews to have equal rights with the Arabs living in Palestine and regard with concern the gulf that exists between the two peoples, the growing enmity on the

side of the Arabs and the chauvinistic and uncomprehending attitude of many Jews to the Arabs. With a few like-minded people I have founded a club to further these goals of better relationships, but for the present see no clear way before us."[36] This lack of clarity gave way to despair as the situation worsened, and there was the premonition that the very structure of the situation might have made such chauvinism inevitable: "Will Zionism really deteriorate into a meaningless form of chauvinism?" Ruppin asked in 1928. "Is there really no way to set aside an area in Palestine where an increasing number of Jews can operate without exploiting the Arabs? I see the limited geographical territory as a particular problem. The day is undoubtedly not far off when no more land will be available, and settling a Jew will necessarily cause the removal of a fellah . . . And what will happen then?"[37]

These circles noted—and rather helplessly tried to resist—the increasingly militant nationalist atmosphere. As one of them reported as early as 1922: "Jewish children fight these days with Arab children and say: just wait, tomorrow Palestine will belong to us. In the Gymnasium recently a teacher gave a talk about the Arabs and said: this people is not worthy of cleaning our shoes . . ."[38] The sentiments of none other than the son of one of their guiding spirits, Achad Ha'am (Asher Ginzberg), were particularly worrying and perhaps typical. In 1928 he declared that he was against Brit Shalom and would rather emigrate from a land in which Moslem Arabs rather than Jews dominated. Brit Shalom, he argued, was not being honest with itself—it was absurd to interpret Zionism in idealist terms. Zionism was simply a race for Palestine, and this did not depend upon how fast we run, but, rather, on how slowly the others moved. That is why we had to be honest and declare that the high mortality rate of Arab children was welcome to us, indeed was absolutely necessary, and every attempt on the Jewish side to alleviate this mortality rate through child welfare had to be condemned from a Zionist standpoint. One could not say this publicly but that was the truth.[39] Such attitudes came even closer to home. When Arthur Ruppin had his first political conversation with his son, Rafi, he observed: "He wanted to know what 'Brit Shalom' is. I told him it was a society for making peace between Jews and Arabs. He did not like that. He revealed himself as a small chauvinist. There should only be Jews and Hebrew spoken in Palestine. When I asked him what the Arabs should do, he said that they should go to Arabia. He asked me to leave 'Brit Shalom,' for otherwise people would laugh at me. He told me that a child at school told him he should be ashamed that his father belonged to 'Brit Shalom.'"[40]

Perhaps what set these men apart from most liberal "assimilated" German Jews was the way in which this *Bildung* sat comfortably side by side with their own recovery of Jewish tradition and informed their project of a personal and collective renaissance of Judaism. Hugo Bergman's letters and diaries are studded with such unself-conscious entries. In January 1918 he wrote: "Proceeded with the study of Talmud, read most of the Odyssey in Greek, began Dante's

Vita nuova and Divina Commedia."[41] A far later entry, for December 2nd 1959, reveals a similar, almost innocent, catholicity: "[Heard] a lecture by Scholem on Pantheism . . . worked well in the evening: Fichte, Natural right and the derivation of the Individual. Bought new tefillin [phylacteries] for 8 pounds . . ."[42]

The binationalists were certainly committed Zionists, but they opposed Zionist theories of "normalization," notions that Jews should become "like all other nations" and uncritically assimilate their accompanying ethos and deployment of political power and violence. Jewish nationalism, nurtured by the Jewish prophetic tradition, they insisted, had to retain Judaism's special ethical core.[43] These critical tendencies become especially noteworthy in light of the fact that these figures were intense, deeply idealistic nationalists, strongly committed—and in some cases, almost fanatically committed—to the personal and collective renaissance of Judaism and the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland. We should not, therefore, be ahistorical and confuse this *binationalist* position with later postnationalist emphases on "a state for all its citizens"—even though there were rather surprising moments when the possibility of a postnationalist state was broached, albeit fleetingly. Thus in a 1928 conversation with Edwin Samuel, Bergman proposed a general "Palestinian land-consciousness [*Landesbewusstein*]" that would "break the particularism of the various communities and create a place open to the Jew, the Arab, the English, the German, the American . . . and where things were not viewed from the standpoint of the particular communities, but rather judged from the perspective of the whole country."[44]

Nevertheless, the overwhelmingly "nationalist" credentials of these figures were clear enough. Their humanism becomes even more noteworthy in view of the fact that their ideas, sentiments, and convictions were shot through with any number of mystical, neoromantic, and "irrationalist" *fin-de-siècle* and Weimarian impulses.[45] Indeed, it is one of the more interesting paradoxes of this group that the most nonchauvinist Zionist nationalism was closely associated with various forms of organic, existential, "religious," and totalistic *Völkisch* visions and ideology.[46] How did the two go together? It should be clear by now that this was a nationalism mediated by the *Bildungs* predilections of its exponents. Zionist binationalism thus dismissed the hierarchical racial and power-political aspects of *Völkisch* ideology and deployed it in the direction of culture and spirit, the moral and inner-directed realm (propensities that characterized the German-Jewish intellectual legacy as a whole), one which was reinforced by their ethical-mystic-prophetic interpretation of Judaism.[47]

But given the acute sensitivity of these intellectuals to the prior presence of Arabs and their dismissal of conventional national considerations, how, nevertheless, did they justify the Zionist project? It is worth quoting at length from a revealing 1919/1920 text by Hans Kohn:

> To refer to historical rights . . . seems impossible . . . 'Historic rights' can be used to justify every injustice . . . Such justifications can vindicate princes or kings in levying a head tax and towns in shutting us in ghettos . . . History

> continues to have an effect on us, but it does not give us rights. Only the living present gives us rights . . . Nor did today's Arabs take the country from us by force or by cunning. Even their father's did not do so, they did not oppress us, and thus this does not even give us the indignation of pathos and revolt . . . we have no historic right to Palestine. But though we do not have this, we have never neglected to exert our real right to Palestine. Since the destruction of our independence by the Romans, we have never ceased to live in that country for any length of time. There have been considerable Jewish colonies there, and the Jewish spirit has brought forth unique fruit. In this way, the country was always not only Arab but also Jewish, not as a historic right, but in the living present.
>
> But what draws us to Palestine, and will slowly change an Arab Palestine into a Palestine of Arabs and Jews, and later a Palestine of Jews and Arabs (nobody can predict the future development) is our love for the country, a love [in] which history surely continues to have an effect, as well as the needs of our time. Although the country is now Arab, this does not at all imply that it is the exclusive property of the nation. No nation has the right to a country in such an exclusive sense. The country belongs to those who make it so fertile through the strength of their minds and their hands [so] that they can make their living there. Palestine, a region of approximately 27,000 km is too large for its present population of 700,000. It is very thinly populated; there is no industry that could support a large number of workers; agriculture is primitive; and wide expanses have not been reclaimed. That is why Palestine needs massive immigration so that it can achieve its potential for humanity and the world economy . . . The Arabs cannot provide this at the moment . . . No country belongs to one nation, it belongs to the people who live there and work peacefully—and in Palestine that will always be not only the Jews, but also the Arabs. Our state institutions must take this into account, they must give both Jews and Arabs the broadest autonomy and self-determination so as to diminish friction. We will have the difficult (but not insoluble) task of settling two non-territorial, non-coherent national communities on one common state-run territory, whose national functions amount to nothing more than the regulation of certain general economic questions. The problem of nationality would otherwise turn into a serious disease affecting our state, which could destroy it, as it has other states.[48]

Both Arab and Jewish exclusivism and domination were unacceptable—beware, Kohn wrote, "of the fetishism of a master-race!"

Time and time again, Buber too sought to theoretically balance the claims of his dual commitment to Zionism and the rights of the Arabs.[49] He thus still upheld Jewish national claims yet remained convinced that this did not necessarily have to negate the rights of the Arabs. Even for the great pioneering idealists, he wrote in retrospect, "the finest people among us did not pretend to remain guiltless, we were perforce reducing the space for future generations

of the Arab nation." Yet he rejected the *Realpolitik* zero-sum power logic of this position. While Jewish needs and national aspirations, their connections to the land, remained legitimate, even urgent, one had to remain cognizant of the effect of one's own community and actions on others. We will, he declared, "say to ourselves: we will do no more injustice to others than we are forced to do in order to exist."

The ideological framework and existential sensibilities of the binationalists threatened or at least moderated the prevalent mechanisms of elision or repression of the "Arab question" in which mainstream Zionists—convinced of the absolute priority of Jewish interests over all else—indulged. To be sure, their positions were often based upon what they believed to be the imperatives of ethical principles and not necessarily upon crises of conscience that followed real encounters with Arabs on the ground. Hans Kohn wrote that his position was "not prompted by any particular sympathy for the Arabs . . . I was not concerned with the Arabs but with the Jews, their Jewishness, and the confirmation of their [humane] values."[50] Similarly, Gershom Scholem—whose highly Judeocentric worldview makes his early adherence to binationalism especially intriguing and in need of special explanation[51]—envisaged an esoteric, highly charged theological and metaphysical form of Zionism, one "which God knows, originally had nothing to do with Englishmen or Arabs."[52] In retrospect, Scholem candidly admitted that his membership in Brit Shalom "was for 'external' purposes. 'Domestically', I was something else. The Arab question was a controversial one, and our approach to it caused us to be suspected of liquidating Zionism—a charge that I think is unjustified. The debate will not be easily be settled . . . But this matter has never been crucial for me. For me it was a matter of conduct."[53]

But among other binationalists existential crises of conscience were palpable and persistent.[54] Throughout his 1927 visit to Palestine, Martin Buber reported "the heavy feeling that our work was fateful (*verhaengnisvolles*), an unintended sin. We inserted ourselves into the house of other people, in which there were a few other rooms, without speaking to them. Yes, through the Balfour Declaration we are in the situation of soldiers who have been quartered in a stranger's house. Given such an unintended sin the Bible enjoins a sacrifice, but what sacrifice should we bring?"[55] For Hugo Bergman, the anguish entered into the depth of his dreams. "Yesterday," he reported in September 1950, "I had a dream about the atrocities the Jews committed against the Arabs . . . I stand in an open carriage at a train station in Israel. The train is still stationary and in front of it on the platform stands an Arab woman and begs. She was dressed in black and turned away from me. I said to myself: I'll give her a hand-out and then she turns to me. Then the train starts moving and I cannot carry out my intention . . . . I interpreted my dream thus: one should not defer giving help to the Arabs or one will lose the opportunity to perform a good deed. Frau Schärff [Bergman's analyst] thinks this is a completely false interpretation. My unconscious had the intention to

compensate for my conscious outlook. She shows me that the Arab woman was *turned away* from me, and as long as this was true, there was nothing I could do. The unconscious was here ironising my 'good heart'…"[56]

But regardless of individual differences, and whether this was experientially or only theoretically articulated, the common concerns and emphases of these circles did render their mental and moral radars unusually empathic, sensitive to the concerns of the other side. For their critics, this was a disastrously naïve, altruistic position in a conflict in which there was no possibility of meaningful compromise and which demanded intense self-interest. They would, doubtless, have approved the contemporary witticism that these were liberals who could not even take their own side in an argument. At any rate, the binationalists resisted an increasingly prevalent zero-sum consciousness, the almost reflexive figuration of the Other as both alien and enemy, a consciousness that prevails so strongly today.

Clearly the application of this legacy was bound to undergo strain (at times to the breaking point) as it came into contact with the realities and exigencies of this new world. The Arab-Zionist conflict and its proper diagnosis has always been an enormously complicated issue and even if these circles more or less mapped out the moral guidelines, in response to changing situations and their own perceived needs, they were not always consistent and, indeed, more often than not, were confused as to the nature and directions of policy that should be adopted. These circles, let us not forget, were for the creation of a Jewish national home (however understood) and for Jewish settlement and immigration (if not statehood)—although the location of such settlement within Palestine and the numbers that should be allowed were always a matter of debate. These aims did not always sit easily with events on the ground or even with their views on the Arabs. Thus, especially in the face of intermittent Arab resistance, rioting, and violence they often adopted the line that only *greater* immigration would render the Jewish presence as a given, a reality, and demonstrate that the Jews could not shocked into submission. Only through the power of numbers, some argued, would Arab-Jewish accommodation eventually become possible.[57] Viewed with hindsight, the various scenarios and blueprints envisaged by the binationalists reveal a curious mix of ingenuity and naiveté. But one way or another, the meetings of these circles reflected an almost equal measure of conviction and confusion.

Indeed, they were increasingly and acutely aware of their own failings and impotence. Their canny associate and patron, Salman Schocken early on shrewdly questioned the political savvy of professors and scholars who at best knew the Arab masses as their gardeners or day laborers, and whose ethical notions came from textbooks. His hunch was that only people who actually worked side by side with Arabs, namely the Russians, could forge a relationship with them—and one based less on condescending morality than on mutual self-interest and respect. Perhaps he got at the nub of the strain of this transplanted German-Jewish humanism in their new, rough

environment when he told his colleagues: "You'll never win a political fight for power because you'll never muster the will for it."[58] Not surprisingly he told them to go back to what they knew best: *Kultur*.

But such confusion and self-doubt was only a small component of the strains that attached to the binationalist position. Connected critics may be admirable creatures but they are vulnerable ones. They always have to carefully balance criticism with their own sense of belonging. As Ernst Simon later put it: "Critique without solidarity is rootless. Solidarity without critique lacks direction."[59] In this case, the tension, finding the balance, was especially problematic because these figures were operating within a still insecure, developing movement where cohesion was at a premium, as was sensitivity to group loyalty. Issues of possible betrayal were always close to the surface.[60] Was it not fundamentally dishonest, one of them wondered in 1929, to settle on the soil and reap the benefits of Zionist national funds and at the same time rail against the repressive Arab policies of those very funds?[61]

These were all irritations but the major binationalist strain consisted of the meeting of their humanism with the emergent political realities of Palestine. Critics of the binationalist position—from Jabotinsky leftwards—had always maintained that, given the acknowledged or implicit Zionist desire to create a Jewish majority in Palestine, the Arab-Jewish conflict was inevitable and was not amenable to moderate or patchwork compromises.[62] One of the most effective German-Zionist opponents of the binational position was the revisionist Richard Lichtheim (1885–1963). Father of the famous Marxist scholar George Lichtheim, he articulated some of the most pungent criticisms that, to this day, constitute the fundamentals of the argument. In a political debate with other German Zionists at the end of 1929 he declared: "It is false to say that the Arabs have exactly the same rights in Palestine. We do not contest their rights as inhabitants of the land, but it is impossible to compare the historic rights of the Jewish people with that of the fellach on his soil…The world accepts Zionism as a grand historical project that must be implemented with real means, or not at all…One must understand that the Arabs are against Zionism. For where in all the world has it happened, that a population inhabiting a half-empty land, looks positively upon a Volk of a quite different historical development—for we are going to Palestine as Europeans—stream in great numbers, buy land as much as they can, occupy economic positions and bring in as many people as they can. An understanding with the Arabs will come when, under the protection of the Mandate, we have become so strong in the country that the Arabs will have to accept the National Home as a fait accompli. Before that, not. And that is why it is completely true, but unavoidable, that we colonize Palestine on the grounds of *power*. We cannot retreat from this line of politics now, or else all will be ruined. Only on the ground of power will the Jewish National Home be developed. When the Jewish commonwealth is a fait accompli, when we eventually become a majority, then I too will fight all Jewish chauvinism."[63]

In the course of time, and with the hardening of conflict, there were various changes of heart and disappointment among those who were centrally involved with the binationalist moment. For many, let it be noted, this occurred before the Nazi threat became apparent (not to mention before the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948). Already by 1928/1929, on the two extreme edges of the movement, these strains lead either to a sad rejection of the ideas of Brit Shalom as unrealistic (as in the case of Arthur Ruppin) or to resignation from the Zionist movement for not taking these ideas seriously and not attempting to actually put them into effect (as in the case of Hans Kohn). It is a measure of the uncertainty and ongoing nature of the conflict and of the competing narratives that seek to understand and shape it that both these positions still resonate with a rather depressing familiarity.

But these were the two extreme edges of the movement. For others, clearly, the most significant strains and shifts in their positions occurred a little later and were a function of the dramatic historical events of the 1930s and 1940s—the rise of Nazism, the destruction of European Jewry, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the ensuing 1948 war. Gershom Scholem, for instance, was throughout aware of the strains entailed in his Brit Shalom stance. His 1946 letter to Hannah Arendt, whose binationalist views strengthened during that time,[64] given the intractable issues and arguments it contains, strikes a depressingly familiar contemporary chord: "My political faith, if it exists at all is—anarchistic. But I cannot take offence with the Jews when they do not take into consideration progressive theories that no one else practices. I would vote with an equally heavy heart for the binational State as for partition . . . The Arabs have not agreed to any single solution, whether federative, State or binational, insofar as it connected with Jewish immigration. And I am convinced that the confrontation with the Arabs on the basis of a *fait accompli* like partition will make things easier than without it. In any event, I have no idea how the Zionists could go about obtaining an agreement with the Arabs . . . Unfortunately, it is by no means idiotic when the Zionist politicians declare that, given the sabotage events made by the British administration, there is no chance of reaching any agreement, however formulated. Certainly, as an old Brit Shalom man, I have heard the precise opposite argued. But I am not sufficiently presumptuous to maintain that our politics would likewise not have found precisely the same opponents, for they are not interested in our moral or political sentiments, but rather in the question whether or not we are present here at all."[65]

There were others in the ranks of the binationalists like Georg Landauer, Max Kreuzberger, and Robert Weltsch who viewed things with less equanimity and regarded statehood as a kind of betrayal of the best, humanist ideals of Zionism, and emigrated.[66] Others, like Buber and Bergman remained, accepted statehood and adapted their critique to the new circumstances, keeping the plight of the refugees and the Arabs in Israel at the center of much of their work and thought.[67] And while all these binationalists were

faced with the foundational question posed by Buber in 1949—"Should the Ichud Accept the Decree of History?"[68]—it is noteworthy that even for those who answered in the negative, none of them became virulent antinationalists, but instead, clung to their humanist cultural versions of the Zionist ideal. In their view it was the power-political, territorial, and state-oriented Jewish nationalism that was deviant.[69]

By the time statehood was declared, the binationalists were of course quite aware that historical events had invalidated most of their assumptions and predictions. The mistaken, often naive, assessments, the moralistic postures and elitism of the binationalist intellectuals were apparent, then, not only to their opponents but to themselves as well. Thus, as a rather sad and resigned Bergman put it to a guest in 1964 concerning the lessons of Cyprus: "...the strivings for a binational State were doomed in the face of what we now experience as a flaming nationalism...I believe in man, I believe too that nationalism is only a transitional phenomenon. Yet it is a fact today. It would be better for people of different nations to live side by side, to live together, to learn together. But if peaceful emigration/removal (*Übersiedlung*) was possible [the Sudeten Germans are here intended] wouldn't this be a better solution?...It is at base the same problem as the separation in marriage. Should we force people to live together and to make their lives hell, when another solution exists? Assuming admittedly, that the separation is voluntary, and if it is possible, to do it so that those who have been moved suffer as little as possible..."[70]

Yet, how wrong—or merely defeatist—was Simon when he wrote: "We always feared that the establishment of a Jewish state would sharply reduce the chances of a Jewish-Arab understanding or even render it impossible"? There are those, of course, who say that it is precisely the state—and its factual, unvanquishable power—which is the only guarantor of such a future eventuality. Sadly, the conflict continues and the decision is not yet in. But it is clear that many of the concerns raised by these Central European intellectuals continue to haunt us.

Binationalism has once again become the topic of intense scholarly, intellectual, and political interest and debate. To be sure, given the drastic contextual changes, the renewed debate on binationalism in contemporary Israeli politics is quite different from that which we have reviewed here. The new turns in, and contemporary crisis of, Israeli-Palestinian relations and the search for—as well as perceived threat of—alternative scenarios, has, much to do with this.[71] In the view of the consensual majority, more often than not "binationalism" is phrased as a frightening slogan, indicating the changed demographic realities in the light of Israel's continued hold over territories conquered in 1967. It points to the belief that the Palestinian Arabs will soon constitute a majority and thus threaten the Jewish and democratic nature of the state. Binationalism has thus become a specter not only of the right but also a threat to much of Israel's moderate left, which proposes a two-state solution and, essentially, a doctrine of separate national existence. There are, of course, those (very few)

who regard such a binational option both as a reality and as a possible shared political solution.[72]

To be sure, there is also some truth in Hagit Lavsky's observation that Brit Shalom has received so much historiographic attention precisely because it furnishes a simultaneously consoling and apologetic narrative: it at once reinforces the Zionist self-image as humane and moral, in search of genuine peace, while at the same time it demonstrates the utopian nature of the binational dream as politically unrealizable from the outset—thereby justifying the path that the Zionist movement ultimately took.[73]

Yet, very much in the tradition of these intellectuals, who went beyond the geographical borders of their birth and who questioned conventional conceptual and political ones, their legacy may help us not to rationalize and justify past actions but to retain a critical and ethical impulse in the midst of increasing desperation, violence, and inhumanity. George Mosse once declared that the nationalism of those people we have discussed here was "a unique phenomenon in our own century and the only attempt I know of not to abolish but to humanize nationalism in an ever more nationalistic age."[74] Rendering nationalism more open, tolerant, and gentle remains a goal that, in the present circumstances, may be exceedingly difficult, perhaps impossibly naïve, but no less admirable for that.[75]

Part 2
Three German Jews at the Junction

5
Hannah Arendt: Jewishness at the Edges

Hannah Arendt positively reveled in adopting stances that were at odds with formulaic left or right positions and with liberal pieties. Where, for instance, do we place her 1959 "Reflections on Little Rock," which, in its advocacy of states' rights, appeared to support the cause of American racial segregationists? (She argued that schools and children should not bear the burden of enforced federal integration.) Her instinctive penchant was to oppose conventional stances, to go against the grain, to ruffle and cause discomfort, even outrage. To this day, admirers regard this as refreshing while critics view it as well-nigh demonic. Arendt, of course, was quite aware of this characteristic and the reactions it could evoke. Regarding the endlessly controversial *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, she told Mary McCarthy that: "You were the only reader to understand what otherwise I would never have admitted—namely that I wrote this book in a curious state of euphoria. And that ever since I did it, I feel . . . lighthearted about the matter. Don't tell anybody; is it not proof positive that I have no 'soul'?"[1]

Arendt was well-known for her 1951 book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* and for her subsequent philosophical 1959 treatise, *The Human Condition,* but it was her book on the Eichmann trial that made her internationally famous—and infamous. Indeed, it is her Jewish writings in general, perhaps because they come so close to the existential nub, that still evoke the most impassioned controversy. In present-day Israel, Arendt—after years of contemptuous neglect—has become a highly charged, contested figure, central to the intellectual battle between the so-called "post-Zionists" (many of whom have rendered her the great prophet and advocate of their cause) and the centrist Zionist establishment, which continues its efforts to radically delegitimize Arendt as a species of Jewish self-hater, occasionally hinting at dubious connections—and even conceptual similarities—to Nazis and Nazism.

To be sure, her present fame as philosopher and political theorist goes well beyond Jewish interests. Yet much of her thought, biography, and interlocutory polemics were passionately linked to core predicaments of the modern Jewish experience: the distorting psychodynamics of assimilation and the fateful emergence of political anti-Semitism; the complex relation between Jewish self-definition and European culture; the infelicities of quietist Jewish

cultivation and the urgent need for an activist Jewish politics (during World War II she repeatedly called for the formation of a Jewish Army); the costs and benefits of Zionism; the rise of Nazism and totalitarianism; and the nature of the Holocaust and the evil that rendered it possible. Her wider philosophy and reputation are largely unintelligible without understanding these roots and ongoing concerns. Indeed, her insight that the most clear-sighted intellectuals (such as Franz Kafka and Walter Benjamin) were led by their Jewish predicament "to a much more general and more radical problem, namely to question the relevance of the Western tradition as a whole"[2] surely applies equally to herself.

What is it about Arendt's Jewish writings and persona that have rendered them so peculiarly divisive and emotionally and ideologically charged? This too is related to her predilection to resist easy classification and simple self-definition, to question ideological platitudes, to provoke and to hold contradictory (some would say perverse) positions. She incisively dissected the rise of modern political anti-Semitism, yet seemed to hold the Jews partly responsible for its emergence and success. She was ideologically and institutionally identified with the Zionist movement (it may come as a shock to recall that in 1941, the man who was later her *bête noire,* Gershom Scholem, described her as "a wonderful woman and an extraordinary Zionist"![3]) but she was also one of its most severe critics. She was one of the earliest and most concerned analysts of the "Final Solution," yet, for many, her portrait of Adolf Eichmann's "banality," and her indictment of the complicity of the Jewish Councils in the extermination process, rendered her more of an enemy than a friend of the Jewish people.

The same complexity applied as much to Arendt's personal life-choices as it did to her philosophical positions. If her committed Jewish identity and politics seemed self-evident (the last chapter of her early work on Rachel Varnhagen is entitled "One Does Not Escape Jewishness"), she always took care to challenge the non-reflexive, self-celebratory nature of group affiliations. She took great pride in the complex and critical, perhaps even subversive, nature of her own intertwined commitments. Of her relationship to her second husband, the German radical and non-Jew Heinrich Blücher, she wrote in 1946: "If I had wanted to become respectable I would either have had to give up my interest in Jewish affairs or not marry a non-Jewish man, either option equally inhuman and in a sense, crazy."[4] Her Jewish identification was strong and passionate—"I belong to the Jews," she declared, "beyond dispute or agreement"[5]—but was never absolute. It was most clear and decisive under conditions of persecution where, as she put it, one had to "resist only in terms of the identity that is under attack."[6] "Politically," she declared in 1946, "I will speak only in the name of the Jews," but she immediately qualified this by adding "whenever circumstances force me to give my nationality."[7]

It is precisely this deep yet ambiguous involvement in existentially crucial Jewish matters, her partial "insider" status, that still endow her, for many,

with a troubling, even threatening, relevance. As a "connected critic," a member of the family rather than an outsider or enemy, her arguments have standing and authority; they demand engagement rather than simple dismissal.

The publication of Arendt's "Jewish Writings" will certainly not resolve the ongoing controversies—they may even fuel them once again—but they provide the materials for more seriously and responsibly evaluating the trajectory of her thought and commitments and what she actually did say.[8] Spanning from the early 1930s to the mid-1960s, they cover the wide spectrum of her writings on Jewish topics. Some pieces, such as "We Refugees," "The Jew as Pariah," "Zionism Reconsidered," her withering dissection of Stefan Zweig's "cultured" but self-deceiving "apolitical" attitudes, and her reply to Gershom Scholem's attack on her *Eichmann in Jerusalem,* are well-known. Others, which were either previously unpublished or appeared originally in German or French, will be new to the English-speaking reading public.

It is something of a surprise to see that Arendt, interested always in secular Jewish matters and hardly at all in Judaism as such, has an uncharacteristically admiring 1935 French piece on the romantic Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. There he is recommended as a "Guide to Youth." But during the same period, and much more characteristically, she caustically dismissed Buber's "attempts to explain Jewish 'substance' by way of pseudophilosophical profundity." Efforts to fixate foreignness in something substantial, she wrote, resulted in "a mad urge to define Jewry, Jew, Jewish, and so forth."[9] The very effort to do so, as Arendt demonstrated in various other works, derived from the torturous, fragmented nature of modern Western Jewish identity, which, shorn of traditional objective characteristics of identification, became essentially "psychologized," resistant to tangible definition.

The most important piece in this collection is a previously unpublished manuscript from the 1930s entitled "Antisemitism" (a kind of draft analysis that decades later informed the section of the same name in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*). There, in typical iconoclastic fashion, Arendt identified the core assumptions and strengths and weaknesses of the major Jewish historical and ideological schools of interpretation – and sought to transcend them:

> Whereas nationalist historiography is based on the uncritical assumption of a *distance on principle* between Jews and their host nation, assimilationist historians opt for an equally uncritical assumption of a 100 *percent correspondence* between Jews and their entire host nations. The advantage of the nationalist hypothesis over that of the assimilationists is a purely practical one: it does not lead to illusions that are quite so absurd . . . But for Zionism—as for nationalist historiography—status as a 'nation of foreigners' is just as undifferentiated as 100 percent correspondence is for the assimilationists. Instead of one abstraction—the German people—we now have what are more or less two opposing abstractions: the German people and the Jews. This likewise strips the relationship

> between the Jews and their host nation of its historicity and reduces it to a play of forces (like those of attraction and repulsion) between two natural substances, an interaction that will be repeated everywhere Jews live . . . Assimilationists were never able to explain how things could ever have turned out so badly, and for the Zionist there still remains the unresolved fact that things might have gone well.[10]

Other unexpected emphases crop up in this wide-ranging essay. One of Arendt's later, more controversial, positions held that the specificities of German history and culture were entirely unconnected to the Nazi exterminations.[11] In this earlier piece, however, Germany does indeed possess a rather radical (both positively and negatively conceived) *Sonderweg*, one clearly linked to later developments:

> From [Gotthold Ephraim] Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* to Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, every liberation and every catastrophe that has befallen the Jews of Europe has been able to borrow its theoretical foundation and its pathos from Germany—and always long before some practical application came due in Germany itself. A good hundred years lie between Lessing and emancipation; it did not take even sixty-five years to move from Marr, the founder of modern anti-Semitism as a political movement, to Hitler's victory. It was not until the total victory of anti-Semitism that Germany gained its genuine 'classic' status as regards the Jewish question; it was not until the Third Reich that the radicalness of theory found itself no longer conditioned by any sort of practical compromise.[12]

These pieces also soften the frequent claim that as a secular, cultivated, German-Jewish intellectual Arendt shared a virulent prejudice towards, or at best had no empathy for, her more primitive East European Jewish and "Oriental" cousins. Her opponents have made plentiful use of her caustic comments—in a 1961 letter to Karl Jaspers—regarding participants in the Eichmann trial:

> On top, the judges, the best of German Jewry. Below them, the persecuting attorneys, Galicians, but still Europeans. Everything is organized by a police force that gives me the creeps, speaks only Hebrew, and looks Arabic. Some downright brutal types among them. They would follow any order. And . . . the oriental mob, as if one were in Istanbul or some other half-Asiatic country. In addition, and very visible in Jerusalem, the peies and caftan Jews, who make life impossible for all the reasonable people here.[13]

Yet the present volume also makes clear that these nasty, but rather conventional, prejudices hardly coincided with her wider political outlook and emotions. Arendt's Jewish national politics were consistently couched in terms of

the priority of popular needs and a critique of self-serving and manipulative elites. Her withering comments on "notable," "educated," and "exceptional" Jews at the expense of poor and East European Jews pervades all these pages. Moreover, she regarded with wonder and admiration those national historical forces that "taught both Eastern and Western Jews to see their situation in identical terms" and, in 1944, showered fulsome praise on the Jewish underground movements for their elimination of "any difference between Western and Eastern Jews, between assimilated and unassimilated . . . "[14]

These pages are particularly useful in tracing Arendt's evolving understanding and critique of political Zionism. One dimension of her dissent flowed from her belief that Jewish national rights and politics had to be conducted in worldwide rather than Palestinocentric terms. But the real gist, and the contemporary relevance, of these essays lie in the conviction that the relationship with the Arabs constituted "the only real political and moral issue" of Zionist and Israeli politics. These pieces document her various attempts to think through options outside of the conventional route. Writing at a time prior to the 1948 creation of a Jewish majority state, it seemed still possible and legitimate to envisage future alternative social and political orders that would satisfy both Jewish national aspirations and Arab needs. Though the possibilities of agreement and negotiated peace appeared increasingly unrealistic (and to some, utopian in the extreme), as the situation worsened, Arendt variously advocated a not always clear series of binational, federal, and confederative solutions.

These were inextricably connected to her prior critique of the modern sovereign nation-state and crucially informed by what she called "the latest phenomenon of recent history:" the European (and her own) experience of mass statelessness. The conventional identification of the State with a homogeneous majority rendered minorities inherently vulnerable, easily deprived even of "the right to have rights." Her many blueprints regarding the Jewish-Arab conflict were designed in some way to deal with this dilemma on both sides. "A genuine federation," she wrote in 1943, "is made up of different, clearly identifiable nationalities . . . that together form the state. National conflicts can be solved within such a federation only because the unsolvable minority-majority problem has ceased to exist."[15] As late as 1952, she supported a suggestion floated by Abba Eban of a federation consisting also of Turkey and Christian Lebanon, an arrangement that "would comprise more than the two peoples . . . and thus eliminate Jewish fears of being outnumbered by the Arabs."[16]

Arendt throughout, it should be clear, remained committed to Jewish national aspirations but argued, perhaps counterintuitively, that "a Jewish state can only be erected at the price of the Jewish homeland." Her notions of an intact Jewish nationalism on a federative or a binationalist basis have, to be sure, thus far proved illusory, given the ongoing lack of political will for such an arrangement. Yet her fears about the inherent problems and

consequences of the conventional national route were realistic enough. In her 1951 *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* she sharply noted:

> After the war, it turned out that the Jewish question, which was considered the only insoluble one, was indeed solved—namely, by means of a colonized and then conquered territory—but this solved neither the problem of the minorities nor the stateless. On the contrary, like virtually all other events of our century, the solution of the Jewish question merely produced a new category of refugees, the Arabs, thereby increasing the number of the stateless and rightless by another 700,000 to 800,000 people.[17]

The seeds of that catastrophe, Arendt argued—in a provocative, rather untestable, counterfactual claim—derived from the paradoxical distinctiveness of the Zionist project. She stressed that the "building of a Jewish national home was not a colonial enterprise in which Europeans came to exploit foreign riches with the help and at the expense of native labor." Imperialist exploitation of the classical kind was "either completely absent or played an insignificant role." The *Yishuv* was constructed as a parallel, separate society and economy. There was something grand in this adventure of independence and self-creation, she declared, but precisely this myopic separation from the local population sowed the seeds for future conflict and resentment. She summed up its ironic results in the 1950s thus:

> What had been the pride of the Jewish homeland, that it had not been based upon exploitation, turned into a curse when the final test came: the flight of the Arabs would not have been possible and [would] not have been welcomed by the Jews if they had lived in a common economy. The reactionary Arabs of the Near East and their British protectors were finally proved right: they had always considered "the Jews dangerous not because they exploit the fellaheen, but because they do not exploit them." (Weizmann).[18]

What emerges from these writings is that any ideologically fixated appropriation of Arendt's writings on Zionism will run into trouble. Her reflections were the product of a time and context quite different from our own, and neither a simplistic Zionist condemnation nor an undifferentiated post-Zionist harnessing bears scrutiny: "Palestine and the building of a Jewish homeland," she wrote in 1945, "constitute today the great hope and the great pride of Jews all over the world. What would happen to Jews, individually and collectively, if this hope and this pride were to be extinguished in another catastrophe is almost beyond imagining . . . There is no Jew in the world whose whole outlook on life and the world would not be radically changed by such a tragedy."[19] For all that, her fears, warnings and critical insights retain a remarkable contemporary freshness and provide an illuminating perspective on an ongoing impasse.

Ultimately, Arendt's achievements and biases, her creativity and inner conflicts must be seen as part of the quite extraordinary history of post-emancipation German-Jewish intellectuals as they confronted German culture and its later great breakdown, the experience of totalitarianism, and Jewish attempts at reconstitution. Her involvement with the Jewish world was always intense and complex, but so too was her simultaneous engagement in other cultural and political spheres. Precisely because she acutely and distinctively embodied the tensions and contradictions of these manifold worlds, she was able—sometimes more, sometimes less, successfully—to critically grasp their interconnections and plumb both the despair and the possibilities of her fractured time.

6

The Metaphysical Psychologist: On the Life and Letters of Gershom Scholem

Few, I suggest, would disagree with the proposition that Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) was the most influential Judaic scholar of the twentieth century, and one of its most fascinating intellectuals.[1] Various aspects of his legacy are presently being heatedly questioned and contested, yet this only serves to underline the broad recognition as to the extraordinary nature of his work and achievements.[2] Those who have read his memoir, *From Berlin to Jerusalem,* his interviews, and the story of his friendship with Walter Benjamin (as well as the letters they exchanged) will also have gleaned something of his intriguing life and spiky personality.[3] But with the three-volume German publication, meticulously edited and annotated by Itta Shedletzky and Thomas Sparr, of a selection of his correspondence (we do not have a complete edition, for Scholem was an inveterate letter-writer), his ongoing epistolatory exchanges with his mother, the just-published English-language volume of a collection of letters (ably translated, introduced, and organized by Anthony David Skinner), the translations into English of his German poems by Richard Sieburth and, perhaps most revealingly, the two-volume compilation of his tempestuous youthful diaries and notes (covering the years 1913–1923), we have been provided access to intimate materials that illuminate and allow us to assess in some preliminary historical perspective Scholem's inimitable self-creation and his stormy relationship to the world.[4]

Master of vast domains of knowledge, Scholem was one of the great pioneers of the academic field of Kabbalah, bringing to the study of Jewish mysticism a finely honed philological rigor. He pored lovingly over musty texts and integrated sects and movements into his story that were previously regarded as too obscure or too obscurantist and notorious for serious consideration and decipherment—and bestowed upon them a vitalizing function at the very heart of historical Judaism. What is especially remarkable about his writings, however, was the ability to excite generations of readers whose worlds were entirely removed from that of Jewish mysticism and esoterica. How do we account for this?

Scholem created and was moved by a master vision. If his work was disciplined by the canons of *Wissenschaft,* it was animated by an intuitive grasp of, and profound identification with, the metaphysical ground of things, as well as an acute sense of its fragility and incommunicability. This was not a gradual acquisition. Before he was 21, he noted in his diary: "All my cognitions merely reproduce my metaphysical existence. If you will, I am also a metaphysical psychologist."[5] Never a positivist antiquarian, he constructed a sweeping, dialectical vision of history, replete with an overarching theory of language; a conception of commentary as the creative force in the active shaping of a dynamic tradition; and a grand narrative that plotted the totality—the structure, contestations, crises, and complex meanings (and loss of meanings)—of Jewish existence.[6] It helped, of course that Scholem's mode of writing combined a disciplined lucidity with a certain sense of transcendental mystery and hidden, sometimes lost, possibilities of redemption. But the fire they generated emanated most palpably from his daring and radicalism of thought: non-initiates could easily (and still can) warm to Scholem because the mind-set he bestowed upon the inner life of Judaism was so familiar to the modernist sensibility.

Scholem was fascinated by the apocalyptic, attracted to the anarchic, and drawn to the subversive. His Kabbalistic studies perfectly fitted (and were made to fit) these propensities. "By its very nature," he wrote, "mysticism involves the danger of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable deviation from traditional authority."[7] Kabbalah also provided a fertile field for his feel for, and insistence upon, paradox.[8] Thus his analysis of the Lurianic doctrine of divine self-contraction (*tzimtzum*)—"the only serious attempt ever made to give substance to the idea of Creation out of Nothing." *Tzimtzum*, "a gigantic process of divine inhalation and exhalation," had to be understood not as "the concentration of God *at* a point, but his retreat *away* from a point," the Divine making "room for the world by, as it were, abandoning a region within Himself, a kind of mystical primordial space from which He withdrew in order to return to it in the act of creation and revelation."[9]

The early diaries demonstrate that many of his shaping categories were Nietzschean in nature. Early on he evinced the desire to write a "Jewish Zarathustra," excitedly read works by and about the philosopher, and wrote in 1918 that "the only person who, in these times, has said anything substantial about ethics is Friedrich Nietzsche."[10] His later consistent and emphatic denials regarding this influence remain curious.[11] His conceptual world revolved around transgression, catastrophe, and danger. "Who would be able to find himself," the teenager asked in his diary of 1914, "were he not to descend into the abyss and seek himself in danger?"[12]

As against the German-Jewish rationalists, Scholem's post-Enlightenment historical universe provided space for the power of the mythical and the demonic. "Jewish philosophy," he wrote, "paid a heavy price for its disdain of the primitive levels of human life. It ignored the terrors from which myths are made, as

though denying the very existence of the problem. Nothing so sharply distinguishes philosophers and Kabbalists as their attitude toward the problem of the evil and the demonic . . . The demonization of life was assuredly one of the most effective and at the same time the most dangerous factors in the development of the Kabbalah."[13] As none before him in the world of Jewish scholarship, Scholem explored the temptations of taboos and highlighted the "sense of the reality of evil and the dark horror that is about everything living."[14]

His was a Judaism poised always on the knife-edge of an abyss (a term that constantly recurs in his work), energized by antinomian paradoxes and the tensions between potentially explosive dialectical polarities.[15] In compelling detail he plumbed the hidden connections between nihilism and faith.[16] His most famous, and quintessential, 1937 essay on Sabbatai Sevi and Jacob Frank, was tellingly entitled "Redemption Through Sin."[17] He immersed himself in the complicated dynamics of the messianic impulse and, while always critically aware of its potential danger (and thus its continuing power), he insisted that its apocalypticism, "as a doubtlessly anarchic element, provided some fresh air in the house of Judaism; it provided a recognition of the catastrophic potential of all historical order in an unredeemed world . . . the truth that redemption possesses not only a liberating but also a destructive force."[18] He portrayed much of Jewish mysticism as a historical product of the 1492 expulsion from Spain which, particularly in the sixteenth-century system of Isaac Luria, incorporated previously repressed gnostic-mythic elements into a Jewish frame and created a theology of Exile and Redemption laden with explosive (albeit transformed) messianic potential. Moreover, apostasy and antinomianism were crucial ingredients in Scholem's mischievous depiction of the unfolding of Jewish modernity, dimensions that figured in his immanent religio-historical sequence of Sabbatianism, Frankism, *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment), Zionism, and Reform.

It should be noted that, in Scholem's world, immanence was not equivalent to inevitability. Indeed, by the age of 17(!), he had come to the conclusion that the grand schemes of *Geschichtsphilosophie*—Hegel, Marx, Ranke, Treitschke—were all misconceived. The only thing that history could demonstrate was the play of such anarchic forces: "I believe," he wrote, "that where in history there are laws, history will be of no use or the laws will be valueless."[19] This was true for the mature Scholem, whose non-Hegelian dialectics were "a mode of transformation, but [do] not become a mode of reaching a synthesis."[20]

The irony has often been noted that this relentless critic of the German-Jewish "symbiosis" was himself one of its most illustrious products. He was as deeply steeped in the great texts of the German and Western tradition, as he was to later become a master of the Jewish corpus; a glance at his 1913–1923 diary entries reveals the immense range of the major and minor thinkers that he imbibed at his most impressionable age. Yet, if we are to get to the roots of his continuing attractiveness, his historical location needs to be more precisely identified. In an obvious though very idiosyncratic way, Scholem

inherited many of the predilections of the *fin-de-siècle* avant-garde, with its suspicion of liberal positivist pieties, its rediscovery of the "irrational" and mythic, the emphasis on rebirth and regeneration, its nascent modernism conscious of the painful rupture with the past, and preoccupation with questions of established limits, authority, and tradition.[21] Scholem came of age when many other dissident young Jews of the time vigorously applied these themes to reinterpret the Jewish experience and appropriated them to transform Jewish sociopolitical practices and sensibilities.[22]

This constitutes the more general background to Scholem's endeavors. But the specific nature of his preoccupations, the kinds of questions he posed, and the particular answers he proffered, were very much of a piece with the radicalized, antibourgeois intellectual culture of the Weimar Republic. Those projects which today we take to be quintessentially Weimarian—for example, the work of Ernst Bloch, Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Jünger, Franz Rosenzweig—were essentially postliberal ruminations, posited on the ruins of, and a disbelief in, the old political and conceptual order. For all their differences, these circles—Left, Right, and Jewish—advocated a kind of "root" rethinking that variously explored novel ways in which to comprehend the disarray of European civilization and to provide radical solutions for its predicament.[23]

In the post-1914 context, these young intellectuals became increasingly preoccupied with the quest for a "deeper spirituality" derived from neglected underground, at times blatantly unrespectable sources. The temper of these manifold projects, indispensably informed by the earlier anti-positivist *fin-de-siècle* fascination with irrational forms and "primal" life forces, was revolutionary. Obsessed by the problematics of rupture and fascinated by the messianic, they developed new, jagged conceptions of time, tradition, and redemption quite removed from their elders' calm prewar Enlightenment faith in gradual and orderly progress. In a 1937 letter to Salman Schocken, Scholem characterized all his work as written "in the hope of a true communication from the mountain," one in which the smallest fluctuation of history would cause "truth to break forth from the illusions of 'development.'"[24]

Independently, and yet like many of his radical contemporaries (such as Franz Rosenzweig's notion of *Jetzzeit*), Scholem developed a notion of redemption as a constant possibility. "Time as a religious category," a 1918 diary entry declared, "becomes the eternal present."[25] His later depictions of the dynamics of Jewish messianism demonstrated a remarkable similarity to these Weimarian hopes and sensibilities: "The redemption is not the product of immanent developments such as we find it in modern Western reinterpretations of Messianism since the Enlightenment . . . secularized as the belief in progress . . . It is rather transcendence breaking in upon history, an intrusion in which history itself perishes, transformed in its ruin because it is struck by a beam of light shining into it from an outside source."[26]

Little wonder that it was Scholem's fellow Weimarians who were his true soul mates. He may have chosen the inner Jewish historical world as his

object of self-definition, research, and hope—indeed, in many ways, he insisted upon its fundamental difference and apartness—but the issues, dilemmas, and categories that plagued and animated him were of one cloth with the sensibilities of the radical, heterodox thinkers of his time. To the end, figures like Hans Jonas, Leo Strauss, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Hannah Arendt were his real interlocutors, the relevant others—even, perhaps especially, when he engaged them in intense intellectual and ideological combat.[27]

For all that, Scholem's youthful, almost primordial, Zionist radicalism took him on a peculiarly lonely and idiosyncratic path, one that, ostensibly at least, left not only both Weimar and Europe far behind, but also departed in significant ways from his fellow Zionists. He was an exception among exceptions, "a master magician" as he (playfully?) put it in a letter to George Lichtheim, path-breaking and formidable, in all senses of the word.[28] As Hans Jonas noted upon the master's death in a moving letter to Scholem's wife, Fania (née Freud): "He was the focal point. Wherever, *he* was, you found the center, the active force, a generator which constantly charged itself; he was what Goethe called an *Urphänomen*."[29] After encountering Scholem for the first time, Adorno wrote to Walter Benjamin that the "spiritual energy of the man is enormous, and he certainly belongs amongst those very few individuals with whom it is still worthwhile discussing such serious matters." His meeting with what he incisively called the "antinomian Maggid" produced "a certain trust—rather like that which might develop between an Ichthyosaurus and a Brontosaurus meeting for coffee, or even better, as if [a] Leviathan should decide to drop in on Behemoth."[30]

Scholem moved to Palestine as early as 1923, going on to almost single-handedly establish Jewish mysticism as a reputable object of study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He did find a group of like-minded, mainly German-speaking, intellectuals, with whom he could communicate. This stimulating and playful *Maennerbund*, dubbed by Scholem as "Pilegesch" (an acronym formed from the first letters of the names of its various members and meaning "Concubine" in Hebrew) spent much time in passionate philosophical discussion and in writing affectionately ironic poems about each other.[31] Still, his secular-theological expectations of the Zionist project bore little resemblance to empirical reality and were, most probably, incomprehensible to many around him. Despite (or perhaps because of) his deep commitment to the Zionist cause, the critical, scornfully humorous edge was never far from the surface. The people that he had come across in Palestine, he remarked to Werner Kraft in 1924, were "*astoundingly* stupid, I tell you. The phenomenon of *original* stupidity amongst Jews in the Diaspora is clearly unknown. It makes the strongest impression in this country."[32]

The diaries and letters provide a detailed window into the formation and deepening of Scholem's intellectual worldview. They are replete with precocious historiosophical, religious,and even mathematical musings. (Scholem studied math before devoting himself entirely to Judaica. "For me," he put it

to a friend in 1916, "all things hang comically together . . . Zionism and mathematics are for me identical things."[33]) The first diary volume is often characterized by conceptual and existential *Sturm und Drang*—as in Scholem's intoxicating mountain revelation experience: "Thou lonely child of man, why do you stand here . . . will not the spirits and elements rise indignantly upon you, for you disturb and eavesdrop upon them in struggle? No, I will not weaken! For the storms' will brought me here. Now you are chaos, but eternal will brings forth renewal. Only in danger is God to be found."[34] The second opens with a perhaps calmer intellectual insight that was to remain a life-long conviction: the insistence upon commentary and tradition as the mediating creative forms through which truth and God could be humanly apprehended. This Scholem linked to Walter Benjamin's "fundamental insight" that the essence of the world lay in language and text.[35] It is a matter of contention as to whether or not he really followed this Benjaminian precept or in fundamental ways departed from it by seeking a reality beyond these texts.[36]

As early as 1919, Scholem was able to conceive of the canonic "as pure interpretability" (*Deutbarkeit*). Holy texts embodied innumerable layers of meaning that awaited decipherment. This ensured that an inclusive historical dynamic—if not what his critic, Baruch Kurzweil, took to be a nihilistic historicism—and the play of emergent contesting interpretative forces would always stand at the center of Scholem's system.[37] "It will resonate well with your dialectical sensibility," Scholem wrote Theodor Adorno, "when I tell you that my sympathies extend not only to the heterodox, but also to the orthodox. Much of my work has been an attempt to help establish connections between these two spheres."[38]

These intellectual moments are compelling, but perhaps of greatest interest in these early letters and diaries is what they reveal of Scholem's person. They capture a rebellious young man bursting with curiosity and zealous ideological energy, propelled by total Jewish commitment and moved by personal—mercifully short-lived—messianic fantasies. Characteristically, his adolescent revelation conjoined the prophetic with the learned, redemption with the world of knowledge:

> The young man goes alone through the world and looks around him, where the soul of his *Volk* awaits him. For he has a deep belief that the soul of Juda goes astray among the peoples . . . And he knows in the depths that he is the one chosen to seek and find his people's soul. The way of the innocent is the way of redemption. And the dreamer—whose name is already recognized as the awaited one: Scholem, the perfect one—prepares himself for his work and begins forcefully to forge the weapons of his knowledge.[39]

In September 1915, a few months after such a vision, Scholem conceded, without a trace of irony: "I do not believe any longer, as I did once, that I am

the messiah."[40] Scholem was to become the leading critical student, if not practitioner, of the messianic impulse. Still, here, as in the rest of his life and work, the existential spark and the scholarly drive were closely fused.[41]

What most sharply emerges in the early diaries is the profile of a person who from the age of 15 or 16 was guided by a kind of unerring inner radar, certain of his overall vocation, clear and extreme in his worldview, and irascible in his judgments of other people.[42] By the age of 16, his life-long loyalties and aversions were clearly elaborated: the commitment to a radical (and always highly idiosyncratic) Zionism; the passionate engagement with and ever-deepening study of Judaism; the revolt against the bourgeois Jewish home ("I am not a German Jew," he wrote in 1917. "I don't know if I ever was"[43]); the principled and conscious disengagement from *Deutschtum* and his never-renounced intuition that German Jews, in their passionate commitment to such a "Germanism," were simply living a lie. These perceptions, more than general humanistic considerations, determined Scholem's fervent opposition to World War I, for which his father threw him out of the house. Zionism, Scholem insisted, had to draw a sharp dividing line between Europe and the Jews; its revolution, he wrote in his diary in January 1915, could "not proceed from the corpses of West European strangers."[44]

Scholem's separatist predilections did not merely derive from a sense of sociological discomfort.[45] It was more a matter of intuited antithetical essences. When he was an immodest 21, he exclaimed: "Goethe has never appealed to me. That must have immense significance; perhaps somehow the Jewish genius in me is sealed off against the Germanic world."[46] He viewed Jewish substance as a distinctive, almost primordial, spiritual order.[47] In January 1916, he mused: "I think that for us Jews still today, the Bible is something inborn, part of our innate tribal inheritance…"[48] There was, he wrote to a friend in 1917, an immanent distance between *Deutschtum* and *Judentum* that rendered a common life, in the serious sense, quite impossible.[49] The prevalent liberal ideology of proposed fusions—"synthesizing" Judaism with Western ideas—constituted something like a pollution of pristine realms. "There is nothing from Western Europe," he announced in his November 1916 diary, "that needs to be brought into Judaism. The spiritual orders should not be rendered impure."[50]

Indeed, one month earlier he formulated an ideological and conceptual position to which, I believe, he adhered all his life: the nation, filled with religious content, was not a fleeting construction, but an "essential determining force [*Wesensbestimmung*] of the inner form of Judaism. An *absolute*."[51] Scholem, it is true, went on to adumbrate Judaism as a living phenomenon, characterized by historical openness, and fructified, indeed, by subversive, mystic and antinomian challenges to the orthodox center. But this openness operated within a given structure. Even, perhaps especially, when the tensions of that structure were highlighted, the process was conceived as organic, immanent.[52] The stimulus, to be sure, was often linked to external circumstances: "Mysticism as a historical phenomenon," wrote Scholem, "is a product of crises."[53] Still, the responses consisted of daring and creative

reinterpretations of materials within the tradition.[54] Genuine change there was, but this proceeded from within a "bedrock foundation" in which a transcendental truth was contained.[55]

To be sure, Scholem, later located the origins of Jewish mysticism in Gnosticism, very much a foreign, even anti-Judaic, source. Indeed, he once, rather untypically, admitted in a letter to Theodor Adorno, that "the strangest and most alluring thing is the fact that the most original products of Jewish thinking are, as it were, products of assimilation."[56] But for Scholem such products were typically metamorphosed by processes of creative commentary and, in the case of Gnosticism, submerged by the internal necessity of overcoming its dualism and explicitly mythical ingredients.[57]

These youthful documents are infused with a pronounced emphasis on religious and national radicalism and even sexual purity. Thus in a 1917 letter to Aharon Heller, Scholem advocated a kind of holy Jewish regenerative asceticism in sexual relations. "If we try to attain national health [*Volksgesundheit*] in the sense that the Germans are trying to become a healthy Volk, then we are lost, for here every access to the holy is blocked by obscenity."[58] His turn to Zionism was intoxicating, epiphanic. "I am," he wrote to a friend in November 1916, "occupying myself always and at all times with Zion: in my work and my thoughts and my walks and also, when I dream . . . All in all, I find myself in an advanced state of Zionization, a Zionization of the innermost kind. I measure everything by Zion."[59] Although he never could be considered a "political" Zionist—indeed, his early years in Palestine were characterized by explicit opposition to this kind of Zionism—his adolescent paean to Theodor Herzl, written when he was 17 years old, gives an indication of the transformative fervor he experienced:

He was the first to pronounce the words
That lifted us to the heights of light
He was the first to dare a new world
That rose unsuspected before our eyes!
He preceded us with steps that gladly moved ahead
And showed untrodden paths to those in doubt
To us who suffered from the past in dread
He pointed to a better springtime, a new way out!
He spoke for those who had repressed their longing
And for those devoured by silent grief,
And they all bowed their heads, now belonging
To him who had come to slake their disbelief
We shall never forget what it was he meant,
Who gave us this dream so rich, so glowing,
And who restored what we had once possessed
And what we had lost—without our knowing!
He shouted of a world that rose, amazed
At his words, the words of our own distress
He held the flag high while the enemy raged,
And the flag was bloody red.[60]

Scholem—who changed his first name from Gerhard to Gershom—endowed Hebrew with a metaphysical status. The deep structure of Judaism, he intuited, could only be apprehended from the innermost center of the Hebraic soul. Jews could not grasp the living word of God in the German language.[61] "I am learning Hebrew," he announced in his diary in 1916, "as I will learn no other language. Judaization grows proportionally to growing close to Hebrew; but at a certain place, one is suddenly sprung into the center of the language, and one's soul is revealed."[62] The language, Scholem insisted, should not be learned "instrumentally," but rather so "that one can be silent in it."[63] Indeed, he noted in March 1918, that unlike his compatriots he studied it "in order to discover the truth of the divine."[64]

Few of his fellow German Zionists would have described their usually unsuccessful tussle with Hebrew in this ecstatic way, but they would have agreed with Scholem's far more conventional abhorrence of Yiddish, which he declared, in August 1919, to be "a massively demonic sphere of indeterminacy (*Zwischensphaere*);" it characterized the impure ways in which Jews still thought (Scholem included himself in this), which needed to be eliminated by entirely replacing it with Hebrew, a challenge that he conceded to be an enormous one.[65]

From the beginning Scholem worked his way toward a unique conception of the intertwined totality of Zionism and Jewish regeneration, one that implied a kind of fanatical purity and complete immersion in Judaic sources and its ethical impulses. "I want something completely different from all other Zionists," he wrote in 1918.[66] His relation to the conventional streams of the Zionism of his day is indeed instructive. He came of age at a time when Martin Buber's influence was pervasive. The letters and diaries trace the evolution of his convoluted relationship to that thinker as it moved from admiration and influence through disillusion and, indeed, a kind of withering contempt.[67] In 1915 Scholem could still praise Buber "because in Judaism, previously the classic religion of rationalism and logic-chopping, he discovered the irrational, emotion and yearning, which is the mother of renewal."[68] Buber was certainly the primary mediator of these regenerative "irrationalist" themes that were so to preoccupy the future scholar of mysticism. Would it be an exaggeration to posit that without Buber, Scholem would hardly have been possible? For all that, he would soon come to entirely dismiss the "prattling" dimension of Buber's Zionism, and sarcastically critiqued it for what he took to be its superficial emphasis on the "cult of experience" (*Erlebnis*), entirely removed from serious study and Jewish textual engagement. "Certainly: Buber cannot do everything, but he can 'experience' everything and in such a way that one can print it. Shame, shame…"[69] It was at this stage that Scholem turned his loyalties overwhelmingly to Walter Benjamin. The latter's critical sophistication and textual seriousness served as an antidote to Buber; in charged and highly complicated ways, the personal and intellectual influence were to mark him for life.

Scholem's spiritually sanctified Zionism of rebirth (whose changing forms were always somehow connected to "origins" and originary events) was also

far removed from the "normalizing" impulses of that movement, from those who rebelled against the tradition and sought to recast and modernize Jews in such a way that they would be "like all other nations." Scholem's Zionism was bound up with what he took to be the still vital redemptive dynamics of the tradition and not, as he put it, the adoption of the worst "goyish" notions.[70] Throughout his life, Scholem refused to regard secularization as final or able alone to encompass ultimate questions: it could never fully "liquidate" (a favorite Scholemian term) deeper religious and traditional impulses.[71] Already in 1926 he wrote to Franz Rosenzweig that the profanation of the Hebrew language was a mere illusion: its suppressed apocalyptic sting and potencies would again be aroused "and they will manifest themselves, for we have conjured them up with very great power."[72] And in a remarkable 1930 statement, a kind of "negative theology," he applied the notion of God's self-contraction (*tzimtzum*) to the overall modern, secular predicament:

> God, banished from people by psychology and from the world by sociology, no longer wanted to dwell in Heaven, and thus relinquished to dialectical materialism the throne of justice and to psychoanalysis the throne of compassion. He contracted himself in secret and did not reveal himself. But did he really not reveal himself? Or perhaps his revelation lies precisely in his last self-contraction? Perhaps the eclipse of God to the point of nothingness was of a higher necessity, and perhaps his Kingdom will be revealed only in a world entirely void of God . . . I will let myself be fathomed by those that did not ask, allow myself to be found by those that did not search.[73]

Scholem's determinedly "anti-bourgeois" Zionism was thus conceived from the very beginning, as a diary formulation of January 1915 put it, as a project that proceeded "above the depths and through the undiscovered, the unexplained."[74] (Later, in his public pronouncements, he would remove some of the more mysterious allusions and define it, historically, as the "dialectic of continuity and rebellion."[75]) His own youthful version was explicitly anarchist, "theological" and revolutionary. It was for this reason that, as a young man, he even rejected Achad Ha'am's "cultural" version and also the various forms of Marxist Zionism as too tame and evolutionary, and why he especially dismissed Herzl's political brand of Zionism. "We preach anarchism," he wrote in 1915, "we want no State, but a free society (with which Herzl's *Altneuland* had little to do.)"[76]

This may explain Scholem's early membership in Brit Shalom (Covenant of Peace) which, from the mid-1920s on, opposed statehood and fostered the vision of an Arab-Jewish federation. This was a group that opposed both the alliance with colonial powers and the dangers of an internal Jewish chauvinism.[77] Perhaps even more than the others in this small circle—virtually all Central European German-speaking Jewish intellectuals who

came to Palestine with baggages of *Bildungs* humanism—Scholem advocated Zionism as a kind of physics and metaphysics of Jewish theologico-cultural regeneration and not naked political power.[78] Clearly, much of his early opposition to statehood and "normalization" was related to this largely apolitical vision.

Yet, given his overwhelming concern with the internal fate of Jews and Judaism and his exceedingly determined youthful preoccupation with recovering these roots, his early sensitivity to and involvement in the Arab-Jewish question is more surprising and interesting than many scholars might acknowledge. After all, the youthful pre-Palestine diaries are almost entirely empty of mention of any Arab presence in the land of his longings. In 1919 he notes that he was studying Arabic, but the motivation for doing so he ascribed to the need for getting to know Hebrew better: "It is only natural that one can learn the structure of one language from another."[79]

I have found no early diary entry or letter that explicitly records a crisis of Scholem's conscience entailed in the awareness of the rent the Zionist presence may have caused for the fabric of traditional Arab society. But it is clear that after his 1923 emigration to Palestine, Scholem adopted an overtly oppositional binational stance, advocated a common Arab-Jewish Parliament, and in many ways regarded the mainstream Zionist policy towards the Arabs as "reactionary" and chauvinistic.[80] It is especially interesting to note that with the 1929 riots—which marked a distinct negative turning point in Arab-Jewish relations—Scholem became more, not less, radical and active.[81] Indeed, rather astonishingly, even earlier in his capacity as a university librarian he only allowed Arabs—and not Jews—to borrow literature relevant to the (then burning) issue of the Western Wall![82] In the face of the usual objection to Brit Shalom's position—that there were no Arabs willing to negotiate even the most minimal of Jewish national positions—Scholem invoked his life-long reliance upon dialectics: the very presentation of Brit Shalom's program and its negation by the Arabs, he argued, would certainly usher in a historical dialectic in which an internal Arab opposition to that position would emerge and eventually accept these conditions. In so doing, Brit Shalom would itself create the needed negotiating partner.[83]

"We are aware," he and fellow Brit Shalom members Shmuel Hugo Bergman and Ernst Akiva Simon wrote in the wake of the 1929 Arab riots: "what a very difficult undertaking it is, under the prevailing psychological and political conditions, to simultaneously pursue a reconciliatory politics with the Arabs and to ensure our defense against attacks of the kind that we have just experienced. It seems to us, however, that there is no other way."[84]

For all that, he was quite aware of the inner confusions and uncertainties of Brit Shalom's positions.[85] And in retrospect, Scholem candidly admitted that his membership in Brit Shalom "was for 'external' purposes. 'Domestically,' I was something else. The Arab question was a controversial one, and our approach to it caused us to be suspected of liquidating Zionism—a charge

that I think is unjustified. The debate will not be easily settled... But this matter has never been crucial for me. For me it was a symbol of conduct."[86] Indeed, with the passage of time he became far less utopian in his expectations of the possibility of such a binational federation and increasingly evinced a certain realism concerning the ongoing Arab-Jewish conflict. "I am personally against partition as such," he wrote to Walter Benjamin in 1937, "since I believe joint Arab-Jewish sovereignty in the whole of Palestine to be the more ideal solution, but this opportunity is one we will probably never be granted."[87] His emerging mix of contemporary realism and residual idealism comes out most clearly in his 1961 letter to Ge'ula Cohen, a right-wing activist who, in the pre-state period, had been part of the militant Jewish *Lechi* underground. "I was never a *fundamental* (*grundsaetzlicher)* pacifist (only in certain concrete cases was I a pacifist in regard to our relations with the Arabs.) I cannot deny that there are circumstances in which a war or a struggle of an underground movement could be justified... We have all dreamed but not the same dream. And still when I dream, I can find nothing in the kingship and heroism that so enthused you and your friends. But how horrible is the thought that history has equally mocked both your dreams and mine!"[88]

As circumstances worsened in the late 1930s and 1940s, Scholem's views hardened somewhat. The intractable issues and arguments contained in his 1946 letter to Hannah Arendt strike a depressingly familiar contemporary chord:

> My political faith, if it exists at all is—anarchistic. But I cannot take offence with the Jews when they do not take into consideration progressive theories that no one else practices. I would vote with an equally heavy heart for the binational State as for partition... The Arabs have not agreed to any single solution, whether federative, State or binational, insofar as it is connected with Jewish immigration. And I am convinced that the confrontation with the Arabs on the basis of a *fait accompli* like partition will make things easier than without it. In any event, I have no idea how the Zionists could go about obtaining an agreement with the Arabs... Unfortunately, it is by no means idiotic when the Zionist politicians declare that, given the sabotage efforts made by the British administration, there is no chance of reaching any agreement, however formulated. Certainly, as an old Brit-Shalom man, I have heard the precise opposite argued. But I am not sufficiently presumptuous to maintain that our politics would likewise not have found precisely the same Arab opponents, for they are not primarily interested in our moral or political sentiments, but rather in the question whether or not we are present here at all.[89]

In a 1972 letter to George Lichtheim, Scholem conceded that Brit Shalom had falsely read the historical situation, "admittedly only when one takes into account that Hitler totally changed the perspective." Given the benefit of

hindsight, however, Scholem added: "Whether we could have achieved more had Hitler not come to power, I still today doubt…"[90]

Still, despite his activist interlude, we must insist that Scholem was seldom "political," at least not in the conventional sense. In the post-1929 period he did, indeed, despairingly pronounce Zionism to be in a state of almost irreparable crisis. Yet his own vision of Zionism was so distinctively esoteric that a careful reading of his critique and credo, most memorably contained in a remarkable 1931 letter to Walter Benjamin, reveal that the mainsprings of his discontent—and residual hope—remained consistently internal and metaphysical, not really "political" or even linked to the issue of Arab-Jewish relations.[91] Although not newly published, this difficult and (in some respects) prescient text is worth quoting at length. Addressing the increasingly "statist" tendencies of the movement (as expressed at the stormy 1931 Basel Zionist Congress), Scholem wrote to Benjamin:

> To tell the truth, the development of the last two years…made evident the radical split between my conception of Zionism, which I heard characterized as a religious-mystic quest for a regeneration of Judaism (a characterization I agree with) and Zionism, whose point of departure is an impossible and provocative distortion of an alleged political 'solution to the Jewish Question.' Now, Zionism as a movement certainly always has been far more than the empirical form of its organization, but surely in all these years there was always the chance for people like me to pursue our cause—which, God knows, originally had nothing to do with Englishmen or Arabs—within this organization. Or, rather, it was a matter of indifference to us (at least from 1920 on), because the legitimacy of the real historical event of Zionism in any case was assured. But because in recent years the purely reactionary forces in Zionism have asserted themselves in this way, both politically and morally…the crisis in our relationship to this cause has become acute for me and many others. I do not believe there is such a thing as a 'solution to the Jewish Question' in the sense of a normalization of the Jews, and I certainly do not think that this question can be solved in Palestine in such a sense. I have always realized that Palestine is *necessary*, and that was enough, no matter what was expected of the event here; no Zionist program bound our hands here. This time things have changed. Because of the demand—originated and presented by a small Jerusalem circle to which I belong—for a clear-cut orientation to Zionism, an orientation that ought to be demonstrated concretely on the Arab question, but that of course derived from an entirely different point of view, one not related to foreign policy, and owing to the fantastic agitation organized against our position since 1929…a resolution about the 'ultimate aim' of Zionism now has been passed that is openly directed *against* us and in accordance with which we would, strictly speaking, automatically no longer appear as 'Zionists' in the sense of the organization…"[92]

The arcane, impossibly demanding dimensions of Scholem's elitist vision—not too dissimilar to the musings of Achad Ha'am's clandestine group *Bnei Moshe* [sons of Moses] or Stefan George's "Secret Germany"[93]—formulated as a kind of secret teaching, a "legitimate concealment," rooted in his originary and recuperative conception of language and tradition, are spelled out in the rest of this rumination:

> . . . who knows whether you will understand me when I say that Zionism has triumphed itself to death. It has anticipated its victories in the intellectual realm and thereby has lost the power to win them in the physical realm. It fulfilled a function, you see, and with an enormous effort that *it certainly had not intended. We were victorious too early.* Our existence, our sad immortality, which Zionism had come along to stabilize in an unshakeable way, once again has been assured temporally—for the next two generations, but at a most horrendous price. . . . When Zionism prevailed in Berlin—which means in a vacuum, from the point of view of our task—it could no longer be victorious in Jerusalem . . . It turned out that the historical task of Zionism simply was quite different from the one it posed itself. For years the despair of the victor has been the real demonism of Zionism; this is perhaps the most important world-historical example of the mysterious laws according to which propaganda (the substance of our defeat) works. The mountains of articles in which the intelligentsia documented our victory in the visible realm before it had been decided in the invisible realm—that is, the regeneration of language—are the true Wailing Wall of the new Zion. Now it is no longer a matter of saving us—consolation for an unjust victory could, after all, lie only in oblivion—but of jumping into the abyss that yawns between our victory and reality.
>
> In the empty passion of a vocation become public we ourselves have invoked the forces of destruction. Our catastrophe started where the vocation did not maintain itself in its profanation, where community was not developed in its legitimate concealment, but where instead the betrayal of the secret values that lured us here became transformed into a positive side of the demonic propaganda. By becoming visible our cause was destroyed. The encounter with Sleeping Beauty took place in the presence of too many paying spectators for it to have ended with an embrace. Zionism disregarded the night and shifted the procreation that ought to have meant everything to it to a world where there was too much sunlight and the covetousness of the living degenerated into a prostitution of the last remnants of our youth. That was not the place we had come to find nor the light that could enflame us. Between London and Moscow we strayed into the desert of Araby on our way to Zion, and our own hubris blocked the path that leads to our people. Thus, all we have left is the productivity of one who is going down and knows it. It is this productivity in which I have buried myself for years, for, after all, where should the immortality be concealed if not here?"[94]

This disenchantment is also clearly discernible in Scholem's poetry which, as Steven M. Wasserstrom notes, was "almost exclusively private verse: intimate, oracular, reflective, light, melancholy."[95] Scholem's "Media In Vita," composed in the years 1930–1933, starkly expressed this loss of faith and a perplexed anxiety as to how long he could keep watch on "that abyss of nothingness in which the world appears."[96]

An oracular negative theologico-metaphysics may perhaps have remained at the inner core of Scholem's Zionism, indeed his overall worldview, throughout his mature life. (This "metaphysical" universe of discourse may be one more reason why, despite their many differences, Scholem and Adorno were able to find common ground in a species of "negative dialectics" and the suspicion of premature positivity.[97]) It may well be that Scholem's 1934 observation to Benjamin about Kafka's "nothingness of revelation," an insistently "theological" world though one in which God did not appear, applied with equal intensity to himself and his relation to Zion: a state in which such revelation still possessed *validity* but *no significance,* one in which "the wealth of meaning" is lost.[98]

Yet, it seems to me, the suggestion that his disenchantment mirrored the disappointment with, and disavowal of, Communism by his European intellectual contemporaries, is far too partial.[99] If it captures a part of his esoteric "Lurianic" self, there are too many public and private pronouncements that also contradict, or at least stand in tension with, this stance. In obvious ways—and his success as an eminent and respected intellectual authority most probably helped the process on—he made his peace with the state and with many of its empirical realities. Indeed, over the years, especially when engaged in polemics with his supposedly more cosmopolitan friends, his posture became decidedly more defensive and down-to-earth. Without detailing the specificities of his own peculiar world-view, he defined himself as an unabashed sectarian, one who saw no reason to submit to universal standards that no one, except the Jews, was expected to do.[100] He put it thus to Arendt: "I am a nationalist and fully unmoved by apparently progressive declarations against a view that since my earliest youth has been repeatedly declared as superseded."[101] When he read Erich Kahler's comment in *The Jews among the Nations* that "The Jews did not live through two millennia of a world-scale destiny, fraught with meaning and ineffable destiny, to end up within a tiny nationalistic framework," he replied: "I do not know why the Jews have survived, but I can only be grateful if that constitutes…the most decisive argument against the homecoming of the Jews."[102] "Regards from my chauvinistic corner," he ironically signed off one of his letters to his admiring but less nationalist friend, George Lichtheim.[103] And to his brother Reinhold, he once concluded a letter: "Your left-Israeli, and—as he is well-known in the so-called new left—reactionary Imperialist and Zionist-aggressor, Brother."[104]

Even though it is clear that one cannot characterize Scholem as "political" in any conventional sense, a heated Israeli debate is taking place concerning the political implications of his stance and teachings. The critique has

come both from the Left and the Right. An example of the former would be Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, who has argued that, despite his warnings regarding the dangers of apocalypticism, Scholem's conception of Zionism

> as the dialectic fulfillment of a redemptive process and of the national attributes of messianism . . . left no room for the people already on the land itself and enabled the exclusion of its population . . . Scholem did indeed warn against messianism, but at the same time, he designed the conception that regarded the present as the final stage of redemption. He opposed radical national-religious movements, but in his description of history, the land preserved its mythical connotation. His intentions were certainly different, but his assumptions did not offer a different approach, and they even motivated right-wing national-religious tendencies. The Arabs had no place, certainly no value, in his national imagination.[105]

Yoram Hazony, on the Right wing of the political spectrum, has indicted Scholem on diametrically opposite grounds, that of fundamentally undermining the notion of a Jewish state and weakening the Zionist enterprise. Scholem's historiography of Hasidism as the "neutralization" of dangerous messianic potentials in Judaism served to transfer "hope of redemption from the historical-political world to the arena of the heart. . . . The result was a Judaism in which 'every individual is the Redeemer, the Messiah of his own little world' and the historical-political aspect of Judaism—which had anticipated an actual return to Israel as part of a historic Jewish redemption—is consequently 'shelved' or 'liquidated.'" The application to contemporary politics, Hazony argues, was obvious. Ben Gurion regarded the Jewish state as essential to both the physical and spiritual redemption of the Jews. Hazony commented:

> Yet as anyone who studied Hasidism at the Hebrew University knew—or believed he knew—one could not make such claims for historical-political actors and instruments without approaching the threshold of heresy. . . . [Scholem] feared that Labor Zionism was gravitating toward 'Sabbateanism,' and he too demanded that Zionists 'neutralize' the Messianic element in their movement by systematically stripping its Jewish basis of political pretensions. Among its other effects, this line of reasoning fed directly into Buber and Scholem's opposition to the Jewish State.[106]

One way or another—and clearly neither of these rather blunt critiques adequately addresses the subtleties and context of Scholem's thought—his Zionism, like his metaphysics of mysticism, could never be captured through "Orthodox" categories. If, at the later, more disconsolate esoteric level, it was characterized by an unbridgeable abyss between transcendental promise and empirical fulfillment, on an everyday level it was throughout, characterized

by a formidable and completely unwavering commitment. Given what he regarded as the impossibly "assimilationist" times in which he was raised and the lonely, "outrageous" program he set for himself, Scholem's heightened self-awareness and ideological single-mindedness was an existential necessity. The diaries clearly reveal that his famous single-minded views concerning the self-deluding cravenness of German Jewry, the putative nonexistence of the German-Jewish dialogue, and his refusal to countenance any mixing or harmonization between *Deutschtum* and *Judentum* were already embryonically formed from the time he began recording his thoughts at the age of 16.

