AESTHETICS OF RENEWAL

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UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO AND LONDON

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The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 60637
The University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London

Printed in the United States of America

17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 1 2 3 4 5

ISBN-13: 978-0-226-84270-7 (cloth)
ISBN-10: 0-226-84270-3 (cloth)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Urban, Martina.
Aesthetics of renewal : Martin Buber's early representation of Hasidism as kulturkritik / Martina Urban.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-0-226-84270-7 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 0-226-84270-3 (cloth : alk. paper) 1. Hasidism. 2. Buber, Martin, 1878–1965. 3. Spiritual life—Judaism. 4. Anthologies. 5. Zionism. I. Title.
BM198.2 .U73 2008
296.8'332—dc22

2007052246

♾ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Earlier versions of chapters 2, 3, and 4 and parts of chapter 5 of this book appeared as "The Jewish Library Reconfigured: Buber and the Zionist Anthology Discourse," in Michael Zank, ed., *New Perspectives on Martin Buber* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 31–60. Parts of chapter 7 appeared as "Mysticism and *Sprachkritik*: Buber's Rendering of the Mystical Metaphor *'ahizat 'enayim*," in Vila-Chã, João J., ed., *Entre Razão e Revelação: A Lógica da Dimensão Semítica na Filosofia/Between Reason and Revelation: The 'Logic' of the Semitic Dimension in Philosophy*, in *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 62, Nos. 2–4 (Abril-Decembro 2006): 535-552, and an earlier version of chapter 8 appeared as "Hermeneutics of Renewal: Biblical Imagery and Tropes of Ecstatic Experience in Buber's Early Interpretation of Hasidism," in *Studies in Spirituality* 15 (2005): 1–33. I thank the publishers and editors of these books and journals for granting me permission to reprint this material.

I wish to express my gratitude to those who offered guidance, assistance, counsel, and support in preparing this manuscript for publication. Above all, I wish to thank Paul Mendes-Flohr. The original doctoral dissertation, out of which this book has emerged, was written under his supervision. He has for many years accompanied and greatly contributed to my intellectual growth in Jewish Intellectual History. He has been a critical interlocutor in the Buberian sense, and made insightful comments on various drafts of this book. I owe a profound debt of gratitude to him.

Another important teacher to whom I am very grateful is Rachel Elior. As a second advisor of the original dissertation thesis, she has been very

supportive throughout the past years. Her works on Eastern European Hasidism, with which she generously furnished me, were an important source for understanding this movement's genesis and ideational and cultural significance. Special thanks are due to Avraham Shapira, Menachem Brinker, and Barbara Schäfer, whose insighful comments at the early stages of this project prompted me to sharpen my argument. I wish to thank Peter Schäfer, then director of the Institut für Judaistik in Berlin. He employed me, a former M.A. student at the Institut, as a Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin to establish the Arbeitsstelle Buber-Werkausgabe. This task afforded me with an opportunity to take on this book project and to reevaluate the research on the early Buber.

I wish to acknowledge Michael Zank, who organized in the summer of 2003 an international conference on Martin Buber at the Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe Universität in Frankfurt am Main, and who made valuable editorial suggestions of how to reorganize my paper for publication in the conference volume. I am also indebted to the assistance I have received from archivists. I am grateful to the director of the Martin Buber-Archive at the Jewish National and University Library Jerusalem, Margot Cohn, who granted me access to Buber's extant collection of Hasidica and did not tire from offering her assistance. Rivka Plesser has also been very helpful whenever material was needed. I owe thanks to the director of the Manuscript Division, Rafael Weiser, who provided me with duplicates of rare books related to my research on Buber's Hasidic sources. I wish to express my gratitude to Avner Holtzman, the director of the M. J. Berdichevsky Archive in Holon, Israel, for his hospitality during my visit of the archive. There are many more scholars whom I hold in high esteem and whose scholarship greatly enriched my own, but I cannot possibly name them all. I greatly benefited from the courses on Jewish mysticism taught by Joseph Dan at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and later at the Institut für Judaistik in Berlin.

I wish to thank many people at Vanderbilt University, the institution which hired me as soon as the last drop of ink had dried on my original thesis. At Vanderbilt I found a new academic home, a stimulating interdisciplinary setting, and a supportive environment. It is at Vanderbilt that I could finally combine my interests and knowledge with the role of an educator. It is through teaching and the interactive classroom experience that I gained a new perspective on the meaning of writing. I thank the first two directors of the new Jewish Studies Program, Jack Sasson and David Wasserstein, and the chair of the Department of Religious Studies, Volney Gay, for their support of my work. I wish to extend my warmest gratitude to Lenn E. Goodman and Idit Dobbs-Weinstein for their support.

I am most obliged to those, including the anonymous readers who reviewed the manuscript for the Press, who made valuable suggestions on how to reorganize the manuscript and transform a doctoral dissertation into a book. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the editorial staff of the Press, who had a not insignificant share in the publication of this book, among them Laura Avey, editorial assistant, Richard Allen, copyeditor, Katherine M. Frentzel, manuscript editor, and the promotions manager, Robert Hunt.

Last but not least I wish to thank the executive editor of the University of Chicago Press, David Brent, for his unflagging support of this book and sharing my hope that it will renew interest in the work of Martin Buber in the United States and beyond and to keep his rich intellectual legacy alive.

ABBREVIATIONS

Works frequently cited in the text are abbreviated as follows:

F	*The Legend of the Baal-Shem,* trans. Maurice Friedman
L	*Die Legende des Baalschem*

INTRODUCTION

Any new treatment of the work of Martin Buber (1878–1965) on Hasidism has to take into consideration the debate that arose in the wake of Gershom Scholem's critical reexamination of the premises underlying Buber's interpretation of Hasidism. "The theoretical literature," Buber held, "is the gloss, the legend is the text, and in spite of the fact that it is a legend which has been handed down in an extreme state of corruption, and which it is impossible to recover in its purity, it would be foolish to object that [the] legend cannot transmit the reality of Hasidic life."[1] Objecting to this, Scholem argued that what Buber claimed to be the "essence" of Hasidism was not central to the intellectual landscape of the movement. Rather, in Scholem's view the theoretical literature, with its theosophical, mystical doctrines, constituted the spiritual basis of Hasidism. But Buber had an agenda that was different from that of the historian of Jewish mysticism. The Hasidic legend, he explained, is a category of meaning anchored in transformative religious values or qualities, and as such it promotes an ethos of action. The historical-philological method, he contended, brackets off questions of meaning.[2] From this perspective, the theosophical doctrines related in the theoretical writings of Hasidism could indeed be regarded as the intellectual domain of a small elite.

Starting in the 1960s, the Scholem-Buber controversy, which was a debate both on scholarly method and on Jewish identity, became one of the fundamental controversies in Jewish studies.[3] During his lifetime, Scholem's criticism, reiterated by his disciple Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer,[4] remained virtually unchallenged. After Scholem's death in 1982 his scholarly legacy, and his own motives for studying Jewish mysticism, gradually came to be reconsidered.[5] From the mid-1980s, scholars from various academic disciplines introduced new perspectives into the ongoing debate.[6]

Following Scholem, Buber's critics claim that his selective approach to Hasidism was at the expense of an accurate presentation of Hasidic mysticism. Another objection was that he made no effort to present Hasidism as a historical phenomenon. According to Schatz-Uffenheimer, Buber subjected Hasidism to positions determined a priori in order to render it meaningful to modern man. Centralizing the "meeting" between man and God, Buber emphasized the relationship of the Hasid to the concrete world, which Hasidism, in fact, negated. Further, she held, in purging Hasidism of its Gnostic elements adopted from kabbalistic theosophy, Buber occluded its relationship to the medieval Kabbalah, de-emphasized its grounding in the normative framework of Judaism, and failed to grasp the phenomenological significance of the interrelationship in it of magic, theurgy, and mysticism.

These charges are on the whole correct.[7] However, in his two earliest anthologies of Hasidic lore, particularly *Die Legende des Baalschem* (1908, hereafter, *Legende*),[8] and specifically in this volume's introductory essay entitled "Das Leben der Chassidim," Buber does in fact also draw upon the theoretical literature of Hasidism to delineate poetically and imagistically a phenomenology of Hasidic ecstatic mysticism.[9]

When Buber embarked on his study of Hasidism at the beginning of the twentieth century, only a few scholarly monographs on the movement were available.[10] But the heart of the matter is that Buber had no scholarly interest in Hasidism, as he admitted in 1943 to the bewildered and despairing Scholem.[11] Steven Kepnes avers that Buber and Scholem have two different goals, namely, reclaiming the founding vitality as opposed to recovering the past 'as it really was.' The question arises for Kepnes and Levenson, whether understanding attained through interpretation and understanding attained by way of explanation (based on the historical-philological method) are self-sufficient.[12]

Although offering a resolution to this seemingly intractable controversy would be beyond the scope of this book, I will seek to historicize the debate through a close textual analysis of select sections of Buber's *Legende* and the writings of the early Buber.[13] This will allow me to revisit and clarify the underlying hermeneutical and aesthetic issues. My intention is not to defend Buber against his critics. Rather, I wish to consider the variety of issues bearing on his hermeneutical task of mediating to the Jewish reader the nature and cultural significance of religious experience in Hasidism as it bears on aesthetics and thus on a Jewish modernism. Buber entered a much broader discourse than that of the academy. While the criticism of Scholem and his school is generally accepted by Buber scholars, the consequences drawn from it are not. An early example for those who hope to achieve a more balanced and holistic view of Buber is the sociologist Shmuel N.

Eisenstadt. Although he agrees with many of the points of Buber's critics, he claims "that most of these criticisms missed the point, because they misunderstood Buber's basic approach."[14] Indeed, the ahistorical representation of the movement was an integral part of Buber's hermeneutic program. It was also a result of his existential view, focused, as Avraham Shapira has illustrated, on the representation of spiritual structures.[15] Recently, scholars such as Seth Brody have begun to probe an alternative reading of Hasidic spirituality with the declared objective of taking neither side of the dispute but rather of focusing on the object of examination, that is, the study of (early) Hasidic practice.[16] Shaul Magid has expressed an opinion shared by an increasing number of scholars: "Martin Buber's intuition about Hasidism, setting aside his use of that intuition to push his own philosophical agenda, has more merit than is often thought in light of Gershom Scholem's critique."[17] Steven T. Katz has come to a similar assessment: "For all the subjectivity of Buber's editing, . . . he, not Scholem, may have come closer to understanding the real secret of Hasidism as lived experience."[18] In this spirit of reevaluation, a new generation of scholars has emerged to offer a fresh look at Buber's legacy, examining philosophical, cultural, and hermeneutical issues in Buber's thought.[19]

Although Buber often spoke of a "Jewish Renaissance" as an overall program for the revival of Jewish culture and knowledge, his primary concern was to perpetuate what he called a "Jewish renewal." Renewal implied in this context a reevaluation of Jewish spiritual sensibilities and intellectual orientations conjoined with a fundamental renewal of the individual. The objective so defined earned him the reputation of being an "edifying philosopher" who, in marked contrast to a systematic philosopher, intends to overcome "conventional ways of thinking" and "to liberate readers from the alienating conditions of life and thought and educate them to alternative forms."[20] I would propose to apply these features to Buber's quest for a self-determined Jewish modernism between continuity and innovation.

As the main medium of cultural memory and constructions of identity, literature was seminal in accomplishing this objective. It was for Buber the most important medium for refuting Richard Wagner's accusation that the Jews lacked poetic genius. Through literature Buber set out to demonstrate the nature of an aesthetics that would be best suited to facilitate the renaissance. It may be noted in passing that the discourse on a Jewish modernism is not unproblematic. Charged with antisemitic rhetoric and a scathing antimodernism, "Jewish modernism" was identified by many members of the German cultural elite as a "problem" and indivisibly linked to the 'Jewish question.' Therefore, as Scott Spector remarks, to "think of

'Jewish modernism' in a topical way, as though there were a specific corpus or prescriptive formal definition captured by the term, seems futile at best (if not ominous)."[21] By presenting the Jewish Renaissance as a distinct form of modernism, as a feature of the Jewish Modern, Buber sought to challenge such rhetoric.

In a recent contribution to the existential and cultural meaning of aesthetic experience, Martin Seel provides a perspective by which we might adjudge Buber's modernism.[22] Following Kant, he notes that aesthetic judgments are an account not of an object's appearance (*Erscheinung*) but of the process of the object's appearing (*Erscheinen*). "Aesthetic perception is attentiveness to this appearing" (4), and as such it focuses on objects—visual and textual—as they appear to one's senses in the here and now. It is this attentiveness to the "immediate presence" of an object that distinguishes the aesthetic act from conceptual and propositional knowledge.[23] Further, taking his cue from Paul Valéry, Seel argues that the aesthetic act is attuned to the indeterminable and ephemeral dimension of an object. Hence, it "uncovers a dimension of reality that evades epistemic fixation but is nonetheless an aspect of knowable reality" (17). The aesthetic act is what Alexander G. Baumgarten called *cognitio sensitiva*, the knowledge of the particular in its particularity, which is beyond the ken of any science.[24] Buber's approach to presenting and representing Hasidic teachings supports Seel's thesis regarding the relation between "appearing" and the aesthetic imagination as an affirmation of both uniqueness and presence. Moreover, noting that an emphasis on presence was emblematic of modernism, Zachary Braiterman identifies Buber's early aesthetics with *Jugendstil* and its anti-historicism. Braiterman analyzes Buber's transition to German Expressionism and its quest to render the invisible or the spiritual manifest through the temporal prism of the present. The eternal is revealed in an experience of the present, unbound by the flow of time.[25] Nonetheless, viewing Buber's aesthetics from the perspective of Expressionism alone obscures the broader hermeneutical significance of his work on Hasidism.

Upon giving Buber's representation a fresh look, another perspective commends itself. It can be convincingly argued that Hasidism helped Buber to realize two objectives: to foster a model for the new or rather renewed Jewish consciousness envisioned by cultural Zionism, also referred to as spiritual Zionism, and, concomitantly, to function as a prism for a *Kulturkritik*. Buber's cultural critique coalesces critiques of modernity, aesthetic theories, and the creation of a distinctive Jewish modernism. At the turn of the twentieth century *Kulturkritik* was expressed in basic trenchant dichotomies, most prominently culture-civilization, myth-history, and community-society. Through

an original though not unproblematic interpretive translation Buber taps into a plethora of debates at the fin-de-siècle, broaching issues pertaining to the critique of language, historicism, Orientalism, Jewish aniconism, aesthetic representation, the 'essence of religion,'[26] and ecstasy vs. asceticism, to name but a few. But beyond these time-bound debates and controversies he also anticipates trends that would come to full maturity only decades later. Among those trends are cultural memory, intertextuality, and reader-reception theory. Yet Buber's critique of culture was also indivisibly linked to the problem of representation. The nature of Buber's representation, as will be demonstrated, is decidedly non-mimetic—at least when mimesis is identified with imitation, as in early German Romanticism. Representation functions for Buber not just as a presentation of what is no longer present but also as a means to open up a horizon of the future.

Although I propose to read Buber as both a critic of modern culture and an advocate of Jewish modernism, it would be an overstatement were one to argue that he hoped to facilitate in his representation of Hasidism a critical debate on political or social issues in the spirit of the later Frankfurt School. Critique of culture does not equate here with cultural criticism. Nor is Buber's *Kulturkritik*, given its social anarchist bent, to be equated with the antimodernism distinctive of the culture criticism of the turn-of-the-century Vienna as exemplified by Otto Weininger and Karl Kraus. While he rejected their cultural pessimism, Buber cast his critical gaze on the dialectic between aesthetic and interpersonal values. As the editor of a series of forty monographs, *Die Gesellschaft*, published between 1906 and 1912 and authored by some of the leading intellectuals of the day, Buber was committed to presenting a whole gamut of socio-psychological theories of modernity, including theoretical approaches to modern phenomena such as "the newspaper" (Jakob J. David, 1907) and "the department store" (Paul Goehre, 1907). During the period of his editorship he published in *Die Gesellschaft* two volumes of immediate significance to his project of representation, Georg Simmel's *Die Religion* (1906) and Fritz Mauthner's *Die Sprache* (1907), as well as his first two anthologies of Hasidic lore. Mauthner's delineation of the epistemological limitations of both ordinary and poetic language would be seminal for Buber's own critique of language, which he elaborated through his phenomenological reflections on the ecstatic speech of the Hasidic masters. Language and speech were, from early on, central philosophical themes for Buber and of broader cultural significance. In his search for an author to write on the related theme "the conversation" for *Die Gesellschaft*, Buber hoped, in vain, to win over Samuel Lublinski (d. 1911), a social philosopher and literary critic involved in Zionist affairs.[27]

Given Buber's exploration of a wide range of cultural-philosophical issues, including religion, it was obvious that Georg Simmel's sociology of culture and his social theory of modernity would be seminal to a vision of cultural revitalization. Simmel's analytic distinction between religiosity and religion—that is, between subjective feeling and social form—informs Buber's thought and encourages him to isolate conceptually and epistemically the primal spiritual moment of Judaism from its normative structure. Buber also shared Simmel's aesthetic interest in literary and artistic modernism. Hailed today as the first sociologist of modernity,[28] Simmel explored the role of culture in fostering the inner, spiritual life of the individual as a member of modern society. In light of the transient nature of experience in an urban environment, the correspondence between the meaning structures of one's lived life and culture is, as Simmel acknowledged, increasingly threatened. From here it was but a short step for Buber to define renewal as a process that depends on a culture's capacity to cultivate the interaction between inner life experience and external "cultural forms." As early as 1900, Buber's reflections on an envisioned "Neue Gemeinschaft" (new community) were permeated with key concepts of Simmel's social theory. Simmel was interested in the processes leading to "perfection toward unity" (*Vervollkommnung zur Einheit*), insisting that cultural unity was to be conceived as an interactive and dynamic harmonization of plurality. Similarly, for Buber's aesthetics of representation, the reintegration of fragments of experience into a unity, that is, the concept of culture as "unity as interaction,"[29] constituted the inner reality of Hasidism.

It will be part of my argument to show the relevance of form, another sociological category borrowed from Simmel, in Buber's early thought. Buber's predilection for the formless led indeed to a very ambivalent view of form, but it would be amiss to regard this as an absolute and principled opposition to form. To be sure, as Shmuel Eisenstadt has observed, Simmel understood the essence of modernity to be a progressive process entailing "the dissolution of primordial elements" and the attendant loss of an "internal center."[30] Yet in spite of the role Buber assigned to "primordial elements," such as community and ethnic bonds, for the creation of social cohesion, it was Simmel's quest for a concept of modernity to account for the abiding metaphysical dimensions of culture that appealed to him. Further, in linking the philosophical question of individuation with a new conception of personality, Simmel posited the individual's creative self-realization as a preliminary step toward self-affirmation. This was a valuable insight for a people whom Buber regarded "most in need of regeneration."

Hitherto Buber research has treated interpretation (hermeneutics) and representation (aesthetics) as two discrete, mutually independent features of his work. Investigating how these aspects inform one another could shed new light on Buber's conceptual considerations and cultural objectives. The philosopher and scholar Ludwig Stein, a contemporary of Buber and hardly an expert of Jewish mysticism, extols Buber with respect to his representation of Hasidism as a "born aesthete": "To my knowledge, nobody prior to Buber has captured so profoundly and formulated so felicitously the essence of Jewish mysticism, such that even those minds oriented toward logic will take pleasure in this infinitely refined Judaism of feeling (*Gefühlsjudentum*). Buber's Neo-Hasidism is an artistic conception, a revitalizing and deepening of kabbalistic feeling, which will carry away every connoisseur and aesthetically elevate him."[31] While Buber's concern for the aesthetic has been widely acknowledged by scholars in the field, though not sufficiently explored, his hermeneutical objectives tend to be overlooked. A close textual analysis of Buber's rendition of the Hasidic sources in "Das Leben der Chassidim," the centerpiece of his *Legende*, suggests that his representation of Hasidic ecstatic mysticism integrated aesthetic experience and a new experience of reading. By representing Hasidic literature through a poetic evocation of its inner meaning and by treating reading as a self-reflective activity, Buber was able to dovetail recontextualization and *Kulturkritik* in *Legende*. I will argue that only by a cross-reading of this text with his early Zionist writings can one fully decode *Legende* in all its multifarious meaning. Of far-reaching significance is the fact that, for purposes of representation, Buber used the anthology. He wanted to showcase the artistic cultural achievements of the Hasidic masters and make available their transtemporal, universal meaning, and in doing so to accord Hasidism a status akin to that enjoyed by Buddhism in the Western world today.