One should note that his dismissal of any authentic relationship between *Deutschtum* and *Judentum* was both the source of insight *and* a certain autobiographically grounded myopia, one that may equally have influenced his more general determinedly Judeocentric historiosophy. For when Scholem—himself also obviously a product of the culture he so disdained—vehemently insisted that men like Kafka, Benjamin, and Freud regarded themselves exclusively as Jews (and in no way Germans), he indulged in a form of simplistic essentialism foreign to these thinkers themselves.[107] Perhaps because he was a participant rather than an observer, Scholem was unwilling, indeed unable, to see that such admixtures and combinations were the motors of as much intellectual productivity and cultural inspiration as they were of confusion and, occasionally, distress and self-abnegation. Constantly negotiating and interpreting the mixed signals around them, German Jews typically upset simple dichotomies. To some degree, this defined both their experience and achievements.

We must conclude that in regard to the analysis of German Jewry, Scholem was more of a rebellious participant than a dispassionate critic. Indeed, his contempt for the indignities, illusions, and contortions of what he termed German-Jewish "assimilation" and the essentialist biases this dismissal implied colored his entire mode of thinking and leaked into his overall "immanentist" historiography. Only in terms of "internal" processes did he allow himself the freedom to conduct deliciously subtle and subversive dialectical analyses. Whatever the limitations of this outlook, the intuitions and critical sentiments that underlay it provided his scholarship with an almost uncanny sharpness and focus, opening up entirely new vistas and areas of interest.

The only area, certainly in his youth, where Scholem appeared to be more typically conventional was in his relatively frequent dismissive attitudes to women. The young Scholem heartily partook of the *Männerbund* predilections of his day; friendship, in the deepest sense, was a male affair and not really possible with women. The diaries variously portray women as of dubious character; unable to be fully "Zionist and innocent"[108] (two grievous Scholemian omissions); hysterical and intuitive; he claimed that "the establishment of knowledge is not their task."[109] These rather quotidian sentiments sometimes underwent a peculiarly Scholemian twist: "The most frightening bourgeois manifestation of the demonic is to be found in the

figure of certain mothers . . . They appear entirely harmless . . . but they carry the stigma that God placed as a warning on moral people: the principled banality of speech . . . "[110]

More probingly, the diaries are sprinkled with analytic notes surrounding his repeated observation that there was no such thing as the "feminine Torah."[111] Later, in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* Scholem would remark upon the complete absence of feminine emotion in Jewish mysticism (unlike its non-Jewish counterpart), and would note, "but it also remained comparatively free from the dangers entailed by the tendency towards hysterical extravagance which followed in the wake of this influence." Kabbalistic symbolism, Scholem wrote, viewed the demonic "as an offspring of the feminine sphere" an emphasis, he acknowledged, that constituted "a problem for the psychologist and the historian of religion alike."[112]

What measure of the man, ultimately, emerges from these documents? In the first place, we receive confirmation that, for the most part, from the earliest times Scholem was as sharply critical, even scornful and inflexible in his personal judgments, as he was zealous in his ideological pronouncements. As early as 1917 this was as clear to himself as to those around him. "It is said of me," he wrote, "that I am disgustingly disparaging of all people and regard everyone around me as idiots. Yes . . . but when the people *are* idiots. And they are, by God."[113] An October 1917 entry reads like a prefiguration of the Marcusean critique of tolerance: " . . . this tolerance whose lack of spirituality stinks to Heaven, which is tolerant because it has no principles and thus holds everything as equally good."[114] If others regarded him as fanatical, he welcomed the description. "They 'know' me now as an intolerant fanatic—thank God," he wrote in July 1916.[115] One of his first diary observations (March 1913) reads: "I relate everything I see to Judaism and contemplate it as such. Perhaps one can regard such a standpoint as one-sided. But that's the way I am."[116] His 1960 description of the radical mystic sounds strikingly autobiographical: "There are plenty of men who incline by nature to the radical formulation of their ideas, who chafe at authority of any kind and have no patience whatever with the folly of their fellow men."[117]

But the diaries also reveal the more human side of the man. They capture his impish moments, his sense of humor, his love of delicacies, the caring moments. They also graphically demonstrate some of Scholem's darker complexities, especially with regard to his friendship with Walter Benjamin. This was governed at all times by deep and vulnerable commitment. It was the "one relationship that holds absolutely and always," he confided to his journal early in 1918, "I love Walter."[118] The diaries trace in splendid, intimate detail the euphoria of the encounter. As early as October 15, 1917, Scholem noted that Benjamin was the "greatest experience of my life: coming into contact, with a person of absolute, magnificent greatness . . . not just through his doctrine but through his existence . . . in him the deepest, absolute Judaism speaks without his being aware of it."[119]

With feelings like these, it is clear that the stakes of the friendship were both emotionally and intellectually highly charged from the outset. The diaries recount the positive encounters but they also painfully document the early intermittent crises and Scholem's almost homoerotic feelings of betrayal and isolation, especially as they revolved around the dense, tension-filled triangle of Scholem, Benjamin, and his wife, Dora. "I need not go anymore into solitude: I am already there. All my personal relationships have become what they had to be: I live beyond them."[120] The significance of these argumentative incidents should not be underestimated: "My life converges onto suicide," he wrote in early 1918. "Never have I thought with such intensity . . . about death and suicide than in these weeks."[121] This is a period of crisis, anger, and deep self-deprecation:

> There once was a person who lived a false life but who also lacked the courage to end it, for he was so cowardly in the depths of his heart, that he could not do it. For he made a game out of the things that most served to keep him free from obligations: he became completely, totally radical, so that no demand that one could raise could make an impression on him, for he surpassed them all—and thus was not required to realize them. He invented a science (*Wissenschaft*), in which the emptiness of his heart could be hidden behind his intellect and called this in profanation a respectable matter of Zionism. The young man is well known to me. The deep swindle stands written in his eyes.[122]

Indeed, he later states: "I am so untruthful that I would perhaps live a lying heroic life, because I am too untruthful for suicide. Suicide requires integrity, totality (*Ganzheit*)."[123]

To what extent there exists a parallel between Scholem's figuration of mysticism, language, and loss—his purported rhetoric of sadness—and his friendship with Benjamin cannot be decided here.[124] But clearly, at least from Scholem's point of view, this was a relationship where the enormous intellectual and emotional charge was deeply intertwined. For his future biographer, the diaries provide surprisingly raw material in this regard.

Indeed, Scholem still awaits his biographer. That person will have to possess enormous knowledge and talent, and be able to master key aspects of nineteenth- and twentieth-century German and Central European cultural and intellectual life, as well as the history and study of Kabbalah, German Jewry, Zionism, and Israel. He or she will have to document, place into context, and assess Scholem's life and *oeuvre,* lay forth his achievements and biases, and penetrate the discourses he subverted, constituted, and perhaps (consciously or unconsciously) reflected and reinforced. Above all, that biographer will have to possess acute psychological insight. "I am aware," Scholem once commented, "that I don't understand my own depths and am clever enough to accept this."[125] The complexity and contradictions of the man will have to

be taken into account. Yet his biographer will also have to possess a capacity for shrewd decipherment for, in certain deliberate and mischievous ways, Scholem indulged in both personal and intellectual concealment. He once approved of a description of his method as esoteric, a form of "camouflage" in which "a secret metaphysician was disguised as an exact scientist," and wrote to Cynthia Ozick: "I find the suggestion that the quarry may have been all the time in the pursuer not without plausibility. I have been asked this question so often that in the meantime I have invented at least twenty different answers, whereas the true one is hidden away between some of my lines."[126]

The letters and diaries that Scholem has bequeathed us will, no doubt, go some way towards helping us better interpret and critically grasp the person and the work. To be sure, one need not relate with equal seriousness to every jotting. Even Scholem must be granted his adolescent whims and moments, and this might also include his messianic fantasies. Moreover, much in the diaries is written in overtly declarative, almost manifestolike form, giving rise to the suspicion that Scholem was already aware of his possible future fame and had his eye on posterity and later audiences (the diaries are full of ruminations about his potential greatness, even if couched in a fashion that putatively questions it).[127]

Throughout, as we have seen, Scholem had a quite valid (if not always admirable) sense of his own dissenting genius and potential greatness. Indeed, many descriptions of his loneliness and depressions flowed from fears that he would not be able to live up to his own ideas of such greatness. Posterity suggests that, critical as we may be, he need not have feared. In his youth he defined Zionism as a life lived securely—on the boundary.[128] Years later he declared (about Carl Gustav Jung) that greatness "has an effect like an intrusion of the transcendental and is a task of life that borders on the extreme."[129] One cannot but suspect that he was aware that both statements could have served as ideal mottos for his own life and work.

7

Comrade Klemperer: Communism, Liberalism, and Jewishness in the GDR: The Later Diaries, 1945–1959[1]

Although Victor Klemperer's 1947 study of the wiles and distortions of Nazi language, *LTI, Notizbuch eines Philologen* (LTI for *Lingua Tertii Imperii,* the language of the Third Reich) achieved something of the status of an underground though largely unread classic,[2] it was only in the mid-1990s, with the publication of the diaries he kept during the Nazi period, that this scholar of French literature acquired broad-based fame within Western intellectual circles. The diaries constitute perhaps the most intricately detailed, sharply perceptive, and painfully wrought chronicles of everyday life in the Third Reich that we possess, at least from the viewpoint of its victims. The immense interest generated by the diaries was also, no doubt, spurred by the author's prickly personality and the ideological conflicts he had to confront in the face of Nazism. They demonstrate how Klemperer, Wilhelmian son of a Reform rabbi, born 1881, convert to Protestantism, radical assimilationist, passionately committed to *Deutschtum*, opposed to all forms of Jewish particularism, and obsessively anti-Zionist, was faced with the collapse of his spiritual and intellectual worlds. The diaries register this process of decomposition and the valiant, if often hopelessly contradictory, attempts of this almost archetypically assimilatory Jew to somehow salvage and reconstitute them.[3]

But Klemperer did not only leave behind his records of the Nazi period. He was, almost instinctively, an inveterate diarist. Although there are no diaries for the period from his birth in 1881 through 1918, he did write a massive two-volume autobiographical memoir—*Curriculum vitae*—covering those years,[4] and the *Tagebücher* for the Weimar Republic alone come to well over 1600 printed pages. Those chronicling the Nazi period are of a similar length.[5] Just as diligently (or compulsively), he continued the habit into the post–Second World War period (1945–1959). With the publication of these diaries—in which he opted for Communism and a life in the German Democratic Republic—we are able to gain a fuller perspective on the course of his tempestuous life.[6] It is through his graphomanic reflex (Klemperer himself came to feel overwhelmed by the mass of material he had accumulated) that the whole course

of German history from the 1880s through the GDR of 1959 is reflected and is given peculiar individual expression. Klemperer's chronicles function as a kind of seismometer of the extraordinary times and changes through which he had to live and respond. In them, the deep historicity of personal existence, of individual fate and choice, becomes uniquely transparent.Were we left merely with the Weimar diaries, we would, I suppose, judge them as occasionally penetrating mirrors of their times, politically perceptive in places, sensitive to the growing anti-Semitism and jingoism of the period, a disarmingly candid personal record of a frustrated liberal and Romance scholar, but not much more than that. Clearly it is within the extremities of the dark Nazi years that Klemperer, for all his self-absorption (perhaps because of it), transcended himself. Attuned to, and skilled at, the art of daily recording, he is transformed into a master observer and chronicler. In the thick descriptions of the National Socialist quotidian life—the graphic portrayal of everyday fear, uncertainty, confusion, growing isolation, slender hope, impoverishment, and expectation of death—Klemperer's chronicles attain a kind of grandeur, clarity, and moral stature. They have stamped our image of him as a kind of hero, *menschlich, allzu menschlich*, to be sure, vain, fussy, vulnerable, and idiosyncratic, but a kind of hero (or anti-hero) nevertheless.What has changed—or remained consistent—now that we have the post–World War II diaries? How, now, are we to measure the life and situate the man? And, more prosaically, what do the diaries reveal about the nature of Klemperer's choices and commitments, his life in the GDR? More than ever, the profoundly conditioned connections between the personal and the political remain in evidence: whether in relatively normal or extraordinary times, all of Klemperer's diaries underline the ways in which larger forces impinge upon ordinary lives. To be sure, the context of the post-1945 diaries, though shaped by the immediate Nazi past, is a different one. It is clear that we cannot expect the same drama, the same starkness, even the same heroism. Indeed, in mid-1945, upon the downfall of Nazism and the return to some kind of normalcy—"again to eat well, to drink well, to go on a nice drive, visit the sea, go to the cinema . . . no 20-year-old can be half as life-hungry . . . "[7]—Klemperer observed to himself, "Compared with the previous situation, you are now in paradise."[8] Relative to what had gone before, as a radically assimilated Jew, one could live a semblance of "normal" life—gray and ambiguous though it may have been—in the German Democratic Republic. But, of course, it is precisely the grayness and the ambiguities here that constitute the interest, the moral tension, of these documents. Anyone familiar with Klemperer's pre-1945 apolitical, liberal *Bildungsbürgertum* existence is faced with an anomaly: the commitment to the GDR, the metamorphosis into a Communist and a loyal party member cries out for explanation. This becomes especially necessary given Klemperer's previous outspoken critical hostility to Communism, a distaste matched only by his contempt for Nazism and Zionism. Indeed, in his 1933–1945 diaries, he consistently damned National Socialism precisely because it so resembled

Communism! "National Socialism," he proclaimed in 1934, "has now become completely or almost completely identical with Bolshevism."[9] Previously he had written that both movements were "materialistic and tyrannical, both disregard and negate the freedom of the spirit and of the individual."[10] In 1939 he protested that he could as little get along with Zionism and Bolshevism as he could with National Socialism. He was, he declared, "Liberal and German *forever*."[11]

When, moreover, Klemperer sought to make the relevant distinctions, the terms in which he did so were not exactly complimentary for the Communists. In 1936 he wrote that while both movements repelled him, "the racial idea of National Socialism seems to me the most bestial (in the literal sense of the word.)"[12] In 1941 he wrote: "We now have pure Communism. But Communism murders more honestly."[13] Indeed, as late as January 1945 he bitingly characterized as Bolshevik all those who were raising the Communist scare! "They owe everything to the bogey of Bolshevism, even though they themselves are the most Bolshevik of all."[14] At times he even invoked a Jewish dimension for this distaste. The Communist Party, he noted, was known for its mistrust of Jews as businessmen, nonworkers, capitalists.[15]

There was nothing in Klemperer's previous scholarship that smacked ideologically or methodologically of Marxism, and little in his individualist, Enlightenment sensibility or writings that betrayed an interest in dialectics or historical materialism. Indeed, upon matriculating at the end of the nineteenth century, Klemperer had not even heard the name Karl Marx.[16] Despite his apparent political leap, Klemperer throughout remained skeptical of Marxist aesthetics: "Why this common injustice against Gutzkow, Spielhagen, Zola?. . . . What narrowness, [to hold] that the poet can only describe *his own class*. Everywhere here *class* functions as did the Nazi [notion of] *Art* (species, kind). . . . This [belongs in my LQI and] cannot be said."[17] Sometimes, Klemperer noted, these philosophico-methodological differences led to farce. Questioning a student at a doctoral examination: "I asked about literature (realism & Enlightenment); *he* answered, to me incomprehensibly, sociologically, Marxistically; I let him speak & said: very good."[18] One may thus be entitled to be somewhat skeptical of Klemperer's putative political conversion. Indeed, his self-presentation over the years was often that of a bemused, ambivalent, half-outsider, never wholly at home in this new (or any other) world. The ambiguity is captured in the German title of the two volumes: "So then I sit between all stools" (*So sitze ich denn zwischen allen Stühlen*)—a leitmotif of the diaries. "Between the stools, always between the stools," Klemperer proclaimed in April 1949, "—that should have been my Ex libris!"[19] In December 1953, he wrote, "I cannot rid myself of the smallest fraction of my scepticism. It is absolute . . ."[20]

And, yet, this is not the way it necessarily looked to the outside world—and, indeed, not always the way Klemperer fashioned his own self-accounting. The fact is that he consciously opted for the Communist Party, and later for

the Eastern bloc. The move to party membership for this previously virulent anti-Communist must, quite obviously, be located within a wider context: the defeat of Nazism; the urge for a radical cleansing of a thoroughly tainted past; the personal, dreamlike chance to live a life again (Klemperer had the feeling that he was living a kind of fairytale and that he should exploit this unexpected gift of liberation); the political openness and uncertainty of the immediate postwar situation, especially in East Germany. All this implied the need for a kind of reinvention. The turn to Communism was not the only step in the process. In related fashion, Klemperer shed a crucial acquired part of his former life and German identity—his Protestantism. On July 30, 1945, he wrote of the Church in the post-Auschwitz age: "It is more and more mysterious to me how people can still believe in the good, loving God. I now want to leave the Church that so shamelessly stabbed me."[21] On August 19 he officially abandoned the evangelical church. It is clear that these moves were based upon a complex of considerations in which self-interest, sheer opportunism, and a certain residual idealism all played intermingled and complex roles. Very early on, Klemperer began pondering his professional and political future. In July 1945 he confided to his diary:

> I do not want to decide in purely idealistic fashion on which horse to sit, but rather coldly reckon what is best for *my* situation, *my* freedom, future work to be done, and thus which can also serve my ideal goals. Which is the correct choice? Russia? The USA? Democracy? Communism? Professor im Amt? Retired? Unpolitical? Politically committed? Question mark upon question mark.[22]

A few days earlier, he noted to himself that if it did come down to politics, "one can only choose the lesser evil, every pure decision has come to an end."[23]

And by mid-November, weighing the new situation in the light of his friend Erich Seidemann's entreaties to join the German Communist Party (KPD), it had become clear to Klemperer that a political choice of one kind or another had, indeed, become imperative: "My situation has fundamentally changed insofar as I *must* join one of the four parties if I am to be recognized as a race-persecuted victim of Fascism."[24]

On November 20, Klemperer formulated this personal-political-moral quandary thus:

> The application forms for entry into the KPD lie on the desk. I am cowardly if I do *not* enter (Seidemann maintains this); am I cowardly if do enter? Do I have exclusively egoistic grounds for joining? No! For if I have to be in a party, than this is the least evil. At least at the present. It alone is really pressing for a radical elimination of the Nazis. But they place new unfreedoms in place of the old. But for the moment this cannot be

> avoided.—But perhaps I am placing myself personally on the wrong horse? It is entirely incomprehensible to me what so many . . . are saying: just no more parties! Once burned is enough. . . . But I must now really declare my colors. . . . I have actually decided to join. But it all strikes me as comic: Comrade Kl! Whose comrade?[25]

Almost three years later, in August 1948, he could still write: "I hold fast onto Marxism and Russia, *as if* I believe in them . . . And yet I do not know if they possess the ultimate truth, if they will win. But I will not change this horse. And it is a matter of indifference if angina or a bullet kills me."[26] As late as October 1949 Klemperer was pondering the long-term correctness of his wager, wondering whether or not "he will end in bed or on the gallows. Actually it does not matter. And I am convinced that ultimately, ideologically and practically, I am on the right side. . . . 'practically,' my conviction is not as fast as my ideological belief. Here 23 million Germans will live, in the Western zone 40 mill. Of the 23. mill. in the East a maximum of 10 mill. are really Russophile & really Communist."[27]

Professionally and personally, at least, one could argue that this previously frustrated professor had indeed backed the right horse. *LTI* had already appeared in 1947. From 1945 on, Klemperer was awarded a series of professorships at Greifswald, Halle, and Dresden. In 1953 he was appointed to the German Academy of Sciences. He was the recipient of numerous official prizes, played a role in the *Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneurung Deutschlands,* and sat as its one of its representatives in the *Volkskammer.* He was active in various organizations representing victims of Nazism, was a member of the Executive Committee of the "Society for German-Soviet friendship" between 1948–1950,[28] and came into contact with many of the regime's intellectual luminaries, many of whom, like Arnold Zweig[29] and Ernst Bloch,[30] were Jewish.

The Weimar diaries, among other things, constitute a tiresome litany of professional setbacks, rivalries, and jealousies. The later period—despite the feeling of growing isolation and intellectual irrelevance in the last years—is crowned with official recognition and, after the death of his faithful wife, Eva, in July 1951,[31] renewed personal happiness in the form of his marriage in 1952 to Hadwig Kirchner, 45 years his junior.[32] Klemperer punctuates these successes with recurrent comments about his lack of tranquility, doubting his own adequacy—and the boredom and desire for sleep induced by the tedium of official meetings.[33]

What, however, of the political and the moral dimensions? At least one commentator has depicted Klemperer's choice as a "wrong turn" (*politischer Irrweg*), comparable to the larger twentieth-century temptation of countless Western intellectuals who joined the Party, "animated by ideals, dazzled by illusory images, some against their better conscience and almost all driven by the murderous circumstances of their times."[34] This interpretation may not

be the best way to grasp Klemperer's more complicated historical dilemma, or even his mix of opportunism, idealism, and scepticism. Perhaps Clive James's verdict comes closer to the specificities of the case, although it may have been prudent to refer to some of the personal-professional advantages as well. Klemperer turned East, James writes, "because he thought that the Nazis had exhausted the possibilities of human evil, and a different kind of tyranny might offer hope."[35] Unlike, say, the decision of the Webbs or, later, Sartre, this was a concrete commitment made by a victim of Nazism on the grounds not of an abstract gesture safely removed from reality. It was an unsure and calculated leap that was not always animated by great conviction and that, to be sure, involved occasional moral shortcuts, unpleasant compromises, and self-serving rationalizations.

Indeed, as early as February 1946, there are moments when the normally sceptical Klemperer surprises even himself with his newfound faith, his metamorphosis of self: "The transformation in me! When Wollschläger told me a short time ago that he wished there were a Soviet Bundestaat here, I was shattered. Now I want it myself. I no longer believe in the single German Patria. I believe that we can very well cultivate German culture as a Soviet State under Russian leadership."[36] And as late as June 1953 he could proclaim, with a combination of personal and ideological considerations, "*For me the Soviet Panzers function as doves of peace*. I will feel secure in my skin and position only as long as I am protected by *Soviet power.*"[37]

Yet, at the same time and for the most part, he did demonstrate a critical self-awareness and constantly reported upon his doubts and vacillations, at least in the privacy of his diary. In some moods, he was brutally candid about himself and his situation. "Always remember [he used the English word *remember*]," he wrote in August 1947, "1) You are a war-winner—only thanks to the emptiness of the Eastern zone are you a success. 2). It is a situational success, you falter at every moment, today powerful, tomorrow powerless. 3). *Vanitas vanitatum*—one foot in the grave, when will the other follow, and what will survive and what worth is there in surviving?"[38] Sometimes his criticisms of the Party and of the Russians were less weighty, voiced in terms of Klemperer's still-loyal *Deutschtum*. Thus he found entirely distasteful the KPD's equation of Nazi mentality with the "Prussian spirit."[39]

But early on, there were also much more substantive doubts. By June 1945, he already had articulated what would become a recurring plaint: Russian reports about Hitlerian barbarism, he wrote, were

> absolutely correct and everything that is said about Russian efforts at reconstruction and humanity is 90% correct, but the missing 10% and the monotonous and exclusive repetition—why are all other reports and themes missing, why is everything politicized and everything else suppressed?—are causing serious damage. And while I observed all this in the Third Reich, and while I had to observe all this, whether or not I wanted to, sub specie Judaeorum, it is [now] painfully burdensome to me.[40]

He noted at the 1949 inception of "Die Deutsche Demokratische Republik," how similarly to Nazism it operated: "I know how little reality there is behind it…I know that the Democratic Republic is internally mendacious…"[41] and early on he observed that Stalin's *"primitive deification proceeds way beyond Hitlerism!"*[42] Indeed, even at the height of his apparent ideological transformation, he displayed interest in a work that identified Marx with Hitler.[43]

At the beginning, Klemperer saw his entrance into the Party as being imbued with a special mission, integrally tied to his long-held apolitical, liberal worldview, in which culture held pride of place: "I want the KPD to comprehend that *in their interest* I want to place humanism and *not politics* at the centre. I want to bring Antigone to the workers, I want to be *unpractical*…."[44] Indeed, by February 1948, if Klemperer had become a convinced Marxist, it was a Marxism informed by his older peculiarly German-Jewish *Bildungs* propensities, in which the cultivation of the self was the supreme value. Not only were socialism and human rights compatible. He now argued that it was *"only* within Marxism that the personality could be successfully realized."[45] A few years later, when disillusionment with the clichés and dogmatism of materialism had set in, Klemperer could still passionately protest his political faith by declaring that "I became a Communist when I realized that the personality would develop under Communism and not be destroyed by it…"[46]

To be sure, the criticism becomes ever more insistent. By 1949 he is anxiously reporting about the growing suspicion, the internal mistrust, within the Party, its division into "authentic" and "inauthentic" Marxists—"the downright atmosphere of Inquisition."[47] Soon after, Klemperer commented cynically:

> In the measure of world history will the DDR stand near the Munich council Republic, the Paris Commune or the Soviet Union? No living person can say, no one really governs, not even Stalin. Doubtless there is a higher power at work. An unconscious one? Then it is no power. A conscious one? Then it is boundlessly evil and ungifted—no unschooled worker should allow such bungling as occurs everyday.[48]

As the noose of control tightened in 1952, Klemperer voiced his distaste to friends, who counseled him that too much passionate criticism "is the way to denunciation, to new concentration camps, to new violence, it is false politics….[They say] criticize *only* where there are proven crimes, not mere talk….*Good!* And yet false. The Nazis talked freely for so long until they could perform their crimes."[49] In some of his darker moods of that year he opined: "I am so often physically and mentally tired. I have a horror of nothingness and wish that it were all over. I try to persuade myself to believe in the Soviet matter, and in my innermost soul no longer believe in anything & everything strikes me at the same time as both unimportant and untrue."[50]

For the most part, however, Klemperer was usually able to contain his dissatisfaction and criticism in terms of the principle of the lesser evil, rationalized

by the familiar conception of West Germany as the clear continuation of Fascism: "Most bitter," he wrote in May 1950, "is my confrontation over everything intellectual with the SED.[51] But I cannot dodge to the West—that is even *more* repugnant to me. With the SED it is only Wissenschaft. . . . there *everything* is hateful to me."[52] He could still write, two years later, "With all our weaknesses, we are still the better people, the truth and the future are with us . . . without being blind towards our own narrowness and errors."[53] Even in the critical year of the 1952 purges, despite the criticisms and his self-description as "tired and wounded," Klemperer held on: "The West is decayed & I belong to the East, that remains firm for me."[54] As time goes on, he develops something of a stoic tragic awareness. In May 1954, once again, he asks himself whether he has chosen the correct loyalty. "But what to do? The Westerners are 100 times worse."[55] The shocking revival of anti-Semitism in West Germany prompts him, in October 1954, to argue that "*we* are the lesser evil—but if the errors of the SED increase—what then?"[56] Listening in February 1955 to a friend's bitter critique of the GDR's dictatorial mode, he confides: "The worst: I cannot fault the man on a single point—& yet I hate West Germany with all my heart. All the more as I see daily our powerlessness."[57] One month later he records: "Constant deep political disappointment. Our culture and politics is *so* dumb & mendacious, it is only just the "'smaller evil'? And where is certainty?"[58] And in August of that year he proclaimed, "I no longer can enthuse about 'us,' [but] I find the Bundesrepublik even worse . . ."[59]

We have no evidence as to how much Klemperer was aware that his image of the West was soaked in Soviet propaganda, but some of his diary entries candidly indicate his consciousness that the commitment to the GDR was increasingly tied to the privileges he enjoyed. When, in 1957, a friend commented that he saw "more bloodletting, more force on the Eastern than the Western side," Klemperer mused:

> Perhaps it is for the most part egoism that binds me to the DDR. *Here* I am someone, *here* I am rich, here I am *vir doctissimus*. What of all these things would I have been in the West? My faith in pure intentions, in the pure humanitas of the Soviets is long gone. But over there they are not any better, only smoother. And *su per giú* we are still the lesser evil.[60]

For all that, his "instinctive hate" of Bonn, as Klemperer later put it, during these years was not purely propaganda-driven. To a great degree, contemporary research has established a shocking degree of continuity between the old and the new regime. Klemperer's conviction that in these early years the capital was infested with "Nazi and Jew-murdering ministers" cannot be entirely dismissed, although, to be sure, it entirely omitted the GDR's very dismal record in regard to its own recent Nazi past.[61] There does, however, appear to be a (qualified) point of no return. In 1957 Klemperer had come to

the conclusion that there was a symmetry of evil:

> . . . I see the deception on both sides and everywhere. Everywhere it is a matter of power, between the States, the parties, inside the parties. At the moment it is most brutal with us, more Asiatic than in the Adenauer State. But there, there is an open return to Nazism—with us to Bolshevism. *De profundissimus*.[62]

To be sure, the profound disillusionment was connected to Klemperer's feeling of increasing intellectual and political isolation and irrelevance in a by now entirely undisguised, stifling Stalinist culture.[63] His very last diary entry for 1958 reads: ". . . without sympathy, not for the West & not for the East. Germany is a ruined rainworm: both parts twist themselves, both equally infected by Fascism, each in its own way."[64] What remained consistent—and thus renders his commitment even more puzzling and problematic—was Klemperer's ongoing and uncompromising insistence in subjecting the manifold distortions and manipulations of Communist, Russian, and GDR political language to the same scrutiny he had exercised on its Nazi predecessor and which had made him famous. From the outset Klemperer was acutely aware of the same phenomenon in the political party and regime to which he had sworn loyalty. The victors, he noted in the immediate postwar period, were reenacting the vices of their opponents: "One cheated, blunted, bored, falsified through the flight of superlatives and through endless repetition and onesidedness."[65] By June 1945 he already had invented LTI's successor: LQI, notations and examples of which would appear through the end in his diaries: "I must gradually begin," he wrote, "to systematically pay attention to the language of the *fourth Reich*. It seems to me it is less distinct from the *third* than Dresden Saxon is from the Leipziger version. Thus when Marshall Stalin is described as the greatest living man of his time, the most brilliant strategist. Or when Stalin in a speech from the beginning of the war, naturally quite correctly, spoke of 'Hitler the cannibal.' In any case, I wish to . . . exactly study this subspecies LQI."[66]

From then on then, through his death, Klemperer sprinkled his diaries with almost daily examples of this LQI—which he constantly compared with Nazi language. "One reports," he noted in October 1945, "how much we have all become anti-Fascists and democrats, how 'cleansed,' transformed, improved we are. One preaches against militarism—and one hits exactly as crudely all truth and reality in the face . . . [as the Nazis did] and with the exact same words—LTI = LQI!"[67] And, less than one month later (when he became a member of the Party), he cried: "This awful identity of LTI & LQI, the Soviet and the Nazi, the new democratic and the Hitler song! This is pushed everywhere from morning to night . . . in every word, every sentence, every thought . . . the undisguised imperialism of the Russians!"[68] LTI, of course, could not be published under the Nazis. Nor has LQI ever

been published—except in the form of the diary entries we now possess. Yet, despite Klemperer's perception of the parallel, his almost obsessive, pre-Orwellian sensitivity (*1984* first appeared in 1949), he very seldom drew the obvious critical conclusions about not being able to publish his findings. We know, from a July 1945 comment, that he was aware of the issue and wondered aloud if he would be free to write under the new conditions.[69] Yet I have found only one comment, linked to one of his innumerable Nazi-Communist language comparisons, where he states explicitly: "That belongs in my LQI and is not allowed to be said."[70] Here were compromises, ambiguities that were sometimes present, at other times suppressed. And if Klemperer managed to repress this ugly reality, others occasionally disturbed his rest. He received an anonymous letter stating that he [Klemperer] was "'a frustrated Nazi'. . . . in *LTI* I had attacked that with which I was now complicit."[71] Another 1952 missive admonished Klemperer for betraying his vocation, "for the present government is the same as Hitler's & I must write an LQI. LQI is actually written in this letter and the man is philologically correct, as I have long noted, but substantively," Klemperer rationalized to himself, "he is not correct—even though I feel narrowed and tyrannized in points of literature."[72]

Ultimately, of course, one would have to argue that, for all the compromises, Klemperer's self-reinvention had its limits. The thirst for a radical purging of Germany's Nazi past, the personal and professional opportunities opened up to him in the new order, were powerful forces, but they sat uncomfortably with his liberal, *Bildungs* sensibility until, in the end, feeling isolated and officially ostracized, there was precious little left of his new political faith. By 1957, he confided to his diary, "I am an old liberal and my temporarily repressed liberalism is increasingly penetrating through my red layer of makeup."[73]

On his 1958 tour of China, he wrote,

> It has become clear to me that Communism is suited to bring primitive peoples out of the primordial slime and to return civilized peoples back to it. In the latter case it goes deceptively to work and operates not only in a dumbing fashion but also demoralizes, in that it educates through hypocrisy. Through my China journey and through the violent acts here I have finally become an anti-Communist.[74]

The final disillusionment, the opportunism and the compromises notwithstanding, Klemperer's reevaluation of Marxism and Communism had nevertheless been genuine enough. It played the most central role in his postwar moral, psychological, and professional reconstitution.

He never found it necessary, however, to seriously reassess either the nature of his Jewish identity and commitments or to temper his virulent anti-Zionism. If anything, Nazism convinced him of the basic soundness of his outlook: emphasizing Jewish particularity and separateness was to

capitulate to Nazi logic.[75] In the later period, as in earlier times, to be sure, Klemperer retained a certain tortured sense of Jewish self; as he rather outrageously and disarmingly put it, "I am more split than ever. If I were not Jewish, I would have transformed myself into a Freicorps soul."[76] He manifested an acute awareness of his own and of other people's Jewish origins—he noted, for instance, how many Jews in the immediate postwar aftermath occupied key positions: "Victory—but at what price! Oh Jahwe!"[77] The postwar diaries are sprinkled with observations about the "Jewish" appearance and mannerisms of people;[78] more often than not he socialized with Jews, and on trips he would sometimes even go to Jewish restaurants.[79] Jewish expressions occasionally and unexpectedly leap up from the page.[80] There are even isolated moments where a kind of Jewish spark was ignited. Thus Klemperer was deeply moved when he saw a production of *Anne Frank* in 1958: " a really shattering impression…I thought of my own experiences in the *Judenhaus*. A highpoint was the Chanukah scene with its Hebrew singing—I had heard the melody many decades ago."[81] Klemperer was enormously sensitive to anti-Semitic currents, though this was derived from his determinedly assimilationist stance and not from an interest in or desire to live a collective or organized "Jewish" life.[82] In the immediate aftermath of war, he constantly voiced the fear that defeat would bring with it the recrudescence of anti-Semitism. "Soon," he wrote in June 1945, "they will say: [the Jews] are pushing themselves in front, taking revenge, they are the winners, Hitler & Goebbels were right."[83] This crucially informed his own sense of self-presentation: " I must just not," he wrote, "appear as the Jewish spirit of revenge [*jüdischer Rachegeist*] and triumphant."[84] Of his hometown, he wrote sadly but also cautiously: "Before '33 in Dresden there was a Jewish community that amounted to a four-unit number [thousands of people], that was exterminated.…today hardly 100 live here. But how many of these few now sit in leading positions!"[85]

Postwar philo-Semitism—what Klemperer dubbed "*Judenfreundlichkeit*"—was bound to turn on itself, he believed. "[At] some time," he declared in September 1945, "the Jews would be presented with its bill: I see a new Hitlerism coming; in no way do I feel secure."[86] This was an ongoing sensitivity. In August 1945, Klemperer reflected that his *LTI* was far more suited to publication than his diaries, which, he wrote, were "formless, incriminated the Jews, were also not in accord with current prevalent opinion and were also indiscrete."[87] (There was a very different atmosphere in the 1990s, when the publication of the diaries in Germany proved to be an unprecedented success.) With the tightening of the Stalinist screws, the 1952 trial of Jewish doctors, and the ensuing Jewish flight, he approvingly recorded the comment of a Jewish worker at the Dresden Jewish library: "We are always the seismographs."[88] But he resisted giving special attention to the Jewish factor: thus, as he wrote of his diary entries describing Dresden's destruction: "I do not want to write my Jewish memories. I want to keep it general."[89] His 1952 visit to Auschwitz records its horrific nature

in detail—"*The* hell of the 20th century, technical and scientific hell, the German hell"—but he leaves out the specifically Jewish dimension of that tragic place.[90]

Anything that smacked of Jewish tradition, of communal expression, remained anathema. Reporting, in July 1945, on a radio transmission (stuck between cabaret spots) of a Jewish prayer in Berlin conducted by a 74-year-old cantor, he wrote: "one hears the singing and the community praying—horrible . . . as a tasteless item between other amusements, desecration, not consecration, and as emphasis on the Jewish victory, even more horrible. It nourishes . . . Natsoc."[91] There was, then, no real conflict between Klemperer's deep Wilhelmian assimilationism and his more recently acquired Communist commitment. No rethinking was necessary here. Both were hostile to singular Jewish affirmation, or any independent collective Jewish existence; in that respect, the two ideologies, and the old and the new Klemperer, sat well together. At a 1947 meeting of the VVN (*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes für die Sovietzone*—Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime in the Soviet Zone), for instance, Klemperer found entirely intolerable a speech in which someone spoke of the "Jewish People" (*jüdischen Volk*) "as one speaks of the Poles and Russians, and in hostile fashion set himself apart, not from the Nazis but from Germany in general. '*We* will never forget *Kristallnacht*, the 6 million dead' etc.'"[92]

For Klemperer—unlike for so many other Jews—there was no question as to whether or not Jews should live in post-Nazi Germany (though of course as Germans rather than as a Jewish collectivity.[93]) Thus, Klemperer attempted to persuade people like the critic Julius Bab to return, despite Bab's protestations that he feared that the hands he would shake belonged to those who had sent his little niece to the gas chamber.[94] To be sure, such a return would be predicated upon Jews defining themselves entirely as Germans and not through receiving anything like separate or preferential treatment.

When he received a copy of a planned Laudatio in his honor, in which the emphasis was on his being "the son of a rabbi, Jewish suffering etc." he noted, "I wrote . . . with unequivocal clarity: for me Philo-Semitism is as painful as anti-Semitism. I am a German and a Communist and nothing else. . . . . the consequences of philo-Semitism will mean a strengthening of anti-Semitism . . . "[95] Klemperer stuck by these old ideological guns, even though he was aware of their idiosyncratic nature and of the problematic company in which, as a consequence of these attitudes, he placed himself. Thus he quotes an official discussion by and concerning the "victims of Fascism:"

> . . . a Jew, unknown to me, spoke for a "proportional consideration of the Jews" and almost prompted an anti-Semitic beating. *I* intervened and emphasized that I rejected all distinctions between Jew and Christian and recognize only Fascists and anti-Fascists. . . . I come out well with none. Anti-Semitism everywhere. And my position between *all* stools.[96]

If Klemperer's overall position on Jewish existence and his own Jewish identity did not significantly change, his attitude to Zionism (and, later, to the State of Israel), if anything, hardened. We should remember that, as his diaries reveal, even in the early Weimar period he compared the Zionists with the Nazis.[97] With the National Socialist assumption to power, the equation became even more insistent. Zionism, he wrote indignantly, was "hateful" for its separatist, nationalist mode of thinking, justified Hitler, "and prepared the way for him."[98] The link was simple enough—Zionism represented the Jewish counterpart to Nazism.[99] As one proceeds into the dark heart of the Third Reich, the continued need to regard the two as identical becomes grotesque. In March 1942 (!) he announced that two things interested him: the nature of Nazism and the history of Zionism.[100] In May of that year, with the extermination factories operating at full strength, he proclaimed: "The Zionist Bolshevists are the purest National Socialists."[101]

This virulently anti-Zionist animus continued throughout the later years. It is especially in this context that his political choices coincided, willy-nilly, with those most rigidly identified with the Stalinist camp, that Klemperer's ideological stance (however fortuitously) placed him within what we would regard as tainted company, whose anti-Zionism went hand in hand with a determined refusal to grant any specificity to the Jewish tragedy under the Nazis. This unfortunate conjoining is best illustrated by the sad history of his "Zion" chapter in *LTI*. In that chapter, it is true, Klemperer pointed out some of the differences—as well as the purported similarities—between Nazism and Zionism and between Herzl and Hitler (the most important of which was the fact that Herzl never dreamed of dominating or eliminating foreign nations).[102] Still, the overall tone and impression, the abiding comparison, was overwhelmingly negative and damning: "Again and again," Klemperer insisted, "there are the identities between the two: in thought and style, psychologically, speculatively, politically—and how much they have mutually stimulated and encouraged each other!"[103]

LTI appeared in 1947—a period prior to the onset of total ideological rigidity. At that time, various activists, spearheaded by the singular Paul Merker, were attempting to persuade the Party to both recognize the specificity of Jewish suffering and victimization under the Nazis (as distinguished from the generalized notion of "victims of Fascism") and to provide moral and political support to the cause of Zionism.[104] Upon the publication of *LTI,* Merker and others attacked the "Zion" chapter in the book. The political climate of the time was still open enough to render this attack successful.[105] A furious Klemperer was told that for future editions he would either have to amend or omit that chapter.[106] "The Jewish objections to my Zion chapter," he wrote at the time, "can have catastrophic consequences."[107] (Merker, it should be pointed out, was *not* Jewish.) Faced with this ultimatum, Klemperer commented: "One presents me as an anti-Semite, places a pistol at my breast."[108] When the anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist purges of the early 1950s led to the brutal removal of Merker and

his colleagues and the changed atmosphere led to the relegimitization and reinsertion of the "Zion" chapter, a remarkably insensitive Klemperer—who, it must be noted, was aware of and disapproved of the purge atmosphere in general—voiced his delight and regarded his own ideas as vindicated! He rationalized the relationship between the purge and his vindication thus (in a diary entry in mid-January 1953): "The last few weeks . . . politically shattering: the arrest of Dertingers, the CDU foreign minister. The Soviet proceedings against the doctors' conspiracy, with Jews involved in connection to the *Joint* [Joint Distribution Committee]. (My Zion chapter does not have to be omitted in the next LTI edition . . . No philo-Semitism is justified!)"[109] A few days later he noted: "These people worked together with the Joint (sent packets to practicing Jews), worked together and had connections with the State of Israel. Horrible. At the same time, triumph for my Zion-chapter in LTI."[110] His resentment against Merker persisted and—judging by his diaries—he had no second thoughts.[111]

Klemperer's distaste for Israel as it became a state reality was just as great. It is true he even (though rather vaguely) contemplated a visit there[112] and that his LQI diary entries remarked on distortions (anti-Semitic and otherwise) of official language describing the state and its politics. Thus he notes a radio program of 1949 where it is stated that "the Israeli State hopes for the financial support of 'das WELTJUDENTUM'"[113] and, later, the particular way of pronouncing and writing, "Isr*ael*ischer Staat."[114] But his distaste and incomprehension, his inability or lack of desire to broaden or soften his perspective, to consider the deeper historical needs and forces at work, are apparent throughout. Reporting on a friend's observations, he writes of Israel:

> Linguistic chauvinism, one constantly creates new words in order to shut out all foreign words. . . . Foolish nationalism . . . one struggles enthusiastically and bloodily against the Arab as the "primordial enemy" [*Erbfeind*]. One is absolutely dependent upon the USA and yet pig-headed in the preconception of independence. (I speak bitterly about the idiotic warfare against Egypt.)[115]

He writes approvingly of an acquaintance who left the country because of its "intolerable barbarism"[116] and of reports of ever greater reimmigration, based upon the conviction that there was no future for the country.

> Astounding financial incompetence . . . millions of American dollars wasted. Astonishing nationalist and bellicose spirit . . . cruel atrocities against the Arabs, children and women travel triumphantly through the streets . . . inhabitants of a village whose men were away shot and then they too [were] shot. The government supported this murder. One needs these people. Ben Gurion a Fascist—like Nasser the Egyptian. Reactionary-Orthodox in the formalities of faith. Childless widows must marry the brother of the dead one.

Even in this entry, dated November 1957, Klemperer argued—to a rather perplexed friend—that the relation of Jews to Arabs was "worse than the Nazis"... And even though as the argument proceeded he somewhat relented, concluded: "certainly there are gradations of Dantean hells and Auschwitz was the ultimate of such depths of hell. But the Jews sit in the penultimate circle of hell—and as Jews that should not be."[117]

Victor Klemperer died in the GDR, in Dresden, on February 11, 1960, three months after his 79th birthday. His life traversed all the major events and crises of modern post-Bismarckian Germany, and his diaries and chronicles provide a remarkable mirror of the complex ways in which one individual—stubbornly, idiosyncratically, fearfully, bravely, armed with manifold strengths and weaknesses—sought to grapple with and respond to his times. On the surface his last fourteen years appear to have been remarkably different from what went before: A convert to Communism, loyal citizen of the German Democratic Republic, successful professor, and honored figure—the overt record is quite unlike the Klemperer of Wilhelmian, Weimar, and Nazi times. This success, as we have seen, was a compound of idealism, post-Nazi radicalism, compromises, and personal and professional opportunism. What does, perhaps, remain consistent throughout is Klemperer's determined refusal of any Jewish particularism and his thoroughly integrationist worldview. Who else could have so easily elided past postures and written so unself-consciously (in January 1953): "I am a German and a Communist and nothing else."

Yet, of course, in the end these loyalties remained provisional and, for Klemperer, perhaps even self-deceiving. In the last analysis they became entirely threadbare, eroded. For Klemperer did, as he put it, fall between all stools. Ultimately (indeed throughout his life) he was too much of a sceptical individualist, a rather apolitical liberal, a *Bildungs*intellectual for whom (very often unrealistically) culture inevitably took center stage. Even his beloved and never forsaken *Deutschtum*—as he tirelessly stressed—was a function of spirit, intellect, and ideas, and not of blood. Paradoxically, these were very German-Jewish proclivities indeed, whatever Klemperer's disinclinations were to see them this way. In old age, both on a personal and a political level, he began to recognize that his life-long attempts to obliterate difference were somehow doomed. Describing his relations to his young wife Hadwig and her (Catholic) parents Klemperer noted: "I myself in the minority—three against one—I feel my foreignness, strangeness (*Fremdsein*): a half-century, a faith, a totally different past..."[118]

Less than five years before his death, he expressed "deep grief over my blindness. I have gone *thus* through life, & now I am at its end. I was alone then—Jewish, indeterminedly liberal & in a society that did not respect me; now I am in a society that does not trust me."[119] By 1957, a dismayed Klemperer concluded that he was never in a "fully legitimate place" and that, one way or another, his life proceeded "from Jewish star to Jewish star."[120] This was, indeed, Klemperer's life. Could it have been lived any other way?

Part 3
Evil at the Edges

8

Locating Nazi Evil: The Contrasting Visions of Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Victor Klemperer

Why, one might well ask, privilege Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), and Victor Klemperer (1881–1960) and their particular confrontations with Nazism and the Jewish experience? Is this not a rather arbitrary choice? I think not. In the first place, these were all German-Jewish thinkers who, in one way or another, achieved fame in the post-Nazi world. They all arrived at intellectual maturity during the fateful but creative years of the Weimar Republic and were witnesses from the rise of Nazism to power through to its defeat and demise in 1945. All, in very different ways, pondered deeply over the catastrophe and its implications for both Germans and Jews. All left records, not just in their academic publications, but in their intimate chronicles of the time, their letters and diaries. The great advantage of these documents is that they are not privileged by hindsight. Rather, they inhabit the present moment, in which the fluidity of developments and the unfolding reactions of these thinkers are captured in process. They shed light not just on the turbulent times in which these fascinating, albeit headstrong, opinionated, and often infuriating people lived, but also on the very distinctive ways in which each conceived of, and coped with, the changes and challenges around him or her. They provide us with distinctive ideological maps, worldviews in the making, snapshots of options defined and pursued.[1]

During the 1930s and 1940s, the differences among these thinkers were already clear. Scholem, one could argue, was a "primordial" Zionist, unwaveringly insistent upon personal and collective Jewish renaissance in Palestine; Arendt, though an idiosyncratically dedicated Jew and erstwhile Zionist, was suspicious of all collective and ideological labelings and was far more provisional than Scholem in her group commitments and conceptions of individual selfhood; and Klemperer was nothing less than a (twice-over) convert to Protestantism, a fervent advocate of *Deutschtum* and German-Jewish assimilation. Their ultimate geographical locations—Israel, the United States and East Germany, respectively—faithfully reflected their diverse chosen

identities and ideologies. Clearly, too their responses to and perspectives on the Nazi phenomenon were also colored by their personal locations during the critical years. Scholem had already immigrated to Palestine in 1923 and thus viewed events from afar and almost entirely from within his peculiar Zionist prism. After a brief encounter with the Nazi authorities, Arendt hurriedly left Germany in 1933, first going to France and then to the United States. Klemperer, on the other hand, remained in the Third Reich until its very end. Indeed, he lived all his life in Germany (he died in 1960 in the German Democratic Republic). Unlike Scholem and Arendt, his observations on and insights into Nazism were almost entirely derived from the realities of everyday personal experience.

Let us begin with Scholem. How, both at the time and later on, did he locate Nazism and the Holocaust? Scholem's magisterial scholarship, his very early dismissal (even as a schoolboy) of the possibility of an honest German-Jewish dialogue, and his *aliyah* in 1923 (an act probably deemed bizarre by most of his fellow German Jews), have given him a certain moral stature, even something of the reputation of a clairvoyant. Concerning the eventual fate of German and European Jewry at the hands of the Nazis, George Steiner has written that Scholem was possessed of a unique "clear-sightedness" and was among the very few who sounded a warning.[2] Scholem's Zionist narrative, to be sure, rendered him acutely sensitive to currents hostile to the Jews. For all that, there is nothing in the record that even approximates a prediction or a warning of what was to come. Although the early letters[3] and diaries[4] contain some scattered references to anti-Semites, nowhere—not in the youthful or more in the mature period—did Scholem provide a considered historical analysis of the development and particularities of German anti-Semitism nor, despite his obvious and intense interest in these events, did he ever attempt a sustained concrete treatment of the specificities of the nature, rise, and disposition of National Socialism or of its atrocities and their overall place within German history. Perhaps, early on, geographical distance accounted for some of this. Referring to the persecution of Austrian Jews after the *Anschluss*, Scholem wrote to Walter Benjamin from Palestine that such events assumed an "abstract" character: "its just too far away, and nobody has any notion of what it might be like."[5]

Scholem's exceedingly nonprophetlike comportment is most vividly apparent in the ongoing exchange of letters with his mother, Betty. In April 1933 he reassured her that even the worst of circumstances could change and, soon after, advised her that "one must take it philosophically. Perhaps times would come again that the German *Volk* would know and comprehend that the Jews were not so horribly dangerous."[6] The detailed luxury shopping list Scholem provided his mother upon her impending trip to consumer-goods-starved Palestine in 1936 betrayed much self-centeredness and little forebodingabout future German developments: "If you want to bring me something special, apart from chocolate marzipan, there are many possibilities: for example, six

really good shirts with attached soft collars, size 41, but really good quality, grey-blue and cream coloured. Or material for a *very good* blue suit. Or in case you think that all of this is not affordable: 2 good dark red ties without any pattern."[7] There is virtually no discussion at all until 1939 (!) of the need to leave Germany and when the matter eventually is raised, it is not raised by Scholem, but by his mother.

Obviously, this does not mean that Scholem was not concerned with or alarmed by these events. On a personal level, their effect—especially Walter Benjamin's death—was shattering. Of course, early on, he did note the historical magnitude of these developments, but in a highly generalized way that was not only true for more sensitized Zionists. There is nothing in Scholem, for instance, that compares to Count Harry Kessler's very early and uncannily accurate diary prediction of January 10, 1920: "Today the Peace Treaty was ratified at Paris; the War is over. A terrible era begins for Europe, like the gathering clouds before a storm, and it will end in an explosion probably still more terrible than that of the World War."[8] And it was the highly assimilated Victor Klemperer who wrote in December 1930: "No one knows what will happen but everyone feels the coming of a catastrophe."[9] Scholem's pronouncements seldom revolved around a differentiated predictive analysis of German society and politics or the nature of the regime itself. Both before, during, and after the Nazi period, they were almost always motivated by and centered upon a criticism of the mind-set and behavior of the German-Jewish middle classes within German society—a critique that was formulated *long before* the onset of Nazism.

It was always to the self-deluding, undignified nature of the "German-Jewish symbiosis" that Scholem returned. His was always a moral critique of Jewish comportment, a Zionist indictment of craven assimilation; it was ethical, not political in character, and it certainly was not a concrete, nuanced analysis of the perpetrators and the catastrophe. But the point is that he had arrived at this conviction *years before* and it was not specifically linked to the Nazi rise to power. German Jewry, he wrote to Karl Loewith in 1968, had lived a "lie," one that eventually had to be resolved, one way or another (this in itself is a fascinating but highly contestable proposition). But, he explicitly emphasized, such a lie in no way necessarily had to lead to extermination; he says, "*None of us thought that.*"[10] In that sense, Peter Gay's (implied) reproach to Scholem—that, given their self-deluding, assimilationist posture, the Jews "deserved" their ultimate fate—is certainly misplaced.[11] But if "the lie" that German Jewry lived was not connected to the "Final Solution," Scholem never really tells us what *were* the relevant connections. Not only was Scholem no more clear-sighted than others when it came to the realities of the hell to come, but even after the fact, he nowhere furnished an analysis of the historical phenomenon of Nazism, of its rise to power, its horrific brand of anti-Semitism or, for that matter, of the murderous dynamics of the Shoah. If, later, he accused Hannah Arendt of excessive criticism of Jewish elites, we

should remember that he too spent enormous energies in criticizing the self-abnegating comportment of his fellow German Jews but, unlike Arendt, he spent almost none in analyzing the visions and actions of their victimizers.

Because of their subsequent intellectual and personal estrangement (which was most centrally related to, but not limited to, the Eichmann case), some of the commonalities between Scholem and Arendt tend to be forgotten. Both, we should remember, were quintessentially Weimarian Jews, fascinated by rupture and the paradoxes of the breakdowns and transmisssion of both Jewish tradition and general tradition.[12] True, unlike Scholem, Arendt's Jewish political awakening came rather late and was heavily focused upon anti-Semitism (rather than on Jewish spiritual renaissance), but it was no less real for that. Her early works (a biography of Rahel Varnhagen, the articles of the 1930s and 1940s, parts of the famous *Origins of Totalitarianism,* and even her critique of Jewish elites in the Eichmann book), were written partly from a national Jewish perspective and were as radical as Scholem's withering indictment of assimilation. It is too easily forgotten that in 1941 Scholem could describe her as "a wonderful woman and an extraordinary Zionist."[13] In the face of Nazism, for both Scholem and Arendt (as compared to the liberal assimilationist Klemperer), the Zionist narrative—with its doubts as to the success and dignity of the emancipation project and its built-in expectation of anti-Semitism—acted as a partial ideological shock absorber, providing at least a modicum of intellectual and psychological immunization. When the Nazis came to power, Klemperer, for instance, acutely noted that the greater the person's attachment to Germany and Germanism—which he himself incarnated to the *n*th degree—the greater the vulnerability and disorientation.[14]

These commonalities should not be overlooked, but neither should the differences. If Scholem located Nazi evil at all, he did this either through tangential comparison of its implications (i.e., the Spanish case) or by simply collapsing it into a generalized German *Sonderweg* of anti-Semitism and German-Jewish self-delusion. And if he occasionally conceded that his Zionist model could not be predictive of the Shoah, it nevertheless remained throughout his generalized narrative of Jewish-Gentile relations. Arendt, on the other hand, made it her explicit goal to provide a head-on account of the nature and specificities of Nazism, one that would be commensurate with its unprecedented magnitude of evil (and in so doing, she found that the Zionist model that initially guided her account soon hit its limits and itself underwent problematization). By the 1930s and 1940s, she already had begun the process of root thinking. The result of these efforts was the classic 1951 *Origins of Totalitarianism* —that extraordinarily idiosyncratic book, so patently wrong-minded in parts, so willfully peculiar in its historical method (or lack of it), yet so obviously punctuated by flashes of brilliance and original insight.

We should remember that until 1951, and for at least a decade after that, there were virtually no serious attempts to forge the theoretical, historical,

and conceptual tools necessary to illuminate the great cataclysms of the twentieth century. To this day, historians find it difficult to persuasively and coherently integrate these events into the flow of the century's history. Arendt sought to provide an account adequate to the enormity of the materials and problems at hand. To be sure, the term "Holocaust" had not yet crystallized and it does not appear in her book. Indeed, it may even be that the guiding generalized concept of the work—the study of totalitarianism—precluded any thoroughgoing, separate analysis of the Final Solution.[15] Yet it is clear that the work is animated by the conviction that Nazism and Auschwitz, far more than the Soviet experience, were the great transgressive moment in European history. Upon learning of Auschwitz in 1943, she later reported: "It was really as if an abyss had opened..... Something happened there to which we cannot reconcile ourselves. None of us ever can."[16] While writing the book in 1947, she wrote to her Zionist mentor Kurt Blumenfeld: "You see, I cannot get over the extermination factories."[17] Arendt—even if her approach to "totalitarianism" was essentially comparative in method—did not seek to relativise National Socialism: implicitly, the Nazi case was the one really in need of explanation, the ultimate against which other crimes were measured.[18] This was unlike the people who participated in the later *Historikerstreit*, the debate during the 1980s in which some German historians insisted not only upon the moral or immoral parity between Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, but sought to place the causal "original sin" of these developments firmly within the Communist camp.

Part I of Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* situated the Jews at the storm center of events.[19] Such a focus was lacking in other accounts, which simply had no idea how to deal with this apparent anomaly. Arendt's emphasis emerged out of a distinctly Zionist sensibility, although naive readers may have been puzzled by her insistence on the absolute centrality of the Jews in the modern state and economy, their instinctive alliance with ruling elites, and their concomitant alienation from "society," which implied that in some way the Jews bore some responsibility for their predicament, that indeed their actions and roles were not disconnected from the emergence of modern anti-Semitism. For Arendt, Jews were always—or at least should have been—active agents, not passive objects of history. Yet from the beginning she insisted that Nazism and the *Shoah* had to be regarded as a radical *novum*. Jew-hatred was a necessary but not sufficient condition for genocide. "Neither the fate of European Jewry nor the establishment of death factories," she wrote elsewhere, "can be fully explained and grasped in terms of anti-Semitism."[20] Contrary to Zionist conventional wisdom, she repeatedly asserted that anti-Semitism was not an eternal, inherent given. Indeed, she went out of her way to indicate that her own Zionist critique of Jewish assimilation implied no connection, causal or otherwise, to the absolute novelty of totalitarianism and the exterminations. "I am afraid," she wrote to her friend Karl Jaspers in 1952, "that people of good will see a connection which does not in fact

exist between [the attempt at assimilation] and the eradication of the Jews. All this was capable of fostering social hatred of the Jews and did foster it, just as it fostered, on the other side, a specifically German breed of Zionism. The truly totalitarian phenomenon—and genuine political anti-Semitism before it—had hardly anything to do with all this."[21]

Of course, her insistence on the radical novelty of Nazism entailed omissions that were as significant as her "positive" explanations, and for some observers were as ominous. She conspicuously eliminated all factors of German history and continuity from her account. There is no hint of a *Sonderweg*, no analysis of the weight of political and social developments peculiar to Germany. Indeed, all connections to the role of tradition and to the role of culture itself are utterly dismissed. She already had declared in 1945 that "Luther or Kant or Hegel or Nietzsche . . . have not the least responsibility for what is happening in the extermination camps."[22] Nazism was about the breakdown of tradition and culture, not about its realization; its sources were to be found in nihilistic rupture, not in continuity. Some critics regard this strange unwillingness to examine direct German influences, to indict cultural predispositions and popular attitudes in that society, in terms of the fact that Arendt herself was raised in and remained wedded to those same suspect intellectual traditions that were also appropriated by Nazism (and in terms of her loyalty, to her ex-lover, Martin Heidegger).[23] Such kinds of *ad hominem* arguments are best left aside, even if we accept that Arendt's refusal to integrate specifically German aspects of history into her account was too extreme, perhaps even misguided.

What must be emphasized here is Arendt's insistence that conventional historical explanations could not account for novel occurrences. These radically transgressive events required new, alternative ways of thinking. Arendt, as Alfred Kazin once commented, saw totalitarianism "Biblically as a great fall,"[24] and this rupture entailed new laws unto itself, ones that older interpretative systems and cognitive models could not comprehend. To be sure, many of her own schemas were markedly inadequate and flawed. Thus her notion of totalitarianism as both the cause and result of the political dynamics of uprooting and atomization rests upon a clearly flawed, and by now almost universally rejected, socio-psychological model of mass society, derived from conservative European social theory. Still it was this disintegrative, taboo-defying impulse that she believed best accounted for the total genocidal mentality. Atomization processes apart, Arendt argued that the new barbarism was spearheaded by an imperialist bourgeois politics and economics of expansion for its own sake, rendering not only the nation-state, but culture and tradition themselves, superfluous. Indeed, Arendt saw the essence of totalitarianism as linked to a bourgeois loss of limits, one where "everything becomes possible." Surplus capital and political ambition produced the precondition for genocide: surplus people. (It has perhaps not been sufficiently noted that the *Origins of Totalitarianism* idiosyncratically fused the conservative theory of

mass society with a Marxist analysis of imperialism, probably provided by Arendt's husband, Heinrich Blücher.)