Because simply reducing Hasidism to pietism would compromise its cultural significance, Buber wedded his poetic phenomenological description of ecstatic mysticism and its quest for spiritual unity with contemporary philosophical issues and debates. These debates challenge us to rethink the relationship between culture, peoplehood, and religion. In reading Hasidism through the prism of contemporary discourses, Buber's poetic mode of representation became an aesthetic complement to mystical spiritual contemplation: he intended it to foster a transformation of consciousness. Hence, Buber's primary concern was not with the aesthetic apprehension of "something outer" but with the "psychic nexus" (Dilthey) of Hasidic ecstatic religiosity, determined as it is by the tension between the temporal and spatial. To capture effectively this tension between the purely temporal dimension

of the mystical experience and its epiphenomenal spatial manifestation and meaning for cultural life required the frame of mind of an artist, "who can advance" in Dilthey's words "our ability to interpret reality."[32]

While Buber changed his views on how best to render Hasidism meaningful to modern man as the century wore on—during World War One he had turned his back on the philosophy of life and renounced *Erlebnis*-mysticism—he continued to adhere to the anthological form of representation to promote his aesthetics of renewal. The phrase "aesthetics of renewal," used here as the descriptive token for Buber's cultural criticism, is not intended to suggest that he saw in aesthetics *the* foundation of life.[33] In the framework of the Jewish Renaissance, aesthetics is, as Asher Biemann most recently pointed out, to be distinguished from aestheticism or, for that matter, aestheticization.[34] Rather, aesthetics was for Buber a means to the higher goal of education. Under the banner of a Jewish Renaissance, aesthetic education was to be realized in tandem with the humanistic ideal of education in the sense of *Bildung,* which originated in Germany and became emblematic of its didactic tradition. In its emphasis on autonomous learning and perfection, *Bildung* offers a most comprehensive approach to personality and character formation. Hence Buber linked aesthetics, whether mystical or artistic, with action. Art, which is in Buber's early works a facet of the poetic and a medium for the *via contemplativa,* is but a preparatory stage to the *via activa*. And it is precisely for this reason that culture in its dialectical relation with social reality was already in Buber's early writings a central concept. Without a clear sense of the primary constituents of a Jewish culture, the attainment of the envisaged transformation of Jewish life would be unfeasible. In line with these deliberations, Buber sought a reading *practice* that would go beyond pleasure and aesthetic elevation. Therefore I use "aesthetics of renewal" as a comprehensive phrase to capture the two varied yet interlinked trajectories along which Buber's cultural vision unfolded.

Buber's cultural program, search for a new Jewish identity, and historical setting account for the difference between his approach to individual experience and that of William James. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (1902, German 1907),[35] a work that was central to the debates on religion on both sides of the Atlantic, James reinforced the tendency to regard the personal, spontaneous experience of the divine as the core of authentic religion. James sought to offer an unbiased investigation into the psychology of religion and its value for the mental health and stability of the individual, and he devoted an entire chapter to mysticism, emphasizing the feeling of unity. For James, genuine religious experience is the exclusive province of individuals, who "in their solitude . . .

apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."[36] These spiritual "geniuses" set the "patterns" that determine the religious conduct of the masses. James was oblivious to the fact that religious experience and meaning is in any of the world religions mediated by community, tradition, and normative religious practices, even doctrinal affirmations.[37] Evidence from Jewish mystical literature is, possibly due to a lack of English translations, missing in James's *Varieties*. Given his focus on the mystical condition, James bracketed the role of tradition, text, transmission, and interpretation. Therefore, James's psychological empiricism does not lend itself to a hermeneutic perspective. Buber, by contrast, tied his reevaluation of religious experience to a concept of culture grounded in religious faith that would demonstrate the significance of religiosity in its tradition-specific elements for cultural revitalization. Nonetheless, both James and Buber defended experience against philosophy.

Suffice it here to say that Buber, in spite of all the criticism leveled against his early work on Hasidism, was not interested in moving beyond Judaism as a religion toward a meta-religiosity. Though he "protested the stifling effect of forms and structures,"[38] what he endeavored to overcome was neither form nor religion but rather the imperious dictates of completed and fixed forms. Irrespective of his own alienation from ritual and religious ceremony, his enemy was not ritual per se but rather what appeared to him as religion saturated with ritualism. Buber's assessment that religion as the main component of Jewish social cohesion "has lost its power" called for revitalization grounded in religious tradition. He compared the one "who has lost God" to an orphan.[39]

With his first Hasidic anthologies Buber also addressed two audiences simultaneously—a general German and a German-Jewish readership. Adaptation seemed the necessary mode of representation. The distinction of Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni between diachronic and synchronic transmission may be helpful in gaining a perspective on the methodological issues attendant to Buber's early representation of Hasidism to these contrasting audiences and their respective sensibilities and prejudices.[40] In "cross-cultural synchronic transmission," the transmitter and the recipient do not share a common culture, as they do in diachronic transmission. Through the aesthetic mode of representation Buber adopted, he sought to address the challenge faced by synchronic transmission. He well realized that the "chain of tradition" or diachronic transmission had been broken. The modern acculturated Jew no longer shared the same cultural and symbolic landscape inhabited by traditional Judaism. To fill this vacuum and recreate a sense of Jewishness, Buber sought to reestablish a new mode of transmission based on

a distinctive conception of the spiritual substance of Judaism. With respect to the general German reader, Buber challenged the regnant view, or rather prejudice, which also left its impress on many contemporary Jews, that Judaism lacked spirituality. Addressing his own community, his portrayal of Hasidism was meant to indicate that Judaism was essentially in harmony with the prevailing cultural sensibilities of humanity at large and could significantly contribute to the new cultural movement. Buber was part of a larger effort of restructuring Jewish memory and reconstructing Jewish identity through the creation of new forms of culture in the Diaspora. By 1904, when his first Hasidic anthology, *Die Geschichten des Rabbi Nachman* (1906, hereafter, *Rabbi Nachman*) was published, modern Jewish culture in Germany had, in fact, entered into a phase of consolidation. *Rabbi Nachman* and *Legende* were considered contributions to these larger efforts to overcome assimilation in favor of acculturation.[41]

Towards the end of his life, Buber still felt obliged to clarify his approach to Hasidism and to distinguish it once more from that of the historian of religion.[42] Being a pedagogue of Jewish rebirth, he considered himself a "filter," distilling the "essence" of Hasidism as the source of regeneration.[43] Nonetheless, he deemed it necessary to preserve the existential *meaning* of Hasidic teachings: "I have dealt with that in the life and teaching of Judaism which, according to my insight, is its proper truth and is decisive for its function in the previous and future history of the human spirit."[44] To be sure, for the pre-dialogical Buber truth is not a definitive concept with an epistemic status to be ascertained by rational reflection. Rather, Judaism's cross-generational bond is "the truth of God's oneness."[45] In concurrence with German Romanticism, he regarded truth as something that can only be pointed to and expressed metaphorically. Taking their cue from the "empirical re-presentation of the world as experience in image,"[46] the Romantics maintained a separation between sign and referent. What matters in this process of apprehending truth is the self-reflection it engenders.

For many Western Jews, the centrality of the text and knowledge of Jewish traditional literature had become phenomena of the past. Due to his anti-historicist bent—which alongside decontextualization is held to be a feature of modernism—Buber had a rather ambivalent attitude toward the role and function of sacred texts when studied purely for the purpose of gaining knowledge. Given his aim of mediating Hasidism as an oral tradition pertinent to the inner life of the acculturated Western Jew, he treated the Hasidic oral teachings not as "texts" but rather as an open "discourse [provisionally] fixed by writing."[47] Whereas Western culture promotes a bourgeois model of renaissance anchored in a written culture and its rigid

positivistic standards, Buber presents Judaism through the prism of Hasidism as a dynamic oral culture. He considers the oral traditions he represents as "informal texts." By contrast to "formal texts" where every word carries defined meaning bestowing the original version with canonic authority, in informal texts meaning is protean and determined by the reader.[48] Indeed, the Hasidic masters derive their teachings from a select and often merely associative reading of the Hebrew Bible. Hence, reading these teachings means, even if in an indirect sense, re-reading and actualizing the word of the Torah. Moreover, Buber affirms, Hasidic teachings interpret a unique experience and illustrate how it generates a mode of existence. As Gerald L. Bruns argues, one should "think of mystical hermeneutics as a kind of appropriation, not of the sacred text but of the archive of interpretation which surrounds it. One's understanding of the text is not mediated by tradition; rather, one's understanding of tradition is mediated by one's experience of the text."[49] Such an understanding of the hermeneutic task well suits the challenge faced by Buber of transmitting texts to an audience for which the chain of a diachronic tradition had been broken.

In spite of his emphasis on the need to ground Judaism anew in the immediacy of lived experience, it was Buber's conviction that without a shared canon, which mediates a common vocabulary and set of values through ongoing reflection and interpretation, the German Jews could neither achieve a sense of unity nor regenerate themselves as a community and distinct, vital culture. According to Halbertal, the traditional "text-centeredness" of the Jews endowed them throughout their history with cultural and social cohesion. The text, however, had lost its unifying role with Jews' participation in the creation of the modern world.[50] This displacement of the text by culture, that is, in the case of German Jews, culture as the sphere of social integration, not only caused a profound religious crisis, as Halbertal argues, but also undermined the symbolic and cognitive universe that constituted Jewish self-understanding as a distinct social entity despite Jews' geographical and sociological diversity. From this perspective, the eclipse of a belief in God and in Israel as a people bound by a covenant to God is less of a threat to the continuity of the Jewish people than the loss of the understanding "of what text is, and how text functions in its midst," namely, as an authoritative source and reference for norms and values.[51] Further, Halbertal distinguishes the act of interpretation which dominates a text-centered community and "reflects and shapes a way of thinking with antisystematic tendencies" from conceptual modes of interpretation characteristic of analytical thought.[52] Buber acknowledges that the Jews, certainly those of the West, ceased to be a text-centered and, consequently, a hermeneutic

community. The source of the crisis lies in the failure of what he labels pejoratively "Talmudism." For Buber, rabbinic scholasticism did not occasion the kind of reflection that would mediate between the values of Judaism and those of humanity, i.e., European high culture. He faulted the rabbinic custodians of Jewish tradition for failing to nurture reflective inwardness. If we accept the evidence adduced recently by Shmuel Magid, Hasidism, in particular in its early stages, had indeed a decidedly anti-rabbinic outlook, which Buber adopted.[53]

In contrast to Shaul Y. Agnon (d. 1970), whom Halbertal refers to as "the last of the text-centered writers,"[54] Buber represented Hasidic teachings generally without any reference to the authoritative texts of Judaism, specifically the Hebrew Bible and Talmud. But this elision of the teaching's "intertextuality" does not annul the referential framework in his *Legende*, that is, the superstructure of commentary constitutive of the hermeneutic practice in Jewish tradition.[55] Certainly Buber's mode of appropriation does not advance an understanding of the actual process of diachronic transmission or the event of interpreting the Torah in Hasidism. His interpretive commentary on what he identifies as Hasidism's four cardinal devotional postures or qualities, namely *hitlahavut*, *'avodah*, *kawwanah*, and *shiflut,* is meant to evoke the spiritual aura of the experience of oneness, the mystical communion with God. Buber's ultimate objective was to transform the traditional text-centeredness of Jewish culture into the "rhythm-centeredness" of poetry, that is, a new reading practice centered as much in the rhythmic cadences of poetry, capturing in the Nietzschean spirit the dynamic, inner life force of culture.[56]

Paul Ricoeur's approach to the hermeneutics of religious texts may provide a novel perspective on some of the considerations guiding Buber's representation of Hasidic literature. In their Preface to *Thinking Biblically* (1998), Ricoeur and André LaCocque present Scripture as a distinctive mode of religious discourse, which is not "scientifically descriptive or explanatory, one that is not even apologetic, argumentative, or dogmatic, it is a world of discourse where the metaphorical language of poetry is the closest secular equivalent."[57] Grounded in Scripture and Oriental wisdom, figurative speech is "the most originary, hence most pretheological, level of religious discourse possible."[58] A similar reconsideration of symbolic language was attempted by Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945). In his philosophy of symbolic forms, Cassirer probes the epistemological value of religious experience. Mythos, the source of symbolic forms, is a mode of thinking which breaks with Western modes of knowledge; it describes a lived reality embedded in religious experience**.** In this milieu for reevaluation of both myth and

religious experience, Buber revisits myth as "the eternal function of the soul."[59] As a creative expression of the divine-human encounter, "symbol and adage" are "forms the unconditional creates within man's mind."[60] Myth translates the unique experience with "primary reality" and creates narratives that link individual reality with the community and its destiny. The revitalization of myth is Hasidism's lasting cultural achievement. He discerns in Hasidism a corrective to the malaise of relativism and a religious paradigm through which the question of meaning of Jewish existence can be addressed anew. In order to perpetuate for the recipient new patterns of interpretation, he also added terms distinctive to the German sociocultural context. This combination of the familiar and unfamiliar could neutralize habitual reading and accomplish a "de-automatization of one's relation to reality which becomes automatized through the constant use of the same code."[61]

Thus Buber encourages an interpretation in which the poetic quality of his text serves a function similar to the hermeneutical procedure proposed by Ricoeur. The latter suggests, with recourse to Hans-Georg Gadamer's theory of the "fusion of horizons," that the reader must not be understood as standing outside the text: "To understand is *to understand oneself in front of the text*. It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity of understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self."[62] In forging a synchronic transmission of Hasidic spirituality to a post-assimilatory Jewish audience at a time when the "dynamics of dissimilation" were fully setting in, [63] Buber's representation of Hasidism posits such a fusion of horizons. This approach of integrating aesthetics and hermeneutics was for Buber the ground for a spiritual *and* cultural renewal which he deemed to be an indispensable aspect of a Jewish modernism.

Buber pursues in his representation of Hasidic spirituality a kind of "pneumatic interpretation" which focuses on the spirit (*pneuma*) animating the ecstatic experience these devotional qualities engender. Although usually credited to Luther's interpretation of the Bible, the method of reading Scripture as a "pneumatic text"[64] was not the exclusive prerogative of Protestant Christianity. Moshe Idel identified such tendencies in the Kabbalah, in which man's soul is held to have a divine root and to bear the Divine Presence, which "authorizes the emergence of a pneumatic exegesis."[65] According to Idel, Hasidism sought a "'re-newed,' or better, really new hermeneutics."[66] Michael Fishbane notes with respect to kabbalistic hermeneutics, "revelation will now not have to cross an ontological abyss between God and man-world; it can return repeatedly in the very soul of man."[67] As an heir of the Kabbalah, Hasidism grafted its innovative ideas onto biblical verses,

employing a mystical hermeneutics alongside midrashic interpretation, in which the text of the Torah serves as a pneumatic source of inspiration. But in contrast to the Kabbalah, transmission in Hasidism testifies to an essentially incommunicable mystical experience rather than to the dissemination of secret knowledge. In the view of Isaiah Tishby and Joseph Dan, "Hasidism is a teaching of religious renewal [based on established ideas], and not a renewed religious teaching."[68]

Buber's aesthetics of renewal reflects these hermeneutic deliberations. His perception of the problems of interpretation changed through the decades of his literary activity, as did his hermeneutical focus. What remained constant was his use of Hasidism as a late heir of the prophetic tradition and paradigm for Jewish revitalization. "The Hasidic teaching," as Buber programmatically states in *Legende*, "is the proclamation of rebirth. No renewal of Judaism is possible that does not bear in itself the elements of Hasidism."[69] The Jewish Enlightenment that emerged parallel to Hasidism in the eighteenth century likewise embodied the elements needed for national revival. Yet it lacked the emotive power requisite for effecting a full-scale cultural revitalization. As the latest, "modern" expression of Jewish myth, the Hasidic legend bears the primal spirit of Judaism, and its legendary anecdote is the most original "category in the history of religion and literature."[70] The Kabbalists and the Hasidim, he maintains, endowed religious-poetic expression with hermeneutical significance.[71] In the mystical mode of discourse, poetry served to facilitate the apprehension of the divine mystery.

For Buber, the Hasidic sayings and anecdotes were not self-interpreting texts but rather teachings whose meaning would gain existential quality when refracted through the *Zeitgeist*. By presenting Hasidic anecdotes and sayings in figurative yet contemporary language, he sought to move his fellow Jews to recover for themselves a unique version of the "lived experience" of Judaism; the aesthetic principles informing his early Hasidic anthologies were meant to expose his readers viscerally to the transformative potential of Judaism's "elements of renewal."[72] Whether he was successful in achieving his self-defined goals or not, Buber's first two anthologies of Hasidic lore and spirituality were unquestionably "the basis for a renewed interest in Judaism among many assimilated German Jews."[73] It would, however, be erroneous to assume that only spiritual Zionists discovered Hasidism's value as a revivalist movement. Even a rationalist mind yet critic of neo-Kantianism such as David Koigen (1879–1933) appreciated Hasidism for having increased "the metaphysical value of man" by combining the individual aesthetic spirit with mystical propensities. Founding Jewish faith on an "intimate," "free,"

and "loving" relation to God offered in Koigen's view a much more constructive paradigm of Jewish identity than the (Kantian) rationalism of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment.[74]

Thus, in light of these observations, it would also be amiss, as some commentators tend to do, to judge Buber's two earliest works on Hasidism—*Die Geschichten des Rabbi Nachman* and *Die Legende des Baalschem*—as mere arbitrary reworking of Hasidic lore guided solely by aestheticist concerns. Buber yearned already in 1897 for a "culture of beauty," but in the same year he also struggled to come to terms with theories of aesthetics, which he found wanting from a psychological point of view, misjudging "the basic powers of the soul." Hence even before the turn of the century Buber's interest in aesthetics focused on the "dualistic theory" and its psychological premises. The *sui generis* status that Edmund Burke assigned to the sublime in his *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) helped Buber to separate the feelings of the beautiful from those of the sublime (which include negative feelings such as fear and suffering) and to develop his view of the will as a major factor in the continuity of the Jewish people.

A discontent with the regnant aesthetic discourse at the turn of the century led Buber, influenced by his teacher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), to revalorize the relationship between *Erfahrung* as empirical experience and *Erlebnis* as lived experience. Whereas in the former perception remained on the level of the intellect, lived experience expands perception beyond the boundaries of the visible to "appearing" and "aura." Lived experience, as Dilthey argued in his "Fragments for a Poetics" (1907–08), cannot be reduced to either a "passive experience" or "active thought," for it addresses the complexity of a human being and life; "it designates a part of the course of life in its total reality."[75] By virtue of its central role for religion, art, anthropology, and metaphysics, it is necessary to actively "generate and multiply" these lived experiences.[76] Consequently lived experiences "involved a deeper level of interiority involving volition, emotion, and creaturely suffering."[77] Dilthey's insights found a fertile soil in the mind of an exploring Buber. Through weaving disparate Hasidic literary forms into a multifarious, experimental anthology of mystical expression, he indivisibly combined aesthetic and hermeneutic concerns. In the larger context of conceptions of revitalization at the time, this approach may be referred to as the "aesthetics of Jewish renewal."

CHAPTER ONE

Buber's Hermeneutic Horizon

In 1906 Buber wrote, in the opening sentence of his preface to *Die Geschichten des Rabbi Nachman*: "I have not translated the tales of Rabbi Nachman, but retold them. I have done so for my purpose is not philological." In the edition of 1916, the second part of the second sentence is replaced with "in full freedom, yet out of his [R. Nahman's] spirit as it is present to me." Buber did not elaborate upon this reference to the spirit of Rabbi Nahman, and he may not have needed to, for the background is clear. Buber's approach to *Verstehen,* "understanding," is manifestly inspired by Dilthey's hermeneutic theory. Dilthey stood in the romantic hermeneutic tradition founded by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). In his theory of hermeneutics, Schleiermacher distinguished between grammatical (objective reconstruction) and psychological (subjective reconstruction) understanding of a text.[1] His method of *Verstehen* was based on the identification of the interpreter with the author to the extent that the interpreter understands the original intention of the author as well as (or even better than) the author himself. By virtue of the knowledge thus gained, the interpreter hopes to recover the author's presumed intentions and to participate in the spirit expressed in the interpreted text. Dilthey developed Schleiermacher's hermeneutics of psychological identification with the author. He presented a more epistemologically rigorous conception of *Verstehen*, focused on the conditions of a veritable understanding of a text or that of any other spiritual expression based on its nexus of life (*Lebenszusammenhang)*.