There is no need here to go into her more familiar and instructive analysis of the general disenfranchisement of minorities and its potentially genocidal implications, attendant upon what she called forced "statelessness, the newest mass phenomenon in history;" or her phenomenological exposition of the transgressive impulse behind the camps, where the belief that "everything is possible" was being verified; or the concluding poetic pages on human plurality and the recuperative powers of natality and beginnings. The point is not whether her judgments were correct or balanced (many, perhaps even most, were not), but rather that she determinedly pursued the issue that she presciently identified in 1945: "The problem of evil will be the fundamental question of intellectual life in Europe—as death became the fundamental problem after the last war."[25] It was Arendt, certainly more than Scholem, who pioneered the post–World War II "discourse of evil," in which Nazism and Auschwitz became symbolic code words, emblematic of our culture's conception of absolute inhumanity. Moreover, she did so in a way that not only annoyed Scholem, but continues to irk many of our own contemporaries. For, despite her emphasis on the radical novelty of the exterminations, she was not prepared to insulate or grant absolute privilege to Jewish history and suffering. Even in the context of analyzing the murders, she insisted on locating Zionism within a wider victimizing context. "Like virtually all other events of our century," she wrote in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, "the solution of the Jewish question merely produced another category of refugees, the Arabs, thereby increasing the number of the stateless and rightless by another 700,000 to 800,000 people."[26]

Victor Klemperer, a professor of Romance literature, provides us with a case that, at least on the surface, is light-years from either Arendt's or Scholem's. He was much less venerable as a scholar; the single work for which he received any larger recognition was his *LTI*, that pioneering study of the nature and distortions of Nazi language, which, rather improbably, was translated into English only in 2002.[27] Klemperer only became famous in the 1990s with the posthumous publications of the diaries he wrote under the Third Reich. He was an inveterate diarist and chronicler: apart from the massive two-volume Nazi diaries,[28] we have his equally loquacious memoirs covering the years 1881–1918,[29] the diaries for the Weimar Republic era,[30] and his daily jottings covering his postwar years in the German Democratic Republic, through 1959.[31] All this amounts to thousands of printed pages. There may have been something obsessiveand deeply egocentric about this graphomanic reflex. Yet we should be grateful for this impulse. By 1933, such chronicling had become everyday routine for him, a well-established habit. It was not just egoism then, but also the discipline and honed skill of an articulate scholar, combined with a growing realization that his testimony and experience would be of crucial historical importance, that spurred him on. This is an unfolding history of the Third Reich, written not from a distance but from daily lived experience

of a shrewd yet bewildered observer and victim, a converted Jew who survived precariously in and because of his mixed marriage. It graphically brings to life the everyday fear, uncertainties, confusions, growing isolation, humiliations, impoverishment, and expectation of death that characterized those *Mischehen* who somehow hung on and survived the nightmare.

I want to concentrate here on Klemperer's choices of identity and ideology and contrast them with Scholem's and Arendt's, but I must first note the degree to which these diaries illuminate public life, the epoch-making events, and shifting atmosphere of the times and do so during real time and *from within*. Among other things, the diaries throw light on the vexing question of German public opinion from 1933–1945. Klemperer was constantly testing these waters. After all, the nature and extent of support of the Nazis and their policies, the degree of popular anti-Semitism were for him not academic matters, but indices to his prospects for survival. No clear-cut answer emerges—inhumanity exists side by side with jokes critical of the regime and moving expressions of decency. Klemperer is particularly keen at noting the built-in ambivalences, the difficulties of judgment. Thus he reports of a policeman's vacillation "between the roughness he had been ordered to display and respect and sympathy."[32] Of some acquaintances he notes: "They are not Nazis, and are very fond of us, but the Führer's picture hangs in the pharmacy."[33] He summed up the analytic uncertainty thus in 1940: "Each of us wants to fathom the mood of the people and is dependent on the last remark picked up from the barber or butcher."[34]

These notes from the inside help too in clarifying the perennial question of how much was known about Nazi atrocities. Despite his persecution, isolation, and confinement to the *Judenhaus*, Klemperer's knowledge—acquired through rumor, his non-Jewish wife's feelers, and foreign broadcasts—is remarkable, and casts considerable doubt upon subsequent claims that Germans were quite unaware of what was transpiring. He was, throughout, aware of the camps, from Buchenwald to Theresienstadt. He reports on the deportations to Poland and details of the euthanasia program. As early as mid-March 1942, he knows of the existence of Auschwitz, "the most horrible of the camps."[35] That April, over a glass of beer in a local pub in Dresden, his "Aryan" wife, Eva, is told by someone who had served in a police batallion in Russia about the "gruesome mass murders of Jews in Kiev. Small children whose heads were smashed against the wall, men, women and half grown-ups in their thousands massed together . . . and masses of corpses buried under exploded earth."[36] In May 1943 he quotes from literature (an article by Johann von Leers) that openly called for the extermination of the Jews.[37] Long before the end of the war, Klemperer astutely recognized the special, methodically organized, and total nature of the crime, and by October 1944 he ventured an assessment of the event as a whole: "six to seven milllion Jews . . . have been slaughtered (more precisely: shot and gassed)."[38]

But let us return to our central focus. Given Klemperer's personal and ideological predelictions—his comment, "I did not feel myself to be a Jew,

not even a German Jew, but rather purely and simply a German,"[39] his Protestantism, ecstatic *Deutschtum*, his obsessive anti-Zionism—it is no surprise that he located Nazi evil within a quite different frame from either Scholem or Arendt. Indeed, these two might well have viewed Klemperer with a disdain bordering on contempt. There is little doubt about what they would have thought of his proclamation in the mid-1930s: "I am German forever." When it was pointed out to him that the Nazis would not concede this, he shot back: "The Nazis are unGerman."[40] Surely, this ongoing assimilationism, this passionate Germanism pursued under Nazism itself, was a classic case of what both Scholem and Arendt would have considered a cloud-cuckoo ideology, a bizarre delusion, dangerously disconnected from reality.

But historians should be wary of pat judgments. I want to set Klemperer within his own historical context, and thus at least render his position more comprehensible and perhaps even more defensible. In the first place, it is not as if Nazism left no dent upon his worldview. On the contrary, it penetrated to the core of his identity, indeed his very self-definition. His diaries record in dense, fascinating detail his ongoing attempt to grasp and analyze the implications of the assaults on his ideological world and to devise new defenses against and solutions to them. Moreover, it would be wrong to portray the pre-1933 Klemperer as the fully Germanized, successfully assimilated Jew in a relatively tension-free pre-Nazi German society. An abiding uneasiness characterizes the play and transformations of Klemperer's multiple identities: it is in their complexities and ambivalences, not in their black-and-white character, that the fascination resides.

Thus, despite Klemperer's obdurate "Germanness," his residual Jewishness *was* a factor even then, as his Weimar diaries make clear. Throughout, he felt more at home, at ease, with Jewish friends (albeit of his own kind, rather than of the Orthodox, Zionist, or *Ostjüdisch* kind). This great despiser of all Jewish separatism once noted that he felt more relaxed when "non-Jewish foreign bodies" (*nichtjüdische Fremdkoerper*) were not present![41] He even shared the prejudice that Jews were inevitably clever (as evidenced by his shock upon meeting a particularly stupid one).[42] Similarly, all his memoirs and diaries show an acute consciousness of the ubiquity of anti-Semitism and its growing dangers. To depict him as self-denying and delusional would thus be absurd. Indeed, well before the rise of Nazism, he was plagued by a kind of identity crisis. In 1927 he wrote: "And now everything in Germany pushes me back to the Jews. But if I became a Zionist it would be more laughable than if I were to become a Catholic. I am always suspended, like an aeroplane, over these things and myself. That is incidentally the most Jewish thing about me. And perhaps the most German. But the German nevertheless finds somewhere a unity of feeling. The Jew remains also above his feeling."[43]

On one level, too, Nazism—which at times he regarded as alien to the German spirit and in other moods its very incarnation—cleansed him of all German national feelings and rendered his Enlightenment commitment ever deeper. Thus his famous 1938 declaration: "I am definitively

changed . . . my nationalism and patriotism are gone forever. Every national circumspection appears barbarous to me. My thinking is now completely a Voltairean cosmpolitanism . . . "[44] Yet, significantly, Klemperer prefaced these words proclaiming that: "No one can take my Germanness from me." How could these two exist, side by side? Klemperer envisaged his Germanness in very selective, specific, historically conditioned ways; it was simply equated with a kind of enlightened Protestantism that functioned not as an empirical description of reality, but rather as a kind of regulative ideal. It was thus that Nazism could be regarded as the antithesis of *Deutschtum,* not its realization. This strategy of splitting, of rendering Germanness a mental ideal rather than a matter of ethnicity, was already present in 1930 when he cried: "Here Jews—there Aryans. And where do I stand? Where are the many who are *spiritually, intellectually* Germans?"[45] The obvious Scholemian solution to this dilemma—deepening one's own sense of and commitment to Jewishness—was for Klemperer less than a half-hearted option (even though often between 1933–1945 he indulged in a savage self-critique, recording many of his own assimilatory self-deceptions). But ultimately, in Klemperer's mind, Jewishness remained indelibly linked with an indefensible separatism, narrowness, and "horrible ghetto oppressiveness."[46]

In assessing his choices and attitudes, it is important that we avoid cheap, post-facto, patronizing judgments; they are especially unnecessary, given Klemperer's own self-interrogations. The transparencies, contradictions, and vulnerabilities are too obvious to state. But we ought to be careful, for even today it is not clear what the "correct" ideological postures should have been. In many ways Klemperer, though he may have denied this, was a classical German-Jewish *Bildungs* intellectual, characterized, as so many of them were, by liberal-humanist, apolitical, and Enlightenment predispositions.[47] Whether realistic or not, he remained a liberal, Enlightenment individualist whose supreme values (wrapped too often admittedly in the guise of *Deutschtum*) were the universal ones of culture and humanity. His attachment to these values can by no means be vitiated or nullified by the fact that brutal powers sought to destroy them. He put it succinctly in April 1942: "Today a German Jew cannot write anything without placing the German-Jewish tension at the centre. But must he therefore capitulate to the opinions of the National Socialists and appropriate their language?"[48] He insisted that one resist appropriating the power and categories of the immoral victor. For him it was not the drive to assimilate, but the illiberal refusal to accommodate it that constituted the immorality. Embracing Jewishness, or the substitution of one exclusivity for another, perpetuated rather than solved the underlying problem.

His enduring belief in an insufficiently problematized, overly spiritual conception of *Deutschtum* strikes one today as strange; his willful belief in the success of assimilation seems almost pathetic; and his refusal to grant Jewish life and culture a dignified authenticity and autonomy seems both

distasteful and misguided. But the refusal to capitulate to brutality and the struggle to maintain the values of culture and humanity deserve our respect and consideration. Klemperer held fast to the classical vision of German *Bildung* when all around him it was being jettisoned—clung to its sense of curiosity and openness, its hunger for humanizing experience, the desire to expand rather than contract horizons.

In many ways, ironically, Klemperer was deeply part of German-Jewish history. He certainly was reluctant to admit this, and it was only toward the end of his life in Communist East Germany that he admitted as much.[49] He is part of that history not just because awful circumstances drove him to become part of it. It is because he so acutely embodied, and indeed clung mightily onto, those Enlightenment values that came to characterize every branch of German Jewry and that informed its sense of self.

Indeed, as we have shown, while there were significant differences between Scholem, Arendt, and Klemperer, with historical distance we can also detect some significant similarities (which they, no doubt, would have denied). Perhaps it was not merely an unavoidable common fate that bound them together, but also a certain underlying spiritual sensibility. They were all highly articulate German-Jewish intellectuals, creatures of the *Bildungs* tradition, with its characteristic bias for culture and passion for ideas. They were all incisive observers and analysts, acutely sensitive to the pathologies and special contours of their times. They personify varying responses to this common fate and the diverse roads taken to negotiate it. While none of them was an "ordinary" or representative figure, they were all emblematic, confronting the public cataclysms of their times and forging creative—if very different—responses to dilemmas that no twentieth-century German Jew had the luxury of evading.

9

The Bonfires of Berlin: Historical and Contemporary Reflections on the Nazi Book Burnings[1]

The Berlin book burnings took place at the symbolic site of what had always been regarded as Germany's humanist, cultured, and cosmopolitan heart—in the large quadrangle of the famed Humboldt University on Unter den Linden, directly opposite the National Library and the Grand Opera House. On that night, over 20,000 books containing purportedly "un-German" works by Marxist, Jewish, and avant-garde authors were consumed in the flames.[2] The list of the proscribed authors reads like a Who's Who of the German progressive intelligentsia, and included non-Jews as well as Jews: a very cursory listing would have to include Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Mann, Arnold and Stefan Zweig, Erich Maria Remarque, Karl Kautsky, Robert Musil, Karl Marx, Lion Feuchtwanger, Kurt Tucholsky, Erich Kästner, Carl von Ossietzky, Thomas Mann, and, of course, Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud. While this was the central event, it is important to note that on the same night, May 10, 1933, book burnings took place at 30 universities throughout Nazi Germany: on the Römerberg in Frankfurt; the Schlossplatz in Breslau; the Königsplatz in Munich; and in Bonn, Dresden, Göttingen, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Nuremberg, and Würzburg.[3]

Danzig, Dillingen, Freiburg, Regensburg, and Tübingen do not appear on this list.[4] A study of the circumstances behind the *nonparticipation* of these institutions could be instructive. Perhaps, in some cases, this was due to the relative weakness of local Nazi student organizations. But there are instances that provide less reassurance. In Freiburg, for instance, the book burning was put off three times—because of rain! Eventually, a symbolic ceremony was held on June 17, 1933. Symptomatically, the famous conservative German historian Gerhard Ritter was simply unable to recall anything to do with book burnings in that university town.[5]

These carefully choreographed events have become an iconic part of our memory of the Third Reich. There are few of us, I imagine, who have not seen the surrealistic pictures or films comprising images of smoke and fire, torchlight parades, books hurled onto the pyre, brown S. A. uniforms, students in boots, and throngs of onlookers beholding the spectacle.[6] They have, to be

sure, become dwarfed by the later indelible images of the camps and their unspeakable atrocities, but they seem somehow to be an integral part of a continuum, a symbol at least, and, perhaps more profoundly, a symptom of the modern descent into an unimaginably base and murderous barbarism.

At the Berlin bonfire, the Reich's Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels famously declared that the age of ultrasophistic Jewish intellectualism had come to an end.[7] The most striking aspect of the burnings of May 10, 1933, however, was not this support from the top political level, but rather the fact that they were explicitly academic affairs. They were initiated by students[8]—indeed, between the vying National Socialist student organizations, the *Deutsche Studentenschaft* and the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund*, there was fierce competition—and were spearheaded by professors, the putative guardians of cultivated *Bildung*, of civilized values, and of the scholarly culture of the book. Indeed, it was the lyrical Nietzsche scholar Ernst Bertram who, in turning to Nazism, propagated a German Revolution "against false Enlightenment, against the whole arrogance of Western civilization" and advocated that "what a *Volk* has truly experienced and recognized as its irreconcilably mortal enemy, it should be allowed to destroy."[9] Bertram enthusiastically attended the book-burning event in Cologne, but apparently regretted that it was not more spontaneous! "Young people should *improvise* something like that in a momentary impulse of enthusiasm, but not as a theatrical performance 'with Dean and Faculty': to me that's not twenty-year-old enough."[10] Who could blame the isolated Dresden Jewish academic Victor Klemperer for noting in his diary three years later: "If one day the situation were reversed and the fate of the vanquished lay in my hands, then I would let all the ordinary folk go and even some of the leaders . . . But I would have all the intellectuals strung up, and the professors three feet higher than the rest."[11]

This was, certainly, a stunning betrayal by the intellectuals.[12] Yet, we should be aware that book burnings and the mind-set that produces them have a depressingly long and continuing clerical and secular history, not only in Germany but also in other parts of Europe and elsewhere, and that they all too often have been inspired, conducted, and justified by the educated classes themselves.[13] The temptation to expunge and root out dangerous, alien, and contaminating ideas—for religious Orthodoxies *and* dissidents and reformers, for ruling classes *and* revolutionaries, for fanatic inquisitors *and* modern avant-garde activist radicals alike—appears to be a perennial one.[14]

Certainly the Nazi thinkers and academicians who formulated the theory and ideological rationales behind the 1933 "Biblioclasm"[15]—Hans Naumann, Eugen Lüthgens, and Alfred Bäumler—did not regard their actions as treasonous. On the contrary, they located their desire to root out Jewish, Marxist, pacifist, and other such "un-German" ideas within what they took to be a venerable religious and nationalist tradition. They approvingly cited the book burnings, also carried out by German student fraternities, during the anniversary celebration of the victory over Napoleon at Leipzig. On October 17, 1817,

the students convened in the historic Wartburg Castle where, three hundred years earlier, Luther had translated the Bible into German. Emulating Luther's own 1520 public burning of the papal bull, these early self-proclaimed "progressive" nationalists decried Prussian feudalism and absolutist particularism as well as "foreigners," disloyal "cosmopolitans," and "Jews,"[16] and consigned such "unmanly" works (including the French civil code) to the flames.[17]

How are we to understand the Nazi book burnings and, for that matter, other book burnings?[18] Their symbolism is rather obvious. These are dialectically structured public rituals. They destroy and expiate, but at the same time they function as purported acts of cleansing. By identifying and extinguishing subversive knowledge, they clear the path towards self-liberation. The National Socialist book burnings set the political, ethnic, and epistemological lines and gave communal expression as to who and what belonged and who and what was to be excluded; they defined the "healthy" and the normal, the corrupt and the "abnormal," the "respectable" and the "degenerate." Nothing better illustrates the unity of this concern with Jews, "respectability," and "degeneration" than the fact that, together with the files and books ransacked from his Institute of Sexual Research, a bronze bust of the homosexual Jewish sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld was tossed into the flames, the only instance where an image was burned along with the books.[19]

These rites herald not only a simulated casting away of racial and cognitive impurities from one's midst; at the same time they are taken to be performative acts of purification and regeneration, reaffirmations of one's own organic, homogeneous whole. The manifold universal symbolism of fire and flames is uniquely placed to effect this. As Gaston Bachelard has shown, fire stands for both birth and death, good and evil, light and darkness; it shines in heaven and burns in hell, it is a protective as well as a punishing god—it bridges the contradictions and creates the dialectically desired moment of destruction and rebirth.[20]

Few would question these ritualistic aspects. Indeed, there were those who—both at the time and later—very much downplayed the significance of these events and regarded them as wholly symbolic. The burnings, they point out, were simply political theatre, spectacles that were irrelevant to the actual disposition of Nazi power and policy.[21] Golo Mann later recalled: "The thing could not have been very impressive. Otherwise I would have noted it in my diary. The matter was not very popular. And the German press did not make much of it. Overseas, yes, because of its symbolic character. In Germany itself there was neither enthusiasm nor indignation."[22] Outside observers like Raymond Aron, who also witnessed the event, came to a similar conclusion. Interestingly, he did not even mention it in a report he wrote at the time for a French magazine; in his memoirs, written years after, he dismissed the affair as a "banality" and wrote that there were no "enthusiastic masses, just a hundred or so Nazis in uniform . . ."[23] Because we have the advantage of hindsight, we should put Sigmund Freud's contemporary ironic response to these

happenings, and his hopelessly mistaken long-term assessment of them, into proper perspective. "Only our books?" he declared. "In earlier times they would have burned us with them."[24]

Even those who lived to see later developments still regard the event as relatively insignificant. The important German-Jewish literary critic Hans Meyer put it thus:

> We should ask ourselves if we do not make too much of the book burning of 10 May 1933. In comparison with the fire-magic of the burning books, the history of the Third Reich marks a far more horrible descent into the barbaric…It was, then, theatre—and a clear lack of seriousness was unmistakable. The way in which books by Heinrich Mann and Ludwig Renn, Jakob Wassermann and Erich Kästner, Remarque or Karl Marx or Sigmund Freud were flung onto the piles of wood, worked as spectacle: it was "spectacular"…but it was an *Auto da fé* without practical effect. One "only" burnt the books, not the authors. One was not apprehended. On the contrary, Erich Kästner (and, I would add, Arnold Zweig) reported how he stood in the crowd and watched as the author Erich Kästner was thrown into the flames. He remained alive…[25]

To be sure, these were designed as spectacular public rites, as a form of symbolic political theatre. It is also true that, although the higher echelons of the Nazi Propaganda Ministry went along with what the student and academic organizations initiated, this was not policy as decided and dictated from above. Indeed, like much else with the National Socialist administration, there was an uncoordinated air to early cultural and literary policies. As Leonidas Hill tells us: "not all the books burned on 10 May 1933 were actually banned. In fact, until 1935 the Prussian police had not banned any of the volumes named at the burnings…The regime did not have a master plan…For some years Nazi bannings and seizures of books in the fifteen German states were uncoordinated and [were] carried out by many agencies at different levels of government."[26]

What are we to make of all of this? This is not the place to rehearse the intricate debates between historians—intentionalists and functionalists—as to how the Third Reich's policies were decided upon and then implemented. Suffice it to say that, especially with regard to Jews and despised outsiders, and despite the lack of coordination, one finds various groups sensing and working their way to what was either explicitly agreed upon or at least tacitly desired or understood.[27]

The May 1933 book burnings thus seem to me to be not just a symbol, but rather more of a symptom, a seismometer of what the regime and its agents represented and an indicator as to where their increasingly radical sentiments and actions pointed, uncoordinated though they may have been. Unlike Golo Mann and Raymond Aron, there were many contemporaries who early on saw the real dangers, not merely the symbolic dangers, and the significance

of the burnings. The great Austrian novelist, Joseph Roth, who had spent the years 1920–1933 in Berlin, dubbed the burnings "the *auto-da-fé* of the mind." Writing from Paris shortly after these events, he declared:

> Very few observers anywhere in the world seem to have understood what the Third Reich's burning of books, the expulsion of Jewish writers and all its other crazy assaults on the intellect actually mean. Let me say it loud and clear: The European mind is capitulating. It is capitulating out of weakness, out of sloth, out of apathy, out of lack of imagination . . .[28]

Confiding quietly in his diary, the theatre personality Erich Ebermeyer noted, soon after the fires had settled:

> We have experienced something grave, final: the inviolability of the free human spirit has been quashed. The book burning has created something irreparable. It is shame and misery. It is capitulation and liquidation. It is the separation of Germany from the moral world.[29]

As the years of Nazi rule went on, the relationship between Nazi actions and atrocities and the early book burnings was noted by many irate observers. In 1942, an angry exiled Alfred Kantorowicz declared that the world had not understood the significance of the May 1933 book burnings. This obtuseness, he wrote, would become part of the tragic guilt of the old Europe. Had they comprehended the real meaning of those events, they would have been able to foresee the invasions of Holland, France, and Belgium of May 1940.[30] In the same year, the writer Oskar Maria Graf bitterly castigated those people who throughout the world had quite mistakenly waved away the book burnings as "laughable rather than horrible . . . even in fascist Italy one shook one's head ironically over Nazi obsessiveness."[31]

It was Graf, the left-leaning writer, who, upon discovering in 1933 that he was *not* on the list of proscribed writers, wrote an ironic protest demanding immediately that his works be burned![32] Indeed, it occasioned Bertolt Brecht's famous poem entitled "The Burning of the Books:"[33]

> When the Regime commanded that books with harmful knowledge/
> Should be publicly burned and on all sides/
> Oxen were forced to drag cartloads of books
> To the bonfires, a banished/
> Writer, one of the best, scanning the list of the Burned, was shocked
> to find that his/
> Books had been passed over. He rushed to his desk/
> On wings of wrath, and wrote a letter to those in power/
> Burn me! He wrote with flying pen, burn me! Haven't my/
> Books always reported the truth? And here you are/
> Treating me like a liar! I command you:/
> Burn me!

But satire was only an internal consolation, not one that could affect the gross reality. In the context of the book burnings as a symptom of something basic to Nazi ontology, it is high time to invoke what, no doubt, has been the most conspicuous omission of this chapter—that deservedly ubiquitous quote from Heinrich Heine. "Wherever they burn books," he famously wrote in 1820, "they will also, in the end, burn human beings." This has become the motto of virtually every salon conversation, academic discussion, and public commemoration of the 1933 book burnings. It also adorns the Israeli artist Micha Ullmann's remarkable monumentalization of this event in the Berlin quadrangle where they took place: it consists of a transparent, underground space consisting of empty bookshelves, sufficient for the over 20,000 volumes that went up in smoke.

Heine's words appeared in his verse tragedy *Almansor,* a parable set during the sixteenth-century Christianization of Spain, where the Moors were tortured into becoming Christians and the Koran was publicly burned in the marketplace of Granada. But his words were not, we should remember, intended so much as a prophecy as they were a comment on the infamous Wartburg book burnings, which had taken place three years earlier. Still, there is something uncannily prescient in his words. They capture Nazism's savage radicalism, the inherent logic of an incremental destructiveness intent on destroying all older taboos and transgressing all previous limits. This was indeed the symptomatology of National Socialism.

In his *Areopagitica* of 1644, John Milton proclaimed that to destroy a book was to slay "an immortality rather than a life."[34] Less than two centuries later, Heine understood that the attack on the spirit was not so simply contained; it could all too easily become an assault on the physical body, on life itself. And here, as current research is overwhelmingly demonstrating, we need to note that, again, it was precisely the intellectuals and academics trained in the humanities (rather than in the natural sciences) who not only initiated the book burnings but stood at the forefront of Nazi racial policies. It was the PhD's in literature, philosophy, law, and history who planned and directed the annihilation of Europe's Jews.[35] The transition from "Bilbiocaust"—as *Time Magazine* fittingly labeled the bonfires a few days after they took place[36]—to Holocaust was almost seamless.

But what, one may well ask, is the contemporary relevance of these book burnings? A didactic, if not inspirational, conclusion would be tempting. And, indeed, what could be better than the 1943 words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt?

> We all know that books burn—yet we have the greater knowledge that books cannot be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can abolish memory. No man and no force can put thought in a concentration camp forever. No man and no force take from the world the books that embody man's eternal fight against tyranny of every kind. In this war, we know, books are weapons. And it is part of dedication to make them weapons for man's freedom.[37]

The kind of memory that Roosevelt advocated—and the humanizing narratives that should always accompany it—may be more fragile and manipulable than we would like to believe. Of course we have not reached the point depicted by Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. There, in a twenty-fourth-century totalitarian, and almost completely culturally leveled society, all books have been burned and banned. Bradbury's persecuted protagonists form a kind of "hobo camp of intellectual outlaws"[38] and begin to commit the cultural treasures and traditions contained in these vanishing volumes to memory. Heine's dystopic dictum is here fully and ultimately realized, for in such a world it is the people themselves who *become* the books—the desire to extinguish the ideas they contain thus becomes equivalent to burning their physical carriers.

We are, to be sure, far from this envisaged world. But the forces of religious and political exclusion, of homogenization and constriction, remain powerful. *All* political camps, we should remember, are prone to the temptations of social, intellectual, and physical control. That is why Erich Kästner's 1958 condemnation of the Nazi book burnings, while he at the same time depicts the Wartburg actions of 1817 as somehow "progressive," leaves an extremely dubious taste.[39] The Nazis, it is true, remain the paradigmatic brutalizers and murderers of the soul and the body. But, it is becoming increasingly clear that in our highly polarized emerging world order, the impulses to forge and enforce old-new categories of insiders and outsiders, faith and heresy, pure and impure, and good and evil remain and may very well become greater and greater. We are all aware of, and aghast at, the Islamic *fatwa* issued against Salman Rashdie for his purportedly blasphemous writings. It is clear that, with the limited means at their disposal, it will be the task of liberal humanists everywhere to resist these tides.

But I remain uncomfortable. My own conclusion rings a little too easy, too smug. The absurdities and transgressions of the Nazi case are so clear-cut, so unworthy of debate, that it is easy to feel self-righteous. But what are we to say about the permissive framework that allowed Nazism to triumph in the first place? As Victor Klemperer put it in his *LTI*:

> The [Weimar] Republic, almost suicidally, lifted all controls on freedom of expression: the National Socialists used to claim scornfully that they were only taking advantage of the rights granted them by the Constitution when in their books and newspapers they mercilessly attacked the state and all its institutions and guiding principles . . .[40]

And, as Bertolt Brecht wrote in a 1947 poem depicting the ironies of German postwar reconstruction, the question even applied to the Nazis *after* their defeat: " . . . behold the former/ Editors of Streicher's Stuermer/ All set to protest unless/ We get Freedom of the Press."[41] The question of the limits of political expression, indeed, remains, a perplexing one.

Today we are confronted by issues that are even more complex and tangled and that relate less to matters of racial and ethnic provenance, but rather

go to the heart of the Western scientific and intellectual project itself. To be sure, the plight of forbidden knowledge is hardly new: since our expulsion from the Garden, through Goethe's *Faust* and Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus,* we have wrestled with it.[42] But with the experience of twentieth-century nuclear physics behind us (no one has more brilliantly satirized the insanities of the dilemmas it poses than Friedrich Duerrenmatt in his 1962 play *The Physicists*), and given the accomplishments and anticipated leaps of the biotechnology in the twenty-first century, the problem has become more acute and, indeed, species-threatening. We know that certain kinds of knowledge, as the eminent scientist Freeman Dyson has put it, may well "bring…death…[and present] grave dangers to human society and to the ecology of the planet."[43] Liberals and humanists must confront a world in which censorship, or at least self-censorship, cannot simply be dismissed as pernicious or evil.

We are thus in the midst of a serious and legitimate ongoing debate as to whether such dangerous knowledge should be repressed, controlled or, with all its dangers, be allowed to develop unimpeded. In this thorny dilemma, my own sentiments incline less towards a "precautionary-repressive" than a "responsible-permissive" approach.[44] I do so, however tentatively, for reasons that John Milton long ago wisely articulated when addressing the question of banning books: "Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue: for the matter of them both is the same: remove that, and ye remove them both alike." We have all taken a bite of the apple. We simply are impelled to continue our physical and spiritual munching—but let us at least attempt always to do so responsibly and in as self-consciously humanizing a way as we can.

10
Imaging the Absolute: Mapping Western Conceptions of Evil

The problem of comparative victimization and the issues associated with the hierarchizing of genocide into greater and "lesser evils" are thoroughly charged, overdetermined, and, for some, even a tasteless enterprise. How does one presume to grade evils? Perhaps a further source of disquiet arises from a powerful claim made by Martin Malia: "Nazism's unique status as 'absolute evil,'" he writes, "is now so entrenched that any comparison with it easily appears suspect."[1] One may (or may not) find such entrenchment normatively problematic or unwarranted, but few, I think, would question the empirical accuracy of Malia's assertion that Nazism has indeed come to occupy a unique demonic status within our moral economy, a symbol of the deepest incarnation of barbarism and inhumanity. Perhaps Malia should have added an important rider to this statement: the model of Nazism as radical evil applies peculiarly and particularly to Anglo-American spheres of influence and to Western and Central Europe societies (and to some variable and increasing degree, to certain Eastern European countries).

To be sure, September 11 and the putative "clash of civilizations" added a possibly erosive or displacing element to this paradigm—an issue to which we shall return later—but even prior to the bombing of the Twin Towers, this privileged position had increasingly come under attack on a number of fronts and from a variety of more or less persuasive perspectives.[2] These contestations did not go without effect. There is by now broad agreement that such a paradigmatic emplacement (especially concerning the Holocaust's putative radical incommensurability) has all too often been accompanied by a variety of crude instrumentalizations and vacuous, ideologically motivated "lesson-drawing," often of an internally contradictory kind. But these exposés are far better at undermining the paradigm than they are in accounting for its initial emergence and later persistence. To argue, as has Peter Novick in his otherwise insightful work, that this figuration is above all a matter of strategic decisions and choices taken by American Jewish communal leaders who, from the 1970s on, discovered a "workable" identity-strengthening commodity in an age of waning Jewish identification, is surely not to take the phenomenon sufficiently seriously. Its far-flung flowering over the last few decades, well

beyond the boundaries of the United States and in societies where the Jewish presence is negligible, suggests that the roots go deeper than this and that the required explanation be a little more rounded.[3] Not all commodities "work" (as Saul Friedländer somewhere pointed out). Something in the event itself, its state-sanctioned criminality, its taboo-breaking aims, its industrial methods and mammoth, transgressive scale clearly rendered such an absolutizing discourse both possible and plausible.[4]

Yet, on its own, this cannot fully account for the centrality of Nazism and the Holocaust within European and American discourse. Perceptual and normative hierarchies are seldom unmediated; representations are not built exclusively upon purely immanent or "objective" considerations. In this paper I want to explore another important though insufficiently remarked and rather subliminal component of this figuration. That it will prove to be both psychologically ambiguous and ethically problematic should come as no surprise.

What, at least in Western consciousness, is the "something" that lifts this case above others? For Michael André Bernstein, the Shoah has become what he calls "*the* decisive evidentiary event" not simply as a result of its extremity (there are, after all, many other examples of extreme human cruelty) but because of our need for a "monotheistic ideology of catastrophe," for a single "exemplary model of the darkness at the heart of the modern world" and because of the Holocaust's singular "figural plasticity," its amenability "to almost every imaginable, ideological, philosophical and moral construction."[5] For Tony Judt, the Holocaust has attained its iconic stature "because it captures succinctly and forcibly, at the end of our terrible century, something for which we lack a modern vocabulary, but which lies at the heart of our recent past and thus our present inheritance. That something is the idea of evil."[6]

But, to some extent, these accounts, while on their own merits quite correct, beg the main question. We need still to probe into what within Western sensibility has, particularly and concretely, allowed Nazism and the Shoah to perform this exemplary and incarnatory role. Judt, indeed, does provide a hint when he writes that: "The Holocaust is not an irreplaceable reminder of human nastiness; for such knowledge we can look in many places. But it is a rather distinctive reminder—or a distinctive warning—of what happens when the patina cracks . . . civil society, public life, open political systems, and the forms of behavior they encourage and on which they depend, are all paper-thin constructions. They are all more fragile than it suits us to believe."[7]

This insight—that the special scandal resides in the fact that it is our own, recognizably civil society that is implicated—gets us an important part of the way. But it is only part of the way. I want to suggest another delicate dimension of this emplacement. The special, enduring fascination with National Socialism and the atrocities it committed; the very deep drive to account for its horrors and transgressions far greater than that of the Gulag, or Cambodia,

or Rwanda, or other genocides and mass murders of the twentieth century; the rich multiplicity of ruminations it has produced and its accumulative imprint on our political and intellectual discourse (including, one must add, the resulting ubiquitous attempts to relativize or neutralize or elide and displace its significance and impact) *reside also in the particular nature and identity of both the victims and of the perpetrators themselves*. That is to say, an added, potent impetus derives from an inverted kind of Eurocentrism, our rather ethnocentric sense of scandal and riddle, the abiding astonishment that a modern, allegedly cultured and civilized society like Germany—traditionally taken to be *the* example of the Enlightened *Kulturnation*—could thus deport itself.[8] Unlike the barbarities perpetrated by imperial powers in remote parts, these horrors occurred upon the European mainland and were visited not upon African "primitives" but on the Jews, whose literate presence represents a constitutive, albeit problematic, ingredient of Western civilization itself. We are, I suggest, less likely to be taken aback by atrocities removed from the imagined Western "core" (even when they are our own)—or even from the Gulag, because those occurred in what we imagine to be a realm that remains geographically and mentally still "*halb-Asien*" (half-Asian).

This system of judgment and expectations applied from the beginning of Nazi rule. For example, commenting on the 1933 boycott of Jewish businesses, the conservative owner of the *Spectator,* Sir Evelyn Wrench wrote: "I had come across antisemitism in Eastern Europe before, but I thought racial persecution belonged to another age. Half-civilized peoples might still indulge in it but surely not the Germany I had known."[9] The following quote, I think, is representative, typical of the substance of our perceptions, the special shock that Nazism, more than any other example of mass cruelty, evokes for us:

> The cry of the murdered sounded in earshot of the universities; the sadism went on a street away from the theaters and museums…the high places of literacy, of philosophy, of artistic expression, became the setting for Belsen.…We know now that a man can read Goethe or Rilke in the evening, that he can play Bach and Schubert, and go to his day's work at Auschwitz in the morning.[10]

George Steiner may be rather idiosyncratic, but his emphases, it seem to me, articulate and capture a far wider, generalized feeling and predilection. To be sure, there have been numerous attempts to displace this identificatory impulse onto a peculiar Germanic anthropology, a historical and ontological *Sonderweg*, that distances and separates Germany from the mainstream. But these have not proved to be enduring. The paradigm retains much of its power because the perceived cultural commonalities seem to overwhelm the differences.

The "blackness"(!) of the atrocities, Steiner adds, "did not spring up in the Gobi desert or the rain forests of the Amazon." By extension, if and when it

does spring up in places removed from the enlightened European center—say, in Rwanda or in Sudan—one is (tragically) less likely to be appalled, less able to empathically connect. While commemorative and historical interest in Nazism persists, massive imperial crimes remain virtually unknown. The Belgian King Leopold II's slave-labor rule over the Congo, it is generally estimated, took many millions of lives. Yet, as Adam Hochschild comments at the beginning of his superb study of "one of the major killing grounds of modern times," "Why were these deaths not mentioned in the standard litany of our century's horrors? And why had I never heard of them?"[11]

It is true, as Michael Ignatieff has pointed out, that ethics typically follows ethnicity, that empathy and moral principles take root within tribal boundaries and are most easily and naturally expressed within its confines.[12] The question of the capacity for empathy is important, but my point goes beyond that. The special status of Nazism within Western sensibility, our almost obsessive wrestling with its ghosts and dynamics, is (among other things) generated by our enduring outrage—and fascination—that the barbarous could erupt precisely where culture seemed most entrenched, that fundamental transgressions occurred within, and were visited upon, what we regard as the most advanced of civilizations.

This is a crucial motor for the encoding of Nazism as *the* measure of absolute inhumanity. This is so even in the face of the worst excesses and brutalities of the Stalinist regime. Contra Novick, I would argue that even at the height of the Cold War, the Gulag was never able to compete with the symbolic resonances—immediately accessible through photographic evidence—first of Buchenwald and then later of Auschwitz. Contemporary scholarship is only now beginning to analyze the role of these iconic images, which have became archetypal and which inform and filter into all our subsequent perceptions of atrocity.[13] Such photographic evidence was obviously not available for the Gulags and would, in any case, I hasten to add, probably not have been as palpably dramatic. But, it is worth pointing out that even in cases where such photographic evidence was abundantly available—as in the recent events in Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur, and Sudan—the reactions seem to have been somewhat blunted and short-lived.

Various political explanations have been proffered for our inability to empathize with the manifold victims of Bolshevism as we do with those of National Socialism. While Nazism appeals to the lowest instincts, Communist ideology speaks to liberal and universalist ideals, thus we are more appalled by the former. Martin Malia has argued the opposite case. Mass murder "in the name of a noble ideal," he writes, "is *more* perverse than in the name of a base one. The Nazis, after all, never pretended to be virtuous. The Communists, by contrast, trumpeting their humanism, hoodwinked millions around the world for decades, and so got away with murder on the ultimate scale. The Nazis…simply killed their prey, the Communists compelled their victims to confess their 'guilt', and thus acknowledge Communism's 'correctness'. Nazism, finally was a unique case and it developed no international clientele.

By contrast, Communism's universalism permitted it to metastasize around the globe."[14] Who could imagine a survivor of a Nazi camp describe his or her sentiments in the terms used by a former Gulag inmate: "The most important factor that secured my survival . . . was my unflinching, ineradicable belief in our Leninist party, in its humanist principles."[15]

At any rate, whatever the intrinsic merits of Malia's argument, it elides a crucial psychological dimension: the ubiquitous nature of the political symbolism evoked by Nazism within Western culture. Michael Bernstein has shrewdly observed that while the Gulag has usually been invoked by conservative and right-wing political interests, and Hiroshima by left-wing discourses, both camps have been successfully able to buttress their own positions by appealing to and deploying the Shoah.[16] That this should be so is directly related to our present theme. Although they predicated them upon different interested political causes and interpretations, all grounded their analyses upon common readings of the breakdown of European culture and civilization.

Moreover, from the psychodynamic viewpoint of Western perceptions, Communism and its outrages retain a more or less distant Asian and Third World character (Pol Pot, Mao, Ho Chi Minh—these are not exactly European names). At the same time, the incapacity to be equally outraged by Stalin and his inequities derives less from the fact that the Communists were allies in the struggle against Nazism (Stalin became the bogeyman of the West immediately after the war) than from the fact that Russia has seldom been considered part of the fully cultivated epicenter but, rather, has been viewed as significantly remote from Western Europe's geographical and spiritual core, a still not fully civilized force. As image, this stereotype still pertains.[17]

Atrocities, perhaps especially our own, are more acceptable when performed in distant places and upon "uncivilized" populations. This has an ancient pedigree. "The Romans distinguished explicitly between war against civilized peoples, which had to obey certain rules of honor and mercy, and war against barbarians, which could be conducted without restraint of any kind."[18] European imperialist and racist cruelties were rationalized not only by the patent "primitiveness" of their subjects, but were made easier by the fact that, far from home, conventional standards could quickly collapse. Behavioral restraints were not applicable to life in the jungles. Joseph Conrad perceived this moral-geographical factor quite clearly, as did Rudyard Kipling:

> Ship me somewhere east of Suez,
> where the best is like the worst,
> Where there aren't no Ten Commandments,
> an' a man can raise a thirst.[19]

The burden of enlightened expectations is greatest at home. George Steiner has honestly owned up to this predilection. "I realize," he writes, "that

barbarism and political savagery are endemic in human affairs… But I think there is hypocrisy in the imagination that would claim universal immediacy, that would seek impartial appropriation throughout the provocations of all history and all places. My own consciousness is possessed by the eruption of barbarism in modern Europe.… I do not claim for this hideousness any singular privilege; but this is the crisis of rational, humane expectation which has shaped my own life and with which I am most directly concerned."[20]

The Holocaust, as Shiraz Dossa once provocatively put it, is the classic instance of "the murder of eminently 'civilized' victims by equally 'civilized' killers."[21] Much of its paradigmatic power derives from this equation. Our representations of the killers refuse to be entirely severed from images of the greatness of German culture; the full horror of the "Final Solution" cannot be separated from conceptions of the charged role and status of the victims themselves.

If a powerful, ongoing negative anti-Jewish stereotype permeates Western culture, it is also true that the Jews are deeply and familiarly implicated within, indeed, co-constitutive of that history. Indeed, one could argue that the venom and rejection of Gentiles towards Jews derived precisely from the depths of intimacy and dependency, from the complex set of interrelations that characterize the relationship, the knowledge that at all kinds of levels Jews represent salient, creative forces and figures within that very culture.[22] In his 1961 report on the Eichmann trial, the Dutch author Harry Mulisch asked: "Had the Jews been a cultureless tribe, for example something like the equally massacred Gypsies, would their deaths have been any less terrible?… Over lunch with a small group of people, I ask Public Prosecutor Hausner this question. He thinks so—I don't."[23]

This then was no "meaningless" massacre but rather a historical "project" saturated with manifold significances. The Jews were not faceless, anonymous atoms. "Hitler's crimes are particularly poignant," Jason Epstein has written, "because they occurred so to speak in the house next door.… The victims were ourselves at barely one remove… The Soviet victims in their faraway country with their unpronounceable names and odd clothes were nothing like us."[24] Phillip Lopate has caught a crucial aspect of the psychodynamics of the "lesser evil syndrome." He asks, why it is that

> those piles of other victims are not as significant as Jewish corpses… Is it simply because they are Third World people—black, brown, yellow-skinned… I sense that I am being asked to feel a particular pathos in the rounding up of gentle, scholarly, middle-class, *civilized* people who are then packed into cattle cars, as though the liquidation of illiterate peasants would not be as poignant. The now-familiar newsreel shot of Asian populations fleeing a slaughter with their meager possessions in handcarts still reads to us as a catastrophe involving "masses," while the images of Jews lined up in their fedoras and overcoats tug at our hearts precisely because we see them as individuals.[25]

This Eurocentric figuration brings with it numerous contradictions and ironies that mingle uncomfortably with each other. Scott Montgomery has insightfully formulated one such aspect. The strange purity we have bestowed upon the Nazis as the ultimate in malevolence, "the horror at Auschwitz [as] supreme by virtue of being fully modern, occurring in the very center of Europe," means that other horrors in Africa, Asia, South America—and, I would add, even Eastern Europe—"no matter how brutal or planned, somehow qualify as more primitive…In a strange twist of logic, the Holocaust is made to seem more sophisticated, more advanced than any other incident of its kind. The terrible irony here is that Nazism finally becomes, at this elevated symbolic height, a perverted reflection of Eurocentrism."[26]

But things are in actuality not that simple. For at the same time that we have bestowed this purity and absoluteness upon Auschwitz, it has determined our iconic and moral imaginations, informed what one observer has called our overall "atrocity aesthetic;" the Holocaust as archetype girds our depictions of East Timor, Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, and Cambodia.[27] As Martin Jay points out: "Only in Hollywood movies can the Holocaust be contained within the boundaries of an aesthetic frame; in real life, it spills out and mingles with the countless other narratives of our century. Its real horror, we might say, is not confined to the actual genocidal acts it has come to signify. Historicizing the Holocaust need not mean reducing it to the level of the 'normal' massacres of the innocents that punctuate all of recorded history, but rather remembering those quickly forgotten and implicitly forgiven events with the same intransigent refusal to normalize that is the only justifiable response to the Holocaust itself."[28]

Of course, there has been no "end of history" and the events of September 11, 2001 and subsequent wars against the so-called "axis of evil," combined with the perception of the "clash of civilizations," may of course, ultimately, undermine the paradigm. It would be remiss not to reassess these comments in their light, for we do not know yet how these events and narratives will affect future mappings of political atrocity. Certainly the problem of "evil" has been reawakened, set into a new context, and has become a central preoccupation of both political and intellectual discourse.[29] Will fundamentalist Islam (Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda, the Taliban, Iran) and regimes like North Korea and the deposed Sadam Hussein's Iraq usurp the more homegrown twentieth-century forms of the Gulag and the death camps, Fascism, and Communism?

A few possibilities exist. Nazism, Communism, and contemporary terrors may merge into one, rather undifferentiated and confused but easily manipulable picture of pernicious wrongdoing. To be sure, a complex, plural culture should be more inclusive, able to face and commemorate these different transgressive expressions not by merging, comparing, or hierarchizing them but rather by noting the distinctions.[30] But that is more of a normative prescription than a prediction.

My own feeling, given the logic outlined in this paper, is that Nazism will not easily yield its paradigmatic hold. As Mark Lilla notes the new "axis of evil" hardly corresponds to the classic totalitarian regimes that produced the great evils of the last century, but consists of a diffuse hodge-podge of various degrees of "tyranny"[31] and as such seem to be less amenable to sustained "absolutist" discourse (and thus also renders decisions of policy necessarily more complicated and confused). Saddam Hussein was a ruthless tyrant, but few, other than interested propagandists, have argued that he was on a par with Hitler or Stalin. We should note too that this list is made up not of modern or first-world regimes and is thus easily relegated to a more primitive "non-European" status. Our own "enlightened" post-1945 sensibility may still be most fascinated by allegedly civilized sites and regimes where "evil" was supposed to have been banished and yet was committed on a gargantuan scale (itself part of the fascination).

But what of the post–9/11 world?[32] As Susan Neiman has noted, the September 11 perpetrators (as well as the Taliban) have bypassed our more complex Auschwitz-generated ruminations on mass murder and have rendered Hannah Arendt's sophisticated model of Eichmann's bureaucratic "thoughtlessness" superfluous. No theories of the "banality of evil" or, for that matter, the dialectic of enlightenment or bourgeois morality (or its violation) or the *Sonderweg* are required.[33] These post–9/11 actions serve to reinstate more direct, simpler conceptions of transgression.[34] Of course this "simplicity," as Neiman persuasively demonstrates, in no way detracts from the "evil" character of such actions.

Yet a certain ambiguity, deriving from the Eurocentric bias discussed here, persists. On the one hand, 9/11 allowed for a certain self-righteous displacement. "Evil" has been thrust outward; it exists elsewhere, especially in alien and primitive climes. The geographical, cultural, and religious contours of light and darkness have been restored. To all intents and purposes this is a clash between "our" and "their" civilizations. Simplicity reigns again. This is a powerful and growing impulse, reinforced by the growing consciousness of a "Muslim Problem" within the very heart of Europe. For all that, I suspect that post-Auschwitz consciousness will continue to instruct us, and perhaps will maintain its paradigmatic position, precisely because it has enlarged and complicated our horizons of transgression and placed at its center this inverted Eurocentric sense of scandal and sophistication. This peculiarly Western mapping of evil inhibits its own impulses at displacement because it renders, at all possible levels, our own modern selves and "culture" culpable: "civilization" itself remains in question. At its heart stands a kind of uneasy, and still rather unique, self-interrogation. That too may be a partially consolatory, saving grace.

11
The Ambiguous Political Economy of Empathy[1]

> Not only could I put myself in the other person's place but I could not avoid doing so. My sympathies always went out to the weak, the suffering and the poor. Realizing their sorrows I tried to relieve them in order that I myself be relieved.
>
> —Clarence Darrow[2]

The present trend in evolutionary psychology and in neurobiology holds that empathy is a generalized human capacity, one by no means limited to humans but, in varying degrees and modes, part too of the animal kingdom, especially to primates.[3] Social scientists and philosophers, moreover, tell us that in our own era of globalization we are witnessing the rise of an unprecedented empathic civilization, that in our global village we are all becoming empathetic actors.[4] These findings, it is portentously claimed, amount to nothing less than a revision of the conventional Hobbesian view of human nature as selfish, materialist, and conflict-driven. Humankind, so the thesis goes, is equally a cooperating, often selflessly generous, indeed empathic species.

This is a civilizational view of progress, one in which older tribal and primitive loyalties are being superseded by a post-Enlightenment universalism, which is supposed to engender empathic relations and advance notions of dignity and humanity.[5] The developed world of the 1960s and 1970s, Jeremy Rifkin claims, saw "the greatest single empathic surge in history." He adds, "When we say to civilize, we mean to empathize."[6] Viewed from the ground—at least from where I stand—this generalized vision seems excessively rose-tinted. Empathy may indeed have biological grounding and a degree of civilizational grounding, but in its intergroup, collective expressions, we may miss what has historically been, and still remains, most characteristic about it: the fact that it is politically structured, channeled, and directed, encouraged or blocked, according to any number of cultural, ideological, religious, racial, ethnic, national, geographical, and other pertinent factors.[7] Typically, organized empathic impulses are encouraged to proceed along normative, official narrative frames and in accordance with regimes of power. One would hope

that these never achieve hermetic status, thus always leaving some room for moral agency and dissent.

What, therefore, is required is a kind of political economy of empathy, one that seeks to account for the multiple, often ambiguous, ways in which it is apportioned, allocated, controlled, confined, resisted, or allowed to expand and overcome differences.[8] Additionally, such a project would have to investigate the possible role of empathy in conflict resolution: to what degree is empathy its precondition or result? Alternatively, the possibility should be considered that empathy might be irrelevant, perhaps even harmful, to a just political settlement (I will come back to this). The variations are manifold, and there is no way in this chapter that a systematic political economy of empathy can be attempted. What I will try to do in the present context is to provide some suggestive directions and indicate some historical and ethical issues entailed in such a future study.

Let me begin with an autobiographical confession. As a South African–born historian who lived through the demeaning apartheid era, a student of the gross inhumanity of the Holocaust and other genocides, and domiciled in an Israel beset by a seemingly intractable, dehumanizing Jewish-Palestinian conflict, I have always been astonished, and remain increasingly perturbed, by either the incapacity, or perhaps more pointedly the structured unwillingness, to attempt *both cognitively and affectively* to place oneself in the position of relevant politically subjugated groups and to recognize their humanity and humiliation. It has only recently struck me that perhaps behind the decision to become an historian lies not only the drive to critically interrogate one's own narrative, but also a kind of empathetic imperative to place oneself sympathetically in the position of other selves—what J. M. Coetzee, in his novel *Summertime* calls *meegevoel,* feeling-with.[9] Although in this chapter I concentrate on the three illustrative cases that are relevant to me, the politics of empathy has much wider applications.

I am fully aware of the hermeneutic difficulties involved in this conceit; there are reams of anthropological and philosophical literature debating the degree to which such an empathic leap is indeed possible. I know that my stipulative definition of empathy as "the cognitive and affective attempt to place oneself in the position of the individual or collective Other" is only one among many possible other definitions. I realize that such a definition is also ethically ambiguous and is not necessarily morally obligating. As Lou Agosta has noted, torturers have to be empathic if they are to grasp the effect they are having upon their victims;[10] and surely, if the historian wants to comprehend the psychology and motivations of Nazi perpetrators or Russian rapists or Rwandan killers, this will involve a deliberate act of empathy. but one that hardly entails ethical identification. Any political economy of empathy will doubtless have to take into account these ambiguities and, as Samuel Moyn has pointed out, will necessarily have to render a crucial tripartite distinction between empathy "as a burgeoning object of historical investigation . . . as a

methodological requirement and [as] a normative horizon of inquiry."[11] To some degree this chapter will include all three, but I must concede that its animating drive remains the ethical one.

We can begin to undertake this task by identifying what we regard as politically relevant components of empathy or of its lack.[12] We could, for instance, begin with fragments of information such as the fact that, revealingly, Hendrik Verwoerd, the Dutch-born architect of the South African apartheid system, wrote his doctoral dissertation in psychology on the theme "The Blunting of the Emotions." Surely, the blocking of empathy via any number of techniques of denial, repression, rationalization, and dehumanization was crucial to the ongoing functioning of that racist system. All of these techniques, it has been exhaustively documented, were clearly at work in the Third Reich.[13] Certainly, empathic blockage of one kind or another is a necessity not only for the perpetration of genocide and atrocities but also for the waging of wars. In his classic poem, *Insensibility*, Wilfred Owen ironically wrote,

> Happy are men who yet before they are killed
> Can let their vein runs cold.
> Whom no compassion fleers
> …
> And some cease feeling
> Even themselves or for themselves.
> Dullness best solves
> The tease and doubt of shelling
> …
> Happy are those who lose imagination:
> They have enough to carry with ammunition.

At the end, he suspends the irony in a crescendo of pain:

> But cursed are dullards whom no cannon stuns,
> That they should be as stones.
> Wretched are they, and mean
> With paucity that never was simplicity.
> By choice they made themselves immune
> To pity and whatever mourns in man
> ….
> Whatever shares
> The eternal reciprocity of tears.[14]

Yet another salient political fragment in need of integration within a wider framework would be the still prevalent notion that "primitive" peoples, Blacks, workers, women, or social outsiders in general possess lower sensitivity to pain than those putatively "advanced" people observing them.[15] Empathy, or its lack, is here conceived in and structured around racial, class, and gendered terms.[16] These kinds of stereotypes and the political economy

of empathy are exceedingly closely related; any systematic study will have to pay close attention to their interaction.

This surely applies to the specific case of the Shoah. The tragic lack of empathy that enabled it has already been mentioned, and has been analyzed with great thoroughness elsewhere. There is no need to rehearse it here. I want to examine another, less remarked, aspect of the political economy of empathy, precisely by examining some of the problematic aspects of post-Holocaust reflection and representation. In that regard, we are faced with a certain paradox. On the one hand, as the event itself and the horrific murders unfolded, the absence of empathy was shockingly palpable. On the other hand, as the years go by, the Shoah, both as historical event and symbolic construct of absolute evil, has been engraved at the very center of our contemporary moral and empathic consciousness. Why the lack then and the plenitude now? And what does this tell us about the structure of the political economy of empathy?

To be sure, the model of Nazi genocide as radical evil applies peculiarly and particularly to Anglo-American spheres influence and Western and Central Europe societies (and, increasingly, in variably ambiguous ways, to certain Eastern European countries). The basis for this is clear enough. Patently, something in the event itself—its state-sanctioned criminality, its taboo-breaking aims, its industrial methods and mammoth transgressive scale—clearly renders such an absolutizing discourse both possible and plausible.[17]

Yet, as analyzed extensively in the last chapter but is also pertinent here and thus worth summarily rehearsing, on its own, this cannot fully account for the centrality of Nazism and the Holocaust within European and American discourse. Empathic and normative hierarchies are seldom unmediated; representations are not built exclusively upon purely immanent or "objective" considerations. I would like to suggest that the special, enduring fascination with National Socialism and the atrocities it committed, the very deep drive to account for its horrors and transgressions, the rich multiplicity of accumulative political and intellectual ruminations it has produced (including, one must add, the resulting ubiquitous attempts to relativize its significance and impact or even entirely deny it), *resides also in the particular nature and identity of both the victims and the perpetrators themselves*. That is to say, an added, potent impetus derives from an inverted kind of Eurocentrism, our rather ethnocentric sense of scandal and riddle, the abiding astonishment that a modern, allegedly cultured and civilized society like Germany—traditionally taken to be *the* example of the Enlightened *Kulturnation*—could thus deport itself.[18] The Holocaust, as Shiraz Dossa once provocatively put it, is the classic instance of "the murder of eminently 'civilized' victims by equally 'civilized' killers."[19] Much of its paradigmatic power derives from this equation.

Our representations of the killers refuse to be entirely severed from images of the greatness of German culture; the full horror of the "Final Solution" cannot be separated from conceptions of the charged role and status of the

victims themselves. If a powerful, ongoing negative anti-Jewish stereotype permeates Western culture, it is also true that the Jews are deeply and familiarly implicated within, indeed, co-constitutive, of that history. One could argue that the venom and rejection of Gentiles towards Jews derived precisely from the depths of intimacy and dependency, from the complex set of interrelations that characterized the relationship, the knowledge that at all kinds of levels Jews represent salient, creative forces and figures within that very culture.[20] *This is what I would label the post-facto political geography of empathy.* We are, I suggest, less likely to be taken aback by atrocities removed from the imagined Western "core" (even when they are own)—and even from the Gulag, because this occurred in what our mental maps still imagine to be a realm that remains "*halb-Asien*"—geographically and morally relatively detached from our cultivated "Western" epicenter. When atrocities are perpetrated outside of the putatively enlightened world—say in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia, or in Sudan—one is (tragically) less likely to be appalled, less able to empathically connect.

How do we locate this within a more general theory of the ambiguous political economy of empathy? We may do well to begin with Michael Ignatieff's suggestion that ethics typically follow ethnicity, that empathy takes root within tribal, ethnic, or national boundaries and are most easily and naturally expressed within its confines.[21] The paradox that I am addressing here can be resolved by arguing that in the post-Holocaust era *we have extended our moral, ethnic and empathic boundaries to include, rather than outlaw, the Jews* (whose pre-Holocaust European identity was perceived often as radically ambiguous and threatening. East European Jews are no longer regarded, as they often were before, as "*halb Asien*").

Despite contemporary rhetoric, atrocities, perhaps especially our own, are more acceptable when performed in distant places and upon "uncivilized" populations. In the past, great imperial crimes went almost totally unnoticed, let alone condemned. The closer to home that they are perpetrated, the more problematic they become.

A certain irony applies here. Given that our empathic political radar is less sensitively attuned to what is perceived as either primitive or civilizationally alien, as Scott Montgomery (in another context has pointed out), other horrors perpetrated in Africa, Asia, South America or, I would even add, in Eastern Europe—"no matter how brutal or planned, somehow qualify as more primitive…In a strange twist of logic, the Holocaust is made to seem more sophisticated, more advanced than any other incident of its kind."[22]

There is another dimension that characterizes the ambiguous politics of empathy in this regard. The evocative industry of empathic Holocaust commemoration and monumentalization is, in many ways, an admirable endeavor. But although such historical or past empathy is obviously necessary, it is a far easier (at times much cheaper) commodity than its exercise in relation to present, contemporary conflicts and, indeed, can very quickly be

instrumentalized into a means for avoiding it. This glaring aspect has been strikingly subordinated to the margins by a scholar who has placed the issue of empathy in the post-Holocaust era at the very center of her large-scale project, entailing numerous books and articles.[23] Thus Carolyn J. Dean has doggedly argued that rather than truly confronting and empathizing with Holocaust victims and survivors, our culture has resorted to any number of techniques of aversion, suppression, erasure, minimalization, and "normalization" of their suffering and experience. She dubs this "the fragility of empathy." Her work is characterized by psychological and hermeneutic sophistication, replete with fashionable meta-analysis taken to a nuanced extreme, yet viewed from my own Israeli perspective, it itself reads like an exercise in evasion. The central need of Germany to zealously maintain the memory and memorialization (regardless of the problems attendant to it) is clear. But in latter-day Israel, there is the danger that the valorization of the Holocaust, its victims and survivors, will suffuse, perhaps overwhelm, the culture and will channel virtually all empathic energies into its memory and representation. This kind of retrospective, self-referential collective empathy can easily muffle or mask or act as a preventive for the far more difficult task of present empathy for *contemporary* victimhood.[24] In this way, Shoah memorialization can also function—whether intentionally or not, explicitly or implicitly—as a counterempathic narrative, a means of either minimizing or omitting the Palestinian narrative, a tool in the ongoing and unproductive battle of comparative victimization. The argument for the uniqueness of the Shoah and the patent lack of symmetry between the two cases most often reinforces blockage, rather than aiding the opening up of empathic channels.[25] This is of course to put it very simplistically; the need for and genuine functions of Shoah memorialization are patent, yet clearly this too has become a part of Israel's political economy of empathy (and perhaps this happens elsewhere as well).

This leads us into a wider issue: the conditioning role of ideologies such as nationalism in annexing and allocating empathic impulses.[26] There is something sociologically obvious (if not morally admirable) in Ignatieff's precepts that ethics follow ethnicity and that empathy is strongest within, if not confined to, tribal or group boundaries.[27] The pertinent normative question for any political economy of empathy concerns the possibilities of extending the range of empathy precisely to those outside one's boundaries, especially, perhaps, those who have become defined along the spectrum of enmity. For purposes of this chapter I will concentrate on the Israel-Palestine case (although, of course, most nationalisms tend to structure their political economy of empathy in similar ways).

It must be clear that in the history of Zionism there *were* indeed those who early on *did* empathically grasp the moral dilemmas it entailed for the local Arab population. Chapter 4 of this volume analyzed the ethical stance taken by Brit Shalom and many Central European Jewish intellectuals in this regard. But even earlier than that, the discomfort was enunciated. Thus already in

1915 the Yiddish poet, Ye'hoash, or Shlomo Blumgarten (1872–1927), wrote:

> We passed by an old barefooted Arab, who lead a loaded camel. Father of his fathers from many generations also drove loaded camels and tended sheep, and pitched tents, and at night lit fires and baked pita-bread and after sat around the fire and smoked and told stories in the quiet night. I—who have just arrived and have hardly slept one night in Eretz Yisrael, hardly drunk a glass of water, hardly taken a few steps, and despite this I see him [the Arab] as foreign. I am the resident and he is the wanderer. The sense of decency and justice be shamed. But my blood cries: legacy of the fathers.[28]

At the same time, there were those who from the beginning were aware of the intractable nature of the conflict and did not look away or repress the gravity of the situation. Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the leader of Revisionist Zionism, was quick to acknowledge that the Arabs loved their country as much as the Jews did, that they fully understood Zionist aspirations, and that their decision to resist them was entirely natural and justified. No agreement was possible and thus the Jews had to set up an "iron wall," which eventually would bring about Arab realization that Jewish settlement was a *fait accompli*.[29]

For all that, I would argue that in the main part of Israeli history (and certainly regarding the post-1948 reality), side by side with ideological justification, a certain myopic blocking out of the indigenous Arab's plight, rather than active hatred or racism, has applied. Because Zionism addressed and satisfied urgent and genuine needs, because it proffered an authentic alternative to the Jewish historical predicament, a selective blindness to the Palestinian presence may have been a psychological precondition for implementing it. This may have been a necessary myopia, but it is no less myopic for that. Zionism, it is certainly true, cannot be simply labeled as simply a Western settler movement, but it is also that and, as in South Africa, the United States, Australia, and so on, openly acknowledging the price this exacted on the indigenous population—dispossession and a certain humiliation—was and remains an extremely difficult empathic act to perform. At times it extends to the denial that an indigenous population was present in the first place.[30] Even if such displacement was not intended, this was the result and, although over the past decade a degree of recognition *has* percolated into Israeli academic discourse and some media discourse, to this day most Israelis are unable to face this head-on. I know how difficult such empathic recognition is, even as a historian who is trained to view matters from above and from a variety of perspectives.

To be sure, all this is stated from a liberal perspective, one that many regard as hopelessly naïve, unwilling to recognize the harsh reality of radical enmity, the viewpoint of a Robert Frost kind of bleeding heart who can't even take his own side in an argument, and one which may be blind to the problematic, at times brutal, realities and practices of Arab society itself. Despite

the Arab Spring, the premises of Enlightenment humanism, the practice of self-criticism, and a corresponding empathic drive to grasp the Other hardly characterize the doggedly traditional nature and structure of these societies. Israelis do have grounds for their fears and suspicions. Still, given the country's insistence upon belonging squarely to the enlightened, democratic camp of the West, the question of its own commitments to empathic recognition and the ability to step out of its own skin and at least honestly face up to the consequences of its own needs and actions will not go away.[31]

The tendency to empathize with those with whom we identify, who are closest to us, is most natural and cannot be considered a particularly ethical achievement.[32] Evolutionary psychologists tell us that empathy is designed for cooperative ventures, a function of proximity, similarity, and familiarity, and that in states of conflict, counterempathic qualities are called for.[33] Yet, as a moral quality, empathy becomes politically relevant when it demands access to other people—even to those who with whom we may be locked in conflict. It is interesting to study those who, despite the prevailing structuring ideologies are sensitive to alternative narratives and able to make that empathic switch. As in the Milgram experiment on obedience to authority figures, the intriguing question is less about those who lack this ability to make the switch than about understanding why some people possess it.[34]

Yet the ambiguities persist and multiple problems ensue from any simplistic schema one may wish to construct. If one desires to extend the range of political empathy, especially in situations of enmity, does this not demand reciprocity on both sides of the conflict? To be sure, often the intractable problem arises in which each side perceives itself to be a victim, thus diminishing both the sense of responsibility and the drive to empathy.[35] As one letter-writer put it recently with regard to the Palestinians in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*: "Why do we have to mark the day of their 'disaster' which sprang from the failure of their attempts to massacre the Jewish Yishuv in 1948 and to annihilate it? Why do we have to tell, to pity, to recall and to feel the pain of those whose wishes, actions, education and prayers are aimed every day at getting rid us from this land?"[36]

It is true that one expects more empathy from those who have greater power than from those who lack it, and it is almost certainly easier for those in power to exercise empathy than it is for those under power's yoke.[37] However, viewing matters purely in terms of power relations is to allow only one side moral freedom and agency. The subjugated are not merely the vulnerable playthings of history and do have some responsibility for their own fate. Not all victims are flawlessly moral, although the temptation to regard them as such is great. In any case, empathy alone is not sufficient. As one observer put it, "I can empathize with the Palestinians, but [I] do not sympathize with their cause."[38] Indeed, in his famous eulogy for Roi Rotberg at Nahal Oz in April 1956, Moshe Dayan employed empathy as a key motivating

force for the continuance, rather than the cessation, of battle-readiness:

> Let us not cast blame on the murders today. Why should we deplore their burning hatred for us? For eight years they have been sitting in the refugee camps in Gaza, and before their eyes we have been transforming the lands and the villages, where they and their fathers dwelt, into our estate. . . . We are a generation that settles the land, and without the steel helmet and the cannon's fire we will not be able to plant a tree and build a home. Let us not be deterred from seeing the loathing that is inflaming and filling the lives of the hundreds of thousands of Arabs who live around us. Let us not avert our eyes lest our arms weaken.[39]

For all that, some degree of identification, painful and threatening though it may be, is necessary if one is to render empathy a politically relevant dimension. One should not be sentimental about it. Few, I think, could recapture Clarence Darrow's putative feelings as given in the opening quote; universal empathy is usually more rhetorical than real. Consider Rosa Luxemburg's counterintuitive rebuke to Mathilde Wurm on February 16, 1917:

> Why do you come with your special Jewish sorrows? To me, the poor victims of the rubber plantations in Putumayo, the negroes in Africa . . . in the Kalahari desert . . . are equally near. The "lofty silence of the eternal," in which so many cries have echoed away unheard, resounds so strongly within me that I cannot find a special corner in my heart for the ghetto. I feel at home in the entire world wherever there are clouds and birds and human tears.[40]

Quite apart from the already-mentioned civilizational lines that tend to structure our empathy, it is psychologically dubious that one can equally empathize with disasters throughout the world; we cannot feel equally for victims of floods in Pakistan, earthquakes in New Zealand, and tsunamis in Japan. And these are natural occurrences not complicated by political factors. Clearly, realistic empathic morality obligates us more in terms of areas and localities for which we can be held responsible and take concrete action.