For Dilthey, the spirit animating a text is grounded in a particular expression of life (*Lebensäußerung*). The hermeneutical task consists in recovering the original moment of expression by entering the thinking consciousness of another individuality, and to "restore its animating spirit to the life of immediate experience."[2] This procedure of rendering the

lived experience of another person susceptible to one's own experience—and hence to understanding—demands "recreation" (*Nachbilden*) and "reliving" (*Nacherleben*).[3] This method is possible thanks to the universal structure of human consciousness, or what Dilthey calls the "objective spirit."[4] By virtue of empathetic understanding—as the act of distilling the psychic expression of another individuality from its work and complementing it with one's own experience—the experience of the other becomes the indispensable path to *self*-understanding. Accordingly, the object of understanding is not verbal expressions as the elements of a linguistic understanding but the life-expression behind the work, that is, the ontological ground in its relation to meaning.[5]

Dilthey distinguishes *Erlebnis* (lived experience) from *Erfahrung* (empirical experience), which he defines as a "sensory experience of the outer phenomenal world."[6] In his theory re-experiencing no longer involves reproducing the state of the mind of the author. In his critique of "historical reason," Dilthey re-centers the interpretive act on "reflection" (*Besinnnung*). Despite the stress on psychological interpretation as a psychic "transposition," he considers philological and historical interpretation as prerequisites for the understanding of a work in its entirety. Dilthey conceives of poetry and art, grounded as they are in *Erlebnis* derived from life experience, as unique prereflective spiritual expressions.[7] Distancing himself from Kantian epistemology, he establishes the categories of life not as a priori categories to be applied to life but rather as inherent in the essence of life itself. His assertion that understanding through reliving can open the individual to conditions which go beyond the determination of his own life became a cornerstone in Buber's approach to representation.[8]

On the basis of his mentor's doctrine of psychological understanding of the lived experience animating a "text," Buber developed a distinctive hermeneutic. Elaborating upon the hermeneutic technique of reliving as an act of retelling (*Nacherzählen*), he describes, if but evocatively, the emotive and religious meaning informing a "text." He was concerned not with reconstructing the historical context but rather with reanimating the spiritual core of Hasidism. Buber deemed it necessary to purge the textual transmission of the teachings of Rabbi Nahman from literary distortions in order to recover their authentic and abiding spirit (*Rabbi Nachman,* 41). He applied the same method to the Hasidic sayings, parables, and legends represented in *Legende*. The amplification of some basic notions of Dilthey's theory enabled him to develop his own hermeneutic approach to the representation of religious experience. The aesthetics of the mystical *Erlebnis* and the recovery of its basic spiritual structures necessitate representation of the mystical

intuition as borne out of the Hasid's life experience. Representation of individual genius is thus not at the core of Buber's anthologies, nor is his main objective to re-embody through *Nacherleben* the genius of R. Nahman of Bratzlav (d. 1810) or to transpose himself or the reader into the mental universe of the Hasidic master. The hermeneutic axis of his representation of mystical experience is to attain, in Diltheyan terms, "the presence of lived experience" in which past and future glide into the consciousness of the present.

Around 1900 Edmund Husserl sought to give a philosophical foundation to a generally intuitive, nonempirical phenomenological method. Together with other philosophers, he developed phenomenology as an alternative to standard scientific methodology, which in their view not only prioritized putatively objective empirical methods but also rejected lived experiences for understanding reality. Buber may have been inspired by the "phenomenological turn," without adopting it as a systematic philosophical method. Given his aesthetic concerns, he had a vital interest in showing through Hasidism that lived experiences could be a means through which reality could be explored. He certainly presents Hasidism such that it both offers and lends itself to a psycho-phenomenological approach that would at the same time do justice to the "psychophysical uniqueness" of Judaism. Lived experiences were integral to the educational-pedagogic structure of Hasidism. Many Hasidic teachings serve the function of also interpreting sensory experience (*Erfahrung*), deemed as intrinsically delusional, in accord with Hasidic theosophical doctrine. Buber would adopt this practice and apply it, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, to what he regarded to be the correct understanding of cultural Zionism.

For Buber, the epistemological link between aesthetics and hermeneutics was psychology, and his model for a perfect synthesis of the two was Meister Eckhart: "One cannot bring the self-contained lexicon of the German psychology [*Wortbereich der deutschen Seelenkunde*] into view without drawing it out from Meister Eckhart page by page."[9] He shared his fondness for this paragon of medieval German mysticism with Simmel, who appreciated Eckhart for his presentation of the soul as the culture-creating and form-shaping faculty. Hence, unity is a quality of the soul, but it needs the dialectic interaction with "objective culture" to fully develop and cultivate itself. Buber was inspired by Eckhart's almost heretical transformation of Christian doctrine into an immediate relation of the soul to its divine primal ground. Eckhart's original treatment of the question of unity was seminal for Buber's reading of Hasidism.[10] He would judge all anthological and scholarly presentations of Jewish mysticism according to their insights

into the psychological reality of mysticism. In 1910 Buber intended to write a "Prolegomenon to a psychology of Jewish mysticism."[11] In a positive review of Jacob Klatzkin's *Thesaurus philosophicus linguae Hebraicae,* he regretted Klatzkin's relative neglect of the psychological tendency of Jewish mystical literature, which he considered essential for an understanding of "general psychological terminology."[12]

The notion of a single meaning of a text or of the intention of an author does not hold for the kind of material Buber represents in *Legende* (it holds partially for *Rabbi Nachman,* where we have one author). In his phenomenological approach to Hasidic religious experience, Buber implicitly acknowledges the Hebrew Bible as the source of continuous inspiration, providing ever new insights into the nature of man's relationship to God and ways to encounter God. Understanding becomes an act of spiritual appropriation. In the case of Buber's early works on Hasidism, appropriation operates on two levels of interpretation of the spirit of the Hebrew Bible, namely that of the Hasidic masters and that of Buber. By forging the Hasidic teachings into a text that calls for interpretation, Buber expects the reader to likewise enter the process of appropriation and to establish the ever-reconstituted meaning of the teachings.[13]

In later statements he reiterated his belief that the task of the interpreter was to practice a reflective reading of the Hasidic teachings, for the "importance is not found in their objective content" but in the creative spirit behind them.[14] Nonetheless, he seeks to avoid the pitfalls of "a circle between two subjectivities" characteristic of 'Romantic hermeneutics.' Buber's hermeneutic trajectory leads away from a subjective identification of a reader with an author to the reader's own reality and cultural horizon. In this approach, appropriation of "the horizon of a world towards which a work directs itself" does not demand the total suspension of distance from what is represented.[15]

Considering himself an artistic writer of the Jewish Renaissance, Buber relocates perception into the dynamic horizon of the "appearance of texts." The presence a literary text possesses, and which constitutes its unique relation to the world, discloses itself, as Seel puts it, "in the sequence of its words and sentences that themselves stand for what they speak of."[16] Buber undoubtedly intended the construction of a highly distinctive and recognizable version of a literary text, one that would be associated for his and future generations with the program of a Jewish Renaissance. Language is the most important aspect in what Seel calls the "constitutive changeability of literature," that is, "the way in which a literary text is situated in its source language (or its translation-determined target language)."[17] Interpretive translation

may not necessarily further a presence of a historical time that is brought to appearance. Yet in Buber's case, literary appropriation creates a high-level interaction between reader and text, precisely because it challenges the meaning and perception of 'presence' in its intended transformation of Jewish consciousness.

R. Nahman, as Buber states in his prefatory remarks to *Rabbi Nachman,* personifies the charismatic spiritual leader of Judaism. A body-spirit dialectic characterizes the notion of unity in Hasidism, as Buber repeatedly emphasizes. As the "soul" of the community, the Zaddik (Hasidic master, pl. Zaddikim) mediates the spirit of revelation through his life and teachings, whereas the religious community constitutes the "body." What is ultimately encountered through the tales and teachings is thus not merely the subjectivity of R. Nahman but what Leora Batnitzky has recently called in her analysis of the ontological and epistemological claims in Buber's thought, "inner origin of reality."[18] On the basis of these philosophical presuppositions, Buber claims authority and legitimacy for his own retelling: "More adequately than the direct disciples, I, a later emissary in the realm of foreign language, received and fulfilled the task" (*Mein Weg,* 22). The task so conceived is to place oneself consciously in the chain of transmission: "This situating oneself [*Sicheinstellen*] in the great chain is the individual's natural situation in his relation to his people."[19] Buber's oft-cited claim in his introduction to the *Legende* to tell anew, "as one who was born later [*Nachgeborener*]," standing in a relationship of "blood and spirit" with his predecessors as a "link in the chain of narrators" (L ii/F x),[20] illustrates both his determination to revalorize the oral culture of Hasidism and his conception of tradition as a dynamic dialectic of renewal within continuity—with the latter understood, however, not simply as a diachronic cultural continuity but as a synchronic, cross-cultural continuity of primal religious experiences. For Buber, retelling is a kind of reenactment where, in the words of Jan Vansina, "innovation is only incremental from performance to performance."[21] The goal is not the retrieval of a collective past but participation in the ongoing spiritual process of receiving and transmitting, as well as of mythmaking, which he defines as the "eternal function of the [Jewish] soul."[22]

In his view, these literary forms, the legendary anecdotes and legends (i.e., the Hasidic tale), transmit myth. In his romantic perspective, the primeval ground of national identity is to be anchored culturally in a novel kind of poetry on the basis of a renewal of mythos.[23] The Hasidic mystic, Buber contends, articulates truth in the metaphysical-cosmic reality of myth. Myth, to speak with Cassirer, is a "spontaneous law of generation," and, by virtue of

the originality of expression, preserves the sensuous quality of the experience.[24] Myth provides the narrative lineaments of Hasidic teaching and is to be understood as a most powerful vehicle of the shared attitude to being characteristic of Judaism.[25]

At this juncture Buber uses a quasi-theoretical argument to distinguish between the act of "rewriting," as a reworking of a text according to aesthetic, philosophical, or other considerations, and an appropriation based on the interpretative mode of retelling. Retelling can overcome the distance caused by writing. By bringing the original discourse to another level, writing tends to abolish its apparent function. Ricoeur's concept of appropriation directs the reader to make "one's own what was initially alien."[26] Reading for Ricoeur is neither the appropriation of "the intention of another subject [or of the original audience], nor some design supposedly hidden behind the text; rather, it is the projection of a world, the proposal of a mode of being-in-the-world, which the text discloses in front of itself by means of its non-ostensive references."[27] That Buber draws the material from written sources does not contradict his position that retelling, given its performative quality, is the true mode of realization. The Hasidim transmitted the teachings and tales of their masters orally, even after the words of the master were already recorded in published volumes. Moreover, in the early stage of Hasidism, the teachings of the Zaddikim were recorded and published only posthumously.[28]

Hermeneutically considered, as Ricoeur observes, "re-saying . . . reactivates what is said by the text."[29] Buber concedes, however, that the one who retells and thus reinterprets needs to be situated within the culture-specific process of tradition and to be committed to its values. Further, the act of interpretation, as he understands it, is fused with self-interpretation. In such a process of reading "the constitution of the self is," again in Ricoeur's words, "contemporaneous with the constitution of meaning."[30] From Buber's perspective, retelling is legitimated by the dynamic relationship between the oral and written in Jewish tradition as well as by the tension between the innovative impulse and preservation. In his search for a form of Jewish religiosity that would not be absorbed by normative practice, Buber conceives of oral transmission as a process of investing Scripture with the meaning of life.

Buber ran the risk of contradicting himself, for he worked with written texts and therefore his retelling was in fact an act of rewriting. Unlike Micha Josef Berdyczewski (1865–1921) in his free but "silent" reworking of legends about R. Israel ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov (d. 1760), Buber

acknowledged that he "retold" the tales of R. Nahman and the Baal Shem Tov. Read in conjunction with the elaboration of 1916—noting that he sought to recapture "the spirit of R. Nahman as it is present to me"—this admission indicates that Buber's concern was not confined to the act of rewriting understood as an arbitrary project with a purely aesthetic motive. Rather he hoped to bring the reader into an experiential relation to Hasidic spirituality and thus to a new understanding of the spiritual force of Judaism. By making retelling and not literal or faithful translation the mode of representation, Buber sanctions moderate decontextualization as a blending of the Hasidic texts with terms that evoke connotations and associations of a different cultural context and semantic field. Hence, retelling is a form of synchronic transmission. Moreover, synchronic transmission is characterized by memory which, especially when transmitted orally, necessarily involves alteration.

In Buber's hermeneutical circle, retelling entails re-experiencing, both for the teller of the tales and his audience. In his representation of R. Nahman's mystical tales, Buber's purpose is not to gain an understanding of their intended religious meaning but to present them as expressions of Hasidic spirituality, which is to be recovered by a renewed reinterpretation qua retelling. As a complement to re-experiencing, Dilthey applies the philological method to reconstruct the objective spirit and to gain a faithful understanding of its inner reality. By contrast, Buber turned *Verstehen* into a creative poetical act freed from rigorous exegetical concerns. Imagination provides the connecting link between aesthetics and hermeneutics.

In presenting, through the voices of the Hasidic masters, the Torah as a self-extending book, a text infinitely open to "re-vision" and reinterpretation, Buber also realized the Romantic conception of text as what Azade Seyhan calls, with reference to Schlegel, "the infinitely perfectible self-representation of the literary work."[31] Novalis also envisioned reading/interpretation as a continuation of writing. According to Romantic criticism, every act of reading engages the text anew and leads to re-presentation.[32] The epistemic issues underlying Buber's aesthetics of representation will become apparent when we (re-)direct our attention to those aspects in his first works on Hasidism that are not devoted to the retelling of the tales but to the representation of Hasidic teachings. Further, Judaism and Hasidism are beholden to an ontological and not a conceptual truth: "We must therefore reject commitment to the claim that Jewish teaching is something finished and unequivocal. For us, it is neither. It is, rather, a gigantic process, still uncompleted, of spiritual activity and creative response to the unconditional."[33] The Torah is "the reign of the eternal *Urkräfte*," the primal forces of authentic Judaism

that must be recurrently reawakened to new activity.[34] R. Nahman's paradigmatic function for contemporary Jews was based on Buber's recognition that his teaching was drawn not from books "but from real life with human beings" (*Rabbi Nachman,* 25). Buber's presentation of Hasidic teachings was guided by a selection of those legends and legendary anecdotes that display the shift from kabbalistic doctrine to the "personal mode of faith" of the Zaddik, who mediates between divine truth and subjective experience of the Infinite.[35]

Indeed, Buber discerned in Hasidism a transformation of religious consciousness "from theosophy to anthroposophy,"[36] from the kabbalistic *derekh 'emet* (path of truth) to *derekh hasidut* (path of pious devotion), that is, to an ethical-religious practice. Kabbalah thus became ethos, and rational theosophy yielded to what Buber called the "de-schematization of mystery."[37] The Hasidic masters no longer indulged in esoteric speculation to overcome the "contradiction of being,"[38] but accepted a "holy insecurity" of existence.[39] The teachings had to "prove themselves" in the life of the Zaddik.[40] Buber refers to this ethos as "religious actualization." Torah is for Buber personal disclosure of the meaning of ethical-religious values, and not dogma or "Law."[41] Scholem described the shift of emphasis in the role of Torah in Hasidism as follows: "Instead of cherishing as a mystery the most personal of all experiences, [*devequt*] undertook to teach its secret to all men of good will."[42] The Besht (acronym of the appellation Baal Shem Tov, lit. "Master of the Good Name' ") enhanced the concept of the Study of the Torah for its own sake, namely, for the ideal of *devequt*, the attaching of oneself to God. In similar vein, Magid observed that the Besht conceived of religious learning as a "religious act in a world without prophecy" which allows for potentially every individual to achieve direct access to God.[43] We find many socio-critical statements by early Hasidic masters against those scholars who elevated *pilpul* to a religious value, and who lacked in the view of the former the burning enthusiasm necessary for bringing God into the world.[44]

As Arthur Green emphasizes, Hasidism, despite its operating wholly within the context of tradition, called "for a major transformation of values: simple devotion was to be placed above abstruse learning, the joy of service above penitential brooding, and the rediscovery of God's all-pervasive presence above the sense of longing and exile."[45] Rachel Elior stresses the role of theosophical expression for the renewal facilitated by the Hasidic masters, who "combined mystical experience and a new perception of reality acquired from ecstatic exaltation and spiritual inspiration."[46] For Buber, the determinative feature of the spoken word (i.e., the Hasidic saying) is

its "connection with an incident."[47] Buber accordingly defined the hagiographic anecdotes as "stories of lived life" and the aphorisms as "sayings in which lived life documents itself."[48] His main aim in representing the material was to illustrate the "inner process in the life of the [Hasidic] master" (*Mein Weg*, 22). Thus he adopted aspects of the hermeneutic approach of early German Romanticism, such as Schlegel's belief that at best we can mediate and elucidate the ultimate incomprehensibility of that which is represented—the mystery of the world.[49] The motifs underlying the Hasidic legend are often folkloristic in nature and only through the shaping by the Zaddik are they invested with a distinctive Hasidic meta-structure. The Hasidic master, as Green noted, dramatically departed from the hermeneutical function of the rabbinic scholar as an authorized interpreter in the chain of tradition. It is the "power of his righteousness" which makes the Zaddik "a vehicle for revelation in his day."[50]

Despite the weaving together of select strands of Hasidic teachings, and his attempt to mediate subjective experience, Buber objects to labeling his approach as subjective.[51] The interpreter, he avers, must be faithful not to the "graspable teaching" but to the event, "which is life and word at the same time." This event is the essential ground of renewal—a claim that can be understood only in light of his hermeneutical program. To be sure, he conceded that he did not aim at a "hermeneutically comprehensive presentation of Hasidism."[52] Buber resisted on principle the representation of the Hasidic material on the basis of clearly defined and consistent hermeneutical rules. Indeed, rules could impede the aesthetic code of a text (here of religious experience) when they became a technique or literary style through their application to other texts.[53] Nonetheless, Buber did identify some principles of interpretation, which he held were also firmly anchored in Judaism, above all the principle of 'faithfulness.' Although Buber seems to confront the problem of squaring the circle, he argues that faithfulness to tradition and retelling are not exclusive of one another. In the material he gleans, faithfulness in the sense of the accuracy transmission is not a condition of reproduction; transmitted by collective memory, oral traditions are inherently dynamic and protean.[54] This view of tradition is echoed by R. Yizhak Yehudah Yehiel Safrin of Komarno, who with respect to the veracity of the tales observed: "This and all the stories are true as the Lord your God is true."[55] The intrinsic unity of truth and faithfulness is maintained as long as what is represented is not objectified in the sense of fixed meaning. The Hasidic material exposes experience and thus *meaning*, which, as Alexander Altmann noted, "is the spiritual element of experiencing. It stems

from the ego-structure of the experiencing individual . . . and cannot be grasped objectively. It can be only understood but not explained."[57]

The Hasidic conception of the hermeneutical act as an ontological relation to Scripture proves resistant to the criteria of an extraneous analytical system. The concept of objective truth, which governs interpretation of cultural phenomena in Western epistemologies, is insufficient when the object of investigation is a dynamic religious and hermeneutic tradition. Buber elaborates on this distinction between "static" and "dynamic" truth in his address *Cherut* (Freedom) of 1919. "Religious truth, in contradistinction to philosophical truth, is not a maxim but a way, not a thesis but a process."[58] Just as Judaism is a way of life, Jewish history is a "spiritual process." In an idealist manner, Buber interprets this spiritual process as a union of three constitutive ideas: "the idea of unity, the idea of the deed, and the idea of the future." Every generation expresses, in consonance with its own existential situation, Judaism's core hermeneutic principle of "freedom in God."[59] Jewish oral tradition is a body of expressions of lived experience, and as such it cannot be thought of "as something finished and unequivocal." The categories of "true" and "false" can neither provide an access to religious experience nor an understanding of divine revelation.[60] Truth is brought forth from the interpretation of those who experienced the mystical unity of being. *Verstehen* is here constituted by the mode of being with God. Somewhat akin to Simmel's *bon mot* that "life can only be understood through life,"[61] Buber sought to interpret the ontological foundation of Hasidism. Accordingly, he favored a presentation of Hasidism through its mode of *interpretatio* as opposed to *explicatio*.[62]

The very pledge to faithfulness in this conception of religious truth appears to be the only discernible binding criterion in Buber's representation of Judaism as a *Seinstradition* (tradition of being). Mediating an understanding of what this "share of truth" entails, determines Buber's hermeneutical task.[63] Faithfulness and retelling are here intrinsically yet paradoxically connected. As Buber contends in *Mein Weg zum Chassidismus* (1918): "The ever greater the self-sufficiency [of free retelling], so much deeper I experience faithfulness." Retelling allows him to experience the "inborn inner link with Hasidic truth" (22).[64] Faithfulness, Buber argues in his later writings, is a traditional value anchored in the Bible, where it denotes loyalty to God. In his translation of Scripture, Buber translates both *'emet* (truth) and *'emunah* (faith) with faithfulness (*Treue*), indicating how ethics and religious doctrine overlap in biblical Hebrew.[65] He accordingly distinguishes the biblical concept of truth from the Greek notion of *aletheia,* which

informs Christian theology. According to the latter concept, truth is a disclosure of what is, or the objective intelligible being of things presented to the intellect.[66] In the context of the Bible truth is, in contrast, that "of a word, which is spoken truthfully."[67] It is, as Buber explains, "faithful truth in relation to the once heard and now fully expressed reality."[68]

Though palpable, Dilthey's influence on Buber was not absolute. Of equal significance was the impact of Simmel, especially his analysis of the relationship of life and culture. Simmel was critical of Dilthey's theory of *Verstehen* and the role Dilthey assigned to *Hineinversetzen* (the empathetic understanding of another subject through psychological transposition of oneself into the other) within the hermeneutical process.[69] Following Simmel, Buber argued that religious community is constituted by a dialectical yet ultimately disjunctive relation between religiosity and religion. Both, as Simmel acknowledged, are important aspects of civilization and culture, although religiosity as the expression of an individual soul speaks more to the modern condition. Religiosity, as Simmel explains in his well-known argument, is the primary, spontaneous, and creative quality which, as a subjective religious feeling and way of being, has a variety of contents. Religion, by contrast, is the conservative, organizing principle, aiming at preservation. It is the nature of religiosity to externalize itself in the process of becoming a social form, and as a result to develop into objective religion.