But the ambiguity reaches deeper than that: the extent to which historical recognition and empathy figure as factors in political conflict resolution is by no means clear.[41] There are those who claim that only a kind of forgetting, rather than remembering, will help to overcome the past. Moreover, it is not clear whether empathy is a precondition or a possible result of resolving conflict.[42] Or, as Hannah Arendt, would have it, perhaps it is irrelevant, or even an impediment, to achieving some kind of political settlement. Arendt might have dismissed the entire notion of the political economy of empathy as nonsensical. "Compassion," she wrote, "by its very nature cannot be touched by the sufferings of a whole class or people, or, least of all, mankind as a whole.

It cannot reach out farther than what it is suffered by one person and still remain what it is supposed to be, co-suffering."[43] It was not compassion (or empathy), which abolishes distance, but justice that was the political route to resolving conflicts, she claimed.[44] Indeed, even if empathy may form part of a humanizing political drive, on its own it cannot be sustained. Some institutional, principled, and legal mechanisms beyond individual and ritualized empathy, as well as a discourse and practice of rights, will surely be required in the longer run.[45] (Cynthia Ward has characterized empathy as "political Valium"![46])

In a preliminary manner, the aim of this paper has been to fashion the outlines of a political economy of empathy, to formulate some basic patterns of its structure, and to list some of the outstanding issues that need to be confronted. At the very least, however, it is also a plea to extend our range of empathic, humanizing impulses,[47] to sympathetically "imagine alternative stories about the past and alternative futures,"[48] and to apply them to situations in which the loss of humanity stands in direct contradistinction to the triumphalist pronouncement that we have already arrived at an empathic civilization.[49]

Part 4

Encounters at the Junction: Jews and Western Culture

12
Reflections on Insiders and Outsiders

The task of this chapter is to provide some kind of a general conceptual and historical framework for thinking about the categories of "insiders" and "outsiders" and for rendering explicit some of the assumptions and problems regarding these notions that usually remain implicit in treatments of this subject.[1] This is no easy assignment, for it would appear that "insiders" and "outsiders" are universal organizing categories. Societies, cultures, and individual as well as collective identities are constituted and function by dint of the fluid dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, by defining the conditions and content of "normalcy" and "abnormalcy," by openly or tacitly invoking conditions of belonging and nonbelonging, through the setting up of often ironically unstable and permeable exits and entrances.[2] For every in-group there will be those who are without, excluded.

One could, conceivably, write not just the whole of Jewish history, but perhaps even the whole of human history, in terms of the putative insider–outsider binary and its various refining permutations and indentations. In their different ways, anthropology and psychology—the social sciences in general—seek to provide us maps and perspectives of these processes. Thus, an entire discipline, "the sociology of deviance," represents an attempt to systemically capture the phenomenon. Outsiders, they tell us, are simply those groups and individuals who, for one reason or another, simply deviate from the normative rules that govern social and cultural systems. Their nature, given identities and location, are to be understood as standing in dialectical relationship to, and in tension with, these power structures and meaning-endowing norms.

There are many such kinds of theories, but their very generality does not provide much succor for historians, whose interests inevitably focus upon the context-bound nature of phenomena and the dynamics and nuances of particular cases and situations. To be sure, general questions and problems still arise. Who defines insiders and outsiders, and how are these constituted? Are modern variants to be differentiated from their premodern predecessors and examples? Do we employ objective and structural or subjective and psychological criteria of outsiderdom, or some combination of both? Viewed from the perspective of the insider, outsiders historically have typically been despised and stigmatized (which in turn often may have strengthened their internal

cohesiveness), but they may also be relatively ignored, or tolerated, and in some cases, even valorized. Indeed, in our own times, as William Ian Miller has pointed out, we have witnessed a certain shift in emotional economy, resulting in a certain ambiguity toward outsiders. A widening of empathic capacities, not merely in traditional terms of class and rank, is being extended to minorities (or "internal" outsiders)—racial and ethnic minorities, the mentally and physically handicapped, etc.—in which the classical indifference, fear, contempt, or mistrust on the part of outsiders is mingled with a certain liberal guilt, anxiety, and self-doubt.[3] This certainly would apply to the most literal and visible outsiders of our time: the homeless.

There is a similarly wide spectrum regarding the possible personal and collective self-images of outsiders themselves. One may variously attempt to erase, blur, minimize, or simply put up with one's outsider status and identity. Yet at times it may be affirmed and become a matter of positive choice (this will certainly be true, in different gradations and inflections, when considering the modern Jewish case). The outsider condition, its freedom of maneuver and action, and its self-image will also depend upon the ways in which the normative "inside" defines it. There are too many variations and interactions to allow any simple or clear-cut *a priori* answers.

But we are already running ahead of ourselves. Given the ubiquitous nature of the insider-outsider divide, when it comes to thinking about the Jewish outsider, we need to establish a distinction between life in traditional or feudal and corporate society and more centralized modern states. In the former, Jews were patently "outside" the normative and religious structures of Christian society. Jews clearly were not Christians, and both parties elaborated a series of rituals and social practices that ensured separation and prevented mixing. To be sure, this does not mean that Jews were entirely cut off from wider contexts—they were engaged in various aspects of economic and political life and in various ways forged identities that ensued from, and were identified with, their particular local, cultural, and even religious environments. Indeed, in extreme cases, such as the Sabbatean and Frankist movements, there was apostasy to Islam and Catholicism, respectively.[4] On the whole, however, life lived within one's own identificatory framework provided a self-definitional security and value sustenance absent from later times. Under those pre-modern conditions, there could be no consciousness of being an outsider in the modern sense. Being Jewish was a datum that simply constituted the given in everyday life. Indeed, because Jews regarded themselves as an exilic community, this became paradigmatic of a positively conceived ideological formulation of nonbelonging.

Of course, exceedingly exceptional individuals, such as Baruch Spinoza, removed themselves from any such identification. But in the modern secular world, religious apostates hardly represent what we consider to be quintessential outsiders. In the new order of centralized (and, later, nationalized) states—characterized increasingly by principles of individual rather than corporate membership, aspirations to equal rights and citizenship,

and ever-greater normative and cultural homogeneity—the production, structure, and very meaning of outsiderdom undergoes transformation. The novel possibility of integration renders outsiderdom itself a structurally relevant and problematic datum of consciousness, psychologized and questioned, a matter of potential identity strain and discomfort. At the same time, outsiderdom can also be dialectically transfigured into a source and space of separate positive self-assertion and pride.

Minorities, as Shulamit Volkov has perceptively pointed out, did not exist in feudal society and the world of estates. The notion of minorities, of numerical relevance and superiority, could only emerge in social structures characterized by categories of, and aspirations to, unity and equality. Volkov defines minorities thus: "a group permanently residing within a more or less homogeneous society, normally distinct by one or more than one objective characteristic, possessing a particular consciousness of itself as a group and ideologically committed to full equality and integration without abandoning its uniqueness."[5] This definition is astute, but requires qualification. It may apply more precisely to Jewish minorities than to some other modern minorities. Thus it is not certain that Europe's Roma and Sinti have, either historically or contemporaneously, aspired to integration, nor does it apply to religious groups such as the Amish in the United States.

What is certain, however, is that modern outsiderdom cannot be grasped outside of this emergent majority-minority context. Yet, both conceptually and socio-psychologically, we need to distinguish between the two. Minorities possess, and are defined by, fairly clear-cut objective characteristics. Outsiderdom is above all marked by the subjective existential and psychological dimensions. *This is because all the variations of self-consciousness, the dilemmas, discontents, and achievements of the modern Jewish or non-Jewish outsider arise out of the (possibly frustrated) potential for integration, the dynamics of partial connectedness, and a degree of presumed entitlement quite absent in traditional societies.*

Like Georg Simmel's stranger, the outsider is not entirely alien and external, not totally foreign, as, say, the barbarians were to the Greeks.[6] In order to qualify as outsiders there must, in some way, be a salient connection to the inside. The outsider, in this sense, possesses a certain relevance and can make claims that—no matter how disputed—have a certain standing. There are no centers without margins, insides without outsides; the inside is constituted by constructing the outside.[7] But this is a relationship that is always fluid, and in modern societies, and certainly in postmodern societies, all "essentialized" centers and identities come increasingly under question.[8] For, as David Rechter argues (although he refers to the case of Czernowitz, his observation has a more general application),

> The insider/outsider dualism proves to be something of a false dichotomy, perhaps better conceived, as noted at the outset, as two shifting poles of a continuum. . . . An insider/outsider framework implies an at least somewhat stable centre around which an individual or a collective situate

> themselves. . . . But if the centre itself shifts, how to fix its boundaries? As a consequence, determining the relative status and meaning of insider/outsider is fraught with difficulty and these sometimes useful descriptors should be applied selectively and with due caution . . . [9]

This permeability will obviously affect the subjective psychodynamics of modern Jewish outsiderdom, whose self-definitions cover a wide and dynamic spectrum of positions ranging from the extremes of Benjamin Disraeli, who flaunted his outsider, "exotic" Jewish origins as a mark of superiority, to that of Otto Weininger's tortured ruminations on Jewish being. Dilemmas of personal and collective self-constitution will be newly defined and heightened when boundaries are most fluid and blurred. Paradoxically, this may apply not only to the more familiar situations where invisible barriers to integration still operate and where the power play of insider/outsider dynamics creates any number of tensions, ambiguities, and misunderstandings. The perplexing example of the Jewish writer Mihail Sebastian and his dependence upon, and torturous relationship with, his anti-Semitic Romanian mentor Nae Ionescu is a particularly charged case in point.[10]

But discomfort may apply, too, when one's particularity is threatened by too "successful" an absorption, too much "assimilation." Many West European and American Jews regard themselves as trapped within a kind of double bind: the integrative ease that comes with the narrative of an inclusive "Judeo-Christian" civilization, and the concern of being swallowed by it. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the balance between full integration (insiderdom) and the maintenance of a distinctive, separate identity (outsiderdom) is an exceedingly fine one and that, ironically, Jews were, and still are, not entirely comfortable with either condition.[11] This may account for the fact that, as David Biale has observed, Jews possess a consciousness of "occupying an anomalous status. They represent the boundary case whose very lack of belonging to a recognizable category creates a sense of unease."[12]

In related fashion, much of the elaborate discourse—in praise, condemnation and fear—surrounding the modern outsider is tied to divergent perceptions of the respective, putatively emancipatory, dissolutive and corrupting influences of that most powerful modernizing and shared institution: the city. At the same time that cities are portrayed as the source of newfound opportunity, integration, and freedom for previously disenfranchised groups, a persistent counternarrative holds such urban centers to be the breeding-grounds of corruption, internal subversion, decadence, crime and degeneration, places of refuge and succor to any number of invidious outsiders: criminals, radicals, homosexuals, Jews, and so on.

All these themes converge in George L. Mosse's suggestive thesis as to the connection between the making of the modern outsider and the overall development of middle-class society and what he calls its accompanying "bourgeois morality." In this schema, not just Jews, but all purported

outsiders are endowed with similar negative characteristics, stereotyped as antithetical to middle-class moral, aesthetic, and economic criteria of "respectability" and "normality." The "normal" (and ideal) bourgeois is held to be manly, self-controlled, honest, healthy, clean, and handsome; outsiders are abnormal, effeminate, nervous, sickly, wily, dirty, and ugly. Such constructions of normality and abnormality, the fundamental yardsticks of respectability, act essentially as mechanisms of social control, the means by which all can be assigned their designated place: the normal and the abnormal, the healthy and the sick, the rooted and the restless, the native and the foreigner, the productive and the profligate.

Most radically, Mosse has argued that, in this sense, Nazism represents the most extreme expression of bourgeois morality. Its classical victims—gypsies, homosexuals, asocials, the mentally and physically handicapped—correspond exactly with constructions of the bourgeois "outsider."[13] But what of Nazism's ultimate victim, the Jew? For, after all, within nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western and Central Europe, Jews had determinedly undergone a process of cultural, political, and social *embourgeoisement;* their aspirations, comportment, and self-definition were decidedly bourgeois. In order to deal with this dilemma, Mosse demonstrates the manifold ways in which anti-Semites and those opposed to Jewish emancipation and integration determinedly read the Jews out of the middle-class by repeatedly attributing to them the "non-bourgeois" traits of typical outsiders. Jews were effeminate, nervous, peripatetic, sickly, schemingly parasitic, and so on.

Mosse's insights, linking the nature and content of modern outsiderdom to the specific dynamics of bourgeois morality, are intriguing. Moreover, his insistence that all outsiders, non-Jews as well as Jews, are endowed with similar characteristics provides us with a salutary reminder that post-emancipation Jewish history inevitably operates within wider, rather than self-enclosed, contexts. Yet its applicability may be somewhat limited. It does not really provide space for an autonomous (or relatively autonomous) consciousness; in this view, the outsider is almost exclusively the Sartrean creation of normative fears and prejudices. Nor does this perspective allow us to follow the contestational dynamics that determine who shall be insiders and outsiders *within* Jewish communities themselves. Perhaps most important, Mosse's work applies most directly to developments centered around Western and Central Europe, rather than the somewhat different East European Jewish experience. To be sure, the East–West divide is both problematic and to some extent artificial, yet in overall terms more traditional, prebourgeois and pre-emancipation patterns prevailed on the Eastern side of the divide. This is so even if we grant that Mosse's model understates a continuing specifically Christian anti-Judaic animus running through emergent secular bourgeois society, and if we grant that within various areas of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Eastern Europe "modern" bourgeois patterns of integration and dilemmas of identity became increasingly apparent.

These more general theories apart, there is a rather vast literature on intellectuals and their creative role as outsiders who sometimes are able to influence, and even penetrate, the center. This is the burden of Peter Gay's analysis of the greatness, anxiety, and excitement of Weimar culture: "the creation of outsiders, propelled by history into the inside, for a short, dizzying, fragile moment."[14] Gay's portrait did not single out Jews in his rather dazzling list of intellectuals and artists. For the most part, however, they are regarded as double social outsiders, presumed to possess a kind of privileged perspective unavailable to those locked into the conventional prejudices and presuppositions of the inside.[15] Paul Mendes-Flohr has portrayed the modern Jewish intellectual as a cultural and cognitive insider but a social outsider;[16] Georg Simmel's "stranger" has very similar characteristics. The stranger "is an element of the group itself. His position as a full-fledged member involves both being outside it and confronting it." He cites the history of European Jews as the classical example of this type, and in many ways his portrait may be autobiographical.[17] While, typically, most of these analyses refer to the Central European experience,[18] they clearly have a far more general application.

Thus, most famously, Isaac Deutscher (born in Chrzanów, Poland) includes the Polish-born Rosa Luxemburg and Russian Leon Trotsky in his list of admired "non-Jewish Jews," together with Baruch Spinoza, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. He writes:

> You may, if you wish to, place them within a Jewish tradition. They all went beyond the boundaries of Jewry. They all found Jewry too narrow, too archaic, and too constricting. They all looked for ideals and fulfillment beyond it, and they represent the sum and substance of much that is greatest in modern thought. . . . Did they have anything in common with one another? . . . in some ways they were very Jewish indeed. They had in themselves something of the quintessence of Jewish life and of the Jewish intellect. They were *a priori* exceptional in that as Jews they lived on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions and national cultures. They were born and brought up on the borderlines of various epochs. Their mind matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other. They lived on the margins or in the nooks and crannies of their respective nations. Each of them was in society and yet not of it. It was this that enabled them to rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations, and to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future.[19]

It is worth pointing out, parenthetically, that for those with a more positive internal Jewish commitment, this question of detached estrangement is seen neither as an inevitable nor a desirable response to modernity. Leo Strauss, perhaps the most articulate expositor of this viewpoint, explicitly inveighed against one of Deutscher's models in this regard. Spinoza is upbraided for taking for granted "the philosophic detachment or freedom from the tradition

of his own people; that detachment is 'unnatural,' not primary, but the outcome of a liberation from the primary attachment, of an alienation, a break, a betrayal. The primary is fidelity, and the sympathy and love that go with fidelity."[20]

In many ways, the narrative of the privileged intellectual perspective of the outsider is a highly consolatory, self-validating point of view. "Because I was a Jew," declared Freud, "I found myself free from many prejudices which limited others in the employment of their intellects and as a Jew I was prepared to go into opposition and to do without the agreement of the 'compact majority.'"[21] This functions both as an explanation of, and a kind of triumphalist justification for, secular Jewish achievement. To be fair, this is not merely an exclusively Jewish perception. The Polish Catholic philosopher Leszek Kolakowski has put forward the case most eloquently:

> It was only by, as it were exiling themselves from their collective exile that they [the Jews] became exiles in the modern sense. However hard they may have tried, they failed (at least, most of them) to lose entirely their identity of old and to be unreservedly assimilated; they were looked upon as alien bodies by the indigenous tribes, and it was probably this uncertain status, the lack of a well-defined identity, which enabled them to see more and to question more than those who were satisfied with their inherited and natural sense of belonging. . . . precisely because by barring to them the path to the moral and intellectual safety of the tribal life—whether French, Polish, Russian or German—they left them in the privileged position of outsiders.[22]

In many ways this fits into a larger existentialist cult, a species of male rite of passage from painful adolescence into manhood popular during the 1950s, in which the outsider was defined by a kind of ruthless honesty, an authenticity marked by a kind of radical nonconformity. Albert Camus described his by now classical outsider simply as someone who refused to lie to himself as well as to others.[23] In related fashion, the modern outsider in general, but the Jewish one in particular, is held to be above all characterized by a kind of cosmopolitan borderlessness, a skepticism concerning conventional and epistemological boundaries, a viewpoint in which all versions of essentialized and fixed identities are questioned and refused.

"Freud's view of Moses as both insider and outsider," Edward Said tells us, "is extraordinarily interesting and challenging." Freud's most profound insight, stemming from his claim that the founder of Jewish identity was himself a non-European Egyptian, according to Said, posits the limits of the most tightly knit communities. For Freud, Said concludes, "identity cannot be thought or worked through itself alone; it cannot constitute or even imagine itself without that radical originary break or flaw which will not be repressed, because Moses was Egyptian, and therefore always stood outside the identity inside which so many have stood, and suffered—and later, perhaps, even triumphed."[24]

But there are clearly problems that arise from this notion of a privileged, unhoused, outsider perspective. In a diasporic age of mobility and globalization, immigration, population movements, refugees and exiles there exists a current tendency to universalize what was previously an essentially Jewish narrative. As Michael Walzer has pointed out, the achievement of critical distance and intellectual detachment should by no means be confused with the marginality of outsiders. Indeed, he argues, marginality may equally act as a thoroughly distorting factor, undercutting the capacity for critical judgment, similar to the related, but opposite, danger of overidentification with the normative centers of power. "Detachment," he writes, "stands to the marginal and the central in exactly the same way: free of the tensions that bind the two together."[25]

Still, given the peculiarly complex and fluid inside-outside and the remarkably creative relationship of Jews to modern culture, these notions must surely possess some validity.[26] But identifying the role that their "Jewishness" or Judaism plays in these creative moments remains an enormously subtle and complex task in which both blanket denial of its relevance (in effect, the refusal of any autonomy to the dimensions of Jewish existence) and willful attributions as to its overwhelming significance (which overlooks the thick influence of the tempting blandishments and the by now quite natural, internalization of cultures outside that tradition) need to be scrupulously and skeptically analyzed. No wonder the definitive history of the modern Jewish intellectual has not yet been written, although, as Richard Cohen makes clear, much of the work done by Ezra Mendelsohn serves as an excellent prolegomenon.[27]

The field is rife with any number of temptingly attractive propositions linking modes of outsidership with Jewish intellectual insight and creativity. They are usually as problematic as they are suggestive. Take, just as one among many instances, the notion that modern theorists and historiographers of nationalism have typically been a species of double outsider, which is enunciated by Jews (not necessarily ones who were identified with Judaism) who left their formerly multinational imperial homelands and migrated into different civilizations (thus Hans Kohn, Karl Deutsch, Ernst Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm hailed from Austro-Habsburg lands and traveled respectively to Palestine, the United States, and England, while Elie Kedourie left his Iraqi birthplace and the former Ottoman Empire for the British Isles). Being situated themselves on the borders of richly textured, multicultural societies at a time when national tensions became increasingly apparent, and then emigrating, clearly rendered them sensitive to and critical of the structures, constructions, inclusions, and exclusions of nationalism.

These are, to be sure, telling examples (although in each case the nature and role of Jewishness would have to be somehow validated), yet one would want to be wary of too easy, self-congratulatory generalizations. One should keep in mind that none of the earlier great thinkers and theorists

of nationalism, such as Herder, Renan, Michelet, Lord Acton, Fichte, and so on, and presumably none of its prominent contemporary theorists and historians, such as Benedict Anderson, Rogers Brubaker, Adrian Hastings, and John Breuilly, can be said to be outsiders in any significant sense, or even Jewish.

Posed in this way, the issue now seems to be rather overworked, if not sterile, and it is one of the central achievements of Jonathan Frankel's essay "The 'Non-Jewish Jews' Revisited: Solzhenitsyn and the Issue of National Guilt" that he has taken the discussion of Isaac Deutscher's secular and universalist "non-Jewish Jews," outsiders to both normative and Jewish society, in a new and provocative direction. In what sense, Frankel asks, can radicals such as Marx, Trotsky, and Rosa Luxemburg—who all dismissed any meaningful relationship to their Jewish origins—be regarded as Jews, part of the parameters of Jewish history? In what ways, despite everything, were they not simply self-proclaimed outsiders to the Jewish world but also insiders? Frankel addresses himself to the highly sensitive charge that these Jewish communists played a central role in the horrors of the 1917 Revolution, the implementation of Bolshevik rule, and the running of the Gulags. Taking up Solzhenitsyn's moral question and challenge, Frankel poses the question thus: If all the Bolsheviks, Russians and Jews alike, were outsiders to their communities, "schismatics," in his terms, at what point do their numbers become statistically significant? Can peoples and communities disavow their own schismatics? Was there not an obligation to remember their own progeny? Frankel's contribution sensitively and acutely engages the relevant distinctions and nuances such an obligation may or may not entail. Invoking Karl Jaspers's important distinction between guilt and shame, Frankel's conclusions, for a Jewish historian, are remarkably frank, refreshingly unapologetic. [28] We cannot with any degree of consistency, Frankel argues, praise the Jewish outsiders we admire and disclaim those who may reflect poorly upon us:

> Solzhenitsyn's insistence that the Jewish people cannot simply shrug off the Trotskys, Uritskys and Yagodas as "non-Jewish," as outsiders, is certainly persuasive. If Jews take pride in Heinrich Heine, Felix Mendelssohn, Benjamin Disraeli and Boris Pasternak, who were Jews by birth but were baptized into the Christian faith, can it be logical as distinct from comfortable—to disown the "non-Jewish Jews" who as Bolsheviks participated in destroying Russia's emergent democracy in 1917; in establishing a brutal (albeit "proletarian") dictatorship; and in provoking a ferocious civil war across the length and breadth of that vast country?[29]

If Frankel's reflections on these Jewish outsiders bring with them a measure of discomfort, Ruth Wisse's treatment of a different kind of outsider—one who decidedly belonged to the Jewish community, yet worked against it—is not likely to create a greater sense of ease. Her examination of the Jewish

moser or *malshin*, the informer and denunciator (the negative counterpart of the traditional *shtadlan*, the intercessor who works on behalf of community interests) elucidates perhaps the most morally problematic and extreme form of internal rupture. Betrayal or treason is, by definition, a matter of insiders turning against their own, although what constitutes betrayal or treason and who defines it will always be a matter of contestation. Wisse's analysis of these defectors—be they well-intentioned reformist *Maskilim*, idealists, or simply unscrupulous opportunists, extortionists—illuminates, as she puts it, not the usual corruptions of power but those of powerlessness and the temptations that accompany vulnerable minority status.[30]

Clearly, however, Wisse does not believe that this is purely a by-product of the lack of sovereignty and majority status, for she argues that with the creation of the State of Israel similar phenomena continue to apply. Israel, she insists,

> is not only besieged by enemies, but also subjected to the kind of de-legitimization that Christianity and Marxism, in their time, applied to Judaism and the Jewish people. The contemporary pressure against Israel on many fronts encourages Jewish defection and 'tale-bearing,' which will probably rise in proportion to the vehemence of the attacks. . . . enemies exploit divisions for their own hostile ends, by conscripting allies from within the polity to help destroy its democratic unity. The Jews and Israel have never been without enemies at the gate, enemies many times their political and demographic strength. The latitude enjoyed by Israelis in blaming their government and one another is subject to exploitation for anti-Jewish ends.[31]

This is not the only, and certainly not the most central, insider-outsider irony that Zionism has produced. The attainment of statehood, of course, did successfully transform the Jews from a vulnerable minority into a sovereign majority, thus creating a new center, a new "inside." But this also inevitably produced its own framework and system of inclusions and exclusions. Zionism does not abolish the insider-outsider condition, but inverts and reinscribes it.[32] If the Jewish outsider now becomes the insider, this entails a dual act of both Jewish diasporic and Palestinian displacement and the creation of a new set of outsiders.

In nuanced fashion, Zvi Jagendorf has acutely demonstrated how both these themes have become part of Jewish consciousness and have permeated the poetry of Yitzchak Manger and Avot Yeshurun (Yehiel Perlmutter). In different ways, their work confronts, and is haunted by, the refugee status of both Jews and Palestinians and their yearnings for "home," and by the impossibilities and ironies implicit in that search. To be sure, Zionism for Yitzhak Manger was never really an option or a goal. Indeed, as Jagendorf demonstrates, in his world outersidership is a kind of existential given; home is as much a burden

as a comfort, an unresolved longing shared by all uprooted people. Manger, that "chameleon poet," working both inside and outside Jewish nostalgia, ultimately does find home in Canaan, but it is demystified, "just dry earth as we are all."

For Avot Yeshurun, who came to find a home in Palestine, the pain of abandoning his parents' house in Poland and the discovery that Palestine was a "home" to another people became thoroughly intertwined. Jagendorf writes that

> Yeshurun believed he was coming home when he was ferried off the boat at Bat Galim in 1925 by an Arab porter. Home, for this young man from Przedmiescie/Krasnystaw in Poland, was Eretz Israel. But throughout his work he is haunted by the guilt of being an accomplice in the ruin of homes, first that of his parents in the *shtetl* and then the homes of the Palestinian Arabs, whose villages and traditional way of life seemed to him to mirror his parents' world. This guilt constitutes the burden of much of his poetry

The fact that Yeshurun uses the Arabic word "*hirbet*" (an abandoned ruined house) in his advocacy of the instability of language, Jagendorf tells us, is a key to "a man torn between languages, places, and ruins. His language, he is telling us, should be read as evidence of ghostly presences that we might hurry to ignore. The ruin demands to be examined, it blurs distinctions between inside and outside, it reveals traces of lives lived, homes abandoned, and languages once spoken."[33]

Obviously, Zionism represents a diametrically different paradigm from, and indeed a quite deliberate revolt against, the more general, modern "exilic" experience of Jewish outsiderdom. To be sure, the individual and collective mediations between universality and particularity; the constitution, fluidity, interconnections, reinforcements, blurrings, and erasures of identities; and the formation, contestation, breakdown, and reconfiguration of physical, mental, social and geographical borders, of belonging and nonbelonging, are general human issues. They do, however, acquire a special sharpness and urgency within Jewish history, in both its internal dimensions and its relations with the wider world. They represent a history and consciousness almost always perched perilously at the edge.

13

Toward a Phenomenology of the Jewish Intellectual: The German and French Cases Compared

In 1956 Hannah Arendt proclaimed: "The German-speaking Jews and their history are an altogether unique phenomenon; nothing comparable to it is to be found even in the other areas of Jewish assimilation. To investigate this phenomenon, which among other things found expression in a literally astonishing wealth of talent and of scientific and intellectual productivity, constitutes a historical task of the first rank, and one which, of course, can be attacked only now, after the history of the German Jews has come to an end."[1] Arendt energetically answered her own call and on occasion quite brilliantly addressed herself to the task.[2] Her conviction concerning German Jewry's unique intellectual productivity, its remarkable cultural achievements, was no idiosyncratic quirk. For over a half-century now, fascinated scholars have been chronicling, mapping, and variously explaining these accomplishments, often in a highly sophisticated manner.

To be sure, some of this is to be explained as an act of commemorative valorization. Still, it would be no exaggeration to state that the study of German-Jewish culture has turned into something of an academic industry.[3] Indeed, at times it comes perilously close to functioning as an ideology. George Steiner, for instance, has insistently advertised the prodigal creative genius of post-Enlightenment German-speaking intellectuals and artists, steeped in the emancipated, secular, critical, rationalist liberal humanism of Central Europe, and he has equated this with his own prescriptive, highly idealized conception of Judaism itself.[4] George Mosse has persuasively argued that the unequaled cultural-intellectual productivity of German Jews is explicable primarily through their peculiar appropriation of the distinctive German Enlightenment notion of *Bildung* into the creative core of their newly acquired identities. Like Arendt and Steiner (and many others), Mosse offers this not only as an analysis, but partly as autobiographical self-description, and partly as his creed, urging this form of Jewishness as the one that ought still to function as "inspiration for many men and women searching to humanize their society and their lives."[5] German-Jewish intellectuality becomes a metaphor for the critical, unmasking, yet always humanizing and autonomous mind.[6]

My own work too, I must admit, has been informed by similar assumptions and preferences. I confess that for me it was these Central European intellectuals, rather than British or French thinkers, who, in matters both Jewish and general, seemed most relevant and acted as magnetic models.[7] These may have been somewhat chauvinistic biases. Nevertheless they appeared to be solidly grounded, based upon a clearly demonstrable historical reality, a *Sonderweg* related to the peculiar, jagged circumstances of Jewish emancipation within the German *Kulturbereich*. This was a model that, while not always making the connections explicit, posited a link between social and individual tensions, political discontents and intellectual creativity. Thus, in Germany, even for the most assimilated of Jews—say, such as Karl Marx—the "Jewish Problem" or issues of Jewishness possessed a proximity, an existential edge, which was likely to be less pressing in the French context.[8] French Jews, it seemed quite clear, lacked a comparable productivity, or so the implicit theory went, because they were far more comfortably assimilated and acculturated and their identities were less torn by the fractures of a long, drawn-out emancipation process and its accompanying constantly uncertain social signals, as took place in Germany.

To the extent that one gave thought to this (and not too much thought *has* been expended in this direction; I have not come across one systematic French-German Jewish cultural comparison[9]), this model would attribute less creativity to French Jews on the paradoxical basis of the *success* of the French *Sonderweg*. Because in France there existed a powerful republican, revolutionary tradition, integration and identification were rendered easier, or at least more tension-free, than in Germany. Certainly in political terms, as Jonathan Frankel has pointed out, in France there were institutional forces, friends, and allies at the core of the society who were friendly to Jews, while in Germany one would be hard put indeed to find such equivalents. The Dreyfus Affair rendered this positive point as clearly as it highlighted the negative, and previously hidden, dimensions of French life.[10]

James Joll once concretized these differences in a comparison between the two most famous Jewish intellectuals, who reached the pinnacle of political life in their respective countries, Walther Rathenau and Leon Blum. Although both were original figures, Joll insists, they also personified the stereotypical characteristics of their respective nations: Blum was logical and rational, Rathenau obscure and metaphysical. Both were deeply influenced by the fact that they were Jews. Blum not only explicitly acknowledged his Jewish identity, he also voiced a certain sympathy for Zionism, a position rather uncharacteristic of many mainstream French Jews. Yet, James Joll notes,

> The difference in their attitudes to their Jewish heritage throws light both on their characters and on the position of the Jews in France and Germany. Both identified themselves with their native country; but while for Blum assimilation was easy and natural, and hardly caused him any personal

> anxiety, even if it was at times a political disadvantage, for Rathenau his Jewish origins and his sedulous cultivation of Prussian traditions were in constant conflict, and added yet another rift to an already divided nature. Rathenau's death was directly due to the fact that he was a Jew; but it was not until the Germans had conquered and corrupted France that Blum's life was in danger for the same reason.[11]

Prevailing scholarship has indeed portrayed German Jewry as more psychologically fractured and embattled than French Jews, and the undoubted richness and qualitative edge of the intellectual achievements of German Jews to a large extent have been explained *by* these conflicts. The iconic status of the most famous exemplars—Marx, Freud, and Einstein (one is tempted to add Kafka to this trinity)—may well by now be cliché-ridden, yet no one can doubt that they were indeed among the crucial makers and embodiments of modern secular thought, universal men who, in ways we admit are notoriously difficult to precisely define (a point to which I shall return), were nevertheless quintessentially Jewish. There is a virtually inexhaustible list of German-speaking Jewish cultural and intellectual luminaries. The influence is felt even down to our own time. Is it not rather astonishing, and a phenomenon worth further investigation, that many current cult figures of Anglo-American culture, thinkers who are regarded as foundational of diverse contemporary major political and ideational currents, were Weimar Republic Jewish intellectuals?[12]

This vaunted creativity applies equally to "inner" Jewish matters and to general, secular, cultural projects. In his 1967 work, Michael Meyer demonstrated that the very origins of the modern Jew and the construction of the lineaments of contemporary Western Jewish identities and ideologies were to be found in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century encounter with European culture in Germany.[13] Scholars have painstakingly investigated, and have claimed as pioneering, German Jewry's confrontation with modernity and the creation of its Jewish equivalents.[14] A cursory list of the relevant familiar names associated with the German *Kulturbereich*—Moses Mendelssohn, Leopold Zunz, Abraham Geiger, Zacharia Frankel, Samuel Holdheim, Hermann Cohen, Theodor Herzl, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem—far from exhausts what could easily become an "interminable and otiose"[15] catalogue. Who has not been privy to conferences lauding the German-Jewish intellectual legacy? I have never heard a comparable testament to, say, the English-Jewish heritage or even the French-Jewish one.[16]

But I am beginning to feel a little uncomfortable with this conventional wisdom. The present very speculative and tentative chapter is designed as an act of critical self-examination. It was inspired by a conversation I had with Richard I. Cohen some years ago, in which he challenged many of these pieties.[17] To what extent does the model hold? Were German-Jewish

intellectuality and its cultural productions, whether specifically Jewish or expressed more generally, really quantitatively and qualitatively *sui generis*? I believe that not enough thought has gone into how we can properly arrive at such judgments. Could a comparison with the French-Jewish experience (one complicated, admittedly, by my own amateurishness in that field) provide a different perspective on this particular claim, and could it shed light on some of the more general assumptions and questions involved in this kind of discourse? And, if so, what methodology would enable us to carry out such a comparison fairly and impartially?

One guideline, perhaps, could be the way in which the protagonists themselves viewed this question. Certainly, at least with regard to internal Jewish scholarship and culture, a sense of comparative inferiority constituted a subjective datum of nineteenth-century French-Jewish consciousness itself.[18] In the first place, a French *Haskalah* did emerge, but it was very closely derived from, indeed was modeled upon, its Berlin counterpart. And while a French *Wissenschaft des Judentums* did develop, its first volume (the *Revue des études juives*) appeared as late as 1880. (Is it not symptomatic that we use the German expression *Wissenschaft des Judentums* unself-consciously and cross-culturally?) When the "Science of Judaism" did eventually emerge in France, it was as a direct result of German-Jewish influence: its earlier and most important exponent was the German-born and -trained Solomon Munk.[19] As the editors of the *Revue* put it:

> One has often stated and with a feeling of regret, that our country is far from occupying one of the first ranks in the vast scientific and literary movement, which during the last forty or fifty years has successfully revived the study of Jewish antiquity. To raise France from the state of inferiority, which suits neither her past nor her present traditions, to enter freely into this remarkable movement where she was so wrong to have let herself be outstripped, to regain if it is possible, *le temps perdu*, such has been the goal of men of goodwill.[20]

To be sure, as Jay Berkowitz and Frances Malino and other scholars have pointed out, although French-Jewish scholarship was built upon the German model, it did develop different foci of interest, more in tune with the French context and its more specific interests.[21]

If we limit ourselves initially to these internal and theological matters then there is no dispute as to the greater originality, the qualitative edge and influence of the Germans over the French. But is this not to state the obvious? Aren't these defining differences easily explicable in terms of the glaringly different demographic, political, and intellectual conditions pertaining to the two countries? Although German Jewry never possessed the masses that lived in Eastern Europe, it had far more substantial numbers than the community in France; moreover, if one were to include German-*speaking* Jewry, then

the inclusion of the Jews of the Habsburg Empire would render the demographic superiority overwhelming. At the time of the Revolution, the entire French-Jewish population was not much more than forty thousand, concentrated mainly in Alsace-Lorraine. There were no major urban centers such as Berlin, Hamburg, and Königsberg and the towns in Alsace-Lorraine had only a few Jews, and certainly no known intellectuals, unless one includes traditional rabbis in this category. The important city of Strassbourg entirely excluded Jews, and some estimates have put the total Jewish population of Paris between five hundred and eight hundred people, which consisted not of scholars but mainly of poor shopkeepers, peddlers, and laborers.

Michael Graetz has shown that it would take another generation or two before Paris became the center of French Jewry.[22] It is only at the end of the nineteenth century, when something like 60% of French Jewry resided in Paris, that any kind of comparison between French and German cities becomes salient. In 1815, Jews constituted 0.16% of the total population of France, and with the 1872 loss of Alsace-Lorraine, the percentage dropped to 0.14%. By 1897, there were about seventy-two thousand French Jews. Though estimates differ, no matter how one calculates it, France had the smallest Jewish population of any major European country—less than half the number of English Jews and a much smaller number than the Jews in the Netherlands.[23]

Apart from this crucial demographic difference, there were also important relevant politico-cultural divergences. In Germany, the link between theology and philosophy was almost constitutive of the culture. The separation between them, like the process of emancipation itself, came far later and more problematically than in France, where the force of the Enlightenment and the revolutionary inheritance meant a quick and radical split between the two realms. There was thus no built-in structural need for intellectual innovation via the *reform* of religion in France; because theology and philosophy were severed, and the political Act of Emancipation was swiftly enacted, citizenship and religious affiliation could separate, and a kind of traditional orthodoxy could remain intact, unthreatened. In Germany, emancipation was conditional upon fundamental behavioral and ideational reform. This was to be facilitated through the peculiar notion of *Bildung*, that ideational or ideological complement to the slow progress towards German political emancipation. *Bildung*, I might suggest, with its emphases on process, on developmental self-cultivation, had "reform" built into it. In Germany, then, it was this kind of built-in need, this creative tension, that produced the Mendelssohns, the Zunzes, the Geigers, the Frankels, and so on.[24] This "theologico-political predicament" applied to the later period as well, when it was clear that the tensions had, if anything, sharpened, providing the backdrop for such diverse and creative responses as Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin, and Leo Strauss (who constantly invoked the term to formulate his dilemma).[25]

This theologico-political predicament was largely absent in France. While, to be sure, no overall account should omit the Jewish Saint-Simonians, this may account for France's greater conservatism and the relative absence of innovation. To be sure, there were, as Jay Berkowitz has documented, various waves within French Jewry that initiated so-called attempts at "regeneration." These ideologies were often explicitly based on the Berlin *Haskalah*. But, typically (as in the 1830s) they were far more *conservative* with regard to religious values and liturgical and educational reform than their German counterparts were.[26] As one of these *régénérateurs,* Samuel Cahen, pithily observed, "Liberty is not favorable to religious discussions." Cahen shrewdly noted what we still take to be the crucial reason for these differences: the timing of emancipation had a decisive relationship to the nature and degree of the cultural development of the population. In Germany, while intellectual achievement was of the highest order, the Jews' legal status lagged behind. Cahen observed that German-Jewish progress in modernization (at least, in the realm of religious reform) was paradoxically linked to government intolerance. In France, the opposite situation pertained. There, the Jews had obtained citizenship well *before* they had achieved a level of cultural sophistication that would have enabled them to identify and resolve problematic religious issues.[27]

But one has to wonder about the fairness, and even the possibility, of such a comparison. On what basis can it be properly conducted? There is here a certain incommensurability; it is inappropriate to compare apples and oranges. The problem may be misguided. The more pertinent questions perhaps should be directed towards an examination of the distinct nature of the two societies and the particular structures that determined where the energies (Jewish and other) could be and had to be directed, what outlets were available, and so on.[28] Given this logic, one could well reverse the question and ask not why German Jews excelled intellectually, but rather, why French Jews featured so prominently and successfully in variegated French affairs of state in ways unthinkable within the German context. In a series of illuminating and by now familiar studies, Pierre Birnbaum has demonstrated how, given its universalistic and meritocratic criteria, the French Revolution (and its final accomplishment under the Third Republic) made state-centered emancipation possible, thereby enabling unprecedented Jewish access to national, political, administrative, judicial, and military institutions and structures of power. In unprecedented ways, Jews were incorporated into the strong Republican French state without being obligated to convert, as happened in the German and Austro-Hungarian cases.One need mention here only such familiar names as the Reinach family, Adolphe Crémieux, Leon Blum, and Pierre Mendes-France to make the point graphically clear.[29]

In other words, and quite obviously, in the Age of Emancipation, where vast energies were directed toward advancement, Jews took their opportunities according to what was contextually available. While French-Jewish creative energies could and did go into matters political, for German Jews

it was precisely this lack of integration, their peculiar outsider status and its accompanying tensions that, according to some historians, not only directed them into the cultural and intellectual arenas but that, above all, encouraged a highly productive *critical* and humanizing intellectuality, a body of significant scholarship sceptical of virtually all orthodoxies. While French-Jewish scholars (especially during the Third Republic) were able to find homes within state institutions of learning, George Mosse has suggested that the peculiar *Bildungs* productivity of the German-speaking intellectuals, this critical refusal of orthodoxies, the originality and independence, may actually have been a result of their being *excluded* from universities and from official bodies of higher education.[30]

Yet it could also be very plausibly argued, I think, that these putatively unique German-Jewish *Bildungs* characteristics were, after all, not that unique and that in general outline they were remarkably similar to the liberal, humanist, universalist, and rationalist values with which French republican or "State Jews" seemed to be so overwhelmingly associated. This, of course, is not at all to suggest that there were no right-wing or conservative Jews in either France or Germany, even if they were not preponderant.[31] Wasn't what I would call this patriotic universalism, combining old and new loyalties, equally true for both Franco-Judaism and German Jewry's ideology of symbiosis?[32] Gambetta's vision of the nation, conceived far more on the basis of morality and universal values than upon notions of land and soil, fitted the worldviews of German Jews steeped in *Bildung* as much as it did these state-centered French Jews.[33] This does not conjure up radically separate worlds of distinctive traits and characteristics, but rather points to the common needs and interests and ideologies of vulnerable minorities in a post-emancipation world. Leon Blum's cultural-moral notion of socialism differs in no significant way from George Mosse's *Bildung* socialists, German-Jewish Marxists "of the heart,"with their emphasis on culture and personality and ethical and intellectual improvement as well as economic reform:[34] "The Jews," proclaimed, Blum in 1899, "have made a religion of Justice as the Positivists have made a religion of Facts and Renan a religion of Science . . . The idea of inevitable justice is the only thing which has sustained and united the Jews in their long tribulations . . . And, unlike the Christians, it is not from another existence that they expect reparation and equity. . . . It is this world . . . which must one day be ordered in accordance with Reason, and make one rule prevail over all men and give to each his due. Is this not just the spirit of Socialism?"[35]

Viewed thus, it is not the differences, but rather the commonalities that are striking.

If a certain asymmetry did apply to the world of inner Jewish scholarship, in the domain of general culture we find that, like German Jewry, French Jews did indeed distinguish themselves (and in ways that, similarly, appear disproportionate to their overall numbers.) To be sure, the particular Jewish odyssey, the commitments and identifications of these individual

thinkers, writers and artists varied tremendously. Many of them, to be sure, were "assimilated", or only tangentially Jewish or even wholly "non-Jewish Jews" but so too were many German-Jewish intellectuals. Whatever the status of their Jewishness luminaries like Marcel Proust, Henri Bergson, Emile Durkheim also stand, surely, in the front-rank. We should be aware that such Jewish name-dropping catalogues smack of a certain parochialism, a kind of chauvinism, and, more often than not, lacks analytic purpose and bite. Still, if comparison is the order of the day, the point needs to be made: not only in the sphere of politics and administration but also in the worlds of French arts and letters, people of Jewish provenance were and still are conspicuously present. A chronologically blind and very far from comprehensive list, would have to include historians such as Daniel HaLevy and Marc Bloch, the social scientists and political commentators such as Claude Levi-Strauss and Raymond Aron, the composers Jacques Fromental Halevy and Darius Milhaud, both of whom identified with Jewish themes and causes,[36] and the oldest French Impressionist, even though he was born in St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies, Camille Jacob Pissarro (1830–1903). One could add the philosopher Léon Brunschvicg.[37] To be sure, not all these men were French-born but one should not be over-fastidious, for how many German Jews originally came from Posen or places even further East? Is it necessary to state, furthermore, that not just in Germany but also in France, Jews were quite disproportionately consumers of culture, patrons and mediators of the arts, especially in its avant-garde guises?[38]

Perhaps most pointedly, we should look at the roles played by two remarkable French actresses of Jewish origins: Rachel Felix and Sarah Bernhardt. While both were indeed stereotyped as quintessential Jewish women in various contemporary anti-Semitic discourses,[39] both nevertheless succeeded in becoming the most celebrated of theatrical figures, representative symbols, the very incarnations of the French nation.[40] Some have argued that this is mere exotica, of little or no sociological or historical significance. For all that, I would suggest, that even as a piece of exotica this would hardly have been possible within the German context, where the stage, more often than not, was the forum for mocking or castigating Jews rather than celebrating them.[41] Both actresses consciously maintained a sense of Jewish identification, though Rachel Felix did so more far more explicitly than did Sarah Bernhardt. Both emphasized their archetypical Jewish names, Rachel and Sarah. Rachel Felix (1821–1858), or the "Queen" as she became known, achieved a fame quite unprecedented in her time, becoming in effect, as her biographer Rachel Brownstein has remarked, the first international dramatic star in the history of the European theatre.[42] Contemporaries agreed that her performances were breathtaking, and she single-handedly revived what had become the old-fashioned genre of high tragedy, especially through Corneill and Racine, and saved the Comédie Francaise. Most relevantly, this beautiful woman who, according to her biographer, lived the life of a pleasure-loving

Parisian courtesan,[43] proudly and conspicuously proclaimed her Jewish origins (her parents were peddlers from Alsace, of whom it was said that they barely spoke French). Indeed, she was given a state funeral, officiated by the Grand Rabbi Isidore of Paris, at which over one hundred thousand mourners were at hand! Her sister, Sarah, who supervised the funeral arrangements, first assembled a *minyan* of local Jews, who chanted Hebrew prayers beside the deathbed.[44]

The similarities between Rachel Felix and Sarah Bernhardt are striking. Bernhardt had seen Felix as a child when Rachel visited her convent school, although Bernhardt was far less expansive about her Jewishness. Still, this most famous woman in *fin-de-siècle* France, as Janis Bergman-Carton notes, constantly called attention to her split origins: her illegitimate birth in 1844 to a beautiful Dutch Jewess and a dashing but much-absent Catholic father, who was around long enough to insist that she receive a convent education. Part of Bernhardt's persona was a continuous play with hybrid possibilities of identity and the rejection of simple categorial binaries. She intuited the relevance of her origins early on and elected to use the name Sarah instead of her given name Rosine, even her after 1857 baptism. She regularly invoked fluid narratives of her Jewish origins and experimented with the possibilities of gender and self-transformation. This is certainly how various contemporaries saw her; precisely the lack of fixity of her self-narration seemed to define her essential modern Jewishness. William Dean Howells described Bernhardt's Hamlet thus: "You never ceased to feel for a moment that it was a woman who was doing that melancholy Dane, and that the woman was a Jewess, and the Jewess a French Jewess."[45]

If, despite the attacks, Felix and Bernhardt, could, uniquely, become the celebrated embodiments of France itself (and this despite the fact that both Jews and actors have generally been regarded as outside the pale of respectable society), "non-Jewish" Jewish intellectuals such as Julien Benda and Raymond Aron could take upon themselves (albeit in very different ways) the roles of liberal consciences of the nation.[46] Moreover, it could be argued that in the Third Republic and after, French social science was very much a "Jewish" affair.[47] A mention of just the most prominent among these figures makes this clear: for the earlier period, Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Lucien Levy-Bruehl stand out, as do Claude Levi-Strauss and the ubiquitous Raymond Aron for the post–World War II period.

In ways not wholly different from Germany, then, French Jews *were* remarkably prominent on the French cultural and intellectual scene. But this is the point at which we have to face the difficult questions. These questions apply to both Jewries and, beyond that, reach to the more fundamental problem of the phenomenology of the modern Jewish intellectual as such. Are ethnic origins relevant to general intellectual creations and, if so, in what ways? How can both the activity and the content be related to Judaism, or Jewishness, especially when people's self-identification as Jews covered the

entire spectrum from estrangement or near-conversion (à la Henri Bergson) and indifference or wariness (à la Marc Bloch) to varying degrees of commitment, sometimes combining these attitudes within one person!) And, just as vexing a question, in which ways can it be said that particular endeavors in the fields of general intellectual and artistic culture, were somehow Jewish, a reflection, in one way or another, of Jewishness? [48]

There is for instance a large literature on the complex issue of the purported Jewishness of French social science—especially Durkheim's[49]—as there is for the problem, say, of the Jewishness of psychoanalysis and Freud. Some, like John Cuddihy, have very problematically linked the two, viewing the projects of both Freud and Durkheim as symptomatically Jewish, part of post-emancipation Jewry's wider, creative, yet essentially subversive, undertaking: the unmasking and undermining of the codes of Western civility and a (hidden) defense of less refined but more authentic forms of (Jewish) community. Durkheim's observations concerning the lower rates of Jewish suicide—a function of the maintenance of tight group ties—is taken as evidence, one instance, of this bias. In this view, Levy-Strauss's recovery of the sophistication of the "Savage Mind," his relativization of the superiority of Western society, his sublimations of the antipodies of the raw and cooked, become a kind of later exemplification of this subversive Jewish project.[50]

Even Pierre Birnbaum, that most careful and refined of observers, has, in far more subtle and restrained form, recently discerned a similar tendency for Durkheim and French-Jewish social scientists in general. The shift in Durkheim's thinking, he argues, that occurred between 1895 to 1900, was implicitly linked to pondering the Jewish question in the France of his time. "Is it too much to suggest, " he writes, "that what we see taking shape here—between the lines, as it were—was a theory of the collective consciousness as shared by unified values yet quietly tolerant of beliefs and allegiances that could not be accommodated within the limits of a purely 'scientific' and 'universalistic' ideology? Did Durkheim move beyond the realm of pure theory to suggest that republican assimilation make room for the recognition of differences?" "The tie to Judaism," he writes, "even when vociferously renounced, had a way of reappearing in a disguised form. This was especially true when anti-Semitism re-emerged in French society, as it did during the Dreyfus Affair, the Occupation and the Six-Day War in 1967. The sociologists and anthropologists…maintained a sort of hidden fidelity to their Jewish roots."[51]

What emerges from this literature is that the peculiarly Jewish may have less to do with substance than with sensibility; Jewishness is to be found in the nature of the emphases and sensitivities, in the weighting of omissions and inclusions. There is much that is alluring in many of these theses, tempting in the intuited connections, yet because it is so often vague and shrouded in the allusive language of transmutation or of hidden, even invisible, codes, it covers too much ground, and explains too many thinkers and matters on

exceedingly speculative (and often self-serving) bases. Insofar as they are needed (and many would ask why any such "ethnic" account is needed at all), there may be other, far simpler, explanations. Thus perhaps Jews so excelled in the French social science of the Third Republic not through some kind of hidden Jewish essence but because this was a relatively new, and thus still open, discipline at universities where ambitious but previously excluded Jews could now gain access and pour their energies into such an activity.[52] Indeed, French Jews were quite aware of this factor and proffered it as their explicit explanation. Gustave Kahn, the resident poet of the avant-garde journal *La Revue blanche* (with its heavy concentration of acculturated Jewish intellectuals) noted: "Because the modern state was opening all its doors to us, admitting us to all its competitive exams, we had to take advantage of this opportunity which was finally offered us to prove that we were not the inferior race…but of the first order by reason of its great capacity for work and by its intellectual gifts."[53]

This possibility of access and openness in the public realm is, I think, quite crucial. The glitter of Paris was partly a function of its legendary hospitality to exiles, including such famous German-Jewish intellectuals as Heinrich Heine, Ludwig Boerne, and Karl Marx. Just as the success and visibility of Rachel Felix and Sarah Bernhardt were most unlikely in the German setting, the open, absorptive power of Paris, not the nature of the Jewishness of those who excitedly flocked their way to the capital, must be an essential part of the explanation of why, for instance, so many Jewish musicians and artists resided and flourished there. Meyerbeer and Offenbach came to France from Germany in order to succeed and achieve fame, and did so brilliantly. The same applies to many Eastern European Jewish artists, who constituted a central presence within and bestowed much of the fame on the almost ironically named "School of Paris" (*Ecole de Paris*). Marc Chagall, Haim Soutine, Jacques Lipchitz, and the wild and prolific Bulgarian Jules Pascin (Pincas) achieved world-wide fame. They were joined by the Italian AmedeoModigliani, and this is just to mention only the masters among them.[54]

What does Jewishness have to do with all of this? Our rather obsessive need to link "membership in a particular group to the way people think"[55] may derive from a certain (perhaps chauvinistic) pride, but it often betrays an essentialism that reveals its flip side of anti-Semitism. If, for instance, modern intellectual Jews peculiarly tend to towards a certain radicalism, and nonconformism, a rejection of orthodoxies, anti-Semitic accounts often mirror the positive depictions of this, but reverse the judgments over such characteristics. Thus Andre Gide's 1914 rejection of Proust's *Swann's Way* in his *Journal*:

> [T]here is today in France a Jewish literature that is not French literature, that has its own virtues, its own meanings, and its own tendencies.…Jewish literature—a history that would not have to go far back in time…I can see no disadvantage to fusing the history of Jewish literature

> of other countries, for it is always one and the same thing.... [Jews] speak with greater ease than we because they have fewer scruples. They speak louder than we because they have not our reasons for speaking often in an undertone, for respecting certain things.[56]

In this respect the discourses around both Freud and Durkheim are remarkably similar. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's posthumous conversation with Freud, imploring the (very recalcitrant) master to acknowledge psychoanalysis as a "Jewish science" is the positive mirror of the condemnatory anti-Semitic discourse that regards analysis as a sullying, dirty and essentially *ressentiment* Jewish activity.[57] Similarly, the massive sympathetic literature that determinedly seeks to somehow "Judaise" Durkheim and Durkheimian thought is not different from the hostile remarks of the Bergsonian Gilbert Maire, who declared in 1912 that sociology in the hands of Durkheim, its "'grand priest,' was a Jewish science, a theory of the subordination of the individual to society...a way in which 'to speak Hebrew into the social being.'"[58]

This is not a new exercise. In 1928, the highly acculturated Julien Benda bemoaned the arrogance of what he saw as a nationalist conceit, a generalized casuistry, which he believed affected Jews and non-Jews alike:

> We all know how during the last fifty years, so many men of learning have asserted their views in the name of *French* science, of *German* science. We know how avidly so many of our writers in the same period have vibrated with *French* sensibility, *French* intelligence, *French* philosophy. Some declare that they are the incarnation of Aryan thought, Aryan painting, Aryan music, to which others reply by discovering that a certain master had a Jewish grandmother, and so venerate Semitic genius in him. Here it is not a question of inquiring whether the form of mind or a scholar or an artist is the signature of his nationality or his race and to what extent, but of noting the desire of the modern "clerks" that it should be so, and noting how new a thing this is.[59]

What has emerged in the present discussion, then, is a double issue: the question of the comparison between the French-Jewish and German-Jewish intelligentsia and, perhaps even anterior to this, the question of the proper status of conceptualizing what we mean by "Jewish intellectuality," especially when it reaches beyond the domain of explicitly Jewish themes. This analysis, at both the particular "Jewish" and the more general level, has sought to address the comparison in terms of what we take to be some of the significant commonalities as well as the more important differences. On both these levels, the methodological and substantive difficulties are manifold, the results problematic and meager. It may very well be that a more productive future approach would be an examination not so much of the comparative as the relational dimension, analyzing the complexities of mutuality, the

reciprocal influences, interactions, tensions, analogies, the pertinent mirror images. Such a history would necessarily entail questioning whether or not the nature of these reciprocal influences, jealousies, admiration, conflict, and cooperation mirrored or differed from the general, broader national history of the wider, and always loaded, German-French nexus.

We would, however, still be confronted with the perennial question as to how to define and grasp the "Jewish" dimensions of such intellectuality. This is not a question that will simply go away—indeed, it may be one which, *á la* Benda, itself is in need of historicizing and contextualization. For now, some kind of balance between the impulse to isolate the specifically Jewish element within general culture and a liberal blindness to Jewish particularity needs to be found.

Of course, the two ingredients need not necessarily be viewed as mutually exclusive. Thus, even as determined and committed a Jewish observer as Gershom Scholem, who always insisted that Sigmund Freud never regarded himself as anything but a Jew, conceded that it was necessary for Freud to go beyond his Judaism in order to pursue his scientific work.[60] Certainly, at least in intellectual and cultural terms, a sometimes intentional, or unconscious hybridity has been the order of the post-emancipation European day.[61] The realms of endeavor, identities, and creations are too mixed, and too subtle, to indulge in essentialist categorizing.[62]

Let me conclude with two examples, drawn from the German-Jewish and French-Jewish contexts, that seem to authentically depict not only how contemporaries viewed this issue, but that capture, perhaps rather idealistically, the cultural mix of such creative adventures. The first comes from Ernst Bloch's description of the exciting Weimar years: "That Reinhardt or S. Fischer or even Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer or Joseph Kains were Jews, that Piscator or Rowohlt or Furtwängler or Bassermann were not—that was of interest to absolutely no one except for shady plotters or sinister tabloids. Most people didn't even know about it. Who in the world identified Weill's music for the *Three-Penny Opera* as Jewish or Brecht's text as outright German?...The pleasant, uncomplicated everyday living and working together—that, above all, remains worthy of remembrance."[63]

The second is Matthew Arnold's poetic summation of Rachel Felix, in whose image the fragmentations and contradictory as well as unifying forces of modern life and ancient times, were played out and resolved:

> Sprung from the blood of Israel's scattered race,
> At a mean inn in German Aarau born,
> To forms from antique Greece and Rome uptorn,
> Tricked out with a Parisian speech and face,
> Imparting life renewed, old classic grace;
> Then, soothing with thy Christian strain forlorn,
> A-Kempis! her departing soul outworn,
> While by her bedside Hebrew rites have placed-

Ah, not the radiant spirit of Greece alone
She had—one power, which made her breast its home!
In her, like us, there clashed contending powers,
Germany, France, Christ, Moses, Athens, Rome,
The strife, the mixture in her soul, are ours,
Her genius and her glory are her own.[64]

14
Reflections on Theatricality, Identity, and the Modern Jewish Experience

> As for the *Jews*...one might see them virtually as a world-historical arrangement for the production of actors, a veritable breeding ground for actors.
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*

It would not be exaggeration, I believe, to argue that the theatre and issues associated with theatricality and performativity are intimately bound to, and illuminate, central dimensions of the modern West and Central European Jewish experience itself. For what are the dynamics of assimilation—or of acculturation or integration (the exact term is not at issue here)—if they are not about basic questions and conflicts of character and role transformation, the gestural and linguistic remaking and re-presentation of the individual and Jewish self? Doesn't the story of Jewish modernization revolve around the complex negotiations, metamorphoses, and stabilizations of roles and identities and the constant contestation as to their nature and authenticity? This, I would like to suggest, is the defining existential framework of the history of Jews on the German stage, in both the literal and figurative senses of the term.

The remaking of the individual and collective Jewish self, always a confusing and conflicted process, entailed a series of detailed imperatives as to external appearance and inner disposition, role, and character. At the beginning, it was an explicitly performative project based upon emulating positive role models (in the German case, imitating that of the cultured *Bildungsburgertum* with its middle-class standards of respectable behavior, its refined modes of speech, lowered decibel level and so on) and on unlearning negative ones, based upon prevalent conceptions and prejudices as to what constituted the crude (as well as dangerous and mysterious) culture of the "ghetto." This focused at first within Germany itself and later was increasingly projected upon and identified with neighboring East European Jewry, *Ostjudentum*. The stereotype was usually given caricature-like, histrionic form. Jews were misshapen, spoke their ugly jargon in a loud and uncouth way, were nervous and agitated. This was the veritable antithesis of the aesthetic, self-controlled, masculine German bourgeois ideal.[1] Goethe's portrait of the traditional rabbi with his "wild

gesticulations . . . confused murmurings . . . piercing outcries . . . effeminate movements" sums it up graphically enough.[2]

This is not the place to document the attempted process of metamorphosis, its ideal types and anti-types. I have done so elsewhere in detail.[3] Here we only need to emphasize that these early guides to role transformation were often patently theatrical. Sermons, manuals, and pamphlets provided stagelike instruction as to how to act this out. Typical of this concern were the worried words of one Jewish commentator, Anton Rée, who in 1844 wrote that political freedoms and religious reform had not led to any real improvement. The dividing gap between Jew and non-Jew, he wrote, was actually social in nature and could be bridged only by a radical reshaping of Jewish manners and mannerisms. Jews, he insisted, had to remove all traces of the cramped ghetto past from their language and gestures, for once and for all. For Rée, manners and mastery of inflection became the key to social acceptance. When he demanded a change in "dialect" he meant not only the jargon, but also the tone and the gesticulations Jews used, even—perhaps especially—when speaking German. He recommended setting up Jewish schools to be run by teachers who would know how to combat these linguistic and gestural deficiencies and inculcate both the language and culture of German *Bildung*.[4]

As on the stage, Jewish comportment in the enlightened, bourgeois age always contained a visual component, a concern with appearance, only here it was tied to a distaste for conspicuousness, the self-protective need to blend or to "hide in public" (in Jeanette Malkin's striking phrase). Sander Gilman's observation that "passing" is not about becoming "invisible" but "becoming differently visible"[5] captures an important ingredient of the ongoing post-Enlightenment West European Jewish experience. It even applied occasionally in Nazi Germany. Thus Goebbels allowed the talented daughters of the Jewish composer Friedrich Korolanyi to join the official Theatre Chamber partly because, as it was officially stated, "externally they exhibit no Jewish characteristics." Indeed, in the Third Reich, such pressure could also be felt by non-Jews! In 1937, John London tells us, the theatre magazine *Die Bühne* carried illustrated advertisements for plastic surgery, urging even German candidates for the Theater Chamber to transform their presumably un-Aryan appearance.[6] And, clearly, the most striking contemporary symptom of the impulse towards a transformed physical appearance is still to be found in the intense Jewish penchant for what has become known as "aesthetic surgery," especially on the female nose.[7]

Over time, then, middle-class modes of appearance, behavior, and culture gradually *did* become more and more natural and self-evident to German Jews, even though for many, as we shall see later, a stubborn if rather indeterminate sense of "Jewishness" persisted. Yet from the outset, their project of modernization generated substantial non-Jewish resistance. It was a resistance, moreover, that was regularly formulated (I almost said "cast") in histrionic terms: the Jew was portrayed, in varying degrees of severity, as *poseur*,

mime, dissimulator *par excellence*. These alleged characteristics all evoked distaste and apprehension, but the fear of "passing" was particularly loaded. This is because, as Scott Spector has perceptively argued, "it evokes the suspicion of oppressed individuals' inauthentic appropriation of privileged or majority identities, [and] it also contains associations that disturb assumptions of authentic, irrevocable and unexchangeable identity."[8] This suspicion, I would suggest, runs deep into the contours of the discourse surrounding modern European Jewry. It incorporates the endemic confusions and conflicts, the ubiquitous contestations regarding an alleged Jewish "essence" (or absence of essence) and, in turn, it generated options of identity that ranged from a perceived "naturalness" to dissimulation, from authenticity to inauthenticity, from self-affirmation to self-hate.

At first, when the signs of Jewish provenance were still easily detectable, and the danger thus apparently containable, the non-Jewish community dealt with the discomfort through dismissive laughter and satire. Ridicule seemed both appropriate and sufficient. Later, however, as integration appeared to be succeeding, and the anxiety developed that the dangerous Other was becoming less and less easily identifiable, representations of the Jew darkened and the critique became more sinister and ominous—even demonic.

It is surely symptomatic that the early resistance, from the late eighteenth century through the first decades of the nineteenth century, was articulated and was given its most articulate expression by playwrights and performers. If the positive Enlightenment portrait of the Jew and his humanity is Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan* (although this was only one of a slew of such plays),[9] the counter-type for the period immediately following was to be found in the Jewish parvenu, who rapidly became a stock figure on the German stage. There are numerous examples of this genre, but perhaps the most popular and influential of these portraits was Alexander Sessa's 1814 biting satire on Jewish assimilation and its impossible pretensions, *Unser Verkehr*. Nazi commentators on literature, theatre, and the Jewish question always gave this piece pride of place.[10] But there are numerous examples of this genre—for instance, Julius von Voss's 1807 play *Die Griechheit*[11] —and all sought to demonstrate the spurious and comic nature of the new Jewish cultural respectability, the fact that underneath the veneer of acquired manners and *Bildung* the old, "real" Jew was still to be found.

Nowhere was the parvenu figure more acutely marked and mocked than through the Jewish dialect, a mode of speaking that ultimately and most dramatically seemed to betray Jewish origins and its underlying character. It is significant that not only did all these plays center upon this theme, but that a famous Berlin actor, Albert Wurm made a great deal of money, as Jacob Katz has shown us, by

> representing Jewish characters not only on the stage but in the houses of the Berlin burghers. His favorite piece was his imitation of a Jewish woman who wished to entertain her guests by rendering one of the well-known

> poems from the German classics. The Jewess makes a tremendous effort to sustain the standard of High German in pronunciation and intonation. At the beginning she does indeed succeed. In the process of the performance, however, she gets carried away and reverts to the common *Judendeutsch* she has been trying so hard to avoid.[12]

This notion of *reversion to type* was a common theme, inherent to a fearful discourse that emphasized disguise and masquerade, character and its absence, authenticity and its opposite. Such themes were the subjects of various, plays, stories, and treatises. They were animated and rendered plausible by an underlying and widely held notion that there existed a difficult to define but ineradicable and pernicious Jewish "essence." Völkish, religious, and racist anti-Semites claimed that this essence rendered assimilation ultimately not merely undesirable, but constitutionally impossible— a notion, incidentally, that many committed Jews also espoused, although of course they put a positive valence on this invisible essence.[13]

The starkest articulation of the demand for and the ultimate absurdity of radical self-transformation was formulated by Oscar Panizza in his 1893 comic and nightmarish short story, "The Operated Jew." At once an indictment and satire of German intolerance *and* virulently anti-Semitic in content, it treats the assimilatory process in its totality, from the gestural, linguistic, and mimetic moment through the ultimate transformative medical procedure. It depicts the desperate attempts of a completely stereotypical Jew, the culturally and physically misshapen Itzig Faitel Stern, to "become the equivalent of an occidental human being." It portrays "how this monster took terrible pains to adapt to our circumstances, our way of walking, thinking, our gesticulations, the expressions of our spiritual movements, our manner of speech." Eventually, radical surgery, an unprecedented operation on Faitel's entire "skeletal framework" is undertaken by the famous surgeon Professor Klotz (!) to set the seal on the required metamorphosis. When this physiocultural metamorphosis is finished and Faitel is virtually indistinguishable from other Germans, a financial arrangement (of course) enables him to marry a "blonde German lass." It is at the sumptuous wedding, when Faitel is supposed to enter "Christian society for good," that his reversion to type occurs. At first, he lapses uncontrollably into his old gestures, loudness, and ugly Yiddish accent. But the regression is not merely cultural, it is palpably physical; the assimilationist project exposed in all its genetic absurdity:

> ...Faitel's blond strands of hair began to curl...Then the curly locks turned red, then dirty brown and finally blue-black....His arms and legs which had been bent and stretched in numerous operations, could no longer perform the newly learned movements nor the old ones...A terrible smell spread in the room...Klotz's work of art lay before him crumpled and quivering, a convoluted Asiatic image in wedding dress, a counterfeit of human flesh, Itzig Faitel Stern.[14]

For obvious reasons, these issues also preoccupied Jewish writers, sometimes satirically, sometimes with deadly seriousness. In his hilarious 1922 "The Operated Goy," Salomo Friedländer (writing under the pseudonym Mynona) inverted the Panizza story. He traces the tortured (but ultimately successful) ways in which the impeccably Aryan Count Kreuzwendedich Rehsok, is transformed into the quintessential caftan Jew, Moishe Mogandovidwendedich.[15] A satirical variation of this theme, written by Julius Freund, was put on the cabaret stage in a 1907 Berlin Metropol revue. It depicts the son of the notorious anti-Semitic racist Count Pückler (not a fictional character) who, after spending six months with one of the Herrnfeld brothers (whose popular "Jargontheater" we will analyze later), becomes quite "Yiddified,",while Herrnfeld's daughter, who conversely resides in the count's estate, becomes thoroughly Teutonized. The stereotypes are deliciously inverted—the Jewish daughter was played by the beautiful Fritzi Massary and Pückler's Aryan son by a fat, ungainly non-Teutonic-looking actor—and the notion of "essence" was summarily dispatched.[16]

Wild variations on these kind of themes persist into our own time. In a relatively recently staged play, *Orla* (Foreskin), the young Israeli playwright Reshef Levy has created the mirror opposite of Panizza's Faitel, probably unwittingly. Unlike Faitel, who was unable to shed his Jewishness, Levy's Rabbi of Karlitz is damned by his physiological inability to remain a Jew—his circumcised foreskin actually renews itself and grows back on![17]

At a far more universal level, as we all know, Franz Kafka was obsessed with these problematics of self-transformation. This is quite obvious not only in the famous story "Metamorphosis" (1915) but also in the multileveled "Report to an Academy." This story—first published, significantly, in *Der Jude* in 1917—documents the indignities, the painful compromises, and irresolvable anxieties of authenticity, as reported by a captured ape whose keepers attempt to transform him into a human being. It powerfully problematizes the concept of a "pure" identity and, in this post-Edenic world, renders both integral apehood and/or unspoiled humanity ultimately impossible. It would not take too much interpretive daring to replace the ape—human antinomy with the terms "German" and "Jew."[18]

All these critiques of assimilation notwithstanding, Jewish integration did continue apace and with some success in Germany. Anti-Semites inevitably turned their attention to this. To the question as to what had made Jewish insinuation possible, a new, rather different, "essence" was added. This was thought to go to the very heart of the Jewish mystique. Jewish essence was precisely the crafty, histrionic ability to camouflage one's essence. Jewish existence now was not only described in theatrical terms—it now became itself a form of theatre.