It appealed to Buber that in Simmel's theory religiosity need not be bound to a transcendent being. Due to the increasing fragmentation of the self, modern culture, Buber maintained, is in need of religiosity. Giving expression to individuality beyond a solipsistic individualism, religiosity offers the modern human being unity.[70] It was Buber's firm conviction that the anarchistic but creative impulse of spiritual inspiration could be sustained only when religion supports an existentially relevant interpretation of the Law: "Religion is true so long as it is creative; but it is creative only so long as religiosity, accepting the yoke of the laws and doctrines, is able (often without noticing it) to imbue them with new and incandescent meaning, so that they will seem to have been revealed to every generation anew, revealed today, thus answering men's very own needs, needs alien to their fathers."[71] Even the Buber of *Legende* did not deny the role of normative practice for Jewish social cohesion. In spite of his ambivalent attitude to positive religion and the Law, he regards the Law *in potentia* as the principal form of Judaism. Yet given his approach to religion from the perspective of its potential for renewal, he insists that "Talmudism" or "Rabbinism" must yield to a (more) dialectical interaction between form and the formless if Jewry wishes to remain vital and partake of modernity.

This leads us to yet another feature of Buber's project of representation of Hasidic spirituality. In his early years he considered himself primarily an artist of a spiritual Zionist outlook. Literature, not *Wissenschaft* was the preferred means for renewal, and the anthology its medium. Propelled by the self-understanding of a cultural agent, he took great interest in the number of copies printed, and in reediting and republishing his works. Claiming the need for revision, by 1920 *Rabbi Nachman* had appeared in five editions, *Legende* in three. Both were part of a never completed anthological "cycle" which was to include further volumes.[72] The first major revision of *Legende* was concluded in 1932, followed by a considerably revised edition in 1955.[73] Further, Buber promptly recognized that the mode of transmission or the medium of representation is equally important to the project of *Verstehen* as the transmitted and represented texts themselves. Anthologies thus can serve very different objectives. Not only can they "grant and deny power to the reading public to shape their own culture,"[74] they can also become a powerful vehicle in forging a new identity. In shaping a new Jewish identity Buber's first two Hasidic anthologies were also inflected with a subtle critique of prevailing post-Enlightenment attitudes and values to which the acculturated Jews of the West were beholden.

Buber regarded his interpretive approach as true to Judaism and its own hermeneutic tradition. With respect to his later theological writings, Dan Avnon maintains that Buber in fact applied "Jewish interpretive practices."[75] In acknowledging the spiritual authority of the Hebrew Bible, he developed in the 1920s a biblical hermeneutics of the 'guiding-word principle' purportedly found in Scripture itself. Another indication for his self-conceived indebtedness to Jewish hermeneutics as he understood it is a letter he wrote in 1924 to the Executive of the Zionist Organization in London. Among his reflections on the constitution of the future faculty of the Humanities of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he asserts that Judaism has its own "inner Jewish method [of interpretation],"[76] to which the future faculty should adhere. To his regret, modern "Judaic research" ignores this "material of the spirit," specifically "the exegetical, [that is] the abundance of hermeneutical insights, hints, conjectures" that it depreciates as "unscientific." Rather than applying the philological method, which Buber considered the distinct method of the Occident (*Mein Weg,* 15), the task of a Jewish hermeneutics must be the rediscovery of the "inner aspect of the texts and the exploration of their context of meaning [*Sinnzusammenhänge*]."[77] The study of Judaism at the Hebrew University should, in contrast to historicist scholarly research grounded in *Wissenschaft des Judentums,* pave the way for an understanding of the diachronic flux of Jewish creativity and life.

Although from the interwar period, these statements resonate with his position of 1901, which he so forcefully articulated in his essay "Jüdische Wissenschaft." Buber's quest for a new "Jewish science" was already germane to his approach to the spiritual experience of Judaism in his two early anthologies of Hasidic thought.[78] Moreover, it was directly related to his vision of Zionist cultural politics. In striving to realize a new Jewish education Buber sought to demonstrate "that there can be no valid Jewish scholarship in a strictly methodological sense, but merely a reading of Jewish materials that could be organized by isolating the areas pertaining to Judaism in the various disciplines [anthropology, cultural history etc.] and by systematically linking them to the modern philological Jewish studies." The most accurate designation of this discipline would be "Jewish studies."[79] This innovative interdisciplinary approach appeals to a new generation of scholars in Jewish Studies today and has led to the gradual reevaluation of the early Buber, whose modernism is dialectically related to his conception of Jewish Studies.[80]

CHAPTER TWO

The Anthology and the Jewish Renaissance

An Attempt at Definition

Buber put together his early anthologies at a time when the anthology itself was a topic of interest in Zionist circles. Against the background of the weakening of the bond of tradition and the threat to Jewish national cohesion posed by the mass exodus of Jews from Eastern Europe, where over 80 percent of world Jewry had resided, Zionists saw the shaping of a new Jewish cultural memory as an urgent task and an *integral* aspect of nation-building. But Zionists also encountered opposition in the form of the socialist Bund in Eastern Europe, which had become a mass movement. The Bund's cultural politics, and especially its radical approach to tradition and the question of language, was feared by political and spiritual Zionists alike.[1] A redefined Jewish cultural memory would, so the majority of spiritual Zionists thought, require a reconciliation of old and new. The anthology could thus provide a suitable medium for the expression of traditional Judaism and thereby make a contribution to the reconstitution of Judaism as a secular culture.

Joseph Klausner's definition of Jewish cultural rebirth resonates with the anthologists' approach to the Jewish heritage. It is "the striving for what is best in the past: to the past of the prophets, supplemented by . . . the better part of contemporary European culture."[2] The Zionist anthologies revisited the relation between representation and innovation to meet the end of a revitalization of Judaism as a distinctive national culture. Rather than a formal exchange of opinion and positions, the anthology discourse of the fin-de-siècle was for the most part implicit. Yet its programmatic contours are evident in the relevant anthologies themselves. The discourse occasionally gained more explicit expression in reviews, correspondence, and in the prefaces to the

Zionist anthologies. It gradually evolved from a non-institutionalized network of collaboration into an institutionalized production of anthologies.

An examination of the role and function of the genre in a specific cultural and existential setting is immediately encumbered by a need to identify the dialectic between the two elementary impulses inspiring the compilation, namely, preservation and innovation. It may be helpful to delineate some definitional considerations before we turn to a discussion of the genre as a distinct cultural form. As a *florilegium* (a "collection of flowers") the anthology is defined as a representative reading of tradition, and as such it needs to be distinguished from less specific representations of literature in the form of collections or miscellanies. The anthology is conventionally described as a collection of "the best, the most beautiful or most *characteristic* of a literary form, a literary epoch or trend, specific authors or works, or rather the best, most beautiful or most characteristic literary expression of one or more historical or contemporary personalities, dynasties, institutions or of events."[3] The Greek term *anthologein* suggests a select representation of excerpts from a corpus of texts guided mainly by aesthetic criteria. In its representative selectiveness the anthology inevitably prompts the formation or reconfiguration of a canon. This observation raises subsidiary issues of epistemological significance, pertaining to the relation of the anthologist to the specific tradition to be represented.

The imprecision of conventional definitions of the constitutive elements of an anthology is particularly evident in formal descriptions of the genre. One can learn from a study of the anthology in the German context that the German library system classifies only those works as anthologies that include a selection of at least four authors.[4] In delineating the main features of a religious anthology, Paul J. Griffiths claims that at least three-quarters of the work must contain excerpts in order to meet the formal requirements of an anthology of religious texts.[5] There exists, however, no defining standard regarding the principles of organization or the length of the excerpts. Excerpts "may be arranged by topic," or "by source," or by a "pedagogical scheme"[6] Further, an anthology may inform the reader about the sources from which the material is taken, but it need not do so. This raises the question of purpose of the anthology that will sometimes "have to be inferred from the anthology's content and what is known about its context."[7] To be sure, the anthology "may contain an introductory explanation of its purpose, or a justification of its principles of selection and ordering,"[8] but it may also not. After all, the anthology is not bound by the requirements of a scientific work. An anthology "may also limit itself to sources of a particular genre" or "topic."[9]

Griffiths defines the anthology as "a work all (or almost all) of whose words are taken from another work or works; it contains a number (typically quite a large number) of extracts or excerpts, each of which has been taken verbatim (or almost so) from some other work; and it uses some device to mark the boundaries of these excerpts."[10] The several rule-of-the-thumb qualifications within this descriptive statement underscore the dilemma of finding a universal definition of the genre while acknowledging the frequency of marginal cases. Another criterion of an anthology is that the compiler refrains from adding to the material, for otherwise he assumes the role of an author or a commentator.[11] But even here Griffiths is hesitant to endorse fully this defining principle, "mostly because the idea of quotation, or verbatim reproduction, is a murky one."[12] Indeed, a hard-and-fast definition of the genre eludes scholars to the present day. What transpires from these observations is that anthologies can serve a variety of objectives.

The indeterminacy of the anthology proved advantageous for Buber, particularly in relation to the genre's mediating function between individual readers and literary culture.[13] Although Buber offers no theoretical statements on the genre, his editions of mystical teachings, just as his collections of the folklore of other cultures, such as the Finnish national epic the *Kalevala,* were clearly anthologies.[14] Significantly, he often refers to his works as anthologies and only occasionally as "collections." The distinction is not incidental. As David Stern notes, although a "collection" is "determined by a clear and acknowledged principle of selection," its primary motivation is "the sheer desire for preservation." On the other hand, "the operative criterion for inclusion" characterizing an anthology is "a very strong principle of selection regardless of a desire for preservation."[15]

The Anthology as a Jewish Form

During the past two decades, scholars of Jewish Studies have discovered the anthology to be a distinctive genre worthy of critical evaluation.[16] As David Stern has shown, much of traditional Jewish literature has an anthological character. Stern stresses the "constancy with which the anthological genre has served as a primary instrument for the transmission of tradition in Judaism."[17] The anthology was the traditional form for commenting upon, reinventing, and transmitting the "missing details" in the biblical text, allowing for the conjunction of the elements constitutive of Judaism as a dynamic religious culture.[18] Historically, the genre owed its key function to the ever-reconstituted need of each generation to interpret the Torah. The rise of national Jewish anthologies marked a fundamental discontinuity in

this process. The anthologist was now a cultural agent who appropriated and transformed a religious tradition rooted in the authority of revelation into a secular literature. The transformation of tradition sponsored by cultural Zionism was somewhat softened by the very adoption of the anthological genre, that is, by virtue of the fact that the form itself was sanctioned by Jewish tradition and religious authority.

Within the Zionist discourse on the anthology, with its decidedly secular outlook, Buber's first collections of Hasidic lore stand out. They not only deal with religious material but also have a religious message, albeit one that does not conform strictly to the tradition from which it is drawn. Indeed, at least three quarters of the *Die Geschichten des Rabbi Nachman* and *Die Legende des Baalschem* are excerpts; thus these volumes formally meet Griffiths' criteria for the genre of anthology.[19] But we have yet to describe the type of anthologies Buber created.