This is most strikingly elaborated in—but by no means limited to—the writings of Hans Blüher, the first historian of the German Youth Movement, famous theorist of homoeroticism[19] and, of course, radical anti-Semite. Although his vicious treatises on the Jews were wide-ranging, here I can only

examine what we can label as his "theatrical ontology" of the Jews, their capacity for disguise, and his panic as to their nonidentifiability. As with most nationalists, there was no room in Blüher's system for hybridity or ambiguity. Every people, he declared in classical Völkish fashion, had its own built-in being and aptitude (*Geschick*). Jewish *Geschick*—radically incompatible with the deeply historical nature of *Deutschtum*—consisted in the dissimulatory mastery of appearances. The faculty of disguise was built into their sick substances. "The Jews," he declared, "are the only Volk that operate through mimicry. Mimicry of the blood, the name and form. . . . When the Jew mimics he conceals his whole substance. Jewish mimicry is anchored in the race, in the idea of Juda."[20]

This mimicry had enabled the always-destructive Jewish influence to proceed apace.[21] Political emancipation, combined with this thespian talent, had created an impossible and fraudulent situation in which the dividing lines between German and Jew had been eroded or entirely erased. Blüher's favorite example here was that of the famous member of the Stefan Georg circle, the writer Friedrich Gundolf (born Gundelfinger). Gundolf, Blüher declared, had carefully cultivated this metamorphosis (and he illustrated this with photographs of Gundolf in his "German" and "Jewish" forms). Still, he insisted, inevitably some tiny cue—something in the Ur-Jewish laugh or gesticulation—would give the Jews away "and the mask falls." This, Blüher hastened to add, was not necessarily a matter of intentional deception, but rather a quite unique "plastic-organic talent of the Jewish substance to mimicry."[22]

The recipe for future action was clear: the boundaries had to be redrawn. Jews should no longer be allowed to say "we Germans;" they had to make themselves overtly identifiable, culturally recognizable. "In foreseeable times every master of an art will be able to say precisely: that is Jewish! The [sensory] organs [of the Germans] are not yet sufficiently sharpened as they are in the economic and political realms. But one day they will be and the borderlines will be drawn in an entirely un-ambiguous way." Once "Jewish substance-mimicry" finally collapsed, one would be able to recognize "the Jews in Germany as clearly as one sees them in Russia and Poland. There no one confuses them with the native [population]. The sense organs will become sharpened and, with the same certainty with which we distinguish today between a Negro-sculpture and Praxiteles, we will be able to intuit and no longer be confused by the Jewish character. One will sense the movement of the Jew, his walk, his gestures, the way in which his finger comes out of his hand, the extension of hair in the neck, the eyes and tongue of the Jew with such certainty that no mistake will be any longer possible, and then the latent ghetto, in which the Jew lives today, will become manifest."[23] (Blüher, incidentally, claimed that, from an internal Jewish point of view, only Zionism would be able to uproot this debilitating "substance-mimicry" from Jewish being[24]—an idea not too far removed from certain Zionist positions. For Theodor Lessing, mimicry was a pervasive characteristic of modern

exilic Jewry and represented both a form of denaturalization and massive self-deception.[25] In more sophisticated fashion, Achad Ha'am's "Imitation and Assimilation" provided space for a positive function for the imitative impulse.[26])

Blüher was working within an established tradition. In the mid-nineteenth century, Richard Wagner's "Judaism in Music" had popularized the idea of the Jew's fundamental incapacity for creativity within European culture. Torn from his own historical community (the cultural products of which Wagner regarded in any case with great disdain), the uprooted modern Jewish artist was essentially barren, superficial, imitative. It is surely pertinent to our theme that in *Siegfried* there is a character called Mime, all of whose characteristics appear to be stereotypically Jewish.[27] A similar line was propagated in some positively elevated intellectual circles. Thus, in his notorious 1934 piece on "Jewish psychology," Carl Gustav Jung wrote that the "young Teutonic peoples are thoroughly capable of creating new cultural forms. . . . The Jew as a relative nomad has never created, and presumably will never create, a cultural form of his own, for all his instincts and talents are dependent on a more or less civilized host people."[28]

This tradition culminated in Joseph Goebbels's obscene July 1941 article "Mimicry," where he documents the systematic Jewish cultural and spiritual laming of the European nations through this form of deception; only the rise of National Socialism had enabled one to see through this. Mimicry, Goebbels wrote, would no longer help the Jews—Germany and Europe were now ruthlessly striking back. In this article, incidentally, Goebbels more than hints as to the fate of the Jewish people that was then underway.[29] (It is interesting to note that racist anti-Semitic diatribes centered around the notion of "mimicry" continue to this day and abound on the Internet.[30])

Of course, these kinds of notions did not have to take on explicitly anti-Semitic overtones; they could be far richer and more powerfully ambiguous. Thus Nietzsche defined acting as "falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding as a power that pushes aside one's so-called 'character,' flooding it and at the same time extinguishing it; the inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance;* an excess of the capacity for all kinds of adaptation that can no longer be satisfied in the service of the most immediate and narrowest utility." The Jews, he declared, were the people who possessed the art of adaptability par excellence. "One might see them," he declared, "virtually as a world-historical arrangement for the production of actors, a veritable breeding ground for actors. And it really is high time to ask: What good actor is *not*—a Jew? The Jew . . . exercises his power by virtue of his histrionic gifts."[31]

We must now, however, recover our bearings somewhat and proceed to the actual rather than metaphorical theatre. The substantial involvement of Jews, regardless of the nature and intensity of their Jewish commitment, in German and Austrian theatrical life as directors, writers, actors, critics, and patrons is

too familiar to rehearse here. As in other spheres of culture, their numbers were disproportionately large. Surely, we have gone beyond the need to document this, for it smacks of apologetic "contribution" history. I will desist from that here. Nor do I mean to pursue the mirror-opposite of this narrative: that depressing anti-Semitic obsession that viewed German-speaking theatre, its finances, personnel, and content, as thoroughly Judaized,[32] except to note that this animus had an extraordinary Nazi-like prefiguration years before that regime came to power. As early as 1898, the Austrian Adam Mueller-Guttenbrunn was appointed director of the Kaiserjubilaeums-Stadttheater, an institution established specifically to promote Christian-Aryan performances and supported by those who sought a completely Jew-free theatre, even among the audience![33]

I propose, rather, to examine the theatre as both a physical and psychosymbolic site in which the problematic dynamics of post-Enlightenment Jewish identity that we have discussed here were condensed and intensely played out. It should be viewed as an expressive microcosm of these manifold discourses and their divergent attempted resolutions. Here, I can only touch on what I take to be the most crucial (or at least most interesting) aspects in an almost endlessly variegated topic.

Let us begin with the theater as a problematic site of social display. We have already seen that it was on the stage that the emergent social type of the Jewish *parvenu* received its most acute representations. But Walter Rathenau's notorious 1897 critique of offensive Jewish cultural philistinism, of Jewish ugliness and comportment, was not about what was presented on stage but off it, and it registered his intense embarrassment with the crude conspicuousness and behavior of Jewish theatre audiences that had come to agitatedly preen themselves in the public spotlight ("loud and self-conscious in their dress, hot-blooded and restless in their manner"). Rathenau's reported theater experience, as expressed in his "*Höre Israel,*" was not about the play but about the spectator; it provides an intensely revealing light not so much on the Jewish *parvenu* as on his own deeply troubled sense of Jewishness.[34]

This would be one avenue of exploration. But, of course, the most pressing questions in the theatrical experience—those that underlie the entire discussion of disguise, passing, character, essence, authenticity, and inauthenticity—revolve around the multiple expressions of, and differing valences attached to, that vague, elusive, yet pervasive, hypostatization called Jewishness.

There is, of course, a problem of recognition with that theatre in which the content of the plays, the languages in which they were performed, and the identity and self-identification of the actors are all explicitly Jewish. The lines of identification were quite clear when the Hebrew Habimah or the Yiddish theater troupes (from Vilna and the Moscow Jewish Academic State Theater) performed in Weimar Germany.[35] This kind of Jewish theater most famously bewitched Kafka, and it did the same for many other leading German and German-Jewish intellectuals (such as Alfred Döblin and Alfred Kerr), precisely

because they viewed it as expressing an organic Jewish authenticity that their deracinated Western brothers had long lost.[36] We should not forget that it was during the 1920s that the cult of the *Ostjuden,*[37] with its thorough inversion of nineteenth-century bourgeois-assimilationist priorities, reached its height.

The definitional waters get murkier, however, when it comes to "Jewish" participation within the mainstream of German-speaking theater. We know that Jews of all kinds wrote, directed, acted in, reviewed, and attended these plays. What was "Jewish" about all of this? Anti-Semites (as we have seen) found it very hard to believe that even for fully acculturated performers and creative artists there was not something "essentially" Jewish present. This was (and perhaps still is) also true for many Jewish commentators, who sought to identify not only a numerical Jewish presence but also the special traits, a peculiar spirit, that somehow inhered in that presence. Even in his progressive treatment of the question, Arnold Zweig indulged in such a dubious exercise. The acting gifts of the Jews derived, he declared, from the fact that they belonged to the warm and expressive Mediterranean type in contrast to the cold and stiff Protestants of the North.[38] This is an ongoing temptation, and if we are to view the theatre as a forum for a—perhaps coded—Jewish "identity-negotiation or self-performance," the conceptual and historical tools required for such an operation need, perforce, to be delicate.

If many Jews active in the theatre either did not thematize their Jewishness on the stage or did not give it much explicit attention, could it not be that this neglect was almost an inevitable product of their ongoing integration into German society, in which they lived and productively worked? One should not view these people through post-1933 eyes. These were creative artists who not only felt at home in German culture but who in many crucial ways were helping to form it. Marline Otte has insightfully traced the metamorphosis of the identity of those German Jews involved in what we today would call popular culture or "the entertainment industry." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Jewish families (the Blumenfelds, Strassburgers, and Lorches) were among the most prominent circus-owners and performers in Germany. Remarkably, this activity was combined with both a deep Jewish communal commitment and stringent Orthodox observance. With post-World War I inflation, these Jewish circuses came to an end. Jews now variously moved from the circus to the cabaret and then to the higher world of theater. Otte's point is that this sequence served as way-stations of German-Jewish acculturation and that the move from *kunstler* (artist) to *schauspieler* (actor) represented a shift of identification in which, more and more self-evidently, those in the performing arts were integrated into, and saw themselves as part of, the German *Kulturnation*.[39]

This does not mean that no identifiably Jewish components were at work. In the first place, both within the Kaiserreich and the Weimar Republic, even the most acculturated Jews could not but notice anti-Semitic currents that rendered their acceptance into *Deutschtum* often precarious. Given this

marginal vulnerability, their emphases, choice of works, and values may well have been biased towards the cosmopolitan and the humanistic, suspicious of increasingly chauvinistic popular taste and opinion and, where possible, intent on channeling it into more constructive directions. Moreover, since German Jews historically and sociologically were never part of normative Christian religious traditions or national Völkish structures, "culture," openly and dynamically conceived, became their obvious mode of identification and creativity, a means of both integrating and perhaps maintaining a distinct sense of self, in differing and not always overtly defined ways.[40] Given previous and ongoing exclusions, German Jews, as Peter Jelavich has perceptively noted, not only sought to assimilate into the dominant aesthetic traditions, but were also particularly receptive to, and indeed often the creators of, new cultural spaces and theatrical experimentation.[41] It is here, rather than in matters of content and thematization, that he locates the relevance of the "Jewishness" of Otto Brahm and Max Reinhardt. (The frequently noted, almost chauvinist, observation that Brahm was born Abrahamsohn and that his even greater and more famous disciple, Reinhardt, was originally Goldmann, or that the Expressionist poet Jacob van Hoddis constructed his name anagramatically from Davidsohn, possesses little analytical value.[42])

Beyond such considerations of historical and socio-psychological marginality, the search for some ineffable "Jewishness" may not only be a somewhat pointless pursuit of anti-Semites and philo-Semites alike, but may miss the essential complexity, the mix and hybridity, and the irrelevance of such barricaded entities as "Germanness" and "Jewishness" when it came to these moments of cultural creativity. And even though we already encountered Ernst Bloch's description of the exciting Weimar years in the previous chapter, it is worth quoting again because it comes closer to the mark: "That Reinhardt or S. Fischer or even Bruno Walter and Otto Klemperer or Joseph Kains were Jews, that Piscator or Rowohlt or Furtwängler or Bassermann were not—that was of interest to absolutely no one except for shady plotters or sinister tabloids. Most people didn't even know about it. Who in the world identified Weill's music for the *Three-Penny Opera* as Jewish, or Brecht's text as outright German?... The pleasant, uncomplicated everyday living and working together—that, above all, remains worthy of remembrance."[43] The realms of post-Enlightenment cultural endeavor, and of identities and creations, are too mixed, too subtle to indulge in essentialist categorizing.[44]

But this is to make life too easy, a little too politically correct. The topic is actually tougher than I have made it out to be. Bloch presents an idyllic world of cultural creativity in which ethnic distinctions played no role at all—and one in which the issue of Jewishness is totally elided. But this surely omits a persistent dimension of felt and perceived experience, one that sometimes requires rather subtle decipherment and that, at other times, though quite obvious and blatant, has remained, for various ideologically determined reasons, studiously ignored and neglected.

The principled temptation to read or project an unacknowledged Jewishness into general cultural phenomena should, of course, be resisted. Yet, in certain cases this kind of decoding seems both necessary and persuasive. Jeanette Malkin's compelling analysis of the links between Jewishness and the Expressionist theatre is illuminating in this regard. There is no question here of reducing the one to the other, of rendering this wider cultural movement as somehow essentially "Jewish" (as many of its critics sought to do). Rather, Malkin locates a certain "fit," a kind of elective affinity: for its Jewish exponents, the Expressionist stage provided a remarkably appropriate vehicle for the acting out of distinctive Jewish needs and sensibilities while at the same allowing for their transmutation and integration into a broader, more abstract, German cultural idiom.[45]

The enlightened bourgeois age required, as we have seen throughout this chapter, that the agitated, nervous, overexpressive Jewish body and mind be recast into more self-controlled, restrained models of gentility. Most Jews acquiesced to this mimetic demand, and in so doing they either implicitly or explicitly confirmed that there was some reality to the stereotype. This was, indeed, a continuing part of Jewish self-consciousness, evidenced by a spectrum of attitudes that ranged from affectionate, folkloric self-irony to the pathological babblings of a self-hater like Arthur Trebitsch who, in his horror of expressive movement and adulation of "fixed forms," obsessively reduced the entirety of the Jewish experience to its threatening "secondary mobile spirit."[46]

Expressionism, as Malkin shows, forged an acting style that portrayed bodies and characters as warped, restless, distorted, vibrating with nervous energy—mirror images, one might say, of the over-expressive Jew himself. Moreover, its thematic emphases of isolation, rebellion, and transformation fitted not only the marginal (provincial or Eastern) biographies of most of its Jewish practitioners, but also fitted their ultimate integrative agenda into a transfigured German society. It thus facilitated a dual function: the emphasis on "becoming" allowed for the possibility of a radical and abstract breakthrough, beyond the simple categories of either "German" or Jew," into a regenerated world at the same time that it also permitted one (albeit in transmuted form) to freely indulge in the normally repressed and castigated histrionic expressiveness that constituted an ongoing part of intimate Jewish subculture.

Not all cases are in need of such subtle decipherment. For Jewishness constituted a far more blatant, almost triumphalist, presence in what many uncomfortable contemporaries regarded as a kind of mongrel theatre, one that positively reveled in upsetting the canons of ethnic discreteness and cultural and sexual respectability, and one that sought to breach the previously hermetic boundary between an exclusively "Jewish" (Hebrew or Yiddish) theatre, on the one hand, and the elevated cultural heights of the German-speaking *oeuvre*, on the other. I am referring here to the now nearly forgotten Herrnfeld brothers,

Anton and Donat, and their raucous and never respectable Berlin theater.[47] A measure of the remarkable success of, demand generated for, and needs satisfied by this enterprise of popular culture, which functioned on the borderline with vaudeville, was the inordinately long time that it functioned and prospered. The brothers opened up their theatre in the Alexanderplatz in 1890 and, as a result of their meteoric success, were able to build a more impressive structure in 1906 in the Kommandantenstrasse, which lasted through 1916, when Donat Herrnfeld died at the age of 48. Although their non-avant-garde, nonmodernist activities in the Scheunenviertel's Kommandantenstrasse was forgotten, the site became notorious as the theatre of the *Jüdische Kulturbund*, established and supervised by the Nazis. Apart from the fact that the building was located in the East European Jewish section of Berlin, this choice, as we shall shortly see, was cynically appropriate.

I want to dwell a little on this theatre, its agenda, audience, and its highly contested reception, precisely because its anomalous nature both exposed and threatened the normative center. The Herrnfeld brothers constituted the opposite pole of Bloch's idyll of a *Bildungs*-oriented ethnic irrelevance. Theirs was not a classically Jewish theatre in the obvious sense that the Hebrew-speaking Habimah or the touring Yiddish troupes could be so designated. Their themes and characterizations were drawn from the reservoir of general drama, and the plot and settings almost always took place within contemporary Germany. Yet, uniquely, this *was* Jewish theater.[48] It featured milieu comedies in which the various types were clearly and unabashedly "Jewish" in manners, gesture and accent, punctuated by frequent lapses into *Galician* jargon or, as one observer (Walter Turszinsky in the 1906 *Grosstadt-Dokumente* volume on the Berlin theatre) put it, "agitated, excitable, nervous types, naturally of Palestinian origin".[49] It was precisely these stereotypical characterizations that so disturbed acculturated or assimilated Jews. Indeed, in 1921Alfred Döblin praised the touring Vilna Yiddish players as dignified and authentic Jewish theater, in explicit contradistinction to what he called the Herrnfeld's "unworthy *Gemauschel*."[50]

Moreover, the Herrnfelds, as their historian Peter Sprengel has pointed out, entirely broke with the prior discretion with which Jews active on the German stage related (or, rather, did not relate) to their Jewishness—for instance, Brahm, Reinhardt, Jessner, Sternheim, and Kerr. Traditionally this was neither expressed nor thematized. Fully acculturated, other acting companies had regarded themselves as representatives of the modern German theatre, not the Jewish theatre. The Herrnfelds entirely upset this categorical apple cart. In comic ways (some argued, self-hating and anti-Semitic ways), the Jewish element was blatantly present. Neither hidden nor coded, it was given free rein.[51] Departing from the stock roles (whether positive or negative) and the specific stereotypical functions assigned to them within the German theatrical tradition, the Herrnfelds portrayed a variety of characters whose Jewishness was simply normal, taken for granted. They did not, as

was usually the case, present Jewishness from an external or apologetic perspective or as a kind of exotic curiosity but rather, as Sprengel perceptively notes, as a self-evident reality, a natural datum without coded messages in need of subtle deciphering.[52] Admittedly, plays like *Die Klabriasparthie*, *Der Fall Blumentopf* and *Herr Cohn aus der zweiten Etage,* combined this realism with caricature. Yet it was precisely in the fusion of comedy and Jewish normality that the attractiveness as well the deeply controversial nature of their ethno-comedy lay.[53]

Outraged opponents and liberal critics of the Herrnfeld theatre claimed that the audiences that flocked to the Kommandantenstrasse were essentially bigoted German conservatives, integral nationalists, and anti-Semites, who came to see their worst prejudices about Jewish immorality and comportment confirmed.[54] But it was almost certainly the Jewish *Bürgertum*, not non-Jews and anti-Semites, who constituted the bulk of the audience. Gershom Scholem (who was no lover of theatre, yet who attended and enjoyed *Die Klabriaspartie* and who was scolded for it by his father, who also claimed that such plays promoted anti-Semitism) even claimed that the brothers "performed Jewish comedies for years before an entirely Jewish public—the only audience able to appreciate the idiom and intonation of these plays."[55] What did attract these audiences? There are those who argue that for both its creators and consumers, much German-Jewish self-satire disclosed a pathological internalization of the worst anti-Semitic stereotypes.[56] Yet, as we learn more about ethnic self-representations and humor, this seems increasingly implausible. It is far more likely that, in a society where the pressure for cultural and behavioral conformity (to a rigid *Bildungs* standard) was so great, the Herrnfeld theatre provided an important outlet for freely expressing and comfortably experiencing an identity whose legitimacy was constantly in question.[57]

The Herrnfeld era was thus both important and symptomatic. Yet it remains virtually unknown and, until very recently, had received very little, if any, scholarly attention.[58] Even more surprising, it is absent from the Nazi accounts of Jews in the theatre that I have consulted; this is strange, as it would have provided explosive grist for their mill.[59] But the Herrnfelds are also ignored in most Jewish analyses of the time. There is not a single mention of them, for instance, in Arnold Zweig's major 1927 study of Jews on the German stage! Perhaps this is because, like almost all the scholars devoted to the subject, Zweig concentrated on the classics and the more sophisticated avant-garde productions.[60] Because the Herrnfeld brothers were determinedly unrespectable, out to contravene and satirize the sexual and ethnic norms of their time, they have been ignored by those historians who are ideologically inclined to confuse high culture with all of culture. Yet the brothers provide a crucial additional perspective on the complex and evolving dynamics of German-Jewish identity.

Indeed, they help to fill in, to complete, the whole picture. For if one major part of the history of German Jews and their corresponding role within the

theater is about overcoming the ghetto past and their self-transformative act into *Bildung*, there is also another, rather neglected, yet quite crucial, dimension. This is the too little discussed underside, in which Jews resisted too pressing a socialization, opted for the familiar, the intuitive and the frivolous, in the light of the stricter canons of self-cultivation and respectability, bridled at the repressions of too rapid a process of Germanization and *embourgoisement*. The Herrnfeld brothers were the veritable distillation, the symbolic incarnations, of this underside.[61]

These, indeed, were deep-running and never-resolved tensions that marked the entire post-Enlightenment German-Jewish experience. All Jews in some way or another had to navigate the clash between formal respectability and unguarded intimacy, expressiveness and restraint, conformity and difference, outsiderdom and the mainstream. The existence of, and tension between, these poles—on the wider stage as well as literal stage—was crucial to the creative history and identity negotiations of German Jewry. If we ignore one or the other, we do so at our peril.

15

Between Rights, Respectability, and Resistance: Reframing the German-Jewish Experience

On the Occasion of the Second Centenary of Gabriel Riesser's Birth[1]

Gabriel Riesser was born two hundred years ago. Given the speed of our own global age, two hundred years seems a very long time. Indeed, in Riesser's case some may be tempted to view him as an especially distant, a merely historical, figure, rendered sadly irrelevant by the subsequent course of German history, which mercilessly mocked and then shattered the dreams and achievements of this liberal champion of equal rights and of Jewish integration into a unified nation. Yet this reading would not only endow the murderous anti-Semitic Nazi assault with a kind of normative teleological inevitability, something which almost all historians reject, but would also misread Riesser's longer-term centrality and significance for the German-Jewish experience as a whole. To belittle Riesser's liberalism on the grounds of its (temporary) defeat because of the Nazi drive to "de-emancipation" amounts to little more than a species of blaming the victim rather than the perpetrator.[2]

Riesser was presciently aware of the fragile and indivisible logic of emancipation. This is what still provides many of his pronouncements with a remarkably vital and contemporary ring. Who can remain unmoved by his stirring comments on the radical indivisibility of human freedom or can consider them no longer relevant? In his famous speech to the Frankfurt National Assembly in 1848—in response to Moritz Mohl's proposal to maintain anti-Jewish legislation—Riesser pointed to the "pernicious rift" (*einen verderblichen Riss*) at the very core of the nascent German democracy and declared: "You must not believe that you can enact discriminatory laws without the whole system of freedom suffering a pernicious rift and having implanted within it the seeds of its own destruction."[3]

Jewish circles from the mid–nineteenth century through 1933 celebrated Riesser for a variety of interested reasons. His open avowal of his Jewish identity (long before Martin Buber's World War I journal of the same name, Riesser proudly named his journal *Der Jude*[4]), plus the fact that he was twice elected vice-president of the 1848 National Assembly, were no doubt a source

of continuing ethnic pride. In the same vein, Riesser was much admired and quoted for articulating an ongoing Enlightenment German-Jewish penchant that defined (or, rather redefined) the essence of Jewish identity as universalism itself. Thus in his 1838 appeal to his fellow "Israelites" to contribute to a memorial for Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Riesser asked: "Whose heart beats louder over the thoughts of freedom, toleration, love of mankind, the struggle against religious animosity and moral constraint than the German Jew, when he is able to comprehend his position and vocation?"[5]

Rendering Riesser into an icon was not merely a matter of self-interested apologetics. His stand on emancipation, as David Sorkin has perceptively pointed out,[6] constituted nothing less than a paradigm shift in the ways Jews came to think about and articulate their claims to equal membership within German society and the body politic. Riesser explicitly championed the Jews, not by requesting special privileges, as was traditionally and rather humiliatingly practiced, or even, as was the norm within pre-1848 polities, by relying on the patronizing conditions of state authorities, but rather on liberal-universalist grounds, on inherent rights that the state owed its citizens. Certainly, belonging to this or that religion, holding this or that belief, could not be the criterion of citizenship.

Riesser the lawyer, for many years barred from obtaining positions because he was a Jew, overturned what until the 1830s had been the "emancipation contract." This posited that Jews were to be given rights according to the state's demand for Jewish "regeneration"—to be acquired through a gradual process of *Bildung*. Critics like Heinrich Laube pointed to Riesser as an exemplar, a successful model of this process of refinement and regeneration: Riesser, Laube wrote, had shown "that nationalization for the Jew is generally possible as far as the thoroughly cultivated Jewish types (*Naturen*) are concerned."[7] But Riesser himself would have none of this. The state, he insisted, was not a tutelary and paternalistic institution; emancipation was not about education and conditioning from above but a legal-political matter inherent to a conception of natural rights. If anything, he proclaimed, it was the *state,* not the Jews that required regeneration.

Riesser also stressed the importance of *Bildung* in the creation of a civilized, integrated, and liberal society. In varying ways, this doctrine of self-cultivation, which transcended traditional religious and ethnic backgrounds and identification, was already on the way to become a defining mark of all of modern German Jewry (we shall come back to this).[8] Jewish efforts at ethical regeneration and aesthetic refinement were indeed crucial, but Riesser's more muscular, self-assertive approach insisted that *Bildung* should not be a one-way process, but rather should apply equally to both Jew *and* non-Jew. For its time, his criticism of non-Jewish behavior, of *its* lack of *Bildung,* was radical. As early as 1831, he declared his disdain for what he called German Gentile "craven arrogance" and their "pleasure in oppressing."[9] Only mutual progress, not merely Jewish progress, would lead "to the path of pure human and genuine patriotic development."[10]

But even this self-assertive emphasis on the political realm, on natural rights, and on a unified national state depended both upon a particular notion of Jewish identity and the assumption of a shared national belonging to Germany that at best remained unresolved and problematic from then through 1933. Jewishness for Riesser was defined purely in terms of faith and religion—and a very reformed, deistic religion at that. Riesser was a member of the radical layman *Frankfurt Verein der Reformfreunde* which "while retaining ethical monotheism, called for the abolition of virtually the entire structure of Jewish law, the abandonment of a hope of Jewish national restoration, the moving of the Sabbath to Sunday and the elimination of circumcision as a mandatory rite."[11] But his claim for equal Jewish rights did not rest on religious grounds but rather on the contention that German institutions had completely suffused Jewish souls.[12] "We are not immigrants," he declared, "we were born here—and so we cannot claim any other home: either we are Germans or we have no homeland. Whoever disputes my claim to this my German fatherland disputes my right to my own thoughts, my feelings, my language—the very air I breathe. Therefore I must defend myself against him as I would against a murderer."[13]

One should not rush to facile ahistorical judgment about Riesser's liberal naïveté, or his simplistic belief in a natural Jewish belonging to the German nation while at the same time Jews somehow retained their group cohesiveness. To a certain degree, he was aware of the contradictions and paradoxical price entailed in his liberal worldview. Although he favored "mixed marriages," he also vehemently opposed conversion to Christianity as the path to civil rights.[14] He passionately advocated freedom of faith, but he understood that the revolt against religious oppression could itself metamorphose into an antireligious principle. This would then threaten not only the very fabric of genuine social and spiritual freedom, but could also destroy the particularity of Jewish society which, albeit in vague and insufficiently articulated ways, Riesser desired to maintain. For Riesser hoped that emancipation, liberalism, and the yearning for universality would not tempt Jews to lose the living ties with each other and with their historical heritage. In doing so, he was one of the first to raise a peculiarly modern and perennially perplexing question: What was the nature and content of this particular, ongoing Jewish "substance"? Like so many others, he invoked the most general terms to somehow capture its elusive essence: "commonality," "uniqueness," "shared belonging." His basic stance possessed a tautological character: "...while Judaism was a group identified by its religion only and its values were universal, at the same time those universal values were to identify the Jews as a particular group." As Uriel Tal has succinctly demonstrated, Riesser's questions and formulations mirrored a far wider and ongoing predicament: the dilemma of Jewish self-definition within the context of modern, liberal, emancipatory society.[15]

It is here that, I would propose, Riesser's longer-term relevance for the wider modern German-Jewish experience lies. If the major building blocks of that experience consisted in the struggle for, and achievement of, equal civic

and political rights, integration within the German nation, self-refinement through the cultivation of *Bildung,* and respectable middle-class existence, *as well as* resisting total absorption so as to somehow maintain—in some form or other—a personal and collective sense of Jewish self, then Riesser's life and work both helped in its creation and, in many perhaps more significant ways, reflected its ongoing paradoxes, tensions, shortcomings, and achievements. For it was within this unresolved dialectical framework suspended between integration, *Bildung,* and respectability (*Sittlichkeit*), as well as with a certain resistance to these forces and the strains of identity that these entailed, that German-Jewish life was consequently to be dynamically negotiated.

I am not saying anything new or unknown to state that much of the modern German Jewish project of integration into German life was about reforming and recreating itself on the basis of these pillars of *Bildung* and respectability. Scholars have concentrated on the importance of *Bildung* in this regard, yet it is only relatively recently that the importance of "respectability" has been recognized. *Bildung* and respectability may have been twins, but in many ways they were not identical either conceptually or socially. The Humboldtian ideal of *Bildung* (an emancipatory ideal to which German Jews adhered long after the nature and content of that ideal had undergone problematic changes) was essentially tied to an open, classical goal of self-formation and cultivation and linked to a universalist ideal of humanity; "respectability" *(Sittlichkeit*)—with its strict norms of proper behavior, its standards of "decency," its demands of propriety—was far more regulatory, demanding a rather rigid conformity in manners and morals. Jews were deeply attracted to the notion of *Bildung*, because it was a self-making ideal that transcended both religion and nationality and which, in the German case, carried with it the promise, indeed was the condition, of equality and citizenship. Respectability without doubt was a much more narrowing, restrictive mode and demanded fixed behavior rather than the never-ending process of self-cultivation. Yet, as George L. Mosse has brilliantly pointed out, the two worked together: *Bildung* and open-endedness in fact operated *within* the restrictive moral order of "respectability." Moreover, despite the differences, Jews could equally adapt to both, for neither *Bildung* nor respectability required any particular ethnic or religious background; one could be both *gebildet* and *Sittlich,* even if there were no common German and Jewish past or shared historical roots.[16]

Both *Bildung* and respectability were major self-defining aspects of the German middle class, into which German Jews overwhelmingly sought to integrate. The sign of successful socialization, of *embourgeoisment*, was the Jewish acquisition of both these characteristics. The Jewish emphasis on education and achievement rendered their entrance into middle-class professions particularly rapid and successful. But *Bildung* for the Jews went far beyond instrumental professional and economic goals. Indeed, it became built into part of the core of modernizing German-Jewish identity. Certainly one powerful force behind German Jewry's spectacular cultural, intellectual, scientific, and artistic achievements had to do with their deep internalization of its

precepts. *Bildung's* emphasis on the primacy of "culture" and the ideational, its openness to change and experimentation, must surely partly account for the radical and creative paths that German-speaking Jews trod—one need only invoke the obvious names of Heine, Freud, Einstein, and Kafka to make the point.[17] The fact that precisely this conspicuousness and success generated hostile reactions and fears of a "*Verjudung*" of German life is beside the point for our purposes.[18]

Just as important as *Bildung* was the Jewish internalization of middle-class respectability and morals. A generalized "gentility," based usually on Protestant norms of comportment, became the implicit, and at times explicit, goal, the prescribed norm for Jewish behavior. As Gabriel Riesser's fellow Jewish liberal Anton Rée declared in 1844, "*Es ist doch gar zu ungentil, ein Jude zu sein*"—"It is far too un-genteel to be Jewish."[19] Jewish reformers stressed manners, politeness, decorum, refinement, self-control, and low decibel levels—and contrasted these modes of civility with the purported crudity, boorishness, loudness, and unrestrained nature of traditional communal Jewish life. The new, cultured, modern German Jew was posited on the basis of these differences from the stereotypical or archetypal "ghetto" Jew or East European Jew.[20] Proper decorum and respectability was to characterize all aspects of Jewish life, ranging from commercial practice and religious services to family and school life. Rée, who was also an educator, provides perhaps the most graphic illustration of this mind-set. Jewish integration, he insisted in the mid-nineteenth century, could not be accomplished through political means alone. The gap that divided Jew from non-Jew was actually *social* in nature; it could be bridged only through a radical reshaping of loud, unrestrained Jewish manners and mannerisms. Assimilation was to a great degree a matter of etiquette, of not standing out, of becoming less conspicuous. Jews had not only to move from their jargon to pure German, they also had to change their tone and manner, the particular gesticulations that marked them off as Jews, which was contemptuously known as *mauscheln*. Special schools, Rée insisted, had to be set up, which could drill young Jews into civility and respectable behavior.[21]

Modern Jewish life proceeded from the wary and powerfully symptomatic dictum: "Be a man on the street and a Jew at home." This demanded a kind of radical and repressive splitting of the self, one that sharply divided the expressive private realm from the restrictive public realm. Of course, civility in general demanded greater control in public space. But as outsiders and a minority aware of the vulnerability and conditionality of their status, German Jews often demanded particularly timid and inconspicuous behavior from themselves. Restraint and respectability were built into their comportment, and were regarded as a vital key to their well-being. "*Stiefkindern*," their leaders stressed, "*müssen doppelartig sein*"—"Stepchildren must be doubly-well behaved."[22] Even that ultimate nonconformist, Walter Benjamin, warned that Jews endangered "even the best German cause for which they stand up *publicly*."[23]

By the beginning of the twentieth century it seemed that Jews had indeed successfully undergone these metamorphoses of *Bildung* and respectability; that their integration into German culture and middle-class life had proceeded apace. Of course, those opposed to the Jewish entry into German life ceaselessly portrayed Jews (sometimes in parodic fashion and at other times in deadly serious fashion) as *ungebildet* and unrefined poseurs who, beneath the veneer of acquired education and manners, remained essentially the same unpolished, nervous ghetto creatures as they began.

But this attack on middle-class German Jews is well-known. Here I want to concentrate not on non-Jewish opposition, but on Jewish resistance to these very processes of cultural conformity and respectability and the mostly unspoken limits to these integrative drives. I do not want to be misunderstood: this resistance was never the dominant theme of German Jewish life. To make it so would be to mimic the stereotypical anti-Semitic version. Yet the individual and collective Jewish reticence concerning "oversocialization" was a persistent undercurrent, a kind of intuitive, underlying subtheme that accompanied post-emancipation German-Jewish life. The "civilizing" processes of *Bildung* and respectability stood in constant subliminal tension with older habits and patterns of behavior, loyalties, solidarities, zones of ease, and comfort.

But in which way could this resistance possibly apply to the particularly strong Jewish appropriation of *Bildung* within *Bildung* itself? This may seem a contradiction in terms, for the attraction of *Bildung* consisted precisely in its *transcendence* of ethnic and religious background, and the *break* with past traditions, and it is on this basis that the peculiar German-Jewish openness to experimentation, its disproportionate involvement with the avant-garde and with radical thought in general, has been explained. This is the conventional account, and in many ways certainly the correct account. But perhaps there was another component to this. Could it not be also that the iconoclastic sensibility of the German Jewish cultural, scientific, and intellectual enterprise, bent often on radically questioning and refiguring, if not subverting, cognitive, artistic, and political categories and borders, represented, at least in part, a kind of compensatory reaction, a protest, against the conformist and behavioral constraints imposed upon and by German-speaking Jews? Certainly, at one time or the other, these thinkers were confronted with the ever-present perception and problematic datum of their own Jewishness; the tensions that this entailed must have surely figured in the ensuing critical and searching modes by which they questioned, and often sought to go beyond, conventional ways of thinking. Moreover, in the Weimar Republic, leading figures of the Jewish renaissance such as Gershom Scholem, Franz Rosenzweig, Ernst Bloch, and Walter Benjamin explicitly challenged the gradualist, liberal assumptions of *Bildung* and in its place posited radical notions of rupture, revelation, and revolution.[24]

Even for the most universally inclined Jews, the pull of the particular, of older patterns of comfort and intimacy, momentarily letting down the

impersonal brakes of *Bildung* and respectability, at times made itself felt. Who on earth would have expected the most extremely assimilated, twice converted to Protestantism Victor Klemperer to remark that the atmosphere of a social evening became more relaxed once Gentile acquaintances—"foreign bodies" (*nichtjüdische Fremdkörper*) as he called them—had departed?[25] On another occasion, he reported on a conversation with close friend: "We chatted till three. We understood each other well. Jewish blood—that's a thing of its own."[26] On another evening, entertaining guests, he reports that "*wir viel gemauschelt haben*" ("we chatted away Jewishly . . . ").[27]

To be sure, these less guarded feelings and expressions were often restricted to home and the private sphere, to German-Jewish "intimate culture." Shulamit Volkov has described this culture, which preserved a uniquely Jewish domestic life-style. Yet, paradoxically, she argues that this was a wholly modern phenomenon and did not imply detachment or withdrawal, but rather a kind of pioneering accommodation and integration."[28] Jews, she argues, maintained their sense of solidarity and distinctiveness precisely by the speed and intensity of their modernization, forging ahead of other groups. Their distinctiveness consisted in their radical adjustment to the modern world, in their occupational patterns, in new approaches to family planning and education, and so on (one in which non-Jews actually sought to catch up with the Jews). But by "intimate culture," I intend something closer to the more conventional meaning of the term, and something that relates to our theme of resistance: by the "intimate" I mean the personal and familiar in opposition to the impersonal and remote, that which is shared only amongst those closest to oneself, the ease that comes with familiarity. This intimate dimension was always present, commingling with, and also in dialectical resistance to, forces such as *Bildung* and respectability that threatened it.

"Modern" as German Jews may have been, traditional, putatively "warmer" and distinctive markers of recognition and belonging remained in place, or reasserted themselves, or, indeed, were longed for. It is only at this level that we can account for Kafka's astonishing observation:

> Yesterday it occurred to me that I did not always love my mother as she deserved and as I could only because the German language prevented it. The Jewish mother is no 'Mutter,' to call her 'Mutter' makes her a little comic (not to herself, because we are in Germany), we give Jewish woman the name of a German mother, but forget the contradiction that sinks into the emotions more heavily. 'Mutter' is particularly German for the Jew, it unconsciously contains, together with the Christian splendor, Christian coldness also, the Jewish woman who is called 'Mutter' therefore becomes not only comic but also strange. Mama would be a better name if only one didn't imagine 'Mutter' behind it! I believe that it is only the memories of the ghetto that still preserve the family, for the word 'Vater' is too far from meaning the Jewish father.[29]

Moreover, these kinds of sentiments were not restricted to the privacy of home and the family; indeed, despite all attempts at denationalization, underlying feelings of family kinship, even with Jews well outside the *Deutsche Kulturbereich*, were never entirely eroded. Despite the opprobrium directed against the language and the embarrassment it elicited, Yiddish expressions persisted, not only among acculturated Jews; they penetrated deeply into the general Berlin lexicon, with even non-Jewish Berliners pronouncing words such as *shikse*, *risches,* and *ganovim* in impeccably German fashion.[30] Was it really ironic then that Victor Klemperer's Protestant wife, Eva, successfully wrestled with crossword puzzles spiced with Yiddish expressions?[31]

These often vague and unarticulated signs of intimacy represented a crucial part of an ongoing Jewish sense of individual and collective self beyond acculturation and integration, and still do. Franz Rosenzweig put it this: Jewishness was "not what the century of emancipation with its cultural mania wanted to reduce it to. It is something inside the individual that makes him a Jew, something infinitesimally small yet immeasurably large, his most impenetrable secret, yet evident in every gesture and every word—especially in the most spontaneous of them."[32]

There were all kinds of ways in which this not-so-hidden secret revealed itself in gesture and word. Liberal Jews were often shocked by what appeared to be an "instinctive" recognition of kinship. When Richard Beer-Hoffman was in Berlin for a rehearsal of one of his plays, he came up the stairs of the subway on a cold, windy night, his face wrapped in a woolen scarf so that only his eyes were visible. An *Ostjude* in caftan stopped him and said, "My good sir is one of us . . . He will tell me how I can get to the Nollendorfplatz?"[33] But highly educated Jews often played the same game. Thus Gustav Landauer and Gershom Scholem (and apparently Martin Buber too) believed they could identify Jews just from their posture and the way they walked.[34] It was this recognition, plus the release of inhibitions that came with familiarity, which was the basis "of the self-respecting, liberating Jewish humor . . . not free of self-criticism,"[35] which Freud made so famous in his *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. Not insignificantly, most of these stories referred to respectable German Jews and their ambivalent relationship with their less respectable East European cousins.

> A Galician Jew was traveling in a train. He had made himself really comfortable, had unbuttoned his coat and put his feet up on the seat. Just then a gentlemen in modern dress entered the compartment. The Jew promptly pulled himself and took up a proper pose. The stranger fingered through the pages of a notebook, made some calculations, reflected for a moment and then suddenly asked the Jew: "Excuse me, when is Yom Kippur?" "Oho!" said the Jew, and put his feet up on the seat again before answering.[36]

As Freud makes clear in his commentary on this joke, it was recognition of commonality that prompted the Jew's "abandoning all decent behavior . . . It is meant to portray the democratic mode of thinking of Jews, which recognizes no distinction between lords and serfs, but also, alas, upsets discipline. . . ."[37]

But while all these consisted of private or merely interpersonal sentiments and actions, in unprecedented ways during the Imperial period and later on, Jews increasingly found room for varying degrees and kinds of open public display of their particularities and distinctive identities. These clearly exposed the tensions between the demand for inconspicuousness and blending, on the one hand, and the expressive, explicit display of Jewishness, on the other. For while *Hochkultur* demanded singular, monolithic standards of behavior, the emergence of "popular culture," with its greater openness to diversity, facilitated previously tabooed public expressions of ethnic difference. If in 1897 Walter Rathenau despairingly (and anonymously) admonished Jews to tone down their disturbing Jewish characteristics,[38] the raucous and never respectable Berlin Herrnfeld Brothers theatre, which ran from 1890 to 1916, openly espoused, nay flaunted, Jewish dialects, characteristics, and dilemmas. Jewishness here took center stage, now not as an apologetic or exotic presence, but rather as a self-evident, natural datum. It featured milieu comedies in which the various types were clearly, and with embarrassment, "Jewish" in manners, gestures, and accent, punctuated by frequent lapses into Galician jargon. Yet, this was not a distancing, self-consciously "foreign" Yiddish theatre, but one whose actors were fully acculturated and who—precisely because they were ensconced in contemporary bourgeois society—reveled in upsetting the canons of ethnic discreteness and cultural and sexual respectability within an overtly Jewish frame.[39] The broader significance of this lies in the fact, I think, that in a society where the pressure for cultural and behavioral conformity to standards of *Bildung* and rigid respectability was so great, the Herrnfeld theatre provided an outlet for freely expressing and comfortably experiencing dimensions of an identity whose legitimacy was constantly in question and which sought in one way or another to assert itself.

I hope that in this short chapter I have been able to provide an idea about an aspect of German-Jewish experience that too often goes unmentioned, repressed perhaps for the reason that it highlights still embarrassing dimensions of a stubborn and perhaps parochial ethnic distinctiveness. I am not for one moment claiming that overcoming the ghetto past and the self-transformative act of German Jewry into *Bildung* and middle-class respectability was not a major component, if not *the* major component, of the emancipatory German-Jewish project. What I am suggesting is that we also take into account another singular dimension, which acted in dialectical tension with its major integrative drives. This is the underside in which Jews resisted too pressing a socialization, opted for the familiar, the intuitive, the spontaneous, and the frivolous as against the stricter controlling canons of self-cultivation

and respectability, and bridled at the repressions of too rapid a process of Germanization and *embourgeoisement*.

These never-resolved and deep-running tensions marked fundamental dimensions of the modern German-Jewish experience. They functioned on the basis of an acculturation and equal citizenship that Gabriel Riesser had helped to obtain. It was within this framework that Jews, in some way or another, had to navigate the clash between formal respectability and unguarded intimacy, expressiveness and restraint, conformity and difference, outsiderdom and the mainstream. As noted in the previous chapter and as stressed here once again, I believe that the tensions and interactions between these poles was crucial not only to their identity negotiations, but also to the creative cultural and intellectual history of German Jewry. It is a dimension that may, incidentally, provide a suggestive paradigm towards thinking of the modern Jewish minority experience in general.

Afterword and Acknowledgments

The present volume consists mainly of essays written over the last decade or so. In the introduction, I explain the intellectual rationale for assembling them into a single collection. There is, however, also a pragmatic reason. Some of these pieces have not yet been published, while others have appeared either in a foreign language or in rather obscure journals. Putting them together here renders them more easily accessible. Seen as a whole, I hope that they reveal a certain continuity and coherence of concern and sensibility as well as clarifying various shifts of focus and development of thought. In collections such as these, there is some degree of repetition. While I have tried to cut this to a minimum, indulgent readers will understand that usually this has been necessitated by an attempt to illuminate cross-cutting themes and issues within different contexts.

Chapters 2 and 4 are radically shortened versions of work that appeared in my 2007 book *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad*. They are included here not only to render them more widely accessible, but because they highlight crucial problems and motifs central to the present volume. Similarly, Chapter 8 tries to present a composite, comparative picture of the relation of Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Victor Klemperer to National Socialism; it is a highly compressed version of what my 2001 book, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times*, sought to portray in detailed manner. Chapters 5 through 7 present subsequent new work on these thinkers and their individual trajectories within other, perhaps less well-known, contexts.

* * *

No matter how many previous books one may have published, each new one brings with it new excitements and pleasures. When I first broached the idea of this volume to Anthony LaVopa and Suzanne Marchand, the editors of the Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History series, their enthusiasm was immediate, infectious, and deeply encouraging. They have supported this project from its onset through completion. With much tact and great sensitivity, Suzanne has shepherded the work into its present form, helping to avoid pitfalls I had prepared for myself and perceptively and always gently coaxing me to improve the manuscript and render it more coherent. I also appreciate the constructive comments of my anonymous reader. Chris Chappell of Palgrave Macmillan has throughout been an anchor, handling hurdles in an always helpful and calming manner, responsive to all requests

and queries. His editorial assistant, Sarah Whalen, has been similarly helpful and has deftly handled many of the technical questions that accompany the making of a book. Isabel Stein at Newgen Knowledge Works has been a meticulous and wisely demanding copy editor who has considerably improved the manuscript. Those responsible for the book production, Joel Breuklander and Deepa John, have proved to be highly efficient and exceedingly friendly. I am indebted to all these people. They certainly cannot be held responsible for any of the deficiencies that may remain in this volume.

The production of books does not take place within a time vacuum, outside the cycle of life. The past year has brought with it both deep sorrow—and great joy. Both my sister Edith and her husband Martin Seehoff passed away, as did my great friend Jerrold Kessel. As incomprehensible as their deaths may be, and as inconsolable as this may be, my extended family keeps on growing and more wonderful grandchildren added to the brood. Yael and Tamar have now been joined by Guy and Lia. Little of my work would be meaningful outside of the boisterous sustenance that my family and friends provide.

It is rare to have colleagues whose friendship is as deep and pleasurable as their intellectual support and inspiration. This has certainly been the case with my witty and formidably brilliant friends, Robert Alter, Ezra Mendelsohn, and Jerry Z. Muller. I am nowhere as productive as these scholars and, not knowing what the future may bring and how many new works are likely to flow from my pen, I am thus taking no chances and dedicating this volume to all three. Each, of course, deserves a work of his own. An added reason for this dedication is our mutual passion for the great game of tennis. At least this is so in the cases of Robert and Ezra (but Jerry is still young and may yet cultivate this most meaningful of pursuits as he grows older and wiser). I hope that this dedication will serve as a token of my admiration for their work and gratitude for their unswerving friendship.

Notes

2 Icons Beyond Their Borders: The German-Jewish Intellectual Legacy at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century

1. In a quite different but striking recent variation, Moshe Idel has depicted many of the people treated in this essay as somewhat isolated, melancholic thinkers, concerned with negativity, desolation, and the deferment of things, in contrast to East European emphases upon plenitude and lived community. See his *Old Worlds, New Mirrors: On Jewish Mysticism and Twentieth Century Thought* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). This brilliant, provocative book reached me too late to receive treatment here. My review is scheduled to appear in the 2012 Spring issue of *The Jewish Review of Books*.
2. George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. ix. In his autobiography, *Confronting History: A Memoir* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), Mosse writes that this "is certainly my most personal book, almost a confession of faith" (p. 184).
3. See, for example, "A Kind of Survivor" in Steiner's *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York, 1977) as well as his autobiographical comments in *Errata: An Examined Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).
4. Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743–1933* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002).
5. See his May 10, 2005 Lecture, "Enlightenment and Achievement: The Emancipation of Jewish Talent Since 1800," Gustav Tuck Lecture Theatre, University College, London.
6. Another example of this genre would be Frederick V. Grunfeld, *Prophets Without Honour: A Background to Freud, Kafka, Einstein and Their World* (New York: Mc-Graw-Hill, 1979).
7. For a revealing contemporary portrait of Strauss's personal religious-philosophical conflicts, his shyness, and his early support for Mussolini (in the latter's pre-anti-Semitic phase), see Hans Jonas, Rachel Salamander, and Christian Wiese, eds., *Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2003), pp. 94 ff and especially pp. 261 ff.
8. The sectarian, cultlike atmosphere promoted by his followers is legendary. For an admittedly tendentious view, see Shadia B. Drury, *Leo Strauss and the American Right* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). Drury puts it thus (p. xi): "...the political ideas of this very influential man are shrouded in mystery, partly because he was preoccupied with secrecy and esotericism, and partly because his students treat his work as sacred texts rather than as objects of critical analysis and debate." Michael Platt, one of Strauss's students, does not alter this designation: "And when one follows the manly path of his sentences, his steady ascents, his sudden dashes to a peak, or his equally sudden descents to some depth, when a single remark goes to the very heart of a matter that has long puzzled one, or when he makes something simple remarkable as well, when reading Strauss makes one get up and walk about the room, when all cares vanish in the bliss of thinking, and one is attached only to detachment, then one is inclined only to ask the Questions and forget

the quarrels, remember Man and forget all cities, men, and meals." See his essay "Leo Strauss: Three Quarrels, Three Questions, One Life" in *The Crisis of Liberal Democracy: A Straussian Perspective* by Kenneth L. Deutsch (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), p. 24.

9. See, for instance, William Pfaff, "The Long Reach of Leo Strauss," *International Herald Tribune* (May 15, 2003); Nicolas Xenos, "Leo Strauss and the Rhetoric of the War on Terror," *Logos* (Spring 2004). See, for instance, Jeffrey Steinberg, "Profile: Leo Strauss, Fascist Godfather of the Neo-Cons," *Executive Intelligence Review* (March 21, 2003). Jenny Strauss Clay, Strauss's (step?)daughter, a professor of classics at the University of Virginia, sought to stem this tide in an op-ed page of the *New York Times* (June 2, 2003), where she wrote: "My father was a teacher, not a right-wing guru. . . . Recent news articles have portrayed my father, Leo Strauss, as the mastermind behind the neoconservative ideologues who control United States foreign policy. He reaches out from his 30-year-old grave, we are told, to direct a 'cabal' (a word with distinct anti-Semitic overtones) of Bush administration figures hoping to subject the American people to rule by a ruthless elite. I do not recognize the Leo Strauss presented in these articles." And, as Mark Lilla has noted: "Journalists who had never read him trawled his dense commentaries on ancient, medieval, and modern political thought, looking for incriminating evidence. Finding none, they then suggested that his secret antidemocratic doctrines were passed on to adepts who subsequently infiltrated government." See "Leo Strauss: The European," *The New York Review of Books* (October 21, 2004), pp. 58–60. The quote appears on p. 58. For some excellent examples of the distortions and partisan uses made by interested American commentators, see Lilla's follow-up article, "The Closing of the Straussian Mind," *The New York Review of Books* (November 4, 2004), pp. 55–59.
10. See Anne Norton, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004). See also Kenneth L. Deutsch and John A. Murley, eds., *Leo Strauss, the Straussians and the Study of the American Regime* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).
11. For sources and references see "Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem" in Steven E. Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
12. See for instance Waltraud Meints, Katherine Klinger, eds., *Politik und Verantwortung. Zur Aktualität von Hannah Arendt* (Hannover: Offizin Verlag, 2004). For an example of one such creative attempt to apply her thought to current crises see in that volume, Nancy Fraser, "Hannah Arendt im 21. Jahrhundert," pp. 73–86.
13. See Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), p. 2.
14. Quoted in Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 451.
15. The examples of this popular percolation are numerous. A full study of Benjamin's *Rezeptionsgeschichte* (history of reception) would be valuable. A beginning has been made in Ehud (Udi) Greenberg's excellent Hebrew MA thesis on the subject (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2008). Thus, Julia Eisenberg's 2001 pop record "Trilectic," based, of all things, upon Benjamin's diary entries of his 1927 trip to Moscow, and his love affair with Asja Lacis (!) sold hundreds of thousands of copies, not through any massive publicity by the mass media but rather through word of mouth and the Internet. See Greenberg's unpublished paper "'A Hero of Our Time'?—Walter Benjamin and Historical Research," p. 1.
16. Charles Rosen, "Should We Adore Adorno?" *The New York Review of Books*, October 24, 2002, pp. 59–66.

17. Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 40–43.
18. Hilary Putnam, "Introduction to Franz Rosenzweig," in *Understanding the Sick and the Healthy: A View of World, Man, and God: With a New Introduction by Hilary Putnam*, by Franz Rosenzweig. Translated and with an introduction by Nahum Glatzer (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 1. For a comprehensive survey of the remarkable volume of writings on that thinker and the modes and problems of Rosenzweig's reception see Peter Eli Gordon, "Rosenzweig Redux: The Reception of German-Jewish Thought," *Jewish Social Studies*, 8: 1 (Fall 2001), pp. 1–57.
19. See Cynthia Ozick, "The Mystic Explorer," *The New York Times Book Review* (September 21, 1980), p. 1. I have provided a far larger list of this kind of adulation in Chapter 6 of the present volume.
20. See Henry Pachter, "Gershom Scholem: Towards a Mastermyth," *Salmagundi* (no. 40, Winter 1978). See too Susan A. Handelman, *Fragments of Redemption: Jewish Thought and Literary Theory in Benjamin, Scholem, and Levinas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).
21. See Jonas's Letter of February 24, 1982 in *A Life in Letters 1914–1982* by Gershom Scholem; ed. and trans. by Anthony David Skinner (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 494–495.
22. Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger*: *Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005) , p. 8.
23. Benjamin to Ludwig Strauss, November 21, 1912, in *Gesammelte Schriften* 2.3, ed., Rolf Tiedmann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977), p. 839.
24. For a critical discussion of this connection, see both works by Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger.*
25. See Terry Eagleton's "Homage to Benjamin" in his *Walter Benjamin; or, Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London & New York: Verso, 1981), p. 183.
26. See Walter Laqueur, "The Arendt Cult: Hannah Arendt as Political Commentator," in Steven E. Aschheim, ed., *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 56–57. In this piece Laqueur voraciously critiques Arendt's work, political judgments and the (to him, rather baffling) cult around her.
27. Stefan Collini, "Moralist at Work: E. P. Thompson Reappraised," *Times Literary Supplement* (February 18, 2005), pp. 13–15.
28. For an example of an admiring assessment, see Jeffrey Andrew Barash, ed., *The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The Legacy of Ernst Cassirer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Cassirer's relative eclipse may also be partly related to the famous confrontation with Heidegger at Davos, where he was reputed to come out second best. Peter E. Gordon has reconsidered this confrontation and Cassirer's role in a much more sympathetic light in *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
29. This quote appears in Susan Sontag's "Under the Sign of Saturn," in the book of the same title (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1980), p. 111.
30. For a superb and nuanced exposition see Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
31. There are many references here. See especially Dana Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
32. See Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger.*
33. For an excellent exposition of Scholem's project, see David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

34. Werner J. Dannhauser writes: "I have become convinced of what in a previous study I could not, that Leo Strauss was of the party of Athens and not of the party of Jerusalem .... [the philosopher] knows by the power of his own thought that divine revelation is impossible. Evidently this is the final position of Leo Strauss; at least the book on Plato's *Laws* is his final book .... If [he] chose Athens over Jerusalem, and I think he did, one must add at once that this choice did not lead to the 'unstringing of the bow.' Perhaps he would have argued that philosophy has its own built-in 'magnificent tension of the spirit.'" See his "Athens and Jerusalem or Jerusalem and Athens?" in David Novak, ed., *Leo Strauss and Judaism*: Jeruslaem and Athens Revisited (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), pp. 155–171. The quote appears on pp. 168–169.
35. See Strauss's complex and difficult 1962 preface to the English translation (by E. M. Sinclair) of his (1930) *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), pp. 1–21.
36. The cases of Fromm, Löwenthal, and Buber are well-known. Jonas, exceptionally, even spent a year in a Zionist agricultural training farm in Germany in 1923 before proceeding with his studies and later, for a time, lived in Palestine/Israel. See Jonas et al., eds. *Erinnerungen*, p. 475. Unlike Jonas, Elias later tried to obscure his Zionist years. See Jörg Hackeschmidt, "Norbert Elias as a Young Zionist," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XLIX (London: 2004), pp. 59–74.
37. See, for instance, Leo Lowenthal's vivid description of such networks: "About a year after my first meeting with [Siegfried] Kracauer [around the end of World War I], he introduced me to Adorno, who was then eighteen years old. I introduced him to my friend Ernst Simon, who like myself, was studying history, *Germanistik*, and philosophy, and who won me over to a very messianic Zionism. Through Ernst Simon, Kracauer met Rabbi Nobel, then a revered figure in our Jewish circle, to whose *Festschrift*, on the occasion of his 50th birthday, Kracauer contributed. Through Nobel, Kracauer first met Martin Buber and later Franz Rosenzweig. In the spring of 1922, I introduced him to Ernst Bloch, and he in turn introduced me to Horkheimer, who was already a good friend of Adorno's." See Lowenthal's "As I Remember Friedel," *New German Critique* (no. 54, Fall 1991), p. 6. Those very close friends, Scholem and Benjamin, were also friendly or at least in contact with most of these figures.
38. I have tried to explore some of the complex dynamics of the relation between marginality and creative thought in "Reflections on Insiders and Outsiders: A General Introduction," in R. Cohen, J. Frankel, S. Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry* (Oxford: Littman Library, 2010). This appears in slightly revised form in Chapter 12 of the present work.
39. I thank John Landau for guiding me in some of these formulations.
40. See Scholem's essay, "Walter Benjamin" in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays,* Werner J. Dannhauser, ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1976),. p. 191.
41. See Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger*, p. 8, and his "Rosenzweig Redux," especially pp. 1–5.
42. See Arendt's piece "Walter Benjamin 1892–1940" in *Men in Dark Times* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), p. 190.
43. The dense reflections on Kafka by Adorno, Arendt, Benjamin and Scholem are too well known to be documented here. Rosenzweig wrote less on the author, yet at least one of his wry statements makes the point powerfully enough. On May 25, 1927 he wrote (to Gertrud Oppenheim): "The people who wrote the Bible seem to have thought of God much the way Kafka did. I have never read a book that reminded me so much of the Bible as his novel *The Castle*, and that is why reading it certainly cannot be called a pleasure." See *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 160.

As far as I can ascertain, Strauss is an exception to this pattern; Kafka does not appear to have figured in his intellectual musings. This is rather surprising, given Strauss's predilection for the esoteric.

44. See *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1914–1923*, edited by Max Brod (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), pp. 202–203. Entry for January 16, 1922. The quotation continues: "if Zionism had not intervened, it might easily have developed into a new secret doctrine, a Kabbalah. There are intimations of this. Though of course it would require a genius of an unimaginable kind to strike root again in the old centuries, or create the old centuries anew and not spend itself withal, but only then begin to flower forth."
45. See Scholem's aphoristic letter written to Zalman Schocken on the occasion of the latter's sixtieth birthday in 1937, "A Candid Word about the True Motives of My Kabbalistic Studies:" "Three years, 1916–1918, which were decisive for my entire life, lay behind me: many exciting thoughts had led me as much to the most rationalistic skepticism about my fields of study as to intuitive affirmation of mystical theses which walked the fine line between religion and nihilism." Scholem added immediately that it was in Kafka that he found "the most perfect and unsurpassed expression of this fine line." See the translation of this letter in Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, pp. 74–76. The quote appears on p. 75. The original German letter is reproduced on pp. 215–216.
46. See Scholem's "Die zionistische Verzweiflung," 19.6.1920 in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1917–1923,* ed., Karlfried Gründer, Herbert Kopp-Oberstebrink, and Friedrich Niewöhner (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 2000), p. 638.
47. See Susan A. Handelman, *Fragments of Redemption*, p. xix. Handelman intended these comments to apply to her subjects, but they apply equally well to all the figures under consideration here.
48. Scholem to Benjamin, Letter 44, early February 1934, in Gershom Scholem, ed., *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932–1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1992), p. 98.
49. These thoughts were prompted by a conversation with John Landau in Jerusalem, on August 18th, 2004.
50. Quoted by Rabinbach in his introduction to the Benjamin-Scholem *Correspondence*, xxv.
51. Arendt put it thus: "And Benjamin's choice, baroque in a double sense, has an exact counterpart in Scholem's strange decision to approach Judaism via the Cabala, that is, that part of Hebrew literature which is untransmitted and untransmissible in terms of Jewish tradition, in which it has always had the odor of something downright disreputable. Nothing showed more clearly—so one is inclined to say today—that there was no such thing as a 'return' either to the German or the European or the Jewish tradition than the choice of these fields of study. It was an implicit admission that the past spoke directly only through things that had not been handed down, whose seeming closeness to the present was thus due precisely to their exotic character, which ruled out all claims to a binding authority." See her essay on "Walter Benjamin," in *Men in Dark Times*, p. 195.
52. See "Against Social Science: Jewish Intellectuals, the Critique of Liberal-Bourgeois Modernity, and the (Ambigious) Legacy of Radical Weimar Theory" in my *In Times of Crisis*, pp. 24–43 (notes pp. 205–218).
53. As Peter Gordon demonstrates, Rosenzweig's notions are very similar to Heidegger's. For him, the sheer fact of mortality, the nonrelational and nontransferable experience of possible death, is the conceptual instrument for exposing the falsity of idealist totalization. There is no redemption beyond death: "eternity" occurs within finitude. See *Rosenzweig and Heidegger*, pp. 112–113.

54. See Scholem's essay, "Religious Authority and Mysticism" (first published in 1960) in his *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, translated by Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965 [paper 1969]), pp. 1–31. The quote appears on pp. 17–18.
55. Christoph Schmidt, *Der häretische Imperative: Überlegungen zur theologischen Dialektik der Kulturwissenschaft in Deutschland* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000).
56. See Handelman, *Fragments of Redemption*, p. 341.
57. Ibid. p. 15. The quote comes from Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1/2, p. 681.
58. See Susan Neiman, "Theodicy in Jerusalem" in Steven Aschheim, ed., *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem,* pp. 65–90.
59. This quote, which appears at the end of Adorno's *Minima Moralia,* is the motto of Handelman's *Fragments of Redemption*.
60. See *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft und zugehörige Schriften,* Vol. 3 in Strauss, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Heinrich Meier (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1996–2001). I thank Jeffrey Brash for this reference.
61. See Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture:The Outsider as Insider* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1968), and Zvi Bacharach, *The Challenge: Democracy in the Eyes of German Professors and Jewish Intellectuals in the Weimar Republic* (Hebrew). (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2000).
62. Quoted in Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life* (London: Vintage, 1999), p. 253.
63. See Isaiah Berlin's *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) and his *The Roots of Romanticism*, Henry Hardy, ed. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999).
64. See Avishai Margalit's illuminating analysis of Berlin's Zionism, "The Crooked Timber of Nationalism," in M. Lilla, R. Dworkin, and R. Silvers, *The Legacy of Isaiah Berlin* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001).
65. On this dialectic, Anson Rabinbach's *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) is exemplary.
66. "The German Idealism of the Jewish Philosophers (1961)," in Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, translated by Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1985), pp. 21–43. The quote appears on p. 42.

3 The Modern Jewish Experience and the Entangled Web of Orientalism

1. In this essay I am in the main not referring to the exotic and nonexotic Orientalisms, as applied to India and Southeast Asia (which were not crucial to the modern Jewish experience), but rather to the Arab and Islamic worlds. I later mention Eugen Höflich and his inclusion of Indian and Japanese cultures in his Pan-Asiatic vision. For another example of the complex ways in which Indian Orientalism was mediated to and by an East European Jewess living in Germany, see Yfaat Weiss, "A Small Town in Germany: Leah Goldberg and German Orientalism in 1932," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 99, no. 2 (Spring 2009), pp. 200–229.
2. In his classic, albeit much-disputed, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979), Edward W. Said locates aspects of the Western Orientalist mind-set from antiquity on. See pp. 55ff.
3. See in general Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: The East in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

4. My formulation has been inspired (albeit proceeding in a different direction and employing other conceptual tools) by Khazzoom's "The Great Chain of Orientalism: Jewish Identity, Stigma Management, and Ethnic Exclusion in Israel," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (August 2003), pp. 481–510.
5. This, I hope, is in line with the emphases of the best in recent overall scholarship in the field, above all in the work of Suzanne L. Marchand and her remarkable *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Marchand insists on the complexities and different contexts of Orientalist practices. In salutary fashion, she questions the prevalent "definition of identity which presumes a primordial, binary distinction between 'Europe' and 'the Orient'. . . . Surely at least some Europeans defined themselves by means of other sets of distinctions—male and female, Christian and Jew . . . German and Frenchman? . . . We cannot *start* with the belief that Europeans found the categories 'European' and 'Oriental' primordial or totalizing and hope to discover how complicated these cultural relationships might have been." (pp. xxi–xxii). She argues that knowledge—including "Orientalist" knowledge—need not merely proceed in Saidian or Foucauldian manner as instruments of power and domination but can also "lead to appreciation, dialogue, self-critique, perspectival reorientation, and personal and cultural enrichment." (p. xxv). Moreover, "invoking the Orient has often been the means by which counter-hegemonic positions were articulated; 'orientalism' then, has played a crucial role in the *unmaking*, as well as the making of, western identities." (p. xxvii). The present paper aims to similarly capture some of these themes, complexities, and ironies of Jewish Orientalism. Marchand's work centers above all on the practices of German Orientalist *scholarship* and the notion that simplistic discourse analysis blurs the contexts and subtleties of its various expressions. As this chapter does not deal with scholarship as such but with more popular diffusions of "East"–"West" representations, it does indeed undertake a species of discourse analysis, but hopefully in a way that muddies and complicates its typical binary logic.
6. See Kalmar and Penslar's introduction to the invaluable collection of essays they edited, *Orientalism and the Jews* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 2005), p. xiii.
7. In my *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), I trace the ways in which German Jews were thus negatively labeled, negative foils to a modern, enlightened, *Bildungs* mentality and way of life and the later process by which these distasteful qualities were transposed to East European Jewry (by both German non-Jews and Jews). The Oriental theme is mentioned but not foregrounded. At that time I was not sufficiently sensitive to its formative and continuing importance. I hope that, in some measure, this chapter provides a small corrective to this.
8. See especially Chapter 2, Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002).
9. For an insightful analysis of the complexities of the notion of "Mosaism" and the ways in which nineteenth century Jewish Reform scholars sought to resist the "Oriental" label by endowing "Mosaic" law with a positive interpretation, one capable of historical and progressive development (as opposed to their versions of rabbinic and Talmudic Judaism), see Judith Frishman, "True Mosiac Religion: Samuel Hirsch, Samuel Holdheim and the Reform of Judaism," in Christian Wiese, *Redefining Judaism in an Age of Emancipation: Comparative Perspectives on Samuel Holdheim* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 278–305.

10. Quoted in Kalmar and Penslar, introduction to *Orientalism and the Jews*, p. xiv.
11. Khazzoom, "The Great Chain," pp. 490–491.
12. On this and other related issues of this chapter see Martin Kramer, *The Jewish Discovery of Islam: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lewis* (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University, 1999), p. 3.
13. Walter Hartenau [pseud.], "Höre Israel," *Die Zukunft*, 18 (March 16, 1897), pp. 454–62. On the "Asiatic horde," p. 454. See p. 458 for his description of the Asiatic Jewish body: "unkonstruktiven Bau, den hohen Schultern, den ungelenken Füssen, der weichlichen Rundlichkeit der Formen."
14. Jakob Fromer (a product and critic of Polish Jewry who sought radical assimilation into German culture) wrote this in his *Vom Ghetto zur modernen Kultur: Eine Lebensgeschichte* (Charlottenburg 1906), p. 234, quoted in Ritchie Robertson, *The 'Jewish Question' in German Literature, 1749–1939: Emancipation and Its Discontents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 231.
15. The journal is available in its entirety on the marvelous Internet site, Compact. The same editor of this journal, Julius Fuerst, published another of the most important scholarly Central European Jewish journals, entitled *Literaturblatt des Orients*.
16. See Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
17. See Ned Curthoys, "Diasporic Visions, Taboo Memories: Al-Andalus in the German-Jewish Imaginary," *Arena Journal*, no. 30 (2009).
18. The literature on the fashion of building synagogues in the Moorish fashion is by now quite large. See most recently Ivan Davison Kalmar, "Moorish Style: Orientalism, the Jews and Synagogue Architecture," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, and Society*, 7, no. 3 (2001), pp. 68–100. See also the massive study by Harold Hammer-Schenk, *Synagogen in Deutschland. Geschichte einer Baugattung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (1780–933)*, 2 vols., Hamburg 1981, especially pp. 251–301, and Hannelore Künzl, *Islamische Stilelemente im Synagogenbau des 19. und frühen 20. Jahhunderts*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1984, pp. 109–126.
19. For the classical statement of this relationship see Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Inspiration—The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: Random House, 1968).
20. See the illuminatingly perceptive and pioneering essay by Ismar Schorsch, "The Myth of Sephardic Supremacy," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XXXIV (1989), pp. 47–66. The Gans quote appears on p. 52.
21. Schorsch, ibid., p. 60. Munk was the first systematic student of the role and influence of Islamic thought on Jewish philosophy. See Chiara Adorisio, "Jewish Philosophy or 'Philosophy among the Jews'?: Salomon Munk and the Reception of Judeo-Arabic Texts in the 19th Century," in *Naharaim*, vol. 3, 2009, pp. 91–101.
22. See, for instance, Strauss's *Philosophy and Law: Essays Toward the Understanding of Maimonides and His Predecessors* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1987).
23. Heinrich Heine, "Moses" (1854) in *The Prose and Poetry of Heinrich Heine*, trans., Frederic Ewen (New York: The Citadel Press, 1948), pp. 665–666.
24. Aphorism 475, in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 174–175; the quote appears on p. 175.
25. See Martin Kramer, *The Jewish Discovery of Islam* and John Efron's insightful piece, "Orientalism and the Jewish Historical Gaze," in Kalmar and Penslar's *Orientalism and the Jews*, especially p. 81. To be sure, despite their greater attempts to give voice and integrity to Islam, many of these scholars also maintained a hierarchy of Jewish superiority.
26. See Raphael Patai, *Ignaz Goldziher and His Oriental Diary* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1987), pp. 20, 109, quoted in Efron, "Historical Gaze," p. 90.

27. For an admiring, detailed discussion of Goldziher, see Marchand, *German Orientalism*, pp. 323–332.
28. For radical and ideologically idiosyncratic reflections upon the complexities of conversion and a plea for the relatedness of Judaism and Islam see Gil Anidjar, "Muslim Jews," *Qui Parle*, vol. 18, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2009). I thank Noah Gerber for this reference and for his many illuminating comments and corrections of error related to this chapter .
29. The best source I know on this complex personality is David Mandler, "Introduction to Arminius Vambéry," in *Shofar*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (2007). I thank Michael Silber for this reference (as well as his intriguing discovery of Bamberger's letterhead). See too the Wikipedia entry which, intriguingly, notes the speculation that Bamberger may have acted as Bram Stoker's consultant on Transylvanian culture and the possibility that the character of Professor Van Helsing in Stoker's *Dracula* novel may have been based on Bamberger. In Chapter 23, the professor refers to his "friend Arminius, of Buda-Pesth University." I thank my friend Ezra Mendelsohn for drawing my attention to Bamberger. Jacob Talmon quotes the following about Vambery—without giving the source: "a seventy–year-old Hungarian Jew who didn't know whether he was more Turk than Englishman, who wrote books in German, spoke twelve languages with equal mastery, and had professed five religions, in two of which he served as a priest…through these many religious intimacies…has naturally become an atheist." See the essay "Types of Jewish Self-Awareness: Herzl's 'Jewish State' after Seventy Years (1896–1966)" in Jacob Talmon's essay collection, *Israel among the Nations* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 123.
30. This story is compellingly told in Tom Reiss's *The Orientalist: In Search of a Man Caught between East and West* (London: Vintage Books, 2006).
31. See Leopold Weiss's piece, "Jerusalem in 1923: The Impressions of a Young European," in *Europe's Gift to Islam Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss)*, edited, annotated, and written by M. Ikram Chaghatai (New Delhi: Adam Publishers, 2007), Vol. 2. , p. 625. I thank Hanan Harif for this reference.
32. On Weiss's early years, see Gunther Windhager, *Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad. Von Galizien nach Arabien 1900–1927* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 2002). See too Ben David Amir's interesting piece, "Leopold of Arabia" in *Ha'aretz Magazine*, 15.11.2001. A full-length documentary has also been produced: "A Road to Mecca: The Personal Journey of Muhammad Asad." The Wikipedia entry, "Muhammad Asad" is also informative.
33. The best, and most accessible, analysis, upon which I base my own account is to be found in Michael Berkowitz, "Rejecting Zion: Embracing the Orient: The Life and Death of Jacob Israel de Haan," in Kalmar and Penslar's *Orientalism and the Jews*, pp. 108–124 (notes, pp. 245–250). Berkowitz provides plentiful quotes from de Haan's Oriental *Quatrains* poetry. Much of it is touching, expressing not only a desire to mediate between Jews and Arabs but also proudly proclaiming the Jewish return to a "reborn Israel." What rendered the poems scandalous was its explicit pederast homosexuality. Thus, for example, the poem, "Hassan:"

    Only a white pair of trousers and a small blue top,
    In the evening he folds his naked little feet together,
    Under his graceful little body and with his willie,
    He plays in ecstasy, something indescribable. (p. 119).

    Arnold Zweig's 1932 novel, *De Vriendt kehrt heim* made de Haan and his case famous.
34. The temptation to endlessly pursue this theme is great, so I will limit myself in this footnote to two final examples. The first concerns Gedalia Fishel Freund (1828–1885), born in Brzezin, Galicia, who fought for Kossuth in Hungary, then went to Turkey, rose to the rank of general, became a Pasha and took on a

Muslim name, Makhmed-Hamid, became the Governor-General of Syria and in 1878 was appointed Grand Vizier (all the while not forgetting his Jewish roots and aiding Jews in the countries where he served). See the *Brzeziny Memorial Book*, ed., A. Alperin, N. Summer (New York: Brzeziner Book Committee, 1961; Yiddish) to be found on http//www.jewishgen.org/yikzkor/brzeziny/brz061.html#Brzeniner. The second example concerns a very contemporary and fascinating example of the Jewish-Muslim mix, who was immensely proud of both these roots. I am referring to Professor Rashid Kaplanov (1949–2007), a polio victim of massive girth, a prodigious researcher, one of the world's great polyglots—"a scruffy, unworldly, lovable man with a prodigious memory and mastery of 36 languages"—the first Russian citizen to preside over the European Association of Jewish Studies, whose grandmother was Jewish and whose grandfather, Rashidkhan Khan Kaplanov, was Prince of the Kumyks, a tribe of about 200,000 Muslims in the mountains of Dagestan. See the *Times Online* obituary from January 7, 2008 (www.citeulike.org/user/3122834351/2212226). I thank Michael Silber for drawing my attention to both these cases.

35. See Daniel Schroeter, "From Sephardi to Oriental: The 'Decline' Theory of Jewish Civilization in the Middle East and North Africa," in Jeremy Cohen and Richard I. Cohen, eds., *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2008), pp. 125–148. The quote appears on p. 128.
36. The work of Aron Rodrigue is important in this respect. See his *Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jews in Transition, 1860–1939: The Teachers of the Alliance Israélite Universelle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993) and *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). See too Pierre Birnbaum, "French Jews and the 'Regeneration' of Algerian Jewry," in Ezra Mendelsohn, ed., *Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilege, Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, X1X (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 88–103; Michel Abitbol, "The Encounter between French Jewry and the Jews of North Africa. Analysis of a Discourse (1830–1914)" in Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., *The Jews in Modern France* (Hanover: N.H., Bradnesi University Press, 1985), pp. 31–53; Richard I. Cohen, "Der Kampf der Kulturen. Europäische und orientalische Juden in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart," *Münchner Beiträge Zur Jüischen Geschichte und Kulture* 2. 2008, pp. 31–52.
37. See Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 4. Of course, this map never strictly followed geographical or political reality. It was always more a cultural and existential state of mind. This continues to be so even in the post–Cold War era. Thus, even today, the fact that Vienna actually lies *East* of Prague may upset our mental hierarchies and cognitive mental maps. Moreover, countries from the old Eastern bloc are likely to seek "Central" European status and respectively push the "East" beyond their own borders.
38. Sometimes this contemporaneously fashionable metaphor becomes so generalized that it refers to any form of constructing an undesirable "Other." Thus current European anti-American attitudes have been labeled as "Orientalising," the central means for defining a superior separate European identity. See, for instance, Volker Hein, "Orientalising America? Continental Intellectuals and the Search for Europe's Identity," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 34 (no. 2), 2006, pp. 433–48. See too Andrei S. Markovits, *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 216–223. Kalmar and Penslar, *Orientalism and the Jews*, p. xvii, quote Ernest J.Wilson, who writes of African Americans as targets of America's "internal orientalism" in

"Orientalism: A Black Perspective," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 10, No. 2 (Winter 1981), pp. 59–69.

39. Franz Rosenzweig pithily summed up the error of this tactic. "...the whole German fear of the East European Jew," he wrote, "does not refer to him as such, but to him as a potential Western Jew ...." See his letter of 7 June 1916 in Nahum N. Glatzer, ed., *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: 1961), p. 37.
40. As the German-Jewish freedom fighter Johann Jacoby commented, to be a German Jew was to be enlightened and a useful citizen, unlike the Asian variety. See Jacoby's remarks in an address to the rabbinical assembly in Frankfurt on 24 April 1845. Quoted in *Brothers and Strangers*, p. 20.
41. For a typical mid-19th century example, see "Galizische Zustände," *Der Israelit des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 7, no. 12 (22 March 1846), p. 93.
42. Even the sophisticated Hannah Arendt was prey to and combined these prejudices, indeed, schematizing them hierarchically, as she reported her observations surrounding the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem: "My first impression. On top, the judges, the best of German Jewry. Below them, the persecuting attorneys, Galicians, but still Europeans. Everything is organized by a police force that gives me the creeps, speaks only Hebrew and looks Arabic. Some downright brutal types among them. They would follow any order. And outside the doors, the oriental mob, as if one were in Istanbul or some other half-Asiatic country. In addition, and very visible in Jerusalem, the peies and caftan Jews, who make life impossible for all the reasonable people here." See Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence 1926–1969*, ed. Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), Letter 285, 13 April 1961, p. 435. The last line, however, of this paragraph softens matter a little: "The major impression, though, is of very great poverty."
43. I deal with these questions in much greater detail, especially in Chapter 2, of *Brothers and Strangers*. See too Richard I. Cohen, "Nostalgia and 'Return to the Ghetto': A Cultural Phenomenon in Western and Central Europe," in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth Century Europe*, Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 130–155. See too Jonathan M. Hess, "Leopold Kompert and the Work of Nostalgia: The Cultural Capital of German Jewish Ghetto Fiction," *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Fall 2007), pp. 576–615. It should be stressed, however, that nostalgia is a condition afforded only because that past has been transcended.
44. Franzos's stories of these areas was entitled *Aus Halb-Asien* (1876). See his foreword to vol. 1 (Stuttgart and Berlin: J. G. Cottasche Buchhandlung, 1914), by which time this had reached its fifth edition.
45. One should note that Franzos's ideal of Germanization was not one of political hegemony but rather a cultural ideal. *Deutschtum* represented a kind of humane standard by which nations could measure their own particular cultural progress. See my treatment of Franzos in my *Brothers and Strangers*, especially pp. 27–31. There I was not sufficiently sensitive to Franzos's own indeterminacies, a matter that I stress below.
46. *Aus Halb-Asien*, p. xxv.
47. This has been emphasized by Leo W. Riegert, Jr. in his "Subjects and Agents of Empire: German Jews in Post-Colonial Perspective," *The German Quarterly* 82.3 (Summer 2009), pp. 336–335. The quotes appear on p. 350.
48. See Franzos, "Die Kolonisationsfrage," *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, 55, pp. 555, 567.
49. This was the formulation of Dr. Hugo Ganz. See my *Brothers and Strangers*, p. 40.
50. On the general as well as Jewish aspects of this mood, see Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Fin de Siécle Orientalism, the Ostjuden, and the Aesthetics of Self-Affirmation"

in his *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), pp. 77–132. The sudden popularity of Schopenhauer's thought both fueled and reflected this current. Symptomatically (see Mendes-Flohr, p. 77), a central charismatic sage of this Orientalism was the flamboyant Omar al Raschid Bey—clad "in Bedouin robes, a bright yellow and green cummerbund, a red fez, and high leather boots"—a Jewish convert to Islam, Friedrich Arndt-Kürnberg.

51. See chapters 5, 6, and 8 of my *Brothers and Strangers* for detailed elaboration of the nature, dynamics, and limits of this cult.
52. Countless examples could be given here. I can't resist the temptation of quoting Franz Kafka in this respect: "And I should like to run to those poor Jews of the ghetto, kiss the hem of their coats, and say not a word. I should be completely happy if only they would endure my presence in silence." See Kafka, *I Am a Memory Come Alive: Autobiographical Writings*, edited by N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 232.
53. "Ost und West," in *Ost und West*, 1901, no. 1.
54. "On Being a Jewish Person," in Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig*, 216.
55. Buber developed these ideas in his famous 1909 lectures to the Prague Bar Kochba group. See his talk "Judaism and the Jews" in Martin Buber, *On Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), pp. 11–21. The quote appears on p. 20.
56. See Buber's Bar Kochba Lecture, "The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism," in Martin Buber, *On Judaism*, pp. 56–78.
57. See Leo A. Lensing, "Altered Images" (a review of Mary Bergstein's *Mirrors of Memory: Freud,Photography and the History of Art*), *Times Literary Supplement* (January 21, 2011), p. 13.
58. See Wassermann's, "Der Literat," *Imaginäre Brücken: Studien und Aufsätze* (Munich: Kurt Wolff, 1921), p. 147. Wassermann wrote repeatedly on this theme. See his "Der Jude als Orientale," in *Vom Judentum. Ein Sammelbuch*, ed. Hans Kohn (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff, 1913) and in *Daimon* 1.1. (1918), pp. 28–32. *Vom Judentum* exemplified both the cult of the *Ostjuden* and this brand of Orientalism, culled from a critique of bourgeois liberal positivism and rationalism and inspired by the revival of mysticism, myth, and the discovery of primal "unconscious" drives.
59. For a very interesting exposition and critique of Feuchtwanger's Orientalism, see Paul Levesque, "Mapping the Other: Lion Feuchtwanger's Topographies of the Orient," *The German Quarterly*, vol. 71 (no. 2, Spring 1998), pp. 145–165. Levesque castigates Feuchtwanger's arrogance and blindness for the belief "that mere assertion will make it so…that when the modern Jew speaks, Europe listens, for through him speaks the wisdom of the Orient." (p. 158).
60. I have tried to explore this relationship in greater detail in "Zionisme en de idée Europa" in *Europees humanisme in fragmenten. Grammatica van een ongesproken taal*, ed. Rob Riemen (*Nexus* 2008, Number 50), pp. 689–700. It has also been published in English under the title of "Zionism and the Idea of Europe" in Julia Matveev and Ashraf Noor, eds., *Die Gegenwärtigkeit Deutsch-Jüdischen Denkens* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2011), pp. 303–319.
61. Arthur Hertzberg formulated this with great insight, albeit a little differently. Zionism, he wrote, represented "the attempt to achieve the consummation of the freedom the modern world promised the Jew as clearly as it is the blasting of that hope; it is the drive of Jewry to be part of society in general as much as, or even more than, it is the call to retreat; and it is the demand for a more complete involvement in modern culture, at least as much as it is the reassertion of the claim of older, more traditional loyalties." See the introduction to his anthology, *The Zionist Idea* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), p. 21.

62. Regarding the fate that awaited the Jews in Europe, Herzl chillingly predicted to the Rothschilds: "Will it be a revolutionary expropriation from below or a reactionary confiscation from above? Will they chase us away? Will they kill us? I have a fair idea it will take all these forms and others." Quoted in Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 183.
63. This is contained in Herzl's 1902 utopian *Altneuland: Old-New Land*, translated by Paula Arnold (Haifa: Haifa Publishing Company, 1960). Even though this was to be a state of the Jews, "all nationalities could be seen thronging the pavements," and its culture was conceived of as entirely cosmopolitan: "In the evening, if you like, we can go to the opera, or to one of the theatres—German, French, English, Italian, Spanish." To be sure, Herzl did not entirely leave out some Jewish components in his vision. This, after all was not only a new but also an "old" land where Jews celebrate Passover, attend temple on sabbath, and so on. Nevertheless, the weight of the matter remains European and cosmopolitan. For a review of recent conflicting interpretations of Herzl, see Allan Arkush, "Old-New Debate," *Jewish Review of Books* (No. 1, Spring 2010). In an interesting piece, Arieh Bruce Saposnik has claimed that Herzl's *Altneuland* represents a kind of fusion of East and West and points to the first appearance in Herzl's book of his Arab character as wearing "European dress and a fez;" the European greeting the Arab (actually, a Turk) "in the Oriental way," and exchanging a few words in Arabic, while his friend answers "in German with a slight North-German accent." These I would argue represent merely decorative elements in the framework of a clearly overall vision of emulation of a Europeanized society. See Saposnik's "Europe and Its Orients in Zionist Culture before the First World War," *The Historical Journal*, 49, 4 (2006), pp. 1105–1123.
64. For this quote see my *Brothers and Strangers*, p. 90.
65. Ibid., p. 91, note 34. See too Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-de-Siécle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (California: University of California Press, 2001), p. 17.
66. This represents a classic, specific form of German-Jewish Orientalism, in that it both articulates a Western and German-Jewish superiority over the East, yet maintains an inner Jewish superiority when it comes to the East itself. See Oppenheimer's "Stammesbewusstein und Volksbewusstein," in *Die Welt* 14, no. 7 (18 February 1910) and *Jüdische Rundschau*, 15, no. 8 (25 February 1910). The present translation appears in Stephen M. Poppel, *Zionism in Germany 1897–1933: The Shaping of a Jewish Identity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1977), p. 58.
67. The formulation is that of Yehouda Shenhav. See his insightful *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 6. Aziza Khazzoom's book, *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), puts it even more bluntly: "Or, How the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual."
68. There is certainly some sociological truth to the witticism that the Israeli WASP is the White Ashkenazi Sabra with Protektzia!
69. There is some validity in this characterization—witness the fact that the appellation "Mizrachim" rather than the more prestigious "Sephardim" has taken hold—yet accusations as to robbing these immigrants of their culture and traditional values—rendering them ashamed of their past and background—was a self-generated ideological demand that also applied to the East European Zionists. Zionism, after all, represented the negation of the *Galut* (exile) and often entailed an enthusiastic and radical transformation of identity, language, and traditional values. "We came to the Land to build and to be built" goes the refrain of a famous

Zionist song. Still, the negation had different roots and ideological electricity. In the first place, as Shenhav notes in The Arab Jews, because these Jews came from Arab lands and Arabs constituted "the enemy," the process of de-Arabization contained a more charged political and existential urgency. Moreover, they constituted a threat to Zionism's self-representation as a "Western" and "modern" project. It is worth noting, however, that well prior to the rise of Zionism and the State of Israel, relations between Jews and Muslims within these Arab countries were not always characterized by harmony and mutual admiration.

70. See Eban's *Voice of Israel* (New York: Horizon Press, 1957), p. 76.
71. For a particularly forceful post-Zionist formulation of this position see Ella Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims," *Social Text*, No. 19/20 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 1–35. This article clearly takes its inspiration from Edward Said's influential text (in the same journal), "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," *Social Text*, No. 1 (Winter 1979), pp. 7–58.
72. There are other important differences to be noted. Both the general non-Jewish labeling of Jews in Europe as "Asian" or "Eastern" *and* the stereotyping by Western and German Jews of *Ostjuden* took place within contexts that rendered their textures and consequences quite different from the Israeli case. Within Europe, the fact of Jewish vulnerable minority status constituted the driving force. The fact of sovereign Jewish rule in Israel—in principle open to the "Mizrachi" population—constitutes a qualitatively distinctive conditioning ingredient. See my "Introduction: *Brothers and Strangers* Reconsidered" in the paperback edition of *Brothers and Strangers* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), p. xxx. While I still hold to this proposition, I do believe that the Orientalizing impulse is more important than I previously believed, and this present chapter is an attempt to flesh out its dynamics, permutations, and complexities.
73. For a nuanced view of the complexities of the ways in which Yemenite Jewry was perceived, see the Hebrew doctoral dissertation by Noah S. Gerber, "The Cultural Discovery of Yemenite Jewry: Between Ethnography and Philology" (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2009).
74. Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, p. 191.
75. Even here there are ironies. Shas often chooses to send its young men to study in Ashkenazi *yeshivot*.
76. It is important to note that the very notion of "Arab Jews"—as a presumed cultural unity—is a disputed one. Critics hold that the term may indeed be more descriptive of recent post-Zionist scholarship than an apt sociological or historical category or one that captures the complex and diversified self-representation of Jews (and non-Jews) and their not always harmonious relationships in the various pre-nationalist and later Arab-speaking worlds. See Emily Benichou Gottreich, "Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the Maghrib" and Lital Levy, "Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the *Mashriq*" in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 98, no. 4 (Fall 2008), pp. 433–451, 452–469 respectively.
77. As part of their group identity, "Mizrachim" define themselves as "traditional," yet their increasing adoption of the *kipa* (Jewish headgear) is also meant to distinguish themselves from the Arabs.
78. See Niva Lanir, "The Rabbi and the Role of Big Brother," *Ha'aretz*, February 8, 2010, p. 5.
79. Personal communication with Noah Gerber, 16th January 2011.
80. In their book, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit trace an overall pattern of *anti-Western* attitudes and ideologies both by non-Europeans and internal Western critics, the mirror image of negative "Orientalism."

81. For an excellent exposition of these trends see Arieh Bruce Sapsonik, "Europe and Its Orients in Zionist Culture before the First World War," *The Historical Journa*l, 49, 4 (2006), pp. 1105–1123. Once again, despite all the difference, this can also be located as part of a larger ongoing "European" rejection of Europe and the West.
82. Hanan Harif is presently writing a doctoral dissertation on this topic, whose expressions are surprisingly widespread. He notes that pan-Asianism was, of course, a varied phenomenon some examples of which included Japan and southeast Asia (and not just the "Asia" that has been the focus of this paper).
83. See Sapsonik, "Europe and Its Orients," pp. 1109–1100, in which he quotes from Meir Wilansky's account of this transformation and the Arab-Jewish link. As "songs of the Qur'an are sung, the Hebrew trills attract the hearts of Israel, gather in the courtyards and ascend to the roofs…The choir lowers its head and body…and responds, breathing 'Allah', or 'Eloheinu'."
84. See Eugen Höflich, *Die Pforte des Ostens (Das arabisch-jüdische Palaestina vom panasiatichen Standpunkt aus)* (Berlin-Vienna, 1923). See too his *Tagebücher 1915–1927* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1999), ed. Armin A. Wallas. For an excellent review of the diary and Höflich's life and views (from which the quotes included here are culled) as well as some insightful views on the nature of Orientalism itself, see Asher D. Biemann, *Modern Judaism* 21 (2001), pp. 175–192. See too A. Dirk Moses, "The Contradictory Legacies of German Jewry," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (LIV, London, 2009), pp. 36–43.
85. See the entry for 13 April 1923 in Arthur Ruppin, *Tagebücher, Briefe, Erinnerungen*, ed. Shlomo Krolik (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäum, 1985), pp. 347–348. I discuss Ruppin and others in a slightly different context in Chapter 1 of *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). There is an additional component to Ruppin's view within this "Orientalist" context. Thus he rendered explicit his belief in the (racial as well as cultural) superiority of Ashkenazi over Sephardic-Oriental Jews. See Etan Bloom, "What 'The Father' Had in Mind? Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), Cultural Identity, Weltanschauung and Action," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007), pp. 330–349, especially p. 340. Bloom's depiction of the nature and degree of Ruppin's racial views has been seriously questioned by Amos Morris-Reich, "Ruppin and the Peculiarities of Race: A Response to Etan Bloom," *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008), pp. 116–119. Moreover (in personal correspondence of January 2, 2011), Noah Gerber, while confirming Ruppin's *theoretical* views regarding Oriental Jews, especially Yemenite, Jews, argues that in practice they were not translated into Ruppin's actual settlement policies.
86. See Hans Kohn's "Der Geist des Orients" in his *Vom Judentum*, p. 10 and my *Beyond the Border*, p. 34.
87. On this see Reiss, *The Orientalist*, especially pp. 299–302.
88. Of course, this was not limited to the Zionists. Many of the characters discussed in this paper did so. As recently as March 5, 2010, *Ha'aretz* (Weekend Section, p. B7) published a picture of de Haan in Arab headdress.
89. See Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West and the Mizrahi Jewish Perspective" in Kalmar and Penslar's *Orientalism and the Jews*, pp. 162–181, especially p. 169.
90. For the quotes from these three Zionist leaders see Shlomo Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (London: Verso, 2009), especially pp. 187–188. Of course, these convictions were different from the pan-Semitism with which we are here concerned, but were based upon a myth of origin and the claim of priority and right to the Land. Moreover, as Reuven Amitai reports (personal communication, 5th February 2011) there is an ongoing claim that "among the present-day

Palestinians are many whose forefathers and mothers were Jews who converted to Islam, although the converted Christians probably represent a much more significant number." To add yet another dimension, one should mention the "Canaanites," another stream of Zionism, which based itself upon *Ur*ethnic origins—and which interestingly combined "Left" and "Right" ingredients. On this movement, see James S. Diamond, *Homeland or Holy Land?: The Canaanite Critique of Israel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

91. See Chapter 4 of the present book, "*Bildung* in Palestine: Zionism, Binationalism, and the Strains of German-Jewish Humanism." This also appeared as Chapter 1 of my book *Beyond the Border.*
92. Aschheim, Beyond the Border, footnote 96, p. 137.
93. M. C. [Moses Calvary], "Probe," *Der Jude* 1/1 (April 1916), pp. 54–56. I am grateful to Adi Gordon for this reference.
94. At times, the "East" meant Eastern Europe rather than the Middle East. Thus Chaim Weizmann's vision of the blending, as he explained it to Herzl, meant extracting the Jewish essence from the Eastern masses and pouring it into a European mold: "What we regard as Jewish culture has till lately been confused with Jewish religious worship, and when culture in the literal sense was discussed, the Zionists of Western Europe thought that it referred to the improvement of educational facilities in East Europe. Perhaps it is now understood . . . that the totality of Jewish national achievement is intended—particularly that literature, art, scientific research, should all be synthesized with Europeanism, translated into modern creativity, and expressed in institutions bearing their own individual character." See the letter of 6 May 1903, letter 316 in Chaim Weizmann, *Letters and Papers* vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 312–313.
95. Saposnik, "Europe and Its Orients . . . ," p. 1114.
96. See entry for January 4, 1916 in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1913–1917* (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1995), p. 226.
97. Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West," p. 169.
98. See the perceptive piece by Tom Segev, "Feuding Orientalists," *Haaretz Magazine* (December 7, 2007), p. 13. The point here is not to agree or take issue with such a standpoint, but rather to underline the degree to which such questions are not merely academic, but rather urgently existential. Of course, many Israeli institutions—parliament, the rule of law, civil society etc.—and much of its normative, intellectual and high culture remains in thrall to the liberal European model. Its constant self-invocation as "an enlightened" polity and society posits both an implicit and explicit negative contrast with its Middle Eastern neighbors and sometimes its own inhabitants. Much of this may have been patronizing and disdainful of other cultures. But one wonders if things could have developed otherwise. For the late nineteenth and twentieth century business of modern State-building and the creation of a new national culture and identity went virtually hand in hand with European ideas and the (negative and positive) models it provided. Few, I think, would want such key institutions to be abandoned.
99. See Schroeter, "From Sephardi to Oriental," p. 128. See too, for example, Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (Boston, 2002).
100. For good analyses outlining this commonality but also its limits and the differences, see Ivan Davidson Kalmar, "Jesus Did Not Wear a Turban: Orientalism, the Jews, and Christian Art," and Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Placing the Jews in Late Medieval English Literature," both in *Orientalism and the Jews*, op. cit.
101. See Jeremy Cohen, "The Muslim Connection, or On the Changing Role of the Jew in High Medieval Theology," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Christians in Medieval Christian Thought* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1996), pp. 141–162; the

quotation appears on p. 162. For an earlier study see Allan and Helen Cutler, *The Jew as the Ally of the Muslim* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

102. See Gil Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Anidjar's radical Schmittian-Derridean analysis contains some interesting and challenging insights, but is marred by an insistence on an arcane, at times virtually incomprehensible, postmodernist jargon.
103. This notion too is partly, of course, an ideological construct. Deborah Dash Moore dates its emergence to the Second World War, in which American Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers fought together and as a result the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains conducted joint services. Democracy and Judeo-Christianity formed a natural alliance or were seen as identical: "What had formerly been three distinct religious traditions were now part of a collective tradition." See her *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). The quote appears on p. 123. There is no doubt that as the "clash of civilizations" has become a dominant theme, so too this ideology has come increasingly to the fore. As a foundational narrative this may indeed be new, but the seeds of notions combining Christian and Jewish values and traditions has an exceedingly long pedigree.
104. See Raz-Krakotzkin, "The Zionist Return to the West," p. 179.
105. These are usually "post-Zionist" constructions of one sort or another, which thus far have had little political force but some have had some intellectual influence. One example would be Amal Jamal, "The Dialectics of 'Othering' in Zionist Thought—Arabs and Oriental Jews in Israel," *Tel Aviv Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* XXX (2002), pp. 283–310. Regarding the situation of Arabs who, under Zionist premises, he believes have undergone thorough Orientalization, Jamal demands radical civic equality, which, p. 303, "in an ethnic state stipulates the transformation of the state structure." In the end Jamal advocates a kind of de-Zionized liberal multiculturalism. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, in "A National-Colonial Theology," proposes a kind of neo-binationalism, which entails "a responsibility towards the victims of the secular [Zionist] myth, and a revaluation of the terms of Jewish identity. In both respects, binationalism is directed against the Orientalism of the present discourse." In his view, binationalism would overcome the "ethnocratic" nature of the state through "the definition of a common Jewish-Arab space" (p. 321). On the extreme fringe, it has recently been suggested that in a tolerant, inclusive Islamic polity (and not even the proposed PLO secular state!), Jews in Palestine would be granted national minority rights. The increasingly dominant (if still far from implemented) two-state solution would maintain separate "Jewish" and "Palestinian" spaces, but, unlike the present situation, it would at least entail a theoretical equality of *national* self-determination (ideally with more civic equality for its nonmajoritarian citizens).
106. Abba Eban voiced an alternative position in 1957 (after rejecting an "unnatural Orientalism"): "The slogan should not be integration, but good neighborliness; not Israel as an organic part of the Middle East, but Israel as a separate and unique entity living at peace with the Middle East. What we aspire to is not the relationship which exists between Lebanon and Syria; it is far more akin to the relationship between the United States and the Latin-American continent: relations of good neighborliness, of regional co-operation, of economic interaction, but across a frankly confessed gulf of historic, cultural, and linguistic differences. The things which divide Israel from the Arab world are very often the most positive things which Israel exemplifies in its region. Nor should this interpretation be understood as equivalent to a desire for Israel to be a bridgehead in the area. There is a form of cooperation which falls far short of organic integration." See his *Voice of Israel*, p. 76.

4 *Bildung* in Palestine: Zionism, Binationalism, and the Strains of German-Jewish Humanism

1. See Felix Weltsch, ed., *Prague and Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Keren Ha'yesod, 1954 [Hebrew]), p. 201.
2. In his study of Brit Shalom, for instance, Shalom Ratzabi divides the group into an exclusively Central European radical component and a moderate circle. Although the latter circle was indeed headed by Arthur Ruppin (very much a German-speaking Posen Jew) he points out that most of its members were from Eastern Europe and adhered more closely to normative "practical" and "political" Zionist positions and to a theoretical rather than "political" engagement with the "Arab problem." See Shalom Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom 1925–1933* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. xii.
3. See Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), p. 251.
4. On Arendt's changing and critical views on Zionism as well as her involvement with Judah Magnes and the Ichud, see her *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, ed. Ron H. Feldman (New York: Grove Press, 1978) and also see Chapter 5 of this volume.
5. On Einstein's positions and his sustained correspondence with Hugo Bergman, see the [Hebrew] article by Jochanan Flusser, "Symbiosis Is the Real Goal," *Ha'aretz* (17 December 2004), p. H3.
6. On this paradox, see Hagit Lavsky [Hebrew], "Chidat Chotama shel 'Brit Shalom' al ha'pulmus ha'Zioni B'zmana o'l'achar z'mana," *Hazionut* (Maasef, Yud Tet [19]), 1995, pp. 167–181. Lavsky sees the development of the Zionist binational idea as one possible outgrowth of Achad Ha'am's ideas and Chaim Weizmann's policy positions. In this view, binationalism was thus not a "foreign" phenomenon but rather an organic part of pre-State Zionism, albeit its most extreme edge.
7. See Michael Walzer, "The Practice of Social Criticism" in his *Interpretation and Social Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 35–66. See especially pp. 59, 61.
8. The binationalists were thus quite different, for instance, from the group of disaffected left-wing socialist émigrés such as Arnold Zweig and the circle around their journal, *Der Orient,* who found themselves in Palestine during the 1930s and 1940s. "Arnold Zweig visited me today in the library," Bergman reported in March 1934. "It is uncanny how he lives here as an *emigrant*. He exists on the '*Tagebuch*'." See Bergman's *Tagebücher & Briefe, Band I, 1901-1948,* ed., Miriam Sambursky (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäaum, 1985), entry for 6.3.1934, p. 353. For an excellent analysis of this circle and its journal see the (Hebrew) study by Adi Gordon, *'In Palestine. In a Foreign Land'. The Orient: A German-Language Weekly Between German Exile and Aliyah* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 2004).
9. This does not mean that German nationalism was "essentially" integral and intolerant. Even if it was ultimately unsuccessful, there was another earlier, more "progressive" strain. On this see Christoph Prignitz, *Vaterlandsliebe und Freiheit. Deutscher Patriotismus von 1750 bis 1850* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1981).
10. See Yfaat Weiss, "Central European Ethnonationalism and Zionist Binationalism," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 11, no. 1 (Fall 2004), pp. 93–117.
11. Arthur Ruppin, *Tagebücher, Briefe, Erinnerungen*, ed. Schlomo Krolik (Königstein; Jüdischer Verlag Athenäaum, 1985). Entry for 7 November 1933, p. 448.

12. Indeed, Ruppin reports without comment in his 1933 diary that he had traveled to Jena to talk with Hans K. Günther, "who created the national socialist race theory. The conversation lasted two hours. He was very kind, denied authorship of the Aryan concept and agreed with me that the Jews were not inferior but different [*andersartig*] and that the Jewish question should be dealt with in respectable manner." See the entry of 16 August, 1933, Arthur Ruppin, *Tagebücher*, p. 446.
13. For a heady perspective on the purportedly racial, and highly illiberal, views of Ruppin see Etan Bloom, "What 'The Father' Had in Mind, Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), Cultural Identity, Weltanschauung and Action," *History of European Ideas* 33.3 (2007), pp. 330–349. See too the reply by Amos Morris-Reich, "Ruppin and the Peculiarities of Race: A Response to Etan Bloom," *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008), pp. 116–119.
14. Ruppin, *Tagebücher*. Entry for 13 April, 1923, pp. 347–348.
15. See Ruppin, "Das Verhältnis der Juden zu den Arabern," *Der Jude*, no. 10 (1918–1919), pp. 453–457. The quote appears on p. 445. Ruppin substantiated these statements thus: "If we estimate the useable agricultural surface of Palestine as half the overall area, that is 15,000 square kilometers, about 17,000,000 dunam, the amount of agricultural concerns in Palestine at 80,000–100,000 and the surface of most concerns at 100 dunam, 7,000,000 to 9,000,000 remains over. That is double what is needed for Jewish colonization over the next years." (p. 455). Ruppin's calculations could not, of course, take into account the rise of Nazi Germany.
16. Yfaat Weiss, "Central European Ethnonationalism," observes that when Kohn later argued that "Zionist nationalism went the way of most Central and East European national movements" it became lumped into his antithesis of "bad" "Eastern," exclusive nationalism as opposed to "good" Western, inclusive nationalism. This model became famous when Kohn outlined it in his influential *The Idea of Nationalism*. Weiss points out (pp. 104–105), that this dichotomous model, which was normative to the study of nationalism for decades, is shot through with antihistorical and essentialist assumptions. Contemporary scholarship, she argues, demonstrates that Western European state nationalism, proceeded on the basis of ethnic unification which took place in these territories in the centuries prior to the rise of nationalism. Thus, she argues, Kohn was unable to use Western models, such as England and France, for his binationalist quest. Western liberal nationalism did not have the ability to recognize hybridity or ethnic diversity and was no more able to accommodate it than Eastern European countries were. She concludes (p. 113) that: "Even the most progressive Zionists were not able to articulate effectively binationalism, a fact, which should make the historian more modest in his or her judgment." The point is well made. Nevertheless, a few mitigating features need to be mentioned. When seeking possible examples of binationalism Kohn most regularly turned to the Swiss and Belgian (as well as to some extent Finnish) examples. This was so also for other members of the group. Thus see Joseph Luria, "National Rights in Switzerland, Finland and Eretz Israel," [Hebrew], *Shi'ifoteinu*, III (1929), pp. 10–29. These are, surely, "Western" models (however we may want to understand that term). Moreover, as their internal discussions and admissions of confusion and contradiction show, these binationalists were themselves acutely aware of the practical problems entailed in their project, but they also pointed out the pitfalls of exclusive and majority rule. As this chapter argues, they based their argument less on the availability of either Eastern or Western models but on a moral position which combined, in their view, a uniquely Jewish politico-moral stance

with a commitment to universal Enlightenment principles. Although their own views have been found to be impractical, it would not be unfair to suggest that majoritarian nationalism in Palestine/Israel has produced its own set of virtually insoluble problems.

17. On this issue see my *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), especially p. 26.
18. On this topic see the Hebrew University doctoral dissertation by Adi Gordon, "The German-Jewish 'Generation of 1914' in the Weltbühne and Brit Shalom" (2008).
19. See Hans Kohn, "Nationalism" (an article dedicated to Martin Buber) which appears in *The Jew: Essays from Martin Buber's Journal, Der Jude, 1916–1918*, Edited Arthur A. Cohen, translated by Joachim Neugroschel (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1980), pp. 20–30. The quotes appear on p. 27. The article appeared originally in *Der Jude* VI (1921–1922), pp. 674–686.
20. See Dimitry Shumsky, "Historiography, Nationalism and Bi-Nationalism: Czech-German Jewry, The Prague Zionists, and the Origins of the Bi-National Approach of Hugo Bergman," [Hebrew] in *Zion* Vol. LXIX no. 1, 2004, pp. 45–80. The emphasis on bridging and mediation in everyday life attempts to ground the notions of Bergman and others in prosaic reality, rather than as a kind of utopian, de-territorialized project as presented in Scott Spector, *Prague Territories: National Conflict and Cultural Innovation in Franz Kafka's Fin-de-Siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). This is a useful and original interpretation but one should not be overdeterministic about all this. While Bergman did, indeed, stress the possibility of intertwined coexistence, there were moments when he explicitly regarded separation as the only possibility. Thus – in response to the watershed 1929 riots – he wrote to Weltsch (25.8.29): "How anyone can imagine that we in Palestine can progress as long as the two peoples live jointly together [*miteinander*] is a mystery to me. We are absolutely easily delivered. I think, for example, with shock how easy it would be to set the library which, in its greater portion lies on Mount Scopus, on fire at night. It is simply impossible to defend us, even if the English had the best intentions. We are a small number, easily sacrificed to a wild horde…as long as the peoples live together." (Bergman, *Tagebücher* I, p. 288). Shumsky's emphasis on formative background is surely important, but so too is the effect of lived and changing reality on the ground. Moreover, his insistence on the animating place of the Czech language and culture constitutes a valuable corrective to older conceptions of Czech-German-Jewish identity. But it may seriously underestimate the ongoing and central influence of, and commitment to, German language and culture in the lives of these circles. Bergman's adherence to German and his belief in its cultivating powers remained exceedingly strong even in the post-Holocaust period.
21. See Bergman's letter to Dr. Kurt Wehle, 22 January 1974, in Bergman's *Tagebücher & Briefe Band 2*, p. 698.
22. See George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985). See too my appreciation, "George Mosse at 80: A Critical Laudatio" in my *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), pp. 155–170. Mosse's book has become, by now, almost a canonic text and thus to some degree contested. See, especially, the essay by Shulamit Volkov, "The Ambivalence of *Bildung*: Jews and Other Germans" in Klaus L. Berghahn, *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered: A Symposium in Honor of George L. Mosse* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 81–97. See too the review of this book by Paul Mendes-Flohr in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, Vol. V (1989), pp. 377–379 and my essay, "German Jews Beyond Bildung and Liberalism: The Radical Jewish Revival in the Weimar Republic," in *Culture*

and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 31–44 (notes pp. 150–162).

23. This is of course a stereotypical characterization, which, like many stereotypes, possesses a grain of truth. The "Yekkes," it was said, were hopelessly formal. Thus, after an acquaintance and close relationship of almost four decades Ernst Simon would still address Martin Buber as "verehrter Professor Buber." See Letter 72, 11.10.1954, in Ernst A. Simon, *Sechzig Jahre gegen den Strom. Briefe von 1917–1984* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), p. 144. The traditional stereotype was largely, if at times affectionately, negative. Over the past few years, however, there has been a striking public transvaluation in which the term itself and the achievements of the German Jews have been celebrated. In May 2004 an International Conference on the traditions of "The Yekkes and Their Influence Upon the Yishuv and Israeli Society" was held in Jerusalem and was attended by overwhelmingly large audiences. For all that, we need to point out, that though all these figures were deeply imprinted with the German *Kulturbereich,* the Jews from, say, Prague or Vienna were hardly "Yekkes" and in sensibility, mannerisms, and habits often were far removed from, say, their "Prussian" cousins.
24. Many of Agnon's satirically named protagonists—Dr. Taglicht, Ernst Weltfremdt, Manfred Herbst, Professor Neu and so on—are explicitly or implicitly associated with these binationalists. As Agnon portrays them, beneath their professorial and European exteriors, lurked rather fervent erotic desires. This novel, unfinished at the time of Agnon's death in 1970, has been superbly translated into English by Zeva Shapiro (with an informative afterword by Robert Alter). See S. Y. Agnon, *Shira* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989).
25. See this citation from *Jüdische Rundschau*, October 22, 1929 as quoted in Antony David, *The Patron: A Life of Salman Schocken 1877–1959* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), p. 236.
26. See entry for 19 March 1930, Arthur Ruppin, *Tagebücher, Briefe, Erinnerungen* (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag, Athenäum, 1985), ed. Schlomo Krolik, with an afterword by Alex Bein, p. 422. Ussischkin later apologized for this outburst, although there is little reason to believe he did not say what he thought.
27. Many years ago I wrote a study about the dynamics of this conflict within its original modern historical context. The degree to which these dynamics were reproduced and seen as significant within Palestine among Zionists whose commonalities were supposed to transcend the differences remained surprisingly great. See my *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; paperback, with a new introduction, 1999). There was something simultaneously comic and nasty in the way these tensions manifested themselves. In 1908, Arthur Ruppin recalled: "The xenophobia directed against me as a 'foreign' Jew by the population of the Yishuv that consisted overwhelmingly of *Ostjuden* created any numbers of rumors and jokes about my Jewish ignorance. This could have been forgivable, for in this lay a core of truth. What was unforgivable is that these rumors ended in defamations, such as the following case: my wife invited some of our acquaintances for Sylvester-evening 1908/09 [New Year's eve] and sang them some *Lieder.* Shortly thereafter there appeared in the 'Press' a notice that I had celebrated Christmas and lighted a Christmas tree. This notice reappeared over the years many times in various newspapers." See Ruppin, *Tagebücher*, "Der 'Weihnachtsbaum,'" p. 171. This was only ultimately exposed when Leib Jaffe published a disclaimer.
28. See the letter to Robert Weltsch of 17.7.1928 by Schmuel Hugo Bergman, *Tagebücher und Briefe: Band I, 1901–1948*, ed. Miriam Sambursky, with an introduction by

Nathan Rotenstreich (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag, Athenäum, 1985), p. 245. Actually, as time passed, members of the circle, notably Gershom Scholem and Hugo Bergman, became increasingly fluent and literate in Hebrew. Moreover, both studied and were reasonably literate in Arabic.

29. Arthur Ruppin, *Tagebücher*. See entry for 31 December 1924, pp. 362–363. Even more extremely, Hans Kohn wrote in his diary (7.1.1927), immediately after noting that his beloved Rilke had died without a homeland and open to the world (presumably an autobiographic remark): "...noteworthy, since I am in Palestine from the end of October 1925, I have the feeling of the proximity of death." See the Hans Kohn Collection, Leo Baeck Institute, New York (Box 18, Folder 2, Reel 12). I thank Adi Gordon for this reference.
30. Hugo Bergman, *Tagebücher & Briefe II, 1948–1975*, ed. Miriam Sambursky with an introduction by Nathan Rotenstreich (Königstein: Jüdischer Verlag bei Athenäum, 1985). Entry for 9.1.1964, p. 448.
31. This even applied to the more practical and moderate Arthur Ruppin (albeit in a different way), who was older than the other figures discussed here and thus generationally closer to the founding fathers of the movement. Zionism, he noted in 1923, was actually "only a springboard for a greater task, the renewal of the culture of the near East. I was always against 'political Zionism'. My entry into the Zionist Movement, occurred under the slogan,'against political Zionism (that is, the Charter Idea of Herzl'), and for practical work in Palestine.' I wanted to base the rights of the Jews to come to Palestine not on some political 'contracts' and concessions but rather on their historical and racial affinities with Palestine and wanted them to acquire as many rights as they could earn through their work." See his *Tagebücher*, entry for 29 April 1923, p. 349.
32. Simon, Letter 58 to Walter Falk, 8.2.43 in Ernst Simon, *Sechzig Jahre Gegen den Strom*, p. 120.
33. Ernst Simon, "Prushim lo isim" [Hebrew], *Davar* (11.11.1932). Quoted in Ratzabi, *Between Zionism and Judaism*, pp. 267–268.
34. See Kohn's letter of resignation from the Zionist movement (to Dr. Berthold Feiwel), 21 November 1929 in Paul Mendes-Flohr, ed., *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 97. The whole letter can be read on pp. 97–100.
35. Bergman, *Tagebücher* I, See 27.10.26, pp. 206–207.
36. See the entry for 31 December 1925, in Ruppin, *Tagebücher*, p. 375.
37. See Ruppin, *Tagebücher*, Entry for 26 May, 1928, p. 400.
38. Bergman, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1. Letter to Leo Herrmann, 19.7.1922, p. 175.
39. Ibid. Letter to Robert Weltsch, 6.9.28, p. 255. Bergman does not mention the name of Achad Ha'am's son,which was Shlomo Mordecai Zalman. The definitive biography of Achad Ha'am, Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) does not shed further light on the man in light of these views.
40. Ruppin, *Tagebücher*. Entry for 23 February 1929, p. 412.
41. Bergman, entry for 9.1.18, *Tagebücher I*, p. 106.
42. Bergman, entry for 2.22.1959, *Tagebücher II*, p. 321.
43. Unlike my own emphasis on the humanist *Bildungs* inheritance of these thinkers, Zohar Ma'or has provocatively argued that the messianic, redemptive and mystico-religious themes were predominant in this circle and that, indeed, their impulses are reflected in contemporary Israeli politics not so much on the Left or in post-Zionist circles but rather among West Bank settler groups! See his Hebrew article, "The Unattainable Land: On the Central European Roots of 'Brit Shalom,'" in Adi Gordon, ed.,*"Brit Shalom" and Zionist Bi-Nationalism: The "Arab Question" as a Jewish Question* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Carmel Press, 2008),

pp. 93–110. Gordon's volume represents an excellent collection of current work by young Israeli scholars on this theme.

44. Bergman, in a conversation with Edwin Samuel as reported in a letter of 6.9.28 to Robert Weltsch. See Bergman's *Tagebücher I*, p. 255. Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland* also contains intimations of this sort.
45. Documenting this multidirectional complex in detail would be a book-length project. Bergman, for instance, was throughout his life interested in parapsychology, mysticism, and life after death. See the Hebrew work by Zohar Ma'or on these predilections among members of the Prague Bar-Kochba Circle (Bergman, Max Brod, Franz Kafa, Felix Weltsch, etc.), *A New Kabbalah: Spirituality, Creativity and Nationalism in the 'Prague Circle'* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2010). Buber's role in mediating myth and legend as part of a Jewish *fin-de-siècle* "irrationalist" revival is too familiar to rehearse here, but see especially Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Fin-de-Siècle Orientalism, the *Ostjuden*, and the Aesthetics of Jewish Self-Affirmation," in *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), pp. 77–109 and Chapter 6, "From Rationalism to Myth: Martin Buber and the Reception of Hasidism" in my *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), pp. 121–138. The early Hans Kohn's neo-Romantic but always spiritually autonomous and culturally inner-directed cosmopolitan inclinations are clearly reflected in his biography of Martin Buber, *Martin Buber. Sein Werk und seine Zeit—Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte Mitteleuropas 1880–1930* (Cologne: Joseph Melzer Verlag, 1961, 2nd edition; the original was published in 1930), and in his essays outlining his ideas on nationalism. See, for instance, his 1921/22 essay *Nationalism*, reproduced in Arthur A. Cohen, *The Jews: Essays from Martin Buber's Journal Der Jude, 1916–1928*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1980), pp. 20–30. The cultivated businessman Salman Schocken (a relatively marginal figure in Brit Shalom) was intent on discovering or inventing a Jewish equivalent to the German Niebelung myth. See Anthony David, *The Patron, A Life of Salman Schocken, 1877–1959* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), especially Chapter 11.
46. The classic statement here, again, is Mosse's "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry" in his *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a 'Third Force' in Pre-Nazi Germany* (London: Orbach & Chambers, 1971), pp. 77–115. Such influences, Mosse argues, ran deep. Nevertheless, he insists upon a crucial distinction: "for Jewish youth the acceptance of this ideology never quite obliterated that belief in humanity which their liberal parents held so ardently. Those who played an important role in the Zionist aspect of this ideology, like Buber and Weltsch, became the principal spokesmen for a binational, Jewish-Arab state of Israel. Fichte and Volk were part of a specifically German culture which was assimilated, but mankind as a whole was never lost from sight. Racial ideas had no place here." (p. 111).
47. This was already noted by Ernst Simon in 1926 when Siegfried Kracauer accused Buber of such Völkisch tendencies. "In truth," he wrote, "Buber is even the champion against such nationalism in the Zionist movement; he and he alone is to be thanked not just for the 12th Congress in Carlsbad rejecting Jabotinsky's Legion proposal but also an explicit resolution that advocates fraternal co-operation with the Arabs. Also in all particular questions of a . . . spiritual nature Buber has always been on the side and at the head of those who have regarded the self-consciousness of the Jewish People as unique and universal and completely in contrast to a nationalist assimilatory position or a nationalist concept of European militarism." See Letter 22 to Siegfried Kracauer, 7 May 1926

in Ernst E. Simon, *Sechzig Jahre gegen den Strom: Briefe von 1917–1984* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) pp. 50–54, but especially p. 52. On this issue see Martin Jay, "Politics of Translation: Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin on the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible" in his *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 198–216. In his autobiography, Hans Kohn writes that "Buber's intellectual breadth preserved our Zionism from cultural narrowness and made our nationalism compatible with a broad humanitarian and cosmopolitan outlook. At the same time, official nationalism throughout Central Europe was characterized by a narrow, militant patriotism which regarded the destiny and power of the nation-state as the most important premise of political life and as the spiritual fulfillment of the individual's own life." See Kohn's, *Living in a World Revolution: My Encounters with History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), p. 69.

48. Hans Kohn, "Der Araberfrage," *Der Jude*, 4 (1919/20), pp. 566–57. See the translation of this article, "The Arab Question" in Wilma Abeles Iggers, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 239–242. (Kohn's piece was written in Irkutsk, Russia, in the summer of 1919.) Kohn wrote extensively about this problem.
49. This is comprehensively documented in Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples*.
50. Hans Kohn, letter to Feiwel. In Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples,* p. 98.
51. See Chapter 6 of the present volume.
52. See the letter of August 1, 1931, reproduced in *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship*, translated from the German by Harry Zohn (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981), pp. 169–174. The quote appears on p. 171. In the same letter Scholem characterized his Zionism as "a religious-mystic quest for a regeneration of Judaism" and not as an empirical "political" attempt to solve the "Jewish Question."
53. See "With Gershom Scholem: An Interview" in Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays*, ed. Werner J. Dannhauser (New York, Schocken Books, 1976), p. 43.
54. Thus Ernst Simon declared that after what had transpired in the 1948 war, all Jews and Zionists were "complicit in deep guilt…for the 400,000 new homeless, the plundering of Katamon, of Abu Tor, the destruction of villages and fields." See his Letter 66 to Martin Buber, 30.7, 48, in Ernst Simon, *Sechzig Jahre*, pp. 134–135.
55. As reported by Bergman in a letter to Weltsch; Bergman, *Tagebücher, I*. Entry for 8.4.27, p. 216.
56. Bergman, *Tagebücher*, II. Entry for 27.9.1950, pp. 65–66.
57. Bergman, "Die Ereignisse in Palaestina," *Selbstwehr*, 30.5.1921. Quoted in Bergman, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, p. 159.
58. See Anthony David, *The Patron*. See p. 158 and 269 for the respective quotes.
59. See Simon's essay, "Erziehung zum Frieden in Kriegszeiten. Dargelegt am Beispiel Israel (1971)" in his *Entscheidung zum Judentum: Essays und Vorträge* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), pp. 365–366.
60. This was most palpable when Magnes and Buber gave evidence to various commissions in the 1940s opposing the creation of the Jewish State.
61. Bergman, *Tagebücher I*. Entry for 6.5.1929, p. 285.
62. Walter Laqueur has summed up this position well: "Jabotinsky had early on reached the conclusion that Zionism did not make sense without a Jewish majority in Palestine…Other Zionist leaders, he argued, also knew this, but preferred not to talk about it openly, on the mistaken assumption that the Arabs could be fooled by a more moderate formulation of Zionist aims. But the Arabs loved their

country as much as the Jews did. Instinctively they understood Zionist aspirations very well, and their decision to resist them was only natural. Every people fought immigration and foreigners, however high-minded the motives for settlement. There was no misunderstanding between Jews and Arabs but a natural conflict. No agreement was possible with the Palestinian Arabs, they would accept Zionism only when they found themselves up against an 'iron wall', when they realized they had no alternative but to accept Jewish settlement…Zionism, Jabotinsky argued, was either *ab initio* moral or immoral. If the basic principle was moral, it was bound to remain so even if some people opposed it. There were no empty spaces in the world…He thought that it was impossible to expel the Arabs and that Palestine would always remain a multinational state…In their transfer to Palestine Jabotinsky's views lost much of their sophistication and moderation, and served as the ideological justification for primitive and chauvinistic slogans which helped to poison Arab-Jewish relations during the 1930s and 1940s." See Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, pp. 256–257.

63. See the "Politische Debatte und Beschlüsse des Jenaer Delegiertentages, 29–30 Dezember 1929," which appeared in the *Jüdische Rundschau* XXX Jg., Nr. 2, 7 January 1930, pp. 11–16; Nr. 1, 3 January, pp. 1–3 and reproduced as document 191 in Jehuda Reinharz, *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1882–1933* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), p. 463.
64. For a good selection of Arendt's various proposals in this spirit—and her support of and shifting relationships to Judah Magnes—during this period see especially Part III of Hannah Arendt, *Vor Antisemitismus ist man nur nich auf dem Monde sicher. Beiträge für die deutsch-jüdische Emigrantenzeitung 'Aufbau' 1941–1945*, ed., Marie Luise Knott (Munich: Piper Verlag, 2000).
65. Gershom Scholem, Letter 131, 28 January 1946, *Briefe I*, pp. 309–314. The quotes appear on pp. 310–311.
66. See Georg Landauer, *Der Zionismus im Wandel der Zeiten* (Tel Aviv, 1957), p. 241 and p. 451. On these personalities see too Mosse's "Gershom Scholem as a German Jew," p. 189, in Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1993).
67. On Buber's copious writings on these topics see Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples*, pp. 228–305. Bergman, too, was concerned with these problems. At times, there was some relief, even if the cause related to such discrimination. Thus, the decidedly aged Bergman reported his satisfaction in 1972 when he joined a demonstration concerning the evacuation of the Arab villages Ikrit and Biram and his joy of demonstrating together with Arabs under the Israeli flag. See the entry for 23.8.1972 in Bergman, *Tagebücher* II, p. 666.
68. See Mendes-Flohr, *A Land of Two Peoples*, pp. 245–253.
69. This assertion may seem surprising given Hans Kohn's declaration in his diary (22.12.1929): "Zionism is founded on the link between politics and violence. Our raison d'etre was to combine Zionism with ethical demands. A vain [attempt] for this is a contradiction in terms. We must withdraw and as much as we are active, combat Zionism." See the Hans Kohn Collection, Leo Baeck Institute, New York (Box 18/folder 4, reel 17). My thanks to Adi Gordon for this quote. Still, as late as 1958, while engaging in a virulent critique of the power-political and Herzlian versions of Zionism, he could still positively defend his Achad Ha'amian vision, to "rekindle the spiritual heritage and ethical tradition of Judaism." See his "Zion and the Jewish National Idea," in Michael Selzer, ed., *Zionism Reconsidered* (London: Macmillan, 1970). The quote appears on p. 210. For a recent treatment see Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).
70. See Bergman's comments to P. Pitter in *Tagebücher II*. Entry for 19.10.1964, p. 469.

71. The rush of new and invigorating research, much of which has been discussed in this chapter, is clearly related to present dilemmas. This is to be welcomed. However, a relevant and influential article by the late Tony Judt on the subject, while clearly responding to the present Middle East deadlock, is decidedly ahistorical. It proposes a binationalist solution without giving the slightest indication that this is not his own invention but, instead, has a rather long and tortuous history of achievements and failures, and without any consideration of the problems this proposed solution may provide. "The time has come to think the unthinkable," he writes, and then advocates "a single, integrated, binational state of Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians," with nary a word about those who, long before him, proposed and considered the details of such an idea. Judt is, of course, quite right that the present state of affairs is exceedingly problematic but his article provides little intellectual or existential evidence that he struggled with the dilemmas entailed in any of these proposed solutions. In this, the disturbing (and highly controversial) reflections, made on the ground, by Meron Benvenisti (mentioned note 72), stand as exemplary. Judt's dismissal of the "Jewish State" as "anachronistic" is facile (we have seen how Gershom Scholem replied to such accusations) and presumes a knowledge of the progressive nature of the historical process that I thought few historians would today venture to predict. See his "Israel: The Alternative," *The New York Review of Books* (October 23, 2003), pp. 8–10.
72. See, for instance, the superb study by Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), translated by Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta; also Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Binationalism and Jewish Identity: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Palestine," in Steven E. Aschheim, *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
73. See Hagit Lavsky, "Chidat Chatoma…," [see note 6 above], especially pp. 168–169.
74. See George Mosse's essay, "German Jews and Liberalism in Retrospect," in his *Confronting the Nation*, pp. 146–160. The quote appears on p. 149.
75. Mosse writes: "That this nationalism did not prevail does not make it any less relevant. As nationalism refuses to go away, as every minority continues to search for its national identity, the task of giving nationalism a human face becomes all the more pressing. Nothing in this book is meant to deny the necessity of nationality; not only has it been dangerous in the past to have been a people without a nation, but the national community rightly conceived can be a source of strength and pride, humanizing rather than brutalizing its members…To be sure, this seems a utopia expressed only by a few pioneers in the past, for it was easier simply to denounce all nationalism. But if nationalism with a human face is not realized, we might once more abandon the world to oppression and war." See the "Introduction" to *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1980), pp. 17–18.

5 Hannah Arendt: Jewishness at the Edges

1. Letter of June 23, 1964 in *Between Friends: The Correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy 1949–1975*, Carol Brightman, ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995), p. 168.
2. See Arendt's essay "Walter Benjamin: 1892–1940," in Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968), p. 190.
3. See his letter to Shalom Spiegel, 17 July 1941, Letter 119 in Gershom Scholem *Briefe Band I, 1914–1947*, Itta Shedletzky, ed. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994), p. 285. See too my review of the recently published Arendt-Scholem correspondence

"Between New York and Jerusalem," *Jewish Review of Books* (No. 4, Winter 2011), pp. 5–8.

4. Arendt to Karl Jaspers, 29 January 1946, Letter 34 in Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers, *Correspondence 1926–1969*, Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, eds. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, 1992), p. 29.
5. Arendt to Scholem, 24 July 1963, reprinted in Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, Ron Feldman, ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1978), p. 247.
6. See her 1959 Lessing Prize address "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing," in Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, p. 18.
7. Letter to Jaspers, 17 December 1946, Letter 50 in Arendt and Jaspers, *Correspondence*, p. 70.
8. Hannah Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman, eds. (New York: Schocken Books, 2007).
9. See her piece on "Anti-Semitism," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings,* p. 56.
10. Ibid., pp. 50–51.
11. See her 1945 essay, "Approaches to the German Problem," reprinted in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, Jerome Kohn, ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1994), p. 108.
12. Arendt, "Anti-Semitism," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, pp. 61–62.
13. Letter of 13 April 1961, No. 285, in Arendt-Jaspers, *Correspondence*, p. 435.
14. "The Political Organization of the Jewish People," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, p. 201.
15. "Can the Jewish-Arab Question be Solved," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, p. 195.
16. "Peace or Armistice in the Middle East," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, p. 446.
17. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 290.
18. "Peace or Armistice in the Middle East," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*. The quotes appear respectively on pp. 434, 435, 444.
19. "To Save the Jewish Homeland," in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, pp. 394–395.

6 The Metaphysical Psychologist: On the Life and Letters of Gershom Scholem

1. No one has stated this in stronger terms than Cynthia Ozick: "Gershom Scholem is a historian who has remade the world. He has remade it the way Freud is said to have remade it—by breaking open the shell of the rational to uncover the spiraling demons inside . . . Freud is a peephole into a dark chamber—a camera obscura; but Scholem is a radio telescope monitoring the universe, with its myriads of dark chambers." See her "The Mystic Explorer," *The New York Times Book Review* (September 21, 1980), p. 1. A comparative study of Freud and Scholem would indeed be useful. It should be noted here, however, that despite the fact that Scholem's second wife, Fania, was a member of the Freud family and that he approved of and emphasized Freud's Jewish self-affirmation and that, at times, he did employ psychological categories to his historical subjects (he characterized the messianic Sabbatai Sevi as a manic-depressive), Scholem's letters reveal a distinct wariness towards the psychoanalytic method as a reliable guide to philologically and historically grounded research. See for instance his remarks to Morton Smith, Letter 12, 30 December 1950, in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe II, 1948–1970*, ed., Thomas Sparr (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995). p. 19. In another letter (No. 24, 13.1.58, p. 43) he wrote: "I am aware that I don't understand my own depths and am clever enough to accept this, even

though I am no disciple of any of the psychoanalytic methods." For another appreciation of Scholem's work see too Harold Bloom, "Kabbalah," *Commentary* 59, No. 3 (March 1975), pp. 57–65. Arnaldo Momigliano also penned a laudatio of Scholem's pathbreaking achievement, "The Master of Mysticism," *New York Review of Books* (December 18, 1980), pp. 37–39. On this essay Scholem commented: "It is highly interesting, but ascribes to me a youthful foresight and uncanny genius which, to my regret, I did not possess. If only I would have known then about the deep connection between the results of my study of the Kabbalah, or even the very undertaking of such a research, with Zionism!" See Letter 210 to Robert Silvers, 28 December 1980, in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe III 1971-1982*, ed., Itta Shedletzky (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999), , p. 227. This was uncharacteristically modest and perhaps misleading, for the diaries make clear that from very early on Scholem intuited a rather deep connection between his Zionism and chosen field of study.

2. Here I will not attempt to recapitulate this recognition nor am I qualified to assess the debates and disagreements that Scholem's work has generated among later specialists in the field of Jewish mysticism (he was surely aware that his own pioneering efforts would usher in a period of criticism and revision). There is already a rather large literature on the subject. The earliest—and to my mind, still the best—full exposition of Scholem's thought is to be found in David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979). For a somewhat different view see Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Religion After Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade and Henry Corbin at Eranos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Robert Alter's *Necessary Angels: Tradition and Modernity in Kafka, Benjamin and Scholem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) is remarkably insightful. See too the important collection edited by Peter Schaefer and Gary Smith, *Gershom Scholem. Zwischen den Disziplinen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995). For more critical viewpoints see Eliezer Schweid, *Judaism and Mysticism According to Gershom Scholem: A Critical Analysis and Programmatic Discussion* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985) and, most prominently, Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988) and, among many of his other publications, "Rabbinism versus Kabbalism: On G. Scholem's Phenomenology of Judaism," *Modern Judaism* 11 (1991), pp. 281–296. There is a virtual library of articles, expository treatments, and evaluations of the work and its historical context and significance. Only a few can be mentioned here. See, for instance, Joseph Dan, "Gershom Scholem: Between History and Historiosophy," *Binah* 2 (1989), pp. 214–289; George L. Mosse, "Gershom Scholem as a German Jew," in *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover & London: Brandeis University Press, 1993); Christoph Schmidt, "Der haeretische Imperativ: Gershom Scholems Kabbala als Politische Theologie?" *Zeitschrift für Religions-und Geistesgeschichte* 50 (no. 1, 1998); Benjamin Lazier, *God Interrupted: Heresy and the European Imagination Between the World Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Henry Pachter, "Gershom Scholem: Towards a Mastermyth," *Salmagundi* (no. 40, Winter 1978). Scholem was not always appreciative of these analyses. Regarding the latter piece he wrote that it was "a very strange essay, full of the most nonsensical assertions about me." See Letter 162 to Stephen Bronner, 20 March 1978, *Briefe II*. See too letter 170 to Bronner, 12 June 1978, p. 186. For a radical deconstructionist critique of Scholem's framework and the alleged male, "Orientalist" assumptions that constitute its discourse see the provocative article by Gil Anidjar, "Jewish Mysticism Alterable and Unalterable: On *Orienting* Kabbalah Studies and the 'Zohar of Christian Spain' in *Jewish Social*

Studies Vol. 3 (no. 1, Fall 1996), pp. 89–157. For a scornful response see Moshe Idel, "Orienting, Orientalizing or Disorienting the Study of Kabbalah: 'An Almost Absolutely Unique' Case of Occidentalism" in *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, Vol. 2 (1997), pp. 13–47. I thank Noah Gerber for alerting me to these two latter pieces.

3. Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth,* translated from the German by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1980). For an important interview see "With Gershom Scholem: An Interview" (conducted by Muki Tsur and Abraham Shapira and translated from the Hebrew by Moshe Kohn) in Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays,* Werner J. Dannhauser, ed. (New York, 1976). On Scholem and Benjamin, see Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship*, translated from the German by Harry Zohn (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981); *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932–1940*, edited by Gershom Scholem, translated by Gary Smith and Andre Lefevere, introduction by Anson Rabinbach (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
4. Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I: 1914–1947*, ed. Itta Shedletzky (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994). *Briefe II: 1948–1970*, ed. Thomas Sparr (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995). *Briefe III: 1971–1982*, ed. Itta Shedletzky (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999). Betty Scholem, Gershom Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn im Briefwechsel 1917–1946,* ed. Itta Shedletzky in cooperation with Thomas Sparr (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1989). *Gershom Scholem, A Life in Letters, 1914–1982,* ed. and trans. by Anthony David Skinner (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2001). Gershom Scholem, *The Fullness of Time Poems*, trans. Richard Sieburth, introduced and annoted by Steven M. Wasserstrom (Jerusalem: Ibis Editions, 2003). Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1. Halbband 1913–1917*, ed. Karlfried Gruender and Friedrich Niewoehner, in cooperation with Herbert Kopp-Oberstebrink (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1995). *Tagebücher 2. Halbband 1917–1923*, ed. Karlfried Gruender, Herbert Kopp-Obserstebrink, Friedrich Niewöhner in cooperation with Karl E. Grözinger (Frankfurt am Main; Jüdischer Verlag, 2000).
5. Entry for 14.3.18 in *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, p. 150.
6. Scholem very early on intuited and insisted upon the importance of such totality, of constructing an inclusive view of Judaism and its tradition. Indeed, he regarded precisely those postbiblical, especially Kabbalistic, sources which, prior to his work, were often neglected and were considered downright unrespectable, as providing Judaism with its "soul" and its "unheard of depth and truth." See his remarkable Letter no. 17 to Siegfried Lehmann, 9.10.16 in *Briefe I*, pp. 46–52. See especially p. 47.
7. See Scholem's essay "Religious Authority and Mysticism" (first published in 1960) in Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965 [paper 1969]), pp. 1–31. The quote appears on pp. 17–18.
8. Thus the motto of Scholem's monumental *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) is a quote from the correspondence of Count Paul Yorck von Wartenburg and Wilhelm Dilthey: "Paradox is a characteristic of truth. What *communis opinio* has of truth is surely no more than an elementary deposit of generalizing partial understanding, related to truth even as sulphurous fumes are to lightning."
9. See Scholem's classic, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. 260–262. The work was first published in 1941.
10. On Zarathustra see the entry for 17 November 1914 in *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 52; on Nietzsche's ethics see Letter 64 to Aharon Heller, 23 June 1918, *Briefe I,* p. 163.

11. As we know what he read of Nietzsche (and how "Zarathustra" inspired him), his later statements can be regarded at best as disingenuous. In his letter to Stephen Bronner concerning Henry Pachter's article (cited earlier) he comments: "What I found particularly amusing was the discovery that I derive from Nietzsche and that my work 'obviously' stands under the influence of *The Birth of Tragedy*, a work that I have never read, as I have hardly read Nietzsche at all, apart from 'Zarathustra' which particularly repelled me." (Pachter had argued that just as Nietzsche had sought in *The Birth of Tragedy* to create a myth for the German people, Scholem, his impeccable scholarship notwithstanding, sought to do the same for the Jews.) See Scholem, *Briefe III*, pp. 178 and 406. I have dealt with Scholem's disputed relationship with Nietzsche in greater detail in my *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 14–16, 102–103.
12. Entry for 17.8.1914 in *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 33.
13. See Scholem's essay "Kabbalah and Myth," in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, pp. 87–117. The quote appears on p. 99.
14. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 36.
15. This applied not just to the subterranean aspects of Judaism but, perhaps most pointedly, to the normative (Halakhic) law. Thus with regard to Kafka's "Before the Law" he wrote to Benjamin: "You had *the moral world of Halakhah* right before your eyes, complete with its abysses and dialectics." See Letter 58, 17 July 1934, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*, pp. 126–127.
16. For a fine appreciation of Scholem's thought and his understanding of "religious nihilism," see Irving Wohlfarth's suggestive and provocative, "'Haarscharf an der Grenze zwischen Religion und Nihilismus.' Zum Motive des Zimzum bei Gershom Scholem," in *Gershom Scholem: Zwischen den Disziplinen*, Schaefer and Smith, eds., pp. 176–256. [see note 2 for details]
17. This essay is reproduced in Scholem's collection, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 78–141. This was originally published in Hebrew in 1937.
18. See his comments in "On the 1930 Edition of Rosenzweig's Star of Redemption," in Scholem, *The Messianic Idea,* p. 323.
19. Letter No. 4 to Werner Scholem, 13 September 1914, Scholem, *Briefe I,* p. 11. The exchange of letters on Marxism, about which Scholem was always sceptical, with his Communist brother (murdered by the Nazis in 1940) is compelling.
20. See Nathan Rotenstreich, "Symbolism and Transcendence: On Some Philosophical Aspects of Gershom Scholem's Opus" in his *Essays in Jewish Philosophy in the Modern Era* (Amsterdam: J. C.Gieben, 1996), p. 299.
21. The literature on this topic is by now familiar. See, for instance, H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought* (New York: Vintage, 1958). See especially chapters 2 and 4. See too Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980) and my *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
22. On this general tendency see George L. Mosse, "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry," in his *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a 'Third Force' in Pre-Nazi Germany* (London: Orbach & Chambers, 1970), pp. 77–115. See too my *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), especially chapters 5 and 6.
23. I have addressed this in more detail in the essay "German Jews beyond *Bildung* and Liberalism: The Radical Jewish Revival in the Weimar Republic" in my *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism*

and Other Crises (New York: New York University Press, 1996). See too the important article by Anson Rabinbach, "Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch and Modern German Jewish Messianism," *New German Critique*, no. 34 (Winter 1985).

24. See the letter of 29 October 1937 to Salman Schocken on his sixtieth birthday entitled "A Candid Word about the True Motives of My Kabbalistic Thinking," reproduced in David Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, (see note 2 above) pp. 74 in English and pp. 215–216 in German. For more on the Scholem-Schocken relationship see the insightful work by Anthony David, *The Patron: A Life of Salman Schocken, 1877–1955* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).
25. See Scholem's remarkable and lengthy ruminations on the nature of time in Judaism in the entry for 17 June 1918, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, pp. 235–240. The quote appears on p. 235.
26. "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea," in Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 10. The essay first appeared in 1959.
27. The Arendt-Scholem connection was especially charged. As the debate with Arendt concerning the Eichmann trial is well-known, I have not treated it here. Most recently their extended correspondence has been published. See *Der Briefwechsel. Hannah Arendt, Gershom Scholem*, edited by Marie Luise Knott in collaboaration with David Haredia (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010). See my review, "Between New York and Jerusalem" in *Jewish Review of Books* (No. 4, Winter 2011), pp. 5–8.
28. See for instance the letter of January 4, 1968 in Anthony David Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters*, p. 427. Already in 1961 Scholem addressed the younger Lichtheim as his "most worthy magic apprentice" (*Wertester Zauberlehrling*). See Letter 53, 21.11.1961, *Briefe II,* p. 82.
29. Skinner, *Gershom Scholem*. Letter of February 24, 1982, pp. 494–495. Jonas has left us a fascinating record of his impressions of, and sometimes stormy relationship with, Scholem in his *Erinnerungen*, ed. Christian Wiese (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 2003). Upon first seeing Scholem in the early twenties, he remembered (pp. 96–97) that his "appearance, his mode of speaking, calling, gesticulating had something simultaneously impressive and grotesque. But he without doubt carried the stamp of an uncommonly independent thinking, original personality, driven by the deepest spiritual motives." See too pp. 265–271. In the 1940s Scholem dedicated his poem "Vae Victis—Or, Death in the Professoriate" to Jonas: To Hans Jonas, my gnostic colleague,
    on the occasion of his descent
    into the depths of the void
    and his reascent into the far more unknown
    offered in friendship
    See Gershom Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*: *Poems,* pp. 108–111.
30. Adorno's extremely insightful letter, it must be said, liberally combined appreciation of the man and the work with criticism of both. Scholem, he wrote, indeed had intellectual power but it was "rather strange how this power sometimes abandons him at a stretch and allows prejudice and the most banal observations to prevail uncontested instead. This is also true for his style of historical interpretation, when he explains the 'explosions' of Jewish mysticism in exclusively internal theological terms, and then precisely for that reason violently repudiates the social connections which would otherwise ineluctably force themselves upon one's attention." Moreover, Adorno argued, unlike Benjamin's (and Adorno's own) attempt to salvage the theological moment within the realm of the profane, Scholem's theology was "a strangely linear and romantic one…He himself insists upon a sort of radioactive decay which drives us on from mysticism, and indeed

equally in all of its monadically conceived historical shapes and forms, towards enlightenment. It strikes me as an expression of the most profound irony that the very conception of mysticism which he urges presents itself from the perspective of the philosophy of history precisely as that same incursion into the profane with which he reproaches both of us." See Adorno's remarkable letter of 4 March 1938 in Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence 1928–1940*, Henri Lonitz, ed. and Nicholas Walker, trans. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), pp. 248–254. See especially pp. 248–250.

31. On this group—consisting of Hans **P**olotsky, Hans **J**onas (pronounced Yo-nas), Hans **L**ewy, **G**eorge **L**ichtheim, **G**erhard **S**cholem and **S**chmuel **S**ambursky—see Steven Wasserstrom, introduction to Gershom Scholem's *The Fullness of Time, Poems* pp. 18–20. See too Jonas, *Erinnerungen*, pp. 148. Jonas quotes numerous poems Sambursky dedicated to Scholem. The November 1947 poem entitled "The Professor of Mysticism" (*Der Professor der Mystik,* quoted on p. 153) was typical. The following is an exceedingly loose, nonpoetic English rendering: Life with its contradictions, even for his mind were so great and so beyond understanding, that, compared with these, the absurdity and conflict of obscure spirits of the Middle Ages seemed quite rational. He gave meaning to a tangled mess and became the advocate of a long abandoned legacy, where he found tranquility. For the bewitched Ideas were softer than the weight of existence, and it was like a flight into the cloister, when he could extract the sense out of corrupt texts as if from the crust. In these far, abandoned zones he was sheltered, for he knew that the inconceivable of life can never be reached from the most religious perversions and the excess of occult heresy.
32. Letter 86 to Werner Kraft, 17 December 1924, Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I*, p. 222.
33. Ibid. Letter 18 to Edgar Blum, 26.10.1916, p.53.
34. Entry for August 17, 1914, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 33.
35. Entry for 17.5.1917, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, p. 17.
36. Gil Anidjar has argued that in respect of the analysis of textuality and symbol, far from agreeing with each other "Benjamin wrote, in fact, 'directly' *against* Scholem." Whereas Benjamin insisted upon the "textuality of the text (its 'form' *and* 'content')," Scholem's "ultimate purpose remains always to see beyond, to go beyond." See Anidjar, "Jewish Mysticism," especially pp. 109–110.
37. David N. Myers, *The Problem of History in German-Jewish Thought: Observations on a Neglected Tradition (Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Breuer).* The Samuel Braun Lecture in the History of the Jews of Prussia. Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press. 2001, especially pp. 8–10.
38. Letter of December 8, 1967 in Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters*, p. 426.
39. Entry for 22 May 1915 in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917,* pp. 120– 121. "Shalem" (Scholem) in Hebrew means whole, perfect.
40. Entry for 19 September 1915 in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1*, 1913–1917, p. 158.
41. It must be noted that Scholem's attitude to those who sought to link the personal with the scholarly was (selectively) ambiguous. He was outraged by Zwi Werblowsky's claim, concerning his inner motivation, that "the contemplative-scientific value of working on Sabbatianism compensates for the value of practicing strange acts." He wrote to the latter (January 13, 1958, reproduced in *Gershom Scholem, A Life in Letters*, p. 371): "I find myself confronted here with a phenomenon that is completely foreign to me: namely, this psychological interpretation into the reasons determining the relationship between a researcher and his field of study." But this seems a little disingenuous. For when his student Joseph Weiss (in a 1947 article reproduced in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I*, pp. 458–460) argued that Scholem's esoteric method consisted of a form of "camouflage" in

which the real person, "a secret metaphysician was disguised as an exact scientist," Scholem was rather delighted. He wrote to Hugo and Escha Bergmann (Letter 141, on 15.12.1947, *Briefe I*, p. 332) about this "nice and cheeky essay" and approvingly noted that his pupils "had learned something from him." And in a letter to Cynthia Ozick, 11.2.1974, no. 89, Gershom Scholem, *Briefe III*, he wrote (p. 96): "I find the suggestion that the quarry may have been all the time in the pursuer not without plausibility. I have been asked this question so often that in the meantime I have invented at least twenty different answers, whereas the true one is hidden away between some of my lines."

42. I have examined some of these questions (without having the 1917–1923 diaries at my disposal) in my *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer*.
43. Entry for 15.10.17 in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, p. 55.
44. Entry for 27 January 1915 in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 85.
45. But, for the young Scholem at least, the issue *was* also prosaically sociological and not only theological and intellectual. "The Goyim . . . are completely strange to me. I stand before them and they before me as totally other." See the entry for 29 December 1918 in his *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, p. 427.
46. Ibid. Entry for 5.3.1918, p. 149.
47. Indeed, at times he portrayed the relation between Judaism and Christianity in radically adversarial ways. "I am convinced," he wrote in 1930, "that the time is coming when a confrontation, in a catastrophic sense, between Judaism and Christianity will become necessary . . . " See Letter 97 to Edith Rosenzweig, 20.11.1930 in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I*, p. 243. In any case, Scholem's view of Christianity was relentlessly negative. "Virtually everything about Christianity which I understand . . . I reject. I read the Epistles of Paul almost every year with increasing astonishment and distaste, and insofar as I have tried to occupy myself with decisive points of Christian theology (the doctrine of incarnation, spiritual messianism, etc.) it attracts me less and [occasions] much indignation." See Letter 21 to Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, January 1955, in his *Briefe II*, pp. 34–35. Given these sentiments—and those quoted immediately after this in the present text—accusations that Scholem harbored pro-Christian, Eurocentric biases become even more intriguing.
48. Entry for 10 January 1916 in *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917,* p. 226.
49. Letter 49 to Werner Kraft, December 28, 1917 in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I*, p. 135.
50. Entry for November 24, 1916, in Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 434. This was clearly one important strand of Scholem's personality. Yet the man was exceedingly complex and delighted in his unpredictable, provocative inconsistencies. Thus in 1937 he shocked a group of his fellow professors by demanding to know why there were no non-Jewish professors teaching at the Hebrew University. See the entry for 2.11.1937 of Schmuel Hugo Bergmann in his *Tagebücher & Briefe Band I, 1901–1948* (Koenigstein: Jüdischer Verlag, 1985), p. 451.
51. Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917,* entry for October 11, 1916, p. 402.
52. The Gnostic dimension here constitutes the major exception—which may prove the rule. Moshe Idel has written that Scholem did not exclude Neoplatonic, Islamic, or Christian influences, yet he pointedly adds, "but they were conceived as secondary in shaping the spiritual physiognomy of Kabbalah." See Idel's "Orienting, Orientalizing . . . ," p. 13. He comments that in contrast to the earlier theory of Gnostic influences, latter-day post-Scholem scholarship has taken far greater cognizance of the influence of (or at least parallels between) medieval Islamic and Christian sources (p. 14).
53. See the essay "The Meaning of the Torah in Jewish Mysticism," in Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p. 32.

54. Thus Scholem grounds Reform Judaism's ideology (however diluted) within the Lurianic understanding or rationalization of exile not as a setback but as a mission. "In its mythical aspect the exile of Israel ceases to be only a punishment for error or a test of faith. It becomes something greater and deeper, a symbolic mission. In the course of its exile Israel must go everywhere, to every corner of the world, for everywhere a spark of the *Shekhinah* [radiance] is waiting to be found, gathered and restored by a religious act. And so, surprisingly enough, still meaningfully anchored in the center of a profoundly Jewish gnosis, the idea of exile as a mission makes its appearance. Disintegrating Kabbalism was to bequeath this idea to a rationalistic Judaism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It had lost its deeper meaning, but even then it preserved a vestige of its enormous resonance." See Scholem essay "Kabbalah and Myth," in his *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism,* p. 116.
55. Thus in 1916, long before he knew he would become a student of Kabbalah, Scholem declared: "…no mysticism without tradition. Jewish mysticism does not base itself upon *Erlebnis* (experience)…but rather on Tradition." See Letter No. 17, 9 October 1916 to Siegfried Lehmann, in Scholem, *Briefe I,* p. 50.
56. Letter of June 4, 1939 in Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters*, p. 300.
57. "Like certain of the earlier gnostic systems, Kabbalistic speculation derives a peculiar note from its endeavor to construct and describe a mythical world by means of a thinking that excluded myth." See the essay "Kabbalah and Myth," in Scholem's *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism,* p. 99.
58. Letter of July 17, 1917 in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I,* p. 80.
59. Ibid. Letter of November 12, 1916 (to Harry Heymann), p. 58.
60. "To Theodor Herzl," in Gershom Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*, *Poems,* pp. 46–49. Wasserstrom notes that though the poem is dated 10.3.1915 it may have been written a year earlier to mark the tenth anniversary of Herzl's death (pp. 140– 141).
61. See Letter 17 of 9.10.16 to Siegfried Lehmann, in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I,* p. 48.
62. Entry for November 21, 1916, Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917,* p. 429.
63. See the very first entry for Scholem's *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*. Entry for 16 May 1917, p. 15. There are, too, passages where the dichotomous nature of "German" and "Hebraic" silence is compared, very much to the detriment of the former. Hebrew was "silent in the symbol and spoken in essence. The German speaks in symbol and is silent in essence." See the entry for 15.10.17, p. 53.
64. Ibid. Entry for 16.3.1918, p. 152.
65. Ibid. Entry for 10 August 1919, p. 512.
66. Ibid. Entry for 16.3.1918, p. 152.
67. Scholem's diaries are throughout interlaced with scathing comments about Buber. See for instance the entry for 19.10.17, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, pp. 61–62.
68. Entry for 27 January 1915, Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 112.
69. Entry for 3.11.17, Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 73.
70. Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*. See the fascinating comments in section X, 1 August 1918 to 1 August 1919, Adelboden—Bern, especially pp. 333–334.
71. See his extraordinary and difficult piece "Reflections on Jewish Theology" in Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, pp. 261–297. This is not to say that Scholem rejected the secular impulse in Zionism; on the contrary, as he writes in the same essay (p. 296): "The state of Israel would never have become a reality without it." Nor does he reject secularism in general. As Zwi Werblowsky has pointed out, for Scholem, "secular culture was not just a mere fact but rather a desideratum and a necessity." Scholem confronted the problem of how its always-open forms could accommodate his particular conception of "tradition,"

and whether or not secularism could possess sufficient plasticity to develop such transcendental possibilities further. See R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, "Tradition in 'saekularer' Kultur" in *Gershom Scholom: Zwischen den Disziplinen*, Schaefer and Smith, eds., pp. 70–79. [See note 2 above.] The quote appears on p. 79.

72. I have used Robert Alter's translation of the document ("Bekenntnis über unsere Sprache") in Alter's *Necessary Angels*, p. 36.
73. This is contained in Scholem's 1930 "Gedenkrede auf Franz Rosenzweig" as translated in Michael Brocke in Franz Rosenzweig's, *Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), p. 533. It is also quoted in Wohlfarth, "'Haarscharf an der Grenze…'," in *Gershom Scholom: Zwischen den Disziplinen*, p. 188. The rough translation into English is my own. See Wohfarth's insightful commentary on this passage, pp. 188ff.
74. Entry for 23 January 1915, Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 83.
75. See the interview, "Zionism—Dialectic of Continuity and Rebellion" in *Unease in Zion*, ed., Ehud Ben Ezer (New York: Quadrangle, 1974), pp. 263–296.
76. Entry for 20 January 1915, Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 82.
77. On Brit Shalom, see Chapter 13 of this volume.
78. On the connection of German Jews, and of German Zionists in particular, to *Bildung,* see George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press 1983). For his analysis of Scholem as an exemplar of this tradition, see his "Gershom Scholem as a German Jew," in Mosse, *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1993). In my "German Jews Beyond Bildung and Liberalism," I try to argue that while Scholem did indeed embody this tradition he, and many of his Weimar contemporaries,also sought to radicalize it and go beyond the gradual, ordered, calm and rational concept of progress and cultivation implied in the culture of *Bildung.* This appears as Chapter 2 in my *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 31–44.
79. See the entry for 27 July 1919, Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*, pp. 497–498.
80. See for instance his "Zur Frage des Parlaments" in *Jüdsiche Rundschau* (no. 34, January 1929), p. 65. Ironically, Scholem was regarded by many at the time as a clear example of the rather weak-kneed, self-disparaging type that characterized members of Brit Shalom. See the letter by Gerschon Barag in *Jüdische Rundschau* (no. 95, 30.11.1928).
81. In his diary entry for 19.9.1929, Schmuel Hugo Bergman, a close friend of Scholem's and fellow member of Brit Shalom, wrote: "Brit Shalom finds itself extremely active. The most active is Scholem, who has become quite the politician and more extreme in his outlook than he was before." See Bergman's *Tagebücher & Briefe Band I, 1901–1948,* p. 289. On 25.9.1929 Bergman wrote to his friend Robert Weltsch: "Brit Schalom is more active than it ever was. The soul of this activity is Scholem, who in this respect is completely transformed." (p. 291).
82. See Bergman's entry for 5.1.1929, p. 279, ibid. and note 2, p. 279. Bergman reports that this inspired press attacks against Scholem and calls for his dismissal from the university (pp. 279 and 325).
83. See Bergman's 7.12.1929 report of a Brit Shalom meeting, ibid., pp. 297–298.
84. See Letter 96 to Robert Weltsch, 22 September 1929 in Scholem's *Briefe I*, pp. 240–242. The quote appears on p. 242. Scholem was clearly shocked by these events, as his report to his mother demonstrates. The situation was known to be serious, he wrote, "but nevertheless no one thought possible that on one Friday one would suddenly find threatening Arab demonstrators in the middle of Mea She'arim armed with clubs and knives…Luckily the Jews

and police had firearms and the Arabs did not, so they could not advance. Just think, all this took place two minutes away from my residence, in the heart of Jerusalem—since then we have naturally not been relaxed." See Letter 124, 29.8.1929, Betty Scholem, Gershom Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn im Briefwechsel*, pp. 198–199. The rest of this letter, as well as Letter 126, 5.9.1929, pp. 200–202, gives graphic descriptions of the riots, the ensuing deaths, injuries, plunder, and political consequences. In the latter letter he concludes: "What will be, one cannot yet say. What is certain is that if the Jewish settlement was double in size, the Arabs would not have risked this matter." See too Letter 127, 12.9.1929, pp. 203–205.

85. On this see Bergman's entry for 8–11.12. 1932, in his *Tagebücher I,* p. 340.
86. See "With Gershom Scholem: An Interview," in Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays,* Werner Dannhauser, ed., p. 43.
87. Gershom Scholem, Letter 94, July 10, 1937 in *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*, pp. 199–201. The quote appears on p. 200.
88. Letter 55 [in Hebrew] to Ge'ula Cohen, 15 December 1961, in Scholem, *Briefe II*, pp. 84–85.
89. Letter 131, 28 January 1946, in Scholem, *Briefe I*, pp. 309–314. The quotes appear on pp. 310–311. This letter consisted of a long and angry refutation of Arendt's exceedingly critical article "Zionism Reconsidered," which appeared in *The Menorah Journal* 33 (no. 2, October-December 1945), pp. 162–196. A shortened version also appears in Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: Life in Letters,* pp. 330– 333.
90. Letter 42, 21.12.1972, Scholem, *Briefe III,* p. 44.
91. Irving Wohlfarth suggests that Scholem's Kabbalistic studies served as a site of refuge for a betrayed Zionist utopia. "'Haarscharf an der Grenze . . . ',' " in Schaefer and Smith, ed., *Gershom Scholem, Zwischen den Disziplinen,* p. 200.
92. Letter of Scholem to Benjamin, August 1, 1931 in Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981), pp. 171–172.
93. It is worth noting that already in 1916 Scholem dreamed of creating a secret society of the elect—"*Bund der Eiferer*" (Society of Zealots)—young Zionist men and women who would dedicate their beings towards creating a pure and religious new life in Zion and thereby save Judea in much the same way the 16th century Safed mystics had fundamentally changed the face of all of Jewry. See entry for 14 August 1916, Scholem, *Tagebücher I*, pp. 363–364.
94. This letter of August 1, 1931 is reproduced in Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship,* pp. 169–174. The quotes appear on pp. 172–174. The similarities with a Weimarian intellectual discourse (of both the Left and the Right), suspicious of mass society, market capitalism, and the trivializing public sphere, are obvious.
95. See Wasserstrom's "The Fullness of Time: Some Thoughts on the Poetry of Gershom Scholem," in Gershom Scholem, *The Fullness of Time*, *Poems,* p. 13.
96. Ibid., "Media In Vita," 1930/33, pp. 94–97. See too the poem "Encounter with Zion and the World (The Decline)," (23 June 1930), pp. 86–89 and "To Ingeborg Bachmann (After her visit to the ghetto of Rome)," 4 February 1967, pp. 122– 125. Wohlfarth suggests that in poems like these Scholem's version of nothingness and Lurianic contraction mirrored his own inner exile from Zionism. See "'Haarscharf an der Grenze . . . ,'" in Schaefer and Smith, eds., *Gershom Scholem: Zwischen den Disziplinen,* pp. 207–208.
97. See Scholem's dense letter to Adorno, No. 116, 1 March 1967 where, despite some scathing comments regarding Marxism and the materialist method, he expresses admiration for the defense of metaphysics (through the post-Hegelian notion of "nonidentity") undertaken in Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. See Gershom Scholem,

Briefe II, pp. 177–180. Adorno replied to this letter on 14 March 1967: "The intention of rescuing metaphysics is central to *Negative Dialectics*. I am very glad that this comes out clearly and that you sympathise with it. The difference lies naturally in the relationship to materialism." See the notes to Scholem's letter, no. 15, p. 302. Already in a 1945 letter to Adorno, Scholem defined Marxism "in Walter Benjamin's sense as an esoteric method of genuine theology." Letter 127 of 4 July 1945 in Scholem, *Briefe I*, p. 299.

98. See Scholem's by now famous letter to Benjamin, No. 66, 30 September 1934 in *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*, pp. 140–143. The quote appears on p. 142. This, in turn, relates to Letter 58, 17 July 1934 (pp. 126–127), where he wrote: "Kafka's world is the world of revelation, but of revelation seen of course from that perspective in which it is returned to its own nothingness…The *nonfulfillability* of what has been revealed is the point where a *correctly* understood theology…coincides most perfectly with that which offers the key to Kafka's work. Its problem is not, dear Walter, its *absence* in a preanimistic world, but the fact that it cannot be *fulfilled*." Scripture had not been lost, but rather had become indecipherable. See too Letter 57, 9 July 1934, pp. 122– 123. One cannot but wonder whether it was his reading of Kafka that inspired Scholem's grasp of mysticism or vice versa. At any rate he found in them a commonality of thought and perception. It is worth quoting at length from his essay "Religious Authority and Mysticism," in Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (p. 12): "The holiness of the texts resides precisely in their capacity for such metamorphosis. The word of God must be infinite, or, to put it in a different way, the absolute word is as such meaningless, but it is *pregnant* with meaning. Under human eyes it enters into significant finite embodiments which mark innumerable layers of meaning. Thus mystical exegesis, this *new* revelation imparted to the mystic, has the character of a key. The key itself may be lost, but an immense desire to look for it remains alive. In a day when such mystical impulses seem to have dwindled to the vanishing point they still retain an enormous force in the books of Franz Kafka. And the same situation prevailed seventeenth centuries ago among the Talmudic mystics…In his commentary on the Psalms, Origen quotes a 'Hebrew scholar', presumably a member of the Rabbinic Academy in Caeserea, as saying that the Holy Scriptures are like a large house with many, many rooms, and that outside each door lies a key—but it is not the right one. To find the right key that will open the doors—that is the great and arduous task. This story, dating from the height of the Talmudic era, may give an idea of Kafka's deep roots in the tradition of Jewish mysticism."
99. See Wohlfarth, "Haarscharf an der Grenze," in Schaefer and Smith, eds., *Gershon Scholem, Zwishen den Disziplinen,* p. 204.
100. This concern over dishonest double standards went beyond Jewish-Arab questions. In his "The Case of Adolf Eichmann" (1961), Victor Gollancz pleaded regarding the possible death sentence "that Eichmann's judges may act in the spirit of what is best in the Old Testament as well as in the New—in the spirit of 'Forsake evil: do good and live' and of 'Go, and sin no more.'" A "distressed" Scholem caustically replied: "When I came to the last page, I just wept, overwhelmed by the sheer enormity of your 'demands' in the face of the Jewish tragedy. I do not see why the Jews should become the only collective that ever followed 'Christian' ethics, and I do not believe that to behave as you wish the Jewish people to behave, would be in accordance with a higher code of values, as you imply. It is all very sublime—but it is also very cheap! How wonderful for a Jew to ask his fellow Jews not to try being what they are—which in this state of the world would be still more than difficult—but being Christian Angels as the History of Christianity has never known them. If it comes to this, I wish to stand up and being counted out."

See Letter 50 (written in English) to Gollancz, 13 June 1961 in Scholem's *Briefe II*, p. 80. See too the Notes, No. 50, p. 263.

101. See Letter 131, 28 January 1946, Scholem, *Briefe I,* p. 310. A shortened version also appears in Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters*, pp. 330–333. Scholem also believed that apparently progressive statements could hide less pleasant intentions. He wrote to Carl J. Burkhardt on 18.12.1972, Letter 41, *Briefe III*, p. 43: "That antisemitism, according to circumstances, can be created behind a new political facade and progressively draped, cannot surprise an old experienced observer of the European scene. One should have no illusions about this."
102. See the 1967 exchange of Letters (122 and 122a) in Scholem, *Briefe II*, pp. 186–188. The quote appears on p. 186. See too the note on p. 304.
103. See 16 November 1972 in Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters*, p. 446.
104. Letter 132, 8 September 1976, Scholem, *Briefe III*, pp. 143–147. The quote appears on p. 147.
105. See Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Binationalism and Jewish Identity: Hannah Arendt and the Question of Palestine" in Steven E. Aschheim, ed. *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001), pp. 165–180. The quote appears on p. 175.
106. See Yoram Hazony, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), especially pp. 288–290.
107. See, for instance, Scholem's letter to Robert Alter, October 29, 1978 in Skinner, ed., *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters*, p. 474, where he flatly states: "Freud all his life considered himself a Jew and nothing else." His comments concerning the delusion of the German-Jewish "symbiosis" in his piece "Walter Benjamin" are instructive: "Only very few among the first-rate minds of German-speaking Jewry did not succumb to that illusion. Freud, Kafka, and Benjamin belong to those few…they shunned German phraseology, even the phrase 'we' Germans, and they wrote in full awareness of the distance separating them from their German readers." See Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, p. 190. In a letter to Manfred Schloesser, 6 April 1965, *Briefe II*, p. 129, Scholem not only insists that while Benjamin did see himself as a German *writer,* he did not regard himself as a German, but purely as a Jew, and bemoans the fact that in postwar Germany there was a triumphalist tendency to posthumously claim as Germans those that they had murdered as Jews. Is there any significance, one wonders, in the fact that in all their correspondence Benjamin refers to Scholem not as Gershom but as Gerhard?
108. "Kleine Anmerkungen über Judentum," Jena, Winter 1917/1918, Scholem, *Tagebücher 2. 1917–1923,* p. 206.
109. For just one example see, the entry for 16.10.1917, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 57. To be sure, there are other passages where Scholem displays greater sympathy and understanding.
110. Ibid. In "Agnon: Und das Krumme wird gerade," p. 332.
111. See, for instance, the "95 Theses on Judaism and Zionism," dated 15 July 1918 and presented to Walter Benjamin on his 26th birthday (thesis number 29), *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 302, and the remarks upon Harry Heymann death, 28 July 1918, p. 351.
112. Scholem, in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 37–38.
113. Entry for 20.5.1917, Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 20. This was a life-long tendency. Thus in 1944 (March 26) he could refer to Hans Kohn (Buberian, a fellow member of Brit Shalom, and later a pioneer of the study of nationalism) as an "*Ober-Quatscher.*" See his Letter 123 to Adoph S. Oko in *Briefe I,* p. 292.
114. Scholem, entry for 1 October, 1917, ibid., p. 47.
115. Entry for 23 July 1916, Scholem, *Tagebücher 1, 1913–1917*, p. 339.

116. Entry for 5 March 1913, ibid. p.19.
117. Scholem, "Religous Authority and Mysticism," in his *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, p. 24.
118. Entry for 22 February 1918, *Tagebücher 1917–1923,* p. 138.
119. Ibid. Entry for 15.10.17, p. 54.
120. Ibid. Entry for 7 October 1918, p. 395. Scholem also wrote various poems to and about Benjamin. See for instance "For July 15," "WB," "Greetings from Angelus" in *The Fullness of Time*, pp. 56–57, 62–63, 64–65 respectively. See too the humorous "The Official Abecedarium," pp. 70–85.
121. Ibid. Entry for beginning (*Anfang*) June 1918, p. 225.
122. Ibid. Entry for 20.5.1917, p. 19. See too the entry for the 29.5.1917, p. 22 where he speaks again of his insecurity and cowardice. But even in these worst moments of self-doubt, his criticism of others remained intact: "I am cowardly; it is no excuse for myself that others are *more* cowardly than me."
123. Ibid. Entry for 2 September 1917, p. 34.
124. See the suggestive piece by Gil Anidjar, "The Silent Voice of the Friend: Andalusi Topographies of Scholem's Conversations (Mourning Mysticism)" in his *"Our Place in al-Andalus": Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab-Jewish Letters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 102–165. I thank Noah Gerber for drawing my attention to this work.
125. See his letter to Zvi Werblowsky, No. 24 of 13.1.58 in Scholem, *Briefe II,* p. 43. See too note 1 of this chapter.
126. See note 41 above for both these references.
127. Scholem, *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923*. See the entry for 10.9.1917, p. 35. "I want to be great, but am not great." See too the entry for 19.9.17, p. 38: "I feel most intellectually alive in conversation with others. That is certainly a defect of mine. Real greatness remains alone, is great without a mirror. Greatness is no optical concept, no optical phenomenon."
128. See "Die zionistische Verzweiflung," 19.6.1920 in *Tagebücher 2, 1917–1923,* p. 638.
129. Letter 63 to Aniela Jaffé, May 7, 1963 in Scholem, *Briefe II*, p. 95.

7 Comrade Klemperer: Communism, Liberalism, and Jewishness in the GDR; The Later Diaries, 1945–1959

1. This paper was prepared for and presented at an International Conference organized by Tel Aviv University in November 2000 on "Jews in the German Democratic Republic." The emphases in this chapter reflect the selective biases necessitated by such a topic.
2. *LTI Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1947).
3. I have examined this period and Klemperer's responses in detail in Chapter 3 of my *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
4. Victor Klemperer, Band I and Band II [vol. I and II]. *Curriculum vitae. Erinnerungen 1881–1918*, ed. Walter Nowojski (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1996).
5. See the massive two-volume diaries covering the years 1918–1924; 1925–1932. Victor Klemperer, *Leben sammeln, nicht fragen wozu and warum* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1996), edited by Walter Nowojski with the collaboration of Christian Löser.
6. These, entitled, *So sitze ich denn zwischen allen Stühlen*, consist of two volumes covering the years 1945–1949 and 1950–1959 respectively, have been edited by Walter Nowojski with the cooperation of Christian Löser (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag,

1999). The English publication of the diaries, *The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1945–1949*, edited by Martin Chalmers (London: Phoenix 2003, 2004) appeared well after this paper was written. Thus the translations into English are mine.

7. *So sitze ich*, Vol. I. Entry for 23 June 1945, pp. 24–25.
8. Ibid. Vol. I. Entry for 17 July 1945, pp. 47–48.
9. *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933–1941*, abridged and translated by Martin Chalmers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), vol. 1. Entry for 19th March, 1934, p. 58.
10. Ibid. Entry for 31 December 1933, p. 43.
11. Ibid. Entry for 12 November 1939, p. 305.
12. Ibid. Entry for 29 August, 1936, p. 178.
13. Ibid. Entry for 21 May 1941, p. 369.
14. *I Shall Bear Witness, 1942–1945*, vol. II. Entry for January 4, 1945, p. 389. (In the German, p. 636).
15. Quoted in Bernd Greiner, "'Zwiespältiger denn je.' Victor Klemperers Tagebücher im Jahr 1945" in Hannes Heer, ed., *Im Herzen der Finsternis. Victor Klemperer als Chronist der NS-Zeit* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1997), p. 151.
16. *So sitze ich*, Vol. I. Entry for 22.2. 48, p. 513.
17. Ibid. Vol. 2. Entry for 16.4.1950, p. 24.
18. Ibid., Vol. 2. Entry for 8 October 1950, p. 95. See too Klemperer's critical comments on the art critic Ernst Fischer's work. "Everything *must* be based on Marx-Lenin-Lukacs, art *must* be seen as social mission, *must* be anti-capitalist; capitalism is guilty of *everything*." Entry for 18.2.51, p. 138. In other moods, perhaps without seeing its really dangerous potential, he labeled its dogmatic absolutism as a form of "childishness." See the entry for 17 July 1952, p. 301.
19. Entry for 10 April 1949, *So sitze ich,*Vol. 1. Entry for 10 April 1949, p. 637.
20. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. December, Resumé 1953, p. 425.
21. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 30 July 1945, pp. 59–60.
22. Ibid. 26 July 1945, p. 57.
23. Ibid. Entry for 14 July 1945, p. 44.
24. Ibid. Entry for 17 November, 1945, p. 143.
25. Ibid. Entry for 20 November 1945, p. 146.
26. Ibid. Entry for 3 August 1948, p. 573.
27. Ibid. Entry for 4 October 1949, p. 690.
28. See Peter Jacobs, *Victor Klemperer. Im Kern ein deutsches Gewächs. Eine Biographie* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2000). The last 4 chapters cover the postwar period. There is also a useful table of central dates and events at the back of the book. See too Walter Nowojski's "Nachwort" in *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2, pp. 910–919.
29. Upon meeting Zweig, Klemperer noted: "Stout, ice gray, liquid eyes behind thick glasses, very old, very vain." Entry for 3 February 1949, pp. 623–624.
30. Upon first hearing Bloch lecture, Klemperer gushed: "I understood with difficulty but was very strongly impressed. The man overwhelmed me. Besides he has profound humanistic knowledge. Gray head of large dimensions, about early 60…" *So sitze ich…* Vol. 2. Entry for 12.1.1950, p. 7.
31. Immediately following the death of his life-long companion, Klemperer wrote: "What will become of me? I am entirely alone, everything has lost its value for me, childishly I lack the physical courage to follow her…." Entry for 8 July 1951, p. 190. See to the entry for 15 July, p. 194. On September 8, 1951 (p. 208) he noted his numbing loneliness: "Nothing has any meaning without Eva…I often ask myself if I was really good enough to her….What really was I to her, what did I know of her?" And on January 3, 1952 (p. 236) he writes: "I sometimes think when, at night, I go into the bedroom, how delightful it would be if Eva could somehow make herself heard [*irgendwie meldete*]."

32. On Klemperer's happiness (and his mixed feelings about marrying such a young woman) and his fears that Eva died before her time so that Klemperer could enjoy a second youth, see the entry for 7.7.1952, p. 297. On 23 August 1952 (p. 308) he noted: "I love H more and more, and my guilt about her and Eva gets daily ever more complex." See also the entry for 23.8.1953, p. 406. On January 16, 1956 (p. 530) he wrote: "Eva must forgive me: I have never loved anyone as much as H."
33. See for instance *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 13 July 1950, p. 59.
34. Greiner, "Zwiespältiger . . . ," p. 151.
35. Clive James in the symposium, "International books of the year—and the millennium," *Times Literary Supplement* (December 3, 1999), p. 12.
36. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 3 February 1946, p. 187. On February 10, p. 196, he noted: "I myself am tending to a German *Bundestaat* (East Germany) tied to Soviet Russia. . . . *So* much have I changed!"
37. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 22.6.1953, p. 390.
38. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 28 August 1947, p. 422.
39. Ibid. Entry for 10 September 1945, p. 100.
40. Ibid. Entry for 21 June 1945, p. 16. On the single-minded nature of Russian reports see too the entry for 30 June 1945, p. 31. See too the entry for 14.1.1948, pp. 491–492.
41. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 12 October 1949, p. 692.
42. Ibid. Entry for 6 November 1949, p. 699.
43. Ibid. Entry for 22.2.1948, p. 514.
44. Ibid. Entry for 14 December 1945, p. 162.
45. Ibid. Entry for 22.2.1948, p. 513.
46. Ibid. Entry for 7 November 1951, p. 224.
47. Ibid. Entry for 16 January 1949, p. 621.
48. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 31 December 1950, p. 115.
49. Ibid. Entry for 2 July 1952, p. 296.
50. *So sitze ich*, Vol. I. Entry for 16 December 1949, p. 708.
51. The SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei, or Socialist Unity Party) was originally composed of both Communists and Social Democrats, but eventually was entirely Stalinized and the pretense of parity was dropped.
52. *So sitze ich,* Vol. 2. Entry for 24 May 1950, p. 37. And on May 27 (p. 39), in comparing the propaganda of both sides, Klemperer ultimately opted for greater truth on the Russian side.
53. Ibid. Entry for 10.2.1952, p. 245.
54. Ibid. Entry for 11 July 1952, p. 299.
55. Ibid. Entry for 29 May 1954, p. 439.
56. Ibid. Entry for 20.10.1954, p. 455.
57. Ibid. Entry for 25 February 1955, p. 473.
58. Ibid. p. 474. 2 March 1955.
59. Ibid. Entry for 10 August 1955, p. 502.
60. Ibid. Entry for 13 January 1957, pp. 598–599.
61. Ibid. Entry for 6.11. 1957, p. 656. On the Federal Republic see Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: DTV, 1996). This would have to include the GDR's own serious nonadmission of the specificities of the Holocaust.
62. *So sitze ich,* Vol. 2. Entry for 10 July 1957, p. 636. See too the entries for 17 August 1957, p. 637 and 23 April 1958, p. 682.
63. "I am 'written off' everywhere, no longer existent . . . received with dead silence," Klemperer wrote on October 27, 1955, *So sitze ich,* Vol. 2, p. 518.
64. Ibid. Entry for Sylvester 1958, p. 733.
65. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 21 June 1945, p. 16.
66. Ibid. Entry for 24 June 1945, p. 26.

67. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1, Entry for October 26, 1945, p. 133.
68. Ibid. Entry for 8 November 1945, p. 139.
69. Ibid. Entry for 11 July 1945, p. 42.
70. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 16 April 1950, p. 24.
71. Ibid. Entry for 30 September 1950, p. 91.
72. Ibid. Entry for 8th January 1952, p. 237.
73. Ibid. Entry for 19 January 1957, p. 599.
74. Ibid. Entry for 24. 10 1958, p. 723. Even here Klemperer still clutched at a saving remnant: "*This* cannot have been Marx's ideal situation."
75. I develop this at length in my book *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer.*
76. *So sitze ich,* Vol. 1. Entry for 26 October, 1945, p. 134.
77. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 20 November, 1945, p. 144.
78. For just one among tens of such examples see the entry for 29.6.51 (p. 183).
79. Thus in Munich Klemperer visited the Jewish restaurant on Baader Street: "Hebrew inscriptions on the wall (welcome to the children of Israel), pictures of Herzl, Buber and so on. Good food." Entry for 17/18 May, 1947, p. 382.
80. Thus for instance the description of a friend: "*witzig jüdisch ohne Chutzpe*." Entry for 31 December, 1955, p. 527.
81. *So sitze ich,* Vol, 2. Entry for 14 January 1958, p. 674–675.
82. This was a recurring theme, not just an immediate postwar fear. Thus on 12 November 1947 (p. 460) he notes the tendency to call bartering, "Judengeschäfte," reports graffiti—"Dirty Jew!"—in a Munich tram: "What do all these Kristallnacht events help against these?" See too the entry for 22.2.48, p. 512.
83. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 17 June 1945, p. 7.
84. Ibid. Entry for 20 June 1945, p. 12.
85. Ibid. Entry for 7.12.45, p. 153.
86. Ibid. Entry for 18 September 1945, pp. 109–110.
87. Ibid. Entry for 8 August 1945, p. 67.
88. *So sitze ich,* Vol. 2. Entry for 11/12 November, 1954, p. 458.
89. Ibid. Entry for 7 January 1950, pp. 5–6.
90. Ibid. Entry for 5 May 1952, pp. 277–280. The quote appears on p. 280.
91. Ibid. Entry for 20 July 1945, p. 50.
92. Ibid. Entry for 28. 2.1947, pp. 354–355.
93. He was aware, and reported on, the fact, for instance, that the Dresden Jewish community had reestablished itself with about 150 Jewish members and had a small synagogue. See the entry in *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2 for 30.1.1952, p. 242. For his visit to the library of the *Jüdische Gemeindehaus* see the entry for 11/12 November, 1954, pp. 457–58. Klemperer also maintained contacts with people actively identified with the community. Thus his description of Albert Konrad: "79. fresh and satisfied…brings self-baked cakes…gardens, is a religious Jew, works in a few things for the Jewish community, for the Party…laughs over the painful comedy that is no longer such, is convinced of the unending errors of Ulbricht's dictatorship, is as liberal as I am and with all that happy.…" See the entry for 2 December 1958 (p. 731).
94. *So sitze ich,* Vol. 1. Entry for 30 September 1948, p. 593.
95. *So sitze ich* Vol. 2, Entry for 2.1.1953, p. 351.
96. *So sitze ich,* Vol. 1. Entry for 19 January 1947, p. 340.
97. See *Leben sammeln* Vol. 1. Entry for 29 June 1923, where he notes that the Zionists were not any more broad-minded "than the people of the swastika," p. 706.
98. *Curriculum Vitae*, Vol. 2, pp. 478–482.
99. See entries for 13 June 1934, p. 66, 22 April 1935, p. 113 and 18 October 1936, p. 190.
100. *I Shall Bear Witness*, Vol 2. Entry for 17 March 1942, p. 30.

101. Ibid. Entry for 3 May, 1942, p. 77.
102. See the chapter, "Zion" in *LTI. Notzibuch eines Philogen* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1947). On the Herzl-Hitler differences see pp. 220 ff.
103. Ibid., pp. 222–223.
104. This history has been well related by Jeffrey Herf in his *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
105. The first mention of Merker in the diaries comes on December 3, 1948 (p. 611) where Merker's pro-Zionist attitude and his justification of the Jewish state are mentioned: "The same Merker who now sits at Party Central in Berlin and who attacked my book."
106. Klemperer describes a conversation between Erich Wendt and himself (on Zionism and the *Ostjuden*) thus: "Wendt asked me to alter the Hitler-Herzl comparison, one does him an injustice; I answered that Herzl is not a Hitler-man and said as much in the chapter, but in general Jewish nationalism is hateful to me—I cannot change anything in my text…The *Ostjuden* are good people and though the Jewish nationalists behave so badly (even now: Bernadotte's murder) they are very deserving of compassion and plucky people." See entry for 10 October 1948, p. 596.
107. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 21.10.1948, p. 599.
108. Ibid. Entry for 25 October 1948, p. 603.
109. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 19 January 1953, p. 353.
110. Ibid. Entry for 24 January 1953, p. 354.
111. This was an ongoing anger. Thus at a meeting of the *VVN*: "I spoke of my deep antipathy for Zion, related the fate of my Zion-chapter (Merker!)—and said more, I should be the only star-wearer on the Committee list." *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 22 February 1953, p. 360.
112. Ibid. Entry for 27 November 1955, p. 524.
113. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 1. Entry for 12 February 1949, p. 627.
114. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 21 February 1951, p. 142. See too the entry for 3.9.55, p. 505.
115. Ibid. Entry for 31.12.1955, pp. 527–528.
116. Ibid. Entry for 1 October 1956, p. 582.
117. Ibid. Entry for 23 November 1957, pp. 661–662. In this argument, Klemperer's interlocutor pointed out that the Nazi-Zionist comparison was faulty. In the first place, the Jews did not act out of pure sadism, but were still in a state of Hitler-induced panic and they made sure that the Arabs take flight, so they would not killed in toto. Moreover, the camps in which they now resided were being cynically conserved for propaganda purposes.
118. *So sitze ich*, Vol. 2. Entry for 12 April 1955, p. 478.
119. Ibid. Entry for 23.8.1955, p. 504.
120. Ibid. Entry for 1 February 1957, p. 601.

8 Locating Nazi Evil: The Contrasting Visions of Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt, and Victor Klemperer

1. Much of the material for this paper is culled from my *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).
2. George Steiner, *Errata: An Examined Life* (London: Phoenix Books, 1988), p. 10.
3. There is now a superb collection of these letters in three volumes. See Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I: 1914–1947,* ed. Itta Shedletzky (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1994); *Briefe II: 1948–1970,* ed. Thomas Sparr (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995); *Briefe III: 1971–1982*,

ed., Itta Shedletzky (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1999). There is also a collection of some of these letters in English, edited by Antony Skinner. See *Gershom Scholem: A Life in Letters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

4. Gershom Scholem, *Tagebücher 1. Halbband 1. 1913–1917,* ed. Karlfried Gründer and Friedrich Niewoehner with Herbert Kopp-Obsterbrink (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1995).
5. See Letter 106, March 25, 1938, in *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem, 1932–1940*, translated by Gary Smith and Andre Lefevere (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), pp. 214–215.
6. See Letter 185, April 26, 1933 in Betty Scholem, Gershom Scholem, *Mutter und Sohn im Briefwechsel 1917–1946* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1989), p. 297.
7. Ibid. Letter 250, March 7, 1936, p. 411.
8. See *Berlin in Lights: The Diaries of Count Harry Kessler (1918–1937)*, translated and edited by Charles Kessler, with an introduction by Ian Buruma (New York: Grove Press, 1999), p. 117.
9. See the entry for December 7, 1930, in Klemperer's *Leben sammeln, nicht fragen wozu und warum*, vol. 1, *Tagebücher 1925–1932*, ed. Walter Nowojski and Christian Loeser (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1996), p. 672.
10. Letter 137 of August 31, 1968, in Gershom Scholem's *Briefe II*, pp. 213–214. The passage quoted appears on p. 214.
11. See Peter Gay's "In Deutschland zu Hause," in *Die Juden im nationalsozialistichen Deutschland/The Jews in Nazi Germany, 1933–1943*, ed. Arnold Paucker (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr, 1986), p. 33.
12. See David Suchoff, "Gershom Scholem, Hannah Arendt and the Scandal of Jewish Particularity," *Germanic Review* 72, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 57–76.
13. Letter 119 to Shalom Spiegel, July 17, 1941 in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I*, p. 285.
14. See the by-now famous *I Shall Bear Witness: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933–1941*, abridged and translated by Martin Chalmers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999). Entry for June 30, 1933, p. 21.
15. On this point see Saul Friedlaender, "From Anti-Semitism to Extermination: A Historiographical Study of Nazi Policies Toward the Jews and an Essay in Interpretation," *Yad Vashem Studies* 16 (1984), p. 16.
16. See "What Remains? The Language Remains: A Conversation with Guenter Gaus," in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1994), p. 14.
17. See Arendt's letter of 19 July 1947 in Arendt & Kurt Blumenfeld, *"...in keinem Besitz verwurzelt": Die Korrespondenz*, ed. Ingeborg Nordmann and Iris Pilling (Hamburg: Rotbuch Verlag, 1995), p. 43.
18. See, again, Saul Friedlaender, "A Conflict of Memories? The New German Debates about the 'Final Solution,'" *The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture* 31 (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1987), especially pp. 7–10.
19. For a fuller discussion see "Nazism, Culture and *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: Hannah Arendt and the Discourse of Evil," in my *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
20. Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," in her *Essays in Understanding*, p. 235.
21. See Arendt's remarkable Letter 135 of September 7, 1952, in *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers Correspondence, 1926–1969*, ed., Lotte Koehler and Hans Saner, translated from the German by Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt & Brace Jovanovich, 1992), pp. 196–201.
22. See her "Approaches to the 'German Problem,'" in Hannah Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*, p. 111.

23. See Ernst Gellner, "From Koenigsberg to Manhattan (Or Hannah, Rahel, Martin and Elfriede or Thy Neighbours Gemeinschaft)" in his *Culture, Identity, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Richard Wolin, "Hannah and the Magician: An Affair to Remember," *New Republic*, 9 October 1995, pp. 27–37.
24. Alfred Kazin, *New York Jew* (New York: Knopf, 1978), p. 307.
25. Arendt, "Nightmare and Flight," in *Esssays in Understanding*, p. 134.
26. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 290. The work first appeared in 1951.
27. Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI—Lingua Tertii Imperii, A Philologist's Notebook*, translated by Martin Brady (London: New York: Continuum, 2002). The work appeared originally in 1946.
28. Apart from Klemperer's *I Shall Bear Witness*, see *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen zum letzten: Tagebücher 1933–1945*, two volumes (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1995), ed. Walter Nowojski, with the assistance of Hadwig Klemperer.
29. Victor Klemperer, *Curriculum Vitae. Errinerungen 1881–1918* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1996).
30. See Klemperer's massive two-volume diaries covering the turbulent years of the Weimar Republic (1918–1924; 1925–1932). *Leben sammeln, nicht fragen wozu und warum* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1996), ed. Walter Nowojski.
31. See the two-volume (1945–1949; 1950–1959), *So sitze ich denn zwischen allen Stühlen*, ed. Walter Nowojski, with cooperation of Christian Loeser (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1999).
32. Klemperer, *I Shall Bear Witness*, Entry for April 5, 1936, p. 152.
33. Ibid. Entry for August 6, 1937, p. 223.
34. Ibid. Entry for July 24, 1940, p. 334.
35. Ibid. Entry for March 16, 1942, p. 47.
36. Ibid. Entry for April 19, 1942, p. 68.
37. Ibid. Entry for May 29, 1943, p. 385. The article appeared in the journal *Freiheitskampf*.
38. Ibid. Entry for for October 24, 1944, p. 606.
39. Klemperer, *Curriculum Vitae*, p. 248.
40. Klemperer, *I Shall Bear Witness*. Entry for November 12, 1939, p. 305.
41. Klemperer, *Leben sammeln*, vol. 2. Entry for May 26, 1925, p. 61.
42. Ibid. vol. 1. Entry for August 12, 1921, pp. 480–481.
43. Ibid. vol. 2. Entry for August 6, 192 7, p. 361.
44. Klemperer, *I Shall Bear Witness*. Entry for October 9, 1938, pp. 260–261.
45. Klemperer, *Leben sammeln*, vol. 2. Entry for August 6, 1930, p. 643.
46. Klemperer, *I Shall Bear Witness*. Entry for April 5, 1934, p. 60.
47. On this predisposition in general, see George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
48. Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen*, vol. 2. Entry for April 28, 1942, p. 75.
49. On this see Chapter 7 of the present book.

9 The Bonfires of Berlin: Historical and Contemporary Reflections on the Nazi Book Burnings

1. This was first delivered as a lecture at the opening event of the New Center for Arts and Culture Festival, "Words on Fire" at the Boston Public Library, March 13, 2003 on the 70th Anniversary of the Book Burnings in Berlin.
2. For a good graphic account see Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743–1933* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), pp. 395–397.

3. See the overview by Leonidas E. Hill, "The Nazi Attack on 'Un-German' Literature, 1933–1945" in Jonathan Rose, ed., *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), pp. 9–46.
4. Ibid., p. 16.
5. On Freiburg and Ritter see Nicolas Berg, *Der Holocaust and die westdeutschen Historiker. Erforschung und Erinnerung* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), pp. 113–144, especially note 22.
6. There are numerous treatments of these events in German. See for instance, Horst Denkler, Eberhard Lämmert, eds., *"Das war ein Vorspiel nur . . ."* (Berlin: Schriftenreihe der Akadamie der Künste, 1985). Many appeared on the 50th anniversary of the burnings. See, for instance, Thomas Friedrich, ed., *Das Vorspiel: Die Bücherverbrennung am 10. Mai 1933* (Berlin: Litpol, 1983); Joachim-Felix Leonhard, ed., *Bücherverbrennung: Zensur, Verbot, Vernichtung unter dem Nationalsozialismus in Heidelberg* (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Verlaganstalt, 1983); *Nie Wieder Faschismus und Krieg: Die Mahnung der faschistischen Bücherverbrennung am 10. Mai 1933* (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität, 1983). We do not have exact figures, but the estimates as to attendance at the Berlin event was about 5,000 students, 40,000 onlookers around the pyre, and another 40,000 spectators who lined the streets for the 8-kilometer (5-mile) torchlight parade to reach the site of the book burning. See Thomas Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik: Das Ereignis der NS-Bücherverbrennung 1933 im Kontext seiner Diskursgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2001), p. 118. This is the most comprehensive study of the book burnings and of the rhetoric that informed them. Much of the material used here is culled from this work.
7. Thomas Friedrich, *Das Vorspiel*, pp. 32–36. The quote appears on p. 32. "Die Zeitalter eines überspitzten jüdischen Intellektualismus ist nun zu Ende, und der Durchbruch der deutschen Revolution hat auch dem deutschen Wesen wieder die Gasse freigemacht."
8. The association of youth and students with radical and extreme nationalist causes is well known, as is a certain predisposition to the spectacular and the violent. For a not sufficiently known French example, see the anti-Dreyfusard student penchant for violence against the Jews in Pierre Birnbaum's fascinating study, *The Anti-Semitic Moment: A Tour of France in 1898*, translated by Jane Marie Todd (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), especially Chapter 1.
9. Ernst Bertram, "Deutscher Aufbruch," *Deutsche Zeitschrift* 46 (1933), pp. 609–617, quoted in Robert E. Norton's introduction to Bertram's *Nietzsche: Attempt at a Mythology* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. xxviii.
10. Ibid., p. xxviii. This appeared in a letter to Thomas Mann. See *Thomas Mann an Ernst Bertram. Briefe aus den Jahren 1910–1955*, ed. Inge Jens (Pfullingen: Neske, 1960), p. 77.
11. *I Shall Bear Witness, The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1933–41*, abridged and translated by Martin Chalmers (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), pp. 176–177. Entry for August 16, 1936.
12. See George L. Mosse, "Bookburning and the Betrayal by the Intellectuals" in his *Confronting the Nation: Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover & London: Brandeis University Press, 1993), pp. 106–117.
13. This is not as surprising as it may at first appear. The educated elites constitute the literate sector and, perhaps unlike other parts of the population, are most likely to take ideas and their effects seriously.
14. This symbolic temptation applies, even in liberal, pluralist societies, especially during periods of war and intense crisis. To name but one example relating to the

recent Iraq-American conflict, corporate interests controlling chains of radio stations organized a putatively popular rally in Louisiana after Natalie Maines, lead singer of the Dixie Chicks, criticized President Bush, in which a 33,000-pound tractor smashed a collection of the Dixie Chicks CDs, tapes, and other paraphernalia. See Paul Krugman, "Channels of Influence," *New York Times*, Op-Ed, March 25, 2003, p. A19.

15. Marc Drogin, *Biblioclasm: The Mythical Origins, Magic Powers, and Perishability of the Written Word* (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1989).
16. Thus they burned Saul Ascher's pamphlet against the "Teutomaniacs" and proclaimed: "Woe to the Jews who hold on to their Jewishness while mocking and reviling our own national character, our Germanness." See Elon, *The Pity of It All,* p. 119.
17. This is how they described their activity: "Wir wollten verbrennen und haben verbrennt . . . : die Gruendsätze und Irrlehren der Zwingherrschaft, Knechstschaft, Unfreiheit und Ungerechtigkeit, Unmännlichkeit und Unjugendlichkeit, Geheimkraemerei und Blindschleicherei, des Kastengeistes und der Drillerei (Leibes und der Seele), die Machwerke des Schergen-, Hof-, Zopf-, Schneur- und Perückenteufels, die Unschönheit und Untugend—alls Schmach des Lebens und des Vaterlandes." Quoted in Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik,* pp. 53–54. For other examples see, p. 100.
18. For an insightful view see Stephen J. Whitfield, "Where They Burn Books," *Modern Judaism* (October 2002), pp. 213–233.
19. George L. Mosse, "Bookburning and Betrayal," p. 107.
20. Gaston Bachelard, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, translated by Alan C. M. Ross (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964).
21. There were, of course, many other literal burnings during the course of the Third Reich. With the destruction of synagogues on *Kristallnacht,* November 9–10, 1938, thousands of books, Torah scrolls, and manuscripts were destroyed. This was the precursor to many similar actions and desecrations throughout the war. I owe this point to Jean Lettofsky, who kindly showed me her unpublished paper, "The Nazi Book Burnings and Their Aftermath." For an excellent overview of these and related matters see Jonathan Rose, ed., *The Holocaust and the Book*.
22. Quoted in Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik,* p.180.
23. Quoted in Elon, *The Pity of It All,* pp. 396–397.
24. Quoted in Hill, "The Nazi Attack," p. 17.
25. Quoted in Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik,* p. 199.
26. Hill, "The Nazi Attack," p. 13.
27. Stefan Zweig, in his memoir (published in 1944), early on identified a related element in the evolution of Nazi policy making. "Note that such monstrous things as book burnings and pilloryings which but a few months later were to be facts seemed, a month after Hitler's seizure of power, still beyond the comprehension of even rather ample minds. For National Socialism in its unscrupulous technique of deceit was wary of disclosing the full extent of its aims before the world had become inured. Thus they practiced their method carefully: only a small dose to begin with, then a brief pause. Only a single pill at a time and then a moment of waiting to observe the effect of its strength, to see whether the world conscience would still digest this dose. . . . Hitler has achieved nothing more ingenious than this technique of slowly feeling his way and increasing pressure with accelerating force against a Europe that was waning morally and soon also militarily. The long-planned project to destroy all free speech and every independent book in Germany was effected according to this method, too. By no means was an order issued immediately—that followed only after two years—to shut down

on our books; instead they first felt their way to see how far they could go . . . the first attack on our books was assigned to an officially non-responsible group, the National Socialist students. . . . Although propaganda minister Goebbels had decided after long hesitation and at the last moment, to bless the burning of the books, it yet remained a semi-official proceeding . . . " See Zweig's *The World of Yesterday*, introduction by Harry Zohn (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), pp. 365–366.

28. See Joseph Roth, "The Auto-da-Fe of the Mind," reproduced in his *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920–1933*, translated with an introduction by Michael Hoffman (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 2003), p. 207.
29. Quoted in Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik,* p. 226.
30. Ibid., p. 242.
31. Ibid., p. 237.
32. See his "Verbrennt mich!" of 12 May 1933, reproduced in Thomas Friedrich, *Das Vorspiel*, pp. 45–46.
33. This 1938 poem was part of a series of satirical poems Brecht wrote for the underground Communist German Freedom Radio, purportedly operating in Germany but actually broadcasting at different times in Spain, Czechoslovakia, and on a ship in the Baltic. It is reproduced in Bertolt Brecht, *Poems 1913–1956,* edited by John Willett and Ralph Mannheim (London: Eyre Methuen, 1976), p. 294. See too the notes on pp. 567–568.
34. Marc Drogin, *Biblioclasm*. Quoted on p. 1.
35. See Michael Wildt's important study, *An Uncompromising Generation: The Nazi Leadership of the Reich Security Main Office*, translated by Tom Lampert (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), which conclusively establishes the educated, humanist background of the leadership cadre of those who carried out the genocide.
36. "Bibliocaust," *Time Magazine*, 22 May 1933, p. 21. Quoted in Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik,* p. 17.
37. Quoted in Lischeid, *Symbolische Politik,* pp. 249.
38. I wish to thank Daniel Pekarsky for drawing my attention to this work published in 1953. I draw upon his interpretation. A convenient summary is to be found on the Internet. See www.classicnote.com/ClassicNotes/Titles/ fahrenheit/ short-summ.html
39. See Kästner's piece "Das blutige Rot der Scheiterhaufen ist immergrün" in *Wissenschaft und Kunst im Exil: Vorgeschichte, Durchführung und Folgen der Bücherverbrennung* (Osnabrück: Wurf Verlag, 1984), pp.102–106. The relevant comments are to be found on p. 104.
40. See Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI—Lingua Tertii Imperii A Philologist's Notebook*, translated by Martin Brady (London, New York: Continuum Books, 2002), p. 20.
41. "The Anachronistic Procession of Freedom and Democracy," Bertholt Brecht, *Poems*, p. 411.
42. On some literary expressions of this problem, see Roger Shattuck, *Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).
43. See Freeman Dyson, "The Future Needs Us," *New York Review of Books* (February 13, 2003), pp. 11–13. The quote appears on p. 11.
44. The former approach has been enunciated by over 20 leading scientific journals, including *Science*, *Nature*, and *The Proceedings of the National Aacademy of Science,* who have made a pact to censor articles that are believed could compromise national security, "regardless of their scientific merit." See "The Scientists: Journal Editors to Consider US Security in Publishing," *The New York Times* (February 16, 2003), p. 13.

10 Imaging the Absolute: Mapping Western Conceptions of Evil

1. Martin Malia, "The Lesser Evil? Obstacles to comparing the Holocaust and the Gulag even after the opening of the Soviet Archives," *Times Literary Supplement* (March 27, 1998), pp. 3–4.
2. See Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999) and Michael Bernstein, "Homage to the Extreme: The Shoah and the Rhetoric of Catastrophe," *Times Literary Supplement* (March 6, 1998), pp. 6–8 and his earlier *Forgeone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).
3. See the insightful critique of Novick by Tony Judt, "The Morbid Truth," *The New Republic* 221, no. 324 (19–26 July 1999): 36-40. (Online as http://www.enotes.com/peter-novick-criticism/novick-peter/tony-judt-review-date-19-26-july-1999). Nevertheless, Novick's emphasis on the differential contextual consequences of the absolutist claim is important and needs to be addressed: while in Germany it operates, correctly, as a force demanding confrontation and responsibility, in America and elsewhere it may be an aid to *evade* one's own crimes. I may add, that in the Israel-Palestine conflict this remains perhaps the most powerful and ubiquitous metaphor though the constant attempts to invoke it—between the two national sides or in domestic Israeli left/right confrontations—is thereafter typically depicted by the respective sides as verging on the blasphemous.
4. I am purposely leaving aside here the question of "uniqueness" because I believe that the claim has become almost irretrievably ideological. In the present context, it simply asserts or assumes what needs to be explained.
5. Michael Bernstein, "Homage to the Extreme."
6. Ibid., p. 14 for Judt quote.
7. Ibid., p. 14 for Judt quote.
8. I have analyzed some of these themes in my chapter in the book of the same name, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), although I develop it further here and take it into slightly different directions.
9. Evelyn Wrench, *I Loved Germany* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1940). Quoted in Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 282.
10. See the preface to George Steiner's *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1977), pp. viii, ix.
11. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), p. 3. Perhaps even more stunning is the almost total ignorance—including widespread neglect by historians—of the great famines that took between 30 to 50 million lives throughout the "Third World" between 1876 and 1899, the time in which European imperialism reached its height and global market forces were unleashed as never before. These mass starvations and deaths (and often murders), so goes the claim, were not the inevitable outcome of "natural disasters," but a result of deliberate political and economic policy. On this "political ecology of famine" ("the missing pages—the absent defining moments…in virtually every overview of the Victorian era") see the controversial work by Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño and the Making of the Third World* (London and New York: Verso, 2001).
12. Michael Ignatieff, "The Danger of a World Without Enemies," *The New Republic* 224 (2001) 25. 44. (Also Internet. Post date 02.21.01/ Issue date 02.26.01) p. 1.

13. See, for instance, Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998) and, quite controversially, Dagmar Barnouw, *Ansichten von Deutschland (1945). Krieg und Gewalt in der zeitgenössischen Photographie* (Basel: Stroemfeld Verlag, 1997).
14. Martin Malia, "The Lesser Evil?," p. 4.
15. Quoted in Anne Applebaum, "After the Gulag," *The New York Review of Books* (October 24, 2002), p. 41.
16. Michael Bernstein, "Homage to the Extreme," p. 7.
17. There is certainly merit in Dan Diner's somewhat different explanation. In Germany, he writes, "the *nation* is the focus of perception and judgment for dealing with Nazi crimes. In contrast, the *regime* serves as the focal point for dealing with Stalinist crimes in the former Soviet Union." Nazism, he argues, becomes a national or *German* crime yet one perpetrated on the "other," thus setting it in "a zone *apart*, as it were, from one's own mnemonic collective. Quite different the task of coming to terms with the mass crimes of the Soviet Union's Stalinist regime . . . part of the same historical mnemonic collective, the process of overcoming the evil past naturally becomes a wrestling with oneself." This argument applies only to the ways in which German and ex-Soviet memory operates. The explanation offered here proffers a larger compass. Moreover, while Diner makes a very clear distinction between "outwardly" and "inwardly" directed crimes, one burden of my argument is that in the case of the Jews—who are seen as ambivalently integral to Western civilization—such a distinction becomes blurred. See Chapter 11, "Nazism and Stalinism: On Memory, Arbitrariness, Labor, and Death" in Dan Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany Nazism and the Holocaust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). The quotes are to be found on pp. 190–191.
18. Quoted in Michael Ignatieff, "The Danger of a World without Enemies."
19. Rudyard Kipling, "Mandalay" in *Barrack Room Ballads* (London: Methuen, 1892). Quoted in Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost,* p. 138.
20. All the quotes from Steiner are taken from his preface to *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1977), pp. viii-ix.
21. Shiraz Dossa, "Human Status and Politics: Hannah Arendt on the Holocaust," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (June 1980), see especially pp. 319–320.
22. I have explored these dynamics on a smaller canvas in "German History and German Jewry: Junctions, Boundaries, and Interdependencies" in *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
23. See Harry Mulisch, *Case 40/61: A Report on the Eichmann Trial* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 63.
24. Jason Epstein, "A Dissent on *Schindler's List*," *New York Review of Books* 41 (21 April 1994). To be sure, traditional ghetto Jews, "*Ostjuden,"* were more remote than the modern, assimilated variety. Yet, as representatives of Judaism, they formed an essential part of the European landscape. For all the attempts to depict them as frighteningly alien, their urban, literate presence was an ambivalently familiar part of social life.
25. Phillip Lopate, "Resistance to the Holocaust," *Tikkun* 4 (May–June 1989), p. 58. Quoted in Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, p. 235.
26. Scott Montgomery, "What Kind of Memory? Reflections on Images of the Holocaust," *Contention* 5, no.1 (Fall 1995), pp. 79–103, esp. pp. 100–101. Mark Lilla states this a little differently: "This is the paradox of Western political discourse ever since the Second World War: the more sensitive we become to the horrors

brought on by the totalitarian tyrannies, the less sensitive we become to tyranny in its more moderate forms." See his "The New Age of Tyranny," *The New York Review of Books*, October 24, 2002, pp. 28–29. The quote appears on p. 29.

27. Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget,* p. 204 and p. 210.
28. Martin Jay, "The Manacles of Gavrilo Princip," *Salmagundi* 106–107 (Spring-Summer 1995), p. 21. Zelizer, in *Remembering to Forget,* however, claims that this normalization of atrocity is indeed what has taken place through iconic familiarization (p. 212). She adds that this may not only be a case of habituation; the very plenitude of cases and images creates what Anthony Lewis calls "compassion fatigue" (p. 218).
29. As evidenced by a rash of recent publications. See Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (San Franciso: Harper, 2002); James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Richard J. Bernstein, *Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation* (New York: Polity Press, 2002). The work that is attracting the most attention is by Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). On this see Edward Rothstein, "Defining Evil in the Wake of 9/11," *The New York Times* (Arts and Ideas section), October 5, 2002, pp. A17, A19; and Judith Shulevitz, "There's Something Wrong with Evil," *The New York Times Book Review*, October 6, 2002, p. 39.
30. As Neiman puts it, *Evil in Modern Thought,* p. 286: "To call something evil is to say that it defies justification and balance. Evils should not be compared, but they should be distinguished."
31. See the suggestive analysis by Lilla, "New Age of Tyranny," pp. 28–29.
32. Post-1945 discussions of political "evil" have typically revolved around the themes of genocide, mass murder, and perhaps imperialism and the dynamics of racist regimes. Now it seems almost certain that the very diffuse notion of "terrorism" will be included.
33. Jeffrey Herf's term "reactionary modernism" may come closest to depicting this variety of technologically aware and armed fundamentalism. See his *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
34. Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought,* pp. 281–288.

11 The Ambiguous Political Economy of Empathy

1. This paper was prepared for an International Conference entitled "Empathy and the Blocking of Empathy," which was held on July 1–2, 2011 at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin.
2. Quoted in "Objection: Clarence Darrow's Unfinished Work," *The New Yorker,* May 23, 2011, pp. 40–41.
3. See Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009). I thank Oren Harman for this reference.
4. Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis* (New York: Penguin, 2009); Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
5. See Samuel Moyn, "Empathy in History, Empathizing with Humanity," *History and Theory* 45 (October 2006), pp. 397–415, especially p. 398. Lynn Hunt has argued that during the eighteenth century through the rise of the novel (as well as the work of playwrights and artists), empathic capacities were extended far beyond their traditional insular reach. See her *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007). I thank David Kretzmer for this reference.
6. Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization*. See pp. 24 and 414 respectively.

7. Frans de Waal argues that "biology constitutes our greatest hope. One can only shudder at the thought that the humanness of our societies would depend on the whims of politics, culture or religion. Ideologies come and go, but human nature is here to stay." That may be so, but viewed historically and contemporaneously, it is precisely the economy of politics, culture, and religion that chiefly directs the avenues and expressions of empathy. See De Waal, *The Age of Empathy*, p. 45.
8. The literature on empathy is vast but I have found very little specifically on the politics of empathy. See Rafael Moses, "Empathy and Dis-empathy in Political Conflict," *Political Psychology*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1985, pp. 135–139. For a particularly perceptive piece that distinguishes between and analyzes the pros and cons of "projective" versus "imaginative" empathy within a political context, see Cynthia V. Ward, "A Kinder, Gentler Liberalism? Visions of Empathy in Feminist and Communitarian Literature," *The University of Chicago Law Review*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Summer, 1994), pp. 929–995. See too Carol Johnson, "Narratives of Identity: Denying Empathy in Conservative Discourse on Race, Class, and Sexuality," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (February 2005), pp. 37–61.
9. J. M. Coetzee, *Summertime* (London: Harvill Secker 2009), p. 97.
10. On this, see Lou Agosta, *Empathy in the Context of Philosophy* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 14: "Empathy is an important way in which the sufferings and joys of another individual are disclosed to one. Yet empathy in and of itself alone does not imply that one should do anything about the suffering. Nothing necessarily follows morally from empathy itself for action; any required or morally meritorious actions follow from morality, not empathy. Theoretically torturers can use empathy to be even more diabolical in devising the suffering and pain inflicted on the victims.... Empathy does not save the perpetrators from violating the moral law or being bad apples." And on p. 70 he writes: "Empathy indicates what the other is experiencing; morality, what the individual ought to do about it."
11. See Moyn, "Empathy in History, Empathizing with Humanity," p. 397.
12. In his novel *Diary of a Bad Year* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007), p. 111, J. M. Coetzee provides a far more generous and nonpolitical explanation for the average person's withholding of empathy: "...people do not simply close their eyes. I suppose the fact is that they feel uneasy, even sickened, to the point that, in order to save themselves and their sense of being decent, generous, etcetera, they have to close their eyes and ears. A natural way of behaving, a human way. Plenty of Third World societies treat lepers with equal heartlessness."
13. Raul Hilberg formulated an early analysis of these mechanisms in his classic *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1973) pp. 649–669. The book was first published in 1961. At the same conference at which this paper was delivered, in the section entitled "Empathy and the Holocaust," Aleida Assmann explained the lack of empathy by the mechanism of "Looking away" (denial, or repression), while Peter Fritzsche noted there was a certain acknowledgment of wrongdoing, but which was typically overwhelmed by rationalizations and justifications of the regime's actions. Denial and rationalization may not necessarily stand in opposition, but can mutually reinforce empathic blocking. Statements such as "I did not know that this is happening, but if it is, the victims deserve it," may not be logical but they are psychologically effective.
14. I thank John Landau for drawing my attention to this poem.
15. See the revealing (unpublished) paper by Esther Cohen, "'If you prick us, do we not bleed?': Reflections on the Diminishing of the Other's Pain," where she writes: "Nineteenth-century anthropologists often claimed that women were more resistant to pain than men (a claim that goes back to antiquity, when barbarian women were supposed to give birth painlessly), savages more insensitive than civilized

people, and white Caucasians more prone to pain than Africans, native Americans, or any other kind of 'native.'" Nowadays, studies show that "women, Latinos, and Afro-Americans receive fewer painkillers in hospitals than white males." See too Esther Cohen, *The Modulated Scream: Pain in Late Medieval Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

16. I am not referring here to the fashionable and putatively "scientific" studies that refer to hard-wired sex differences between men and women, notions that the female brain contains more mirror-neurons than does the male brain, and that females have greater empathic capacity than men, but rather to obviously stereotypical representations enabling differential cultural and political allocations of empathy. For refutations of the allegedly scientific differences between men and women, see Cordelia Fine, *Delusions of Gender: The Real Science Behind Sex Differences* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010) Also see the review by Carol Tavris, "Women Don't Eat Pizza," *Times Literary Supplement*, January 28, 2011, p. 13.
17. I am purposely leaving aside here the question of "uniqueness" because I believe that the claim has become almost irretrievably ideological. In the present context, it simply asserts or assumes what needs to be explained.
18. I have analyzed some of these themes in my chapter in the book of the same name, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), although I develop it further here and take it into slightly different directions. See too my "Imagining the Absolute: Mapping Western Conceptions of Evil" in Helmut Dubiel, Gabriel Motzkin, eds., *The Lesser Evil: Moral Approaches to Genocide Practices* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 73–84.
19. Shiraz Dossa, "Human Status and Politics: Hannah Arendt on the Holocaust," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (June 1980); see especially pp. 319–320.
20. I have explored these dynamics on a smaller canvas in "German History and German Jewry: Junctions, Boundaries, and Interdependencies" in *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: WI: University of Wisconsin, 2001).
21. Michael Ignatieff, "The Danger of a World Without Enemies," *The New Republic* 224 (2001) 25. 44. (Also Internet. Post date 02.21.01/ Issue date 02.26.01) p. 1.
22. Scott Montgomery, "What Kind of Memory? Reflections on Images of the Holocaust," *Contention* 5, no. 1 (Fall 1995), pp. 79–103, esp. pp. 100–101. Mark Lilla states this a little differently: "This is the paradox of Western political discourse ever since the Second World War: the more sensitive we become to the horrors brought on by the totalitarian tyrannies, the less sensitive we become to tyranny in its more moderate forms." See his "The New Age of Tyranny," *The New York Review of Books*, October 24, 2002, pp. 28–29. The quote appears on p. 29.
23. See Carolyn Dean's piece "Recent French Discourses on Stalinism, Nazism and 'Exorbitant' Jewish Memory," *History & Memory,* 18 (2006), pp. 43–85; "History writing, numbness, and the restoration of dignity," *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 17, Nos. 2/3, 2004, pp. 57–96; *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); *Aversion and Erasure: The Fate of the Victim after the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); all are by Dean.
24. In an e-mail of January 31, 2011, Amos Goldberg has voiced a similar criticism: Dean's indignant tone refers to groups (Holocaust survivors, women, and homosexuals) whose suffering has already been well recognized, while leaving untouched contemporary victimization.
25. In this context, the vexed relationship of the Arabs to the Holocaust is relevant. Contemporarily, the Nakba and the Shoah are pitted against each other as zero-sum counternarratives. Much denial of either event on both sides prevails. I am not sure that there is a symmetry or relevance to the comparison but, in any event, it seems to me that given the imbalance of the power relationship, one may

wonder about the efficacy (and relevance) of Arab visits to Yad Vashem. (Tours of Israelis to the sites of disappeared Arab villages may carry a different resonance, given the fact that those who participate in it already have a predisposition to empathize with this narrative. These constitute a tiny minority of the Israeli Jewish population.) In a recent, nuanced work, *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives* (New York: Metropolitan, 2011), a Lebanese scholar, Gilbert Aachar, has demonstrated the variety of Arab responses to Nazism and that apart from a few radical figures such as Amin al-Husseini, whose Islamic anti-Semitism ran deep, many in the Arab intelligentsia not only opposed Nazism but also critiqued Hitler on the basis of ethnic and religious persecution. To be sure, they also voiced their opposition to Nazism because they feared this would strengthen the Zionist case. Holocaust denial (which Aachar roundly condemns), he argues, emerged as a function of the dynamics of the Israel-Palestine conflict and not because of an ingrained anti-Semitism. The Holocaust, he insists, must be regarded as a European event for which Europe, and not the Arabs, must take responsibility. His position is clearly anti-anti-Semitic and, as Derek Penslar comments in a perceptive review, does touch upon the role of competing and counterempathic narratives (though Aachar's total dismissal of the validity of any Zionist legitimacy renders any rational discussion between Israeli and Arab narratives ultimately impossible). As Penslar comments "…the gradual emergence of Holocaust denial in the Arab world calls to mind a parallel process that has taken place in Israel and the Jewish world in general. The Palestinian tragedy was widely known at the time it occurred, and some Israelis assumed a share of responsibility for it. Yet…the fact that some measure of the Palestinian tragedy was due to forced flight was forgotten over time…What might be called '*nakba* denial,' like Holocaust denial, has been an acquired behavior. This parallel process of forgetfulness is something that ought to be the subject of discussion among Jews and Arabs, Zionists and Palestinian sympathizers." See Derek J. Penslar, "The Hands of Others," *Jewish Review of Books*, No. 5, Spring 2011. See too Meier Litvak and Esther Webman, *From Empathy to Denial: Arab Responses to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia, 2009).

26. George Orwell put it thus: "By 'nationalism' I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions of people can be confidently labeled 'good' or 'bad.' But secondly—and this is much more important—I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests." See his essay "Notes on Nationalism" (October 1945) in his *Essays*, ed., John Carey (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), p. 865.
27. For a particularly chilling example see Raphael Gross, "'The Ethics of a Truth-Seeking Judge': Konrad Morgen, SS Judge and Corruption Expert," in Christian Wiese and Paul Betts, *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination: Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 193–209.
28. Thus very early, the Yiddish poet, Ye'hoash, or Shlomo Blumgarten (1872–1927), wrote the quote given in his *Tel Aviv, 1915* (freely translated here). See Ye'hoash, "Tel Aviv, 1915," *Haaretz* [Hebrew], 9 May 2011. I have traced other such attitudes in the Brit Shalom group of Central European Jews during the 1920s in Chapter 1 of *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).
29. For an excellent summary of Jabotinsky's position see Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), pp. 256–257. Jabotinsky was also a realist liberal. He was against the expulsion of Arabs and believed that Palestine should and would always remain a multinational state. For a

similar statement, see the quote by Richard Lichtheim in Chapter 4 of this volume.

30. This is reflected in the popular Zionist slogan "a land without people, for a people without a land." This view has also been given scholarly currency by Joan Peters in her *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict over Palestine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).
31. This being said, I am fully aware of the immense complexities and complications entailed in this seemingly intractable conflict. For all that, given the historical experience of Jewish suffering or even a modicum of moral sensitivity, it is very difficult for me to understand how our official policy (and most public opinion) can state with such pride, conviction, and self-righteousness that Israel won't even accept the return of a single refugee. This signals a significant loss of crucial empathic and moral sensibility.
32. This not only applies to larger ethnic, religious, or national units;, in conditions of extreme suffering, mutual empathy tends to be broken down into far smaller subgroupings of loyalty. Recently Saul Friedländer has pointed to the "glaring lack of an overall Jewish solidarity in the face of catastrophe. The German-Jewish leadership attempted to bar endangered Polish Jews from emigrating from the Reich to Palestine, in late 1939 and early 1940, in order to keep all emigration openings for German Jews only; native French Jewish leadership (the *Consistoire*) ceaselessly demanded from the Vichy government a clear-cut distinction between the status and treatment of native Jews and that of foreign ones. The Councils in Poland—particularly in Warsaw—were allowing a whole array of privileges to members of the local middle class who could afford to pay bribes, while the poor, the refugees from the provinces, and the mass of those devoid of any influence were increasingly pushed into slave labor or driven to starvation and death. Once the deportations started, Polish Jews in Lodz, for example, turned against the deportees from the West. In Westerbork, German Jews, the elite of the camp, closely working with the German commandants, protected their own and put Dutch Jews on the departure lists, while, previously, the Dutch Jewish elite had felt secure and was convinced that only refugees (mainly German Jews) would be sent to the local camps, then deported. The hatred of Christian Jews (converts to Christianity) by their Jewish brethren, and vice versa, particularly in the Warsaw ghetto, is notorious. . . . Yet a strengthening of bonds appeared within small groups sharing a specific political or religious background." See his "An Integrated History of the Holocaust: Possibilities and Challenges," in Christian Wiese and Paul Betts, *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination: Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 27.
33. De Waal, *The Age of Empathy*, p. 168 talks of a counterproductive "indiscriminate" empathy. On proximity and familiarity, see p. 204.
34. See Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
35. On the Israeli side, there are innumerable calls for the Arabs to accept their share of responsibility for their own fate and for the ongoing lack of resolution of the conflict, and the need for them too to indulge in self-criticism. For a recent example, see Shlomo Avineri, "Wanted: Palestinian Self-criticism," *Haaretz*, May 11, 2011, p. 5.
36. Letter from Yisrael Hayun, "Why Mark Nakba Day?" *Haaretz*, May 18, 2011, p. 7.
37. Nelson Mandela's forgiving attitude, his pronouncement that the past was over, was both exceptional and exemplary.
38. Internet source Haaretz Daily News com/Magazine/daily news/anglo file/empathy vs.sympathy/1.299607
39. Quoted in Aluf Benn, "Doomed to Fight," *Haaretz,* May 9, 2011, B2.

40. From Rosa Luxemburg's *Briefe an Freunde*, quoted in Peter Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 517. See too J. L. Talmon, *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1981), p. 217.
41. Gideon Levy clearly belongs to this camp. "The time has come," he recently wrote, "to remove the abcess and air out the wound. We're not talking about an impossible turning back of the wheel of history, about the return of millions and the end of the State of Israel, as the Right is trying to scare us in believing. We're talking about understanding the other side and granting some of its desires—accepting moral responsibility for 1948, a solution to the refugee problem, and, of course, that very minimum, the 1967 borders." See *Haaretz*, May 19, 2011, p. 5.
42. For a view arguing that if empathy is not a sufficient condition, if reconciliation, as opposed to coexistence or cohabitation is to occur, it is surely necessary, see Jodi Halpern and Harvey M. Weinstein, "Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation," *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (August 2004), pp. 561–583.
43. See Arendt's *On Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 80. Much of her Chapter 2 ("The Social Question") is devoted to a critique of compassion in politics. As it [compassion or empathy] "abolishes the distance, the worldly space between men where political matters, the whole realm of human affairs are located, it remains, politically speaking, irrelevant and without consequence." (p. 81).
44. That justice and empathy do not always accord is supported too by social science. See C. Daniel Batson, Tricia R. Klein, Lori Highberger, and Laura L. Shaw, "Immorality from Empathy-Induced Altruism: When Compassion and Justice Conflict," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1995, Vol. 68, pp. 1042–1054.
45. See Moyn, "Empathy in History", p. 40.
46. Cynthia Ward, "A Kinder, Gentler Liberalism?" p. 954.
47. As Stanley Cohen put it: "The difference between knowing about the sufferings of our family and loved ones, compared with strangers and distant others, is too primeval to be spelled out. These ties of love, care and obligation cannot be reproduced or simulated anywhere else. But the boundaries of the moral universe vary from person to person; they also stretch and contract historically—from family and intimate friends to neighbourhood, community, ethnic group, religion, country, right up to 'the children of the world'. These are not just psychological questions but draw on a wider discourse about responsiveness to 'the needs of strangers'." See his *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 18.
48. Johnson, "Narratives of Identity," p. 42. As one such narrative—which, of course, may produce a backlash—she quotes from a speech by Paul Keating the Australian Labour Party Prime Minister (from 1991–1996) launching the International Year of Indigenous People: "It might help us if we non-Aboriginal Australians imagined ourselves dispossessed of land we had lived on for fifty thousand years—and then imagined us begin told that it had never been ours . . . Imagine if we had suffered the injustice and then we were blamed for it. It seems to me that if we can imagine the injustice we can imagine its opposite."
49. In a speech on Wednesday January 12, 2001, President Obama called on Americans to "expand our moral imaginations, to listen to each more carefully, to sharpen our instincts for empathy, and remind ourselves of all the ways our hopes and dreams are bound together." Quoted in Paul Krugman, "A tale of two moralities," *International Herald Tribune*, January 15–16, 2011, p. 7. These words could be applied to other political situations as well.

12 Reflections on Insiders and Outsiders

1. This piece, slightly revised in the present version, was originally written as the introduction to a volume (in honor of Ezra Mendelsohn), dedicated to an exploration of "insiders" and "outsiders" in modern East European Jewish history. See Richard I. Cohen, Jonathan Frankel, and Stefani Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010).
2. The classic work by Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), remains one of the most insightful general approaches to the question.
3. See William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 235. In the chapter in the present book, "The Ambiguous Political Economy of Empathy," I provide a somewhat different perspective on the problem.
4. See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, translated by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973); also Pawel Maciejko, *The Mixed Multitude: Jacob Frank and the Frankist Movement, 1755–1816* (Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
5. See Shulamit Volkov's "Excursus on Minorities in the Nation-State" in her *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapter 8.
6. See Simmel's "The Stranger" in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed., Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 402–408.
7. This is a recognition that is shared both by formal classical sociology and in different form by contemporary deconstruction. As Edward Shils formulates it: "Society has a center. There is a central zone in the structure of society. . . . Membership . . . is constituted by relationship to this central zone." See his "Center and Periphery," in *Center and Periphery: Essays in Microsociology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 3.
8. For a provocative discussion of these issues in general, and with regard to matters Jewish in particular, see Michael P. Steinberg's impassioned plea against essentializing conceptions in his *Judaism Musical and Unmusical* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
9. David Rechter, "A Jewish El Dorado? Myth and Politics in Habsburg Czernowitz," in Cohen, Frankel, and Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders*, pp. 207–220. The quote appears on p. 220.
10. See Leon Volovici, "Mihail Sebastian: A Jewish Writer and his (Antisemitic) Master" in Cohen, Frankel, and Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders*, pp. 58–69.
11. For an interesting analysis of this condition see Rael Meyerowitz, *Transferring to America: Jewish Interpretations of American Dreams* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), especially pp. 262–263.
12. See the introduction to David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susan Heschel, eds., *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 5.
13. See especially Mosse's *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).
14. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. xiv.
15. Many of George Steiner's writings point in this direction. For one example, see "A Kind of Survivor" in his *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1977). See too Isaiah Berlin's rather surprising

essay, "Jewish Slavery and Emancipation," in Alexander Manor, ed., *The Jews and the National Question* (Tel Aviv: Ichud Habonim, n.d.).

16. See the essay, "The Study of the Jewish Intellectual: A Methodological Prolegomenon," in Paul Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press), especially p. 37.
17. "The Stranger" appears in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed., Kurt H. Wolff (New York: The Free Press, 1950), pp. 402–408. The quote appears on p. 402. On the Jews as the quintessential strangers, see p. 403.
18. See, most prominently, George L. Mosse's *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985). For a more popular treatment, see Frederic V. Grunfeld, *Prophets without Honour: A Background to Freud, Kafka, Einstein and Their World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).
19. See the essay "The non-Jewish Jew," in Isaac Deutscher's collection, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). The quote appears on pp. 26–27.
20. See Strauss' preface to the English translation of his *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 24.
21. Thus Freud to members of the Viennese B'nai Brith, May 6, 1926. Quoted in Peter Gay, *A Godless Jew: Freud, Atheism, and the Making of Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 137.
22. Leszek Kolakowski, "In Praise of Exile" in his *Modernity on Endless Trial* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 56–57.
23. In a similar vein, see Colin Wilson's self-indulgent 1954 work, *The Outsider*. James Thurber's satirical question is apt here: "Why do you have to be a non-conformist like everybody else?"
24. See Edward W. Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (London: Verso, 2003). The quotes are from p. 16 and p. 54 respectively. I am fully aware of the highly ideological and political charge contained in Said's book. I am using this piece agnostically and as yet another example of the ways in which Jewish intellectuality, dual outsiderdom, and a certain cosmopolitanism have been linked. In critiquing Said's advocacy of the non-Jewish Jew, a rather outraged Leon Wieseltier asks, "then why not the non-Palestinian Palestinian?" See his piece entitled "The Ego and the Yid," *The New Republic*, April 7, 2003, p. 38. Said and Wieseltier represent diametrical opposites. The former insists upon denying and opposing "essentialized" identity while Wieseltier writes: "The Jews are not Europeans and they are not non-Europeans. They are Jews, an autonomous people with an autonomous history that had directed them, in different times and in different places, against their will and according to their will, toward certain peoples and away from certain peoples." But for "outsiders" both "non-essentialist" *and* "autonomist" assumptions may be problematic and their choices in practice more gray, and less stark.
25. See Michael Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), Chapter 2,"The Practice of Social Criticism," especially pp. 35–40.
26. I have tried to address some of these aspects in *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), a work that could have profited from some of the more critical observations made here.
27. See Richard I. Cohen,"The Project of Jewish Culture and Its Boundaries—Insiders and Outsiders," in Cohen, Frankel, and Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders*, pp. 17–29.
28. For a sensitive philosophical and historical treatment of these questions in general, see Jerzy Jedlicki, "Heritage and Collective Responsibility," in Ian Maclean, Alan Montefiore, Peter Winch, eds., *The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

29. Jonathan Frankel, "The 'Non-Jewish Jews' Revisited: Solzhenitsyn and the Issue of National Guilt," in Cohen, Frankel, and Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders*, pp. 166–187. The quote appears on p. 185.
30. See Ruth Wisse's provocative essay, "The Jewish Informer as Extortionist and Idealist," in Cohen, Frankel, and Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders*, pp. 188– 204.
31. From Wisse's "The Jewish Informer." The quote appears on p. 204.
32. Hannah Arendt put it thus: "After the war it turned out that the Jewish question, which was considered the only insoluble one, was indeed solved—namely, by means of a colonized and then conquered territory—but this solved neither the problem of the minorities nor the stateless. On the contrary, like virtually all other events of our century, the solution of the Jewish question merely produced a new category of refugees, the Arabs, thereby increasing the number of the stateless and rightless by another 700,000 to 800,000 people." See her *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian, 1958), p. 290.
33. See Zvi Jagendorf, "Gott fun Avrohom: Itzik Manger and Avot Yeshurun Look Homewards," in Cohen, Frankel, and Hoffman, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders*, pp. 30–39. The quotes appear on pp. 34 and 39.

13 Toward a Phenomenology of the Jewish Intellectual: The German and French Cases Compared

1. See the (1956) preface to Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, ed. Liliane Weissberg, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 82.
2. There are too many examples of Arendt's work to be listed here. But, the above work notwithstanding, see especially the essays in Part I ("The Pariah as Rebel") of her anthology *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, ed., Ron. H. Feldman (New York: Grove Press, 1978) and, most crucially, her marvelous piece "Walter Benjamin: 1892–1940" in her *Men in Dark Times* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968).
3. For a very fine example that documents and seeks to explain "the startling productivity of the German-Jewish symbiosis," see David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1740–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), especially the conclusion.
4. This is evident in almost everything Steiner writes. See especially but not exclusively "A Kind of Survivor," in his collection of essays, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1977) as well as his autobiographical comments in *Errata: An Examined Life* (London: Phoenix, 1997).
5. See George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington and Cincinnati: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. ix. In his autobiography, *Confronting History: A Memoir* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), Mosse writes about *German Jews Beyond Judaism*, that it "is certainly my most personal book, almost a confession of faith" (p. 184).
6. See the analysis of Mosse, "George Mosse at 80: A Critical Laudatio" in my *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans and Jews* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001). This originally appeared in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (April 1999).
7. I explore the personal and autobiographical dimensions of these predilections in an essay, "Growing up German-Jewish in South Africa," in *In Times of Crisis*. This appeared originally in *American Jewish Archives*, Vol. XL, No. 2 (November 1988).

8. This "proximity" thesis was suggested to me by Jeffrey Barash in a conversation in Jerusalem, August 23, 2000.
9. Thus Sorkin's *Transformation of German Jewry* seeks to explain the peculiar creativity of German-speaking Jewry via the comparative method but, instructively, he does this by examining the English and Russian cases and does not even mention French Jewry. See pp. 173–178.
10. I owe these insights to a conversation with Jonathan Frankel in Jerusalem, October 3, 2000.
11. James Joll, *Intellectuals in Politics: Three Biographical Essays* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), pp. xii–xiii. In overall terms this portrait is accurate, yet it somewhat downplays the anti-Semitic attacks that Blum had to endure.
12. For an elaboration of this theme, see Chapter 2 of the present work.
13. Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749–1824* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967).
14. This is the view, for instance, of Gerson D. Cohen, "German Jewry as Mirror of Modernity," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, 20 (London, 1975). Tellingly, almost all of Jacob Katz's work on processes of Jewish modernization concentrates upon the German case.
15. George Steiner's phrase in *Errata*, p. 53.
16. This point was made in George L. Mosse's (unpublished) concluding remarks at a conference honoring his work, between October 7–9, 1993. See *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered: A Symposium in Honor of George L. Mosse*, edited by Klaus L. Berghahn (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).
17. I would also like to thank Stephen Whitfield for his later comments on this paper.
18. It should be pointed out that contemporary historians are now beginning to question this negative French-Jewish self-evaluation and are arguing for a degree of autonomy and creativity absent in the consciousness of the historical actors themselves, as well as in previous historiography. Among others, the volume in which this essay originally appeared attests to this. See *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed., Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, Uri Kaufmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).
19. Munk was born in Glogau, Germany, and studied at the universities of Berlin and Bonn. He later moved to France where, in 1863, he succeeded Ernst Renan in the Chair of Hebrew at the College de France. The other major exponent, Joseph Derenbourg, was born in France, but was also a German resident. The French-born and trained Auguste Franck was an exception to the pattern.
20. "A nos lecteurs," *Revue des études juives*, I (1880), v. Quoted in Frances Malino, introduction to Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., *The Jews in Modern France* (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1985), p. 6.
21. See the superb work by Jay Berkowitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), pp. 142–144. He argues that, unlike in Germany, where there was a concentration upon rabbinic literature and a disinclination towards Biblical criticism, prompted by the anti-Jewish bias of this Protestant-dominated field with which German Jewish scholars did not want to be associated, in France Jews were vocal in Biblical and philosophical studies. Thus the by-now Frankified Munk dispassionately treated issues pertaining to the documentary hypothesis, disputing most of its claims, but accepting in principle the idea of human authorship of the Pentateuch. Unlike German-Jewish scholars and in the spirit of the Durkheimians, he adopted a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. French scholars, Berkowitz notes, hardly touched rabbinic literature. Because reformers and rabbis could work together in France, no massive assaults on the Talmud were necessary, as they

were for their counterparts in Germany. Munk, it should be noted, also translated Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed* into French. Of course, French-Jewish scholars were clear on the fact that they modeled their translation work on the Mendelssohn *Biur*. See also Frances Malino, "Jewish Enlightenment in Berlin and Paris," in Brenner, Caron, and Kaufmann, *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered*. Of relevance too is Ivan Strenski, *Durkheim and the Jews of France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), especially p. 95.

22. See Chapter 2, "Paris Becomes the Center of French Jewry," in Michael Graetz's, *The Jews in Nineteenth Century France: From the French Revolution to the Alliance Israélite Universelle*, translated by Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), especially pp. 41–42. In Metz, where there was less isolation, and more wealth and mobility, a *maskilic* movement did emerge, but the names of its practitioners remain far less well-known than those across the Rhine (Lipmann Moses Bueschental, Moses Ensheim, Elijah Halfan Ha-Levi); Elie Halevy, 1760–1826 [was] editor of the first French-Jewish newspaper, the weekly *L'Israelite francais*.
23. I have used the figures supplied by Eugen Weber in his "Reflections on the Jews in France," in Malino and Wasserstein, *The Jews in Modern France*, pp. 8–9.
24. I owe some of these insights to a conversation with Jeffrey Barash, Jerusalem, August 23, 2000.
25. See the difficult but insightful preface to Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965).
26. Berkowitz comments that among these intellectuals there "appears to have been greater affinity and loyalty to the basic ideals of Mendelssohn and Wessely in France than among the reformers in Germany." In Jay Berkowitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity,* note 11, p. 270. See too the comparisons with regard to French-Jewish and German-Jewish education in Chapter 8, "The Ideology of Educational Reform." It should also be noted that there were other (perhaps a little more minor) intellectuals who in the Third Republic sought to redefine Jewish identity and to "re-embody" it—people like Hyppolite Prague, the editor of the *Archives Israelites*, or the Jewish theologian Maurice Liber of the *Societe des Etudes Juives*; James Darmsteter; Israel Levi; and so on. See Ivan Strenski, *Durkheim and the Jews of France* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 38.
27. Berkowitz, *The Shaping of Jewish Identity,* pp. 209–210. The same author (note 18, p. 283) does however remind us that Michael Meyer in his *German Political Pressure and Jewish Religious Response in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1981), pp. 11–14, has challenged the notion that religious reform was a strategy designed to strengthen the case for emancipation.
28. Conversation with Jonathan Frankel, Jerusalem, 3rd October 2000.
29. Most centrally see Pierre Birnbaum's *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy*, translated by Jane Marie Todd (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996) and his superb essay on the French model in his and Ira Katznelson, *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
30. These remarks were made at the above-mentioned talk George Mosse gave in Madison, Wisconsin, October 7–9, 1993.
31. The phenomenon of right-wing and conservative Jews is well known in the German case. In France too, while Republican liberalism was the dominant strain among late nineteenth-century Jewry, there were those who were influenced by Barrés (paradoxically to return to their Jewish roots) and the Action Francaise appealed, for instance, to people such as Daniel Halévy. See note 4 in Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: The Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 251.

32. This was to be sure a kind of patriotic universalism, as evidenced in Hermann Cohen's rendering of *Deutschtum* and *Judentum* or as Crémieux put it in May 1872: "To the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, to the God of David and Solomon, our adoration as believers; to our France of 1789, our worship as sons; to the Republic of 1870, our absolute devotion. That is our great Trinity." See Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic*, p. 230.
33. Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic*, pp. 11–12.
34. Chapter IV, "A Left-Wing Identity" in George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism*.
35. Blum stated this on 11 April 1899. Quoted in Joll, *Intellectuals in Politics*, p. 6.
36. Halevy, who was one of the most successful French opera composers of the nineteenth century, wrote that most bitter and explicit opera *La Juive* in 1835 and also the lesser-known *Le Juif Errant* in 1852. The eclectic, avant-garde composer Darius Milhaud (1892–1974) was closely identified with Jewish causes—there is a commemorative Israeli stamp in his honor—and often composed explicitly Jewish music. Among these are to be counted the Biblical opera *David* (for the Jewish Festival of 1954), *Poemes juifs*, *Service Sacré* (*Kedusha*), and musical settings of the Psalms. Strenski notes (p. 73) that together with Israel Levi, Milhaud was very much part of the pre–World War I French Jewish renaissance and was joint founder of the Les Amis du Judaisme in 1913.
37. In this paper I have almost entirely omitted the remarkable post–World War II presence of Jewish thinkers who often overtly identify with, and write about, Jewish matters (such a list would have to include luminaries such as Emanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Claude Lanzmann, Alain Finkielkraut, Bernard Levy, and could, of course, be significantly extended). I have not dealt with this chapter in the present paper, mainly because of the significantly transformed nature of the post-Holocaust context.
38. On this and the problematic of defining the "Jewishness" of such activities, see Ezra Mendelsohn, "Should we take Notice of Berthe Weill? Reflections on the Domain of Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 1 (no. 1, Fall 1994), pp. 22–39.
39. On the nature of these anti-Semitic representations, see the articles by Sander Gilman, "Salome, Syphilis, Sarah Bernhardt, and the Modern Jewess," and by Carol Ockman, "When Is a Jewish Star just a Star? Interpreting Images of Sarah Bernhardt" in Linda Nochlin and Tamar Garb (eds.), *The Jew in the Text: Modernity and the Construction of Identity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995). I thank Richard I. Cohen for this reference.
40. In 1848, Rachel literally came to symbolize the Republic. The Comédie Francaise was renamed Theatre de Republique and a rapturous Rachel sang, and was heroically portrayed chanting, the "La Marseillaise," in Nochlin and Garb (eds.), *The Jew in the Text,* pp. 185–187.
41. On this see Elizabeth Frenzel, *Judengestalten auf der deutschen Bühne: Ein notwendiger Querschnitt durch 700 Jahre Rollengeschichte* (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1940). Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto* (New York, 1978) also touches on this. See especially p. 86.
42. For the following remarks I have relied upon the excellent work by Rachel M. Brownstein, *Tragic Muse: Rachel of the Comédie-Francaise* (New York: Knopf, 1993). I thank Zvi Jagendorf for suggesting both this topic and book to me. Brownstein informs us that the name "Felix," the Latin for "happy," was a fairly common name among Jews and constituted a translation of the Hebrew "Baruch" ("blessed"), p. 50.
43. One Jewish newspaper put it thus: "All we can say of Mlle. Rachel is, that to her other immoralities she had not added that of apostasy," Brownstein, *Tragic Muse,* p. 25.

44. Brownstein, *Tragic Muse* pp. 17–120.
45. I have relied fully on the interesting article by Janis Bergman-Carton, "Negotiating the Categories: Sarah Bernhardt and the Possibilities of Jewishness," *Art Journal,* vol. 55, No. 2 (Summer 1996), pp. 55–64.
46. Most famously, Benda's 1928 *La Trahison des Clercs*, translated by Richard Aldington as *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959) and Raymond Aron, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, translated by Terence Kilmartin (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1957). The work originally appeared in 1955. By placing these two together I do not mean to imply that there were not significant differences between them. See Aron's critical comments on the lofty but rather abstract, removed moralism of Benda, pp. 301ff: "It is seldom possible to choose between parties, regimes or nations on the basis of values defined in abstract terms. . . . The intellectual who sets some store by the just and reasonable organisation of society will not be content to stand on the side-lines, to put his signature at the bottom of every manifesto against every injustice."
47. In Raymond Aron's impressive historical account, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought,* vol. I, translated by Richard Howard and Helen Weaver (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), Karl Marx is the only featured non-Frenchman. Aron's choices of founding fathers , apart from the obvious Comte, are both literate and surprising: while Saint-Simon only receives passing mention, it is Montesquieu and de Tocqueville who occupy center stage.
48. For a nuanced view proclaiming, in the last analysis, the relevance of this factor in terms of the Jewish situation of cognitive belongingness and social outsiderness, see Paul Mendes-Flohr's suggestive "The Study of the Jewish Intellectual: A Methodological Prologemenon" in his *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).
49. Strenski's *Durkheim and the Jews of France*, not only provides an example of this but also exhaustively lists other such attempts.
50. John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Lévi-Strauss and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1974). Cuddihy's work contains many interesting insights. Yet some of the dangers of such undertakings also become apparent in this work, as its ultimate impulse seems to veer close indeed to older stereotypical conceptions of Jewish subversiveness and unruliness. See the superb review by Robert Alter, "Manners and the Jewish Intellectual," *Commentary* 60 (no. 2, August 1975), pp. 58–64. Alter concludes (pp. 63–64): "In dropping so many Jewish names, Cuddihy seems to have forgotten about Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Baudelaire, Mann, Lawrence . . . Cuddihy's sleight-of-hand trick is to focus on a few seminal thinkers of Jewish origins within this much larger movement and so to give the impression that the subversiveness of modernism was foisted on intellectuals everywhere by the Jews, who repeatedly argued out of the resentment of their own special social predicament as though they were describing man in general. I do not presume to know Cuddihy's motives, which may well be associated with a kind of uneasy admiration of Jewish intellectuality. But whatever his conscious intentions, the clear tendency of his historical exposition is to represent Jewish social thought as inherently meretricious, disruptive, vindictive, twisting, and breaking the civil body of Christian society on the Procrustean bed of Jewish social distress."
51. See Chapter 4, "The Love of Learning: Sociologists and Their Roots," in Pierre Birnbaum, *Jewish Destinies: Citizenship, State, and Community in Modern France*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), pp. 94, 98.
52. Once again I owe this thought to Jonathan Frankel (from a conversation held on October 1, 2000).

53. See Venita Datta, *Birth of a National Icon: The Literary Avant-Garde and the Origins of the Intellectual in France* (Albany: State University of New York, 1999), p. 107.
54. See Waldemar George, "The School of Paris," in Cecil Roth, *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History*, revised edition, Bezalel Narkiss (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1971), pp. 229–260. This aspect of the school is now becoming increasingly recognized in the popular press. See for instance, Michael Gibson, "The Gifted Foreigners of the School of Paris," *International Herald Tribune* (December 23–24, 2000), p. 7.
55. Ivan Strenski, *Durkheim and the Jews of France* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 1.
56. Gide's *Journal* entry (175–176) is quoted in Elaine Marks, *Marrano as Metaphor: The Jewish Presence in French Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 59–60.
57. See especially Chapter 5, "Monologue with Freud" in Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991). Anti-Semites depicted analysis as an essentially "dirty" and subversive leveling Jewish act, reducing spiritual matters to their most gross primitive and sexual dimensions.
58. Quoted Strenski, *Durkheim and the Jews of France* 2. See note 12, p. 162. Strenski notes in this connection (p. 18): The Jewish philosophers of Durkheim's generation—those who opposed him in the name of the autonomy of reason, such as Léon Brunschvicg—seemed immune enough from some native Jewish tendency toward the social." But beyond this, Maire misunderstood what Durkheim was doing for, like so many other bourgeois *Bildung* Jews, he never abandoned his deep embrace of individualist values; what he patriotically sought to do was reform individualist Cartesianism along societist lines, both within the domain of national morale and in the realm of science. This attempt to integrate individualism within nationalism, as distinct from integralist efforts to suppress such individualism under the weight of nationalism, as Strenski (p. 42) puts it, was just as characteristic of French Jews as it was of German Jews (if we are to make the claim that Jews tended to emphasize certain things and downplay others). Be that as it may, Maire's essentialist, hostile reading is really not far from the sympathetic and suggestive but ultimately problematic approach of Louis Greenberg, who posits that Durkheim's antiaesthetic sensibilities were derived from his rabbinical father Moise and his adherence to a strict Talmudic (Rashi) rationalism, whereas for Henri Bergson, his Polish Hasidic background may have pushed intuition to the center of his thought. See Louis Greenberg, "Bergson and Durkheim as Sons and Assimilators: The Early Years," *French Historical Studies* 9: 4, (1976), pp. 619–634. The difficulty here is that Durkheim's positivistic hostility to poetry, arts, and mysticism and Bergson's irrationalism are far more easily and persuasively accounted for in terms of the wider prevalent intellectual currents of their times.
59. Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (*La Trahison de Clercs*), translated by Richard Aldington (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1959), pp. 61–62. Benda earlier referred to the new Jewish propensity of "laboring to assert this peculiarity, to define its characteristics.... I am not trying to discover whether the impulse of these Jews is or is not nobler than the efforts of so many others to have their origin pardoned in them; I am simply pointing out to those interested in the progress of peace in the world that our age has added one more arrogance to those which set men against each other, at least to the extent that it is conscious and proud of itself" (pp. 11–12). In a note (1, p. 12) Benda added that he was "speaking of Western Jews of the bourgeois class. The Jewish proletariat did not await our time to plunge into the feeling of its racial peculiarity. However, it does so without giving provocation."

60. See the exchange of letters between George Lichtheim and Gershom Scholem, letters 108a (28 November 1966) and 108 (4.12.66), respectively in Gershom Scholem, *Briefe* II, 1948–1970, ed., Thomas Sparr (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995), pp. 159 and 162, where Scholem very briefly concedes this.
61. This should not be confused with the fashionable, latter-day emphases of post-colonialist discourse, which has valorized hybridity, marginality, and exile in ways quite different from the context under discussion here. See Ian Buruma's excellent, "The Romance of Exile," *The New Republic*. Feb 12, 2001, posted on the Internet 02.05. 01.
62. See "German History and German Jewry: Junctions, Boundares, and Interdependencies," in my *In Times of Crisis*.
63. Ernst Bloch, "Die sogennante Judenfrage" (1963) in Bloch's *Literarische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), p. 553. Quoted in Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Jews Within German Culture" in *German-Jewish History*, edited by Michael A. Meyer (Michael Brenner, Assistant Editor), Volume 4, *Renewal and Destruction 1918–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 192. Note 13 (p. 411).
64. Arnold wrote a number of poems on Rachel, published in his *New Poems* of 1867. See Brownstein, *Tragic Muse*. See pp. 230–234. The quoted poem appears on p. 233.

14 Reflections on Theatricality, Identity, and the Modern Jewish Experience

1. The classic statement of the connections between the ideals of masculinity and self-control as normative to bourgeois respectable society and the positing of all outsiders (especially Jews) as nervous, effeminate, and lacking in self-control is to be found in George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985).
2. On this, see Isaac Eisenstein Barzilay, "The Jew in the Literature of the Enlightenment," *Jewish Social Studies* 17, no. 4 (October 1956), especially p. 254.
3. For this see my *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; revised edition, 1999).
4. Anton Rée, *Die Sprachverhältnisse der heutigen Juden im Interesse der Gegenwart und mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Volkserziehung* (Hamburg, 1844).
5. See Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. xxi.
6. See the introduction to *Theatre under the Nazis*, edited by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). On Goebbels, see p. 14 and p. 44, note 35; on plastic surgery, p. 13.
7. Gilman's *Making the Body Beautiful,* and also his *Creating Beauty to Cure the Soul: Race and Psychology in the Shaping of Aesthetic Surgery* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 1998) are pioneering works in this field.
8. Scott Spector, "Edith Stein's Passing Gestures: Intimate Histories, Empathic Portraits," *New German Critique* (no. 75, Fall 1998). The quote appears on p. 33.
9. For a survey of these positive representations (as well as some of their mirror-opposite negative types), see Herbert Carrington, *Die Figur des Juden in der dramatischen Litteratur des XVIII Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 1897).
10. See, for instance, Wilhelm Stoffers, *Juden und Ghetto* (Graz: Heinrich Stiasnys Söhne, 1939), pp. 110–121, and Elizabeth Frenzel, *Judengestalten auf der deutschen Buehne* (Munich, 1940), pp. 86–113.
11. For details see Stoffers, *Juden und Ghetto,* pp. 131–132.

12. See Katz's *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (New York; Schocken Books, 1978), p. 86. Katz's source is Julius von Voss, "Über des Schauspielers Herrn Wurm jüdische Deklaration," in von Voss, *Jüdische Romantik und Wahrheit, von einem getauften Israeliten* (Berlin, 1817), pp. 291–300.
13. On this theme, see "Assimilation and Its Impossible Discontents: The Case of Moritz Goldstein," in my *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
14. 0skar Panizza, "The Operated Jew", *New German Critique* (no.21, Fall 1980), pp.63–79. The quote appears on p.79. Translated by Jack Zipes.
15. Both the Panizza and Friedlaender stories are contained in *The Operated Jew: Two Tales of Anti-Semitism,* translated with commentary by Jack Zipes (New York and London: Routledge, 1991).
16. This can be found in Peter Jelavich's superb piece, "Peforming High and Low: Jews in Modern Theater, Cabaret, Revue, and Film," in Emily D. Bilski, *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture 1890–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 228–229.
17. See Yossi Klein, "Writing It Off: Reshef Levy Writes Plays and Texts for Television – and Laughs All the Way to the Studio," *Ha'aretz* (English) *Magazine* (December 8, 2000), p. 31.
18. For one persuasive example of this see Robert Alter's "Jewish Dreams and Nightmares," in his *After the Tradition: Essays on Modern Jewish Writing* (New York: Dutton, 1969).
19. For these aspects of Blüher's career and writings see George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964), chapters 9 and 11.
20. Hans Blüher, *Secessio Judaica. Philosophische Grundlegung der Historischen Situation des Judentums and der Antisemitischen Bewegung* (Berlin: Der Weisse Ritter Verlag, 1922), especially p. 19.
21. Ibid., pp. 20–21. Jewish success had encouraged the mistaken belief that it could continue. Clearly, Blüher's writings were designed to foil any such continuation.
22. *Die Erhebung Israels gegen die christlichen Güter* (Hamburg/Berlin: Hanseatsiche Verlaganstalt, 1931), p. 126. See opposite of p. 200, showing pictures of Gundolf "in German form" and "in Jewish form."
23. Hans Blüher, *Secessio Judaica*, p. 55.
24. This theme did not only appear in *Secessio Judaica*. In his *Deutsches Reich. Judentum und Sozialismus Eine Rede an die Freideutsche Jugend* (Berlin: Anthropos-Verlag, 1920), p. 20 he declared: "In Zionism the Jew attempts the spring back from race to Volk: It is a movement of absolute historical greatness. . . ." A Volk could not realize its being without a state.
25. Theodor Lessing, *Der jüdische Selbsthass* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1930), p. 50.
26. For Achad Ha'am imitation was not in itself a negative element; indeed it was both a necessary and healthy social force. It was only when it degenerated into "self-effacement" and where one's own natural and creative inclinations became repressed, that assimilation occurred. On this and how it fits into Achad Ha'am's broader system see Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Achad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), especially p. 79.
27. I thank Ezra Mendelsohn for drawing my attention to this. See Marc A. Weiner, *Richard Wagner and the Anti-Semitic Imagination* (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), who quotes Gustav Mahler on this subject: "No doubt with Mime, Wagner intended to ridicule the Jews (with all their characteristic traits—petty intelligence and greed—the jargon is textually and musically so cleverly suggested," p. 143). Weiner's work analyzes this in detail but see too especially p. 278. Theodor Adorno, Paul Lawrence Rose tells us, called Mime

"a ghetto Jew." Rose describes Mime as "misshapen, hunch-backed and bleary eyed, slinking, shuffling and blinking." See Rose's *Wagner: Race and Revolution* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 71. The literature on this question is enormous and cannot be comprehensively listed here. Suffice it to say that there are those who dismiss this reading entirely and who deny that Wagner's Mime and other purported "Jewish" characters are intended to be Jewish at all, precisely because Wagner explicitly (and for quite horrible reasons) held in *Judaism and Music* that Jews should not be represented on the stage, "for a race whose general appearance we cannot consider suitable for aesthetic purposes is by the same token incapable of any artistic presentation of its nature." Wagner went so far as to say that in presenting Mime, there "must be nothing approaching caricature." See Bryan Magee, *The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000), pp. 343–880, but especially pp. 375–378.

28. For a translation of the relevant passages (originally published in the *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie*), see Frederic V. Grunfeld, *Prophets without Honour: A Background to Freud, Kafka, Einstein and Their World* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), pp. 58–59.
29. See Joseph Goebbels, "Mimicry," in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel* (Munich: Zentrlaverlag der NSDAP, 1941), pp. 526–531. The article appeared first in *Das Reich*, 20 July 1941 and included phrases such as these: "Just as the fist of an awakened Germany has struck this racial filth, the fist of an awakened Europe will surely follow. Mimicry will not help the Jews then. They will have to face their accusers. The court of the nations will judge their oppressors. Without pity or forgiveness, the blow will strike. The world enemy will fall, and Europe will have peace."
30. My first "hit" under "Jewish mimicry" thus yielded a pernicious piece by Michael Rienzi, "Mimicry, Phenotype and 'Anti-Semitism'" on www.legioneuropa.org/Racediv/mimicry.htm
31. "On the problem of the actor," Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Book Five, 361, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), p. 317.
32. Indeed, "Judaization" was regarded as an all-pervasive quality encompassing the economy, the polity, culture, and even the psyche. See "'The Jew Within:' The Myth of 'Judaization' in Germany," in my *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).
33. See London, *Theatre Under the Nazis*, p. 3, p. 40, note 6.
34. Rathenau's "Höre Israel" was published under the anagramic pseudonym W. Hartenau in *Die Zukunft* 18 (6 March 1897). It is partially translated in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, ed., Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 231–233. In fairness, it should be noted that Rathenau later removed the essay from public view. A useful analysis of Rathenau's complexity is to be found in James Joll, "The Contradictory Capitalist," *Times Literary Supplement* (25 August 1978).
35. See Michael Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), especially Chapter 7.
36. Kafka's diaries and letters enthuse over this encounter. Some critics, moreover, are convinced that Kafka's literary output was also substantively influenced by this experience. See, for instance, Evelyn Torton Beck, *Kafka and the Yiddish Theater: Its Impact on His Work* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971). On Döblin and Kerr see Brenner, *The Renaissance*, pp. 190–191.
37. See chapters 4, 5, 6, and 8 of Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers*.
38. Arnold Zweig, *Juden auf der Deutschen Bühne* (Leipzig: Der Heine-Bund, 1927), pp. 22–23. Zweig also claims here that the Jew was a natural actor not because he had many "I's" but because his self was so secure and self-evident.

39. Marline Otte, "Vom Circuszelt zum Revuepalast: Metamorphosen deutsch-jüdischer Identitaeten in der Unterhaltungskultur 1900–1933." The copy in my possession was sent to me by the author. See too her subsequent book, *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890–1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
40. For this incisive analysis see George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
41. "Performing High and Low: Jews in Modern Theater, Cabaret, Revue, and Film," in *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture 1890–1918,* ed., Emil Bilski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), especially pp. 212–213. This innovative bent, Jelavich notes, was "most prevalent in the most recent and least traditional realms: revue, cabaret, and film."
42. See Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), note 12, p. 98.
43. Ernst Bloch, "Die sogennante Judenfrage" (1963) in Bloch's *Literarische Aufsätze* (Frankfurt am Main, 1965), p. 553. Quoted in Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Jews Within German Culture" in *German-Jewish History*, edited by Michael A. Meyer, Vol. 4, *Renewal and Destruction 1918–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 192. Note 13 (p. 411).
44. For an elaboration of this theme see "German History and German Jewry: Junctions, Boundaries, and Interdependencies" in my *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).
45. Jeanette R. Malkin, "Transforming in Public: Jewish Actors on the German Expressionist Stage," in Jeanette R. Malkin and Freddie Rokem, eds., *Jews and the Making of Modern German Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010).
46. See Trebitsch's *Geist und Judentum: Eine grundlegende Untersuching* (Vienna: Strache, 1919). Theodor Lessing's work on Jewish self-hate, *Der jüdische Selbsthass*, has a chapter on Trebitsch. Louis Kaplan has also written a fascinating (though, I believe, as yet unpublished) paper, "The Secondary Moves: Arthur Trebitsch and 'Der Jüdische Witz.'"
47. An indispensable source on the Herrnfeld theater are the works by Peter Sprengel. See his *Scheunenviertel-Theater. Jüdische Schauspieltruppen und Jiddische Dramatik in Berlin (1900–1918)* (Berlin: Fannei & Walz Verlag, 1995) and, especially, Sprengel's *Populaeres Jüdisches Theater in Berlin von 1877 bis 1933* (Berlin: Haude & Spener, 1997). Both volumes are lavishly illustrated.
48. It should be pointed out that this theater also fitted into a broader kind of prevalent *Volks* or *Dialekt-Theater* in which different regional and national groups could see and hear themselves represented. (Donat would thus most often play the Jewish role and Anton a clearly identifiable Bohemian one!) Through these performances, such theatre provided outsider national, ethnic, and linguistic groups with a means of both integrating into the wider society, as well as identity-maintenance and expression.
49. Quoted in Sprengel, *Scheunenviertel-Theater,* p. 29.
50. Quoted in Brenner, *The Renaissance . . . ,* p. 191.
51. Sprengel, *Populaeres Jüdisches Theater,* pp. 7–9.
52. Ibid., pp. 69–72.
53. That it was seen as provocative should not surprise us. We should not view matters anachronistically and acontextually. A long line of American ethno-Jewish comics—Lenny Bruce, Mel Brooks, Jacky Mason, Woody Allen—has perhaps inured us to the daring, taboo-breaking nature of this enterprise. Yet, we should remember that even in the more open, heterogeneous United States, the explicit nature of ethno-comic Jewishness only emerged in the 1960s. Both before and after World War II, the likes of Milton Berle, Danny Kaye, Sid Caesar kept their

Jewishness well away from their comedy. I thank Ezra Mendelsohn for sharing some of these insights with me.

54. See Flaneur, "Die antisemitische Gebrüder Herrnfeld," *Die Standarte* 2 (no. 44, 13 August 1908), p.1391–1393. This article also claims that the brothers were converts to Christianity. Gershom Scholem (see below) similarly states that they were baptized, but there is no mention of this in Sprengel, who adds that Donat Herrnfeld was buried in 1916 in the Jewish cemetery at Weisensee.
55. Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth* (New York: Schocken, 1980), translated from the German by Harry Zohn, pp. 15–16. In her *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment*, Marline Otte notes that the conspicuously ethnic Herrnfeld theater signified a newly found Jewish self-confidence within the Reich. This is no doubt correct, but she ignores the ongoing ironies and inner tensions that came with it and she does not cite counter-evidence that points to continuing anxieties. Scholem's father was by no means the only person who believed that the Herrnfelds "promoted anti-Semitism." Otte repeatedly asserts, without sufficient substantiation, that the theater constituted a common "bourgeois" space shared and enjoyed by Jew and non-Jew alike. She should at least have noted the claim by contemporary liberals that the audience of the Herrnfeld theater consisted not of the friendly non-Jewish bourgeoisie but nationalist bigots and anti-Semites, who came to see their worst prejudices about Jewish immorality and comportment confirmed. Even here the evidence is not clear. There is no mention at all of these dubious circles in Scholem's report that such comedies were performed "before an entirely Jewish public—the only audience able to appreciate the idiom and intonation of these plays."
56. On this problem see the chapter "Hermann Levi: A Study in Service and Self-Hatred," in Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews . . .*, pp. 209–210. The theatre was often the site of such self-satire. Gay raises the case of the caricature (part of a series entitled "Poems and Jokes in Jewish Dialect" brought out by the Berlin Jewish publisher, Eduard Bloch), in which the grossly stereotypical Jewish Mendel Silberstein, attending an opulent theater and surrounded by an appalled respectable Aryan public, shouts at his son, who is falling precipitously into the orchestra from the top balcony: "Jacob don't lose me the watch!"
57. See, again, Sprengel, *Scheunenviertel*, p.122, and Sprengel, *Populaeres*, p. 71.
58. For an illuminating analysis (with rather different emphases) of the subtleties, subversions, and manifold functions of Jewish humor in the Hungarian context, see Mary Gluck, "Jewish Humor and Popular Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Budapest," *Austrian History Yearbook,* Vol. 39, 2008, pp. 1–21.
59. They are, for instance, not mentioned in either Elizabeth Frenzel, *Judengestalten,* or Wilhelm Stoffers, *Juden und Ghetto.*
60. Arnold Zweig, *Juden auf der deutschen Bühne* (Leipzig: Der Heine-Bund, 1927).
61. Marline Otte's *Jewish Identities*, misses this aspect of the Herrnfeld's project. See my review of her book in the *Times Literary Supplement* (23 February 2007).

15 Between Rights, Respectability, and Resistance: Reframing the German-Jewish Experience

1. This Festive Centenary Lecture was delivered on December 21, 2006 at the Institute for Jewish Studies, in Heidelberg, Germany.
2. For a discussion of the changing ways in which Riesser and other Jewish figures who fought for Jewish emancipation were represented in Jewish memory under the impact of Nazism, see Guy Miron, "The Emancipation 'Pantheon of Heroes' in the German-Jewish Public Memory in the 1930s," *German History* Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 476–504. See especially pp. 498–500. For a superb analysis of the logic of

eman cipation and its unfolding see Reinhard Rürup, "Das Ende der Emanzipation: Die antijüdische Politik in Deutschland von der 'Machtegreifung' bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg," in Arnold Paucker, ed., *Die Juden im Nationalsozialistichen Deutschland* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), pp. 97–114.

3. Gabriel Riesser, "Über die Stellung der Bekenner des Mosaischen Glaubens in Deutschland," in Riesser, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig, 1867–1868), Vol. 2, p. 54. Quoted and translated in Edward Timms, "The Pernicious Rift: Metternich and the Debate about Jewish Emancipation at the Congress of Vienna," in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook,* 2001, vol. 46, p. 7. (online at http://www.archive.org/details/gabrielriessers03riesgoog)
4. To be sure, there were major differences between the two organs. In the opening issue (April 1916), Buber remarked that while Riesser's 1832 journal was devoted to matters of religious freedom and freedom of conscience and was aimed at the individual, his journal did not conceive of Jews as a confessional faith but rather as a living organism, as a *Volkstum*. Still, he consciously named his journal after Riesser's and the typography of the journal's title page was explicitly a modernized variation of Riesser's Logos. See Eleonore Lappin, *Der Jude 1916–1928. Jüdische Moderne zwischen Universalismus und Partikularismus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 2000), pp. 4–6.
5. Gabriel Riesser, *Einige Worte über Lessings Denkmal; an die Israeliten Deutschlands gerichtet* (Frankfurt am Main: Druck von Stockmar & Wagner, 1838) as quoted in David Sorkin, "Jews, the Enlightenment and Religious Toleration—Some Reflections," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 37 (London, 1992), p. 4.
6. See David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry 1780–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 144–146.
7. This appeared in the introduction to Laube's drama *Struensee* and is quoted in Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 184.
8. The classical statement of this conjunction is George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
9. For this quote see Dagmar Herzog, "Telling Ethnic and Gender History Together: A Comment," in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XLVI (London, 2001), p. 153.
10. Sorkin, *The Transformation*, p. 146.
11. See Steven M. Lowenstein, "The 1840s and the Creation of the German-Jewish Religious Reform Movement," in Werner E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker, Reinhard Rürup, eds., *Revolution and Evolution 1848 in German-Jewish History* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), p. 263.
12. See Michael A. Meyer's, "A Comment" in Mosse, Paucker, and Rürup, *Revolution and Evolution,* p. 332.
13. Quoted in Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A History of Jews in Germany, 1743–1933* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002), p. 177.
14. See Deborah Hertz, "The Lives, Loves, and Novels of August and Fanny Lewald, the Converted Cousins from Königsberg," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XLVI (London, 2001), p. 111.
15. See Uriel Tal's "German-Jewish Social Thought," Mosse, Paucker, and Rürup, *Revolution and Evolution,* for the most nuanced and contextualized discussion of Riesser in this regard, pp. 303ff. The quotes of this paragraph all come from this piece.
16. See George L. Mosse's extremely insightful piece, "Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung* and Respectability," in Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1985), pp. 1–16.
17. See, again, George Mosse, *German Jews beyond Judaism*.

18. On this theme, see my "'The Jew Within:' The Myth of 'Judaization' in Germany," in Reinharz and Schatzberg, *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, pp. 212–241.
19. Anton Rée, *Die Sprachverhältnisse der heutigen Juden im Interesse der Gegenwart und mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Volkserziehung* (Hamburg: Verlag von H. Gobert, 1844), p. 40.
20. See my *Brothers and Strangers: The East European in German and German-Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; paperback edition, 1999).
21. Ibid., p. 10 for an attempt to contextualize Rée within this wider constellation.
22. This was the spirit of much of the communal action of German Jewry. These actual words have been attributed to Ludwig Holländer, director of the *Centralverein*. See Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans: Masters and Victims in Modernist Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 183.
23. Benjamin to Florens Christian Rang, 18 November 1923, Letter 122 in *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin 1910–1940*, eds., Gershom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, trans. Manfred R. and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), pp. 214–217.
24. For an elaboration of this theme, see Chapter 2, "German Jews Beyond *Bildung* and Liberalism: The Radical Jewish Revival in the Weimar Republic," in my *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: NYU Press, 1996).
25. See Klemperer, Entry for May 26, 1925, *Leben sammeln, nicht fragen wozu und warum* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1966), ed., Walter Nowojski with the assistance of Christian Löser, Vol. 2, p. 61.
26. Ibid. Entry for 18 December 1921, p. 537.
27. Ibid. Entry for 20 September 1922, p. 620.
28. See Shulamit Volkov, Chapter 10, "Paradoxes of Becoming Alike," in her *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 202–223. The quote appears on p. 210.
29. See the entry for 24 October 1911, *The Diaries, 1910–1913*, ed., Max Brod (New York: Schocken, 1965), p. 111.
30. Peter Gay, Chapter 3, "The Berlin-Jewish Spirit: A Dogma in Search of Some Doubts" in Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans*, pp. 176–177.
31. Entry for March 13, 1925, Klemperer, *Leben sammeln*, p.17.
32. "On Being a Jewish Person," in Rosenzweig, *Franz Rosenzweig*, ed., Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1962), p. 216.
33. This story is recounted by Eric Kahler in "What Are the Jews?" in his *The Jews Among the Nations* (New York: Ungar, 1967), p. 6.
34. Paul Breines, "The Jew as Revolutionary: The Case of Gustav Landauer," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 12* (London, 1967), p. 76. Breines refers to an interview with Scholem in Madison, Wisconsin, April 1976.
35. The phrase is Peter Gay's in his essay "Hermann Levi: A Study in Service and Self-Hatred," in Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans*, p. 213.
36. Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, translated by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 80–81.
37. Ibid., p. 112.
38. See Walter Hartenau (pseudonym for Walter Rathenau), "Höre Israel," *Zukunft* 18 (March 16, 1897), pp. 454–462.
39. See Marline Otte, *Jewish Identities in German Popular Entertainment, 1890–1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and Chapter 14 of the present volume.

Index