As a working definition, Buber's *Legende* may best be described as an experimental blend of both anthology and interpretive commentary. The combination of the anthological genre with a distinct interpretation of a religious mode of existence in effect constitutes a critique of modernity. Buber situates *Legende* in particular within a quest for a new non-institutional discourse on religion and the meaning of religious values. Whereas many of his Jewish contemporaries, above all Hermann Cohen and the Jewish neo-Kantians, focused on the philosophical foundation of Judaism's ethical ethos, Buber chose to focus on the aesthetic representation of Judaism's spiritual ethos. Given the increasing discontent with the rational interpretation of religion, he considered a complementary approach to the eternal spirit and inner core of Judaism necessary.

Let us specify further the nature of Buber's *Rabbi Nachman* and *Legende*, drawing once again upon Griffiths' theoretical insights. In religious traditions reading and commentary are indivisibly linked. Griffiths contends that religious anthologies are "metaworks" to the work they interpret. Religious anthologies practice a "devotional and detailed rereading."[20] They typically arise out of "practical interests . . . that require or make desirable interpolations, excursuses, asides and so forth."[21] In later years Buber explicitly stated his interest in a contemporary commentary on the teachings of Hasidism: "The life of such people [the Zaddikim] stands in need of a theological commentary; their own words form a contribution towards this, but often it is only a very fragmentary contribution."[22] If we follow the criteria set by Griffiths for an ideal type of religious commentary, Buber's first anthology (*Rabbi Nachman*) does not qualify as a religious commentary.[23] It is not structured according to the form, content, and order of the work upon

which it comments on, namely, R. Nahman's *Sippurey ma'asiyyot*. In contrast, *Legende*, which does not comment upon one work but rather on a mystical way of life, can be said to qualify as a nontraditional kind of religious anthology. It has "overt signs of the presence in it of another work to which it is a metawork," and, as Griffiths specifies, "quotation, paraphrase, and summary will be the three most common modes of such presence." These elements "must outweigh other elements in the anthology." Further we find "explication in some parts" in a language not used in the material anthologized.[24] Buber indeed composed such a metawork by combining representation and interpretation in his description of Hasidic devotion in his introductory essay to *Legende,* which qualifies in a modified sense as a commentary. The essay, "Das Leben der Chassidim," is a metawork, for its commentary is intrinsic to the teachings it cites. To put it differently, the removal of Buber's commentarial voice—which either summarizes, paraphrases, or offers an interpretive translation (even if poetic)—would make many of these decontextualized excerpts and aphoristic teachings incomprehensible to the assimilated or even the acculturated reader. Tellingly, Buber does not confine himself to interpretation but presents—as he indicates in formulaic phrases in "Das Leben der Chassidim"—an authoritative reading. The relation between this essay, which itself is of an anthological nature, to the twenty-one legends of the Baal Shem Tov (see appendix) is elliptical. The legends do not necessarily bespeak the mystical way of life described in the aforementioned essay. At the most the essay suggests that the existential and spiritual *Sitz im Leben* of the legends is the devotional life of the Hasidim. Thus all categorical definitions of the genre of anthology prove somewhat insufficient to capture appropriately Buber's use of the anthology within the framework of the Jewish renaissance.

But is *Legende* then truly a religious anthology? Whereas the ideal type of commentary, according to Griffiths, can have only one work as its object of interpretation,[25] Buber's presentation of the Hasidic way in *Legende* is formally an interpretation of many "texts," or rather of discourses, by many authors. Yet these often anonymous teachings are cumulative interpretations of one object, that is, the Hasidic form of life (*Daseinsform*). Consequently, the structure of the work, that is, "the order in which material occurs in it," can in such a case not be given to it "by the work to which it is a metawork."[26] Hence, Buber's works may be considered as religious anthologies only if one broadens the definitional criteria. Similar to traditional religious anthologies, Buber is interested in promoting "commentarial application." In his commentary, he points "to what is supposed to follow behaviorally from the work commented upon,"[27] which is indeed

a salient feature of religious commentaries in general. However, he uses the teachings not to inculcate religious behavior as such but rather to illuminate the spiritual structure of Hasidism and its relevance for the Zionist *Gegenwartsarbeit* ("work-in-the-present")—in other words, for Jewish cultural and spiritual renewal. If *Legende* is unlike a religious anthology, it is also fundamentally at odds with the modern anthological genre and its aim of faithful representation. The conflation of excerpts from Hasidic sources with a didactic commentary disqualifies this work as an anthology. But then again, as selections, all anthologies are implicitly commentaries, and, when translation is involved, representation is invariably shaped on the anvil of interpretation.

Religious commentary, as Griffiths notes, follows in each religion tradition-specific criteria. Judaism as a tradition of commentary and interpretation is grounded in the quest to understand the word of God as transmitted in the sacred text of the written Torah. Commentary serves in Judaism to foster an understanding of revelation, which, by itself, as Gershom Scholem has pointed out, "is far from self-evident religious doctrine."[28] Revelation constitutes both the ontological and epistemological authority to which commentary is beholden. What was self-evident for traditional Jews underwent a radical reassessment in the post-Enlightenment period. In the light of new axiological orientations primed by universal values, modern Jews redefined the meaning of tradition and its metaphysical presuppositions.

The models for Buber's Hasidic anthologies were the anthologies prepared by the Hasidim themselves. As a dynamic form of transmission, the masters' words, as recorded by their followers, were presented as an unsystematic creation, withstanding closure. In consonance with the primary intent to preserve the original oral quality of the masters' teachings, these anthologies—either as a whole or selections thereof—were continually retold and published anew. The redactional character of these anthologies as well as the fact that the masters' teachings were initially written down by their votaries from memory rendered the question of accuracy of representation pointless.[29] Authentic autographs of these teachings, which were said to communicate the deeper truth of the Torah, were the exception, while pseudepigraphy was a common practice among Hasidic editors, both for the theoretical as well as the legendary material.[30] Attesting to this phenomenon are the many nineteenth-century printed versions of *Shivhey ha-Besht* (In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov, originally published in 1814 in Hebrew, in 1815 in Yiddish), the hagiographic biography of the founder of Hasidism. As I will show in detail below, this work served as the principal source for Buber's *Legende,* and in drawing heavily on it Buber expressly sought to

continue Hasidism's tradition of interpretive anthologizing. Yet what was in Hasidism a retelling within a diachronic chain of transmission, where transmitter and recipient shared a common discourse, turned, by the very nature of Buber's project, into a cross-cultural synchronic transmission.

It is no mere coincidence that his interest in the genre and his unconventional use thereof coincided with the birth of Expressionism in art in 1905, which also marked the beginning of modernism in literature and philosophy. But the cultural avant-garde was at the time only a loosely affiliated group of artists and writers in Wilhelmine Germany. It took five more years until Herwarth Waldens' magazine *Der Sturm* (1910–32) would provide a literary forum for the new cultural scene. Among the contributors to the magazine were the co-founder, Alfred Döblin, Walden's wife the poetess Else Lasker-Schüler, the poet Richard Dehmel, and the journalist, satirist, and poet Karl Kraus. Together with other authors of *Der Sturm* they would define the horizons of Expressionism in literature, poetry, graphic art, and music. Nietzsche was a major source of inspiration and a paragon of the anti-bourgeois stance shared by the German avant-garde in all its shades. Adopting Nietzsche's view of the artist as a critic of traditional values and outdated societal norms, Buber crafted his Jewish vision of modernism through a literature that was not on any reading list. He experimented with how best to depict inner experience, a question that also came to preoccupy the artists of Expressionism who sought to translate the inner experience onto canvas. They shared his fascination with the ecstatic and with the mythic imagination, which have a rhythm of their own and remained unaffected by time and space. Drawn to religious themes, Buber's cross-cultural collection of *Ekstatische Konfessionen* (Ecstatic confessions, 1909) offered Expressionists new insights into the recesses of the human soul. Religious spirituality now appeared as a means to expand one's consciousness, to transcend the self-enclosed reality of the subject. Buber opened a window into a world beyond the stifling binaries guarded by bourgeois culture, a world in which the boundaries between the inner and outer reality, male and female, spiritual and material were bridged. As an artist of renewal Buber was also interested to capture the auratic moment which engenders the experience of mystery. Although he cannot be said to have been at the center of the heterogeneous Expressionist movement, partially because of his dedication to the objectives of a Jewish moderne, he was certainly part of this vibrant cultural scene. His anthologies of myth and mysticism found great resonance among Expressionists. He participated occasionally in the cultural activities of the Berlin avant-garde, for instance by lecturing in 1910 at the Neopathetische Cabaret.[31] What he shared with Expressionism was, alongside the appreciation

of the religious, an ambivalent attitude to modernity. Highlighting such aspects as rhythm and movement, Hasidism cultivated the spiritual life as both a distinctive form of religious culture and a dynamic form of life. *Lebensphilosophie* was the connecting link between Neo-Romanticism and Expressionism. Henri Bergson had just presented intuition as an integral experience. In his *L'Évolution Créatrice* (1907) Bergson elaborated the notion of *élan vital*, which continuously shapes all life. The idea of a vital creative impulse resonated, among other aspects of Bergsonian vitalism, with Buber's approach to spirit. Buber depiction of Judaism as a spiritual process reverberates with Bergson's emphasis on evolution as a creative process. The very title "Das Leben der Chassidim," which introduces the reader of *Legende* to Hasidic spirituality and the world of inner intuition, expresses Buber's affinity with *Lebensphilosophie*. But since he sought the integration of the metaphysical into modern culture, Nietzsche's position that "life is self-determining" and an absolute value challenged Buber to present through his anthologies of Hasidic spirituality a counter-model.

The Jewish Library Reconfigured

Anthological reading combines the private with the communal. While modern reading practices are largely solitary, the transmission of the formative elements of Jewish tradition represented selectively in anthologies endows the reading of the anthologies with a communal dimension.[32] Buber envisioned the Jewish reader's participation in the community through the rereading of religious texts. In 1901 he initiated *Vorlesungsabende*,[33] readings from works of Jewish interest that provided opportunities to enhance communal experience. Like the anthologies, these readings were specifically designed for German Jews, or for the typical *Bildungsjuden* among them, whose acquisition of humanistic culture had in various degrees displaced their knowledge of the classical texts of Judaism. The path to becoming a "Jewish human being," Buber reasoned, would thus necessarily have to be forged by works that embrace the humanistic and aesthetic values of German *Bildungskultur* while presenting Judaism as a living national culture.[34] Writings such as Buber's Hasidic anthologies, testifying to Judaism as a spiritually imaginative and vibrant national culture, now vied for pride of place on the bookshelves of German Jews. They stood next to volumes of German and European letters as well as works on Judaism written in the rationalist and historicist vein of Wissenschaft des Judentums, such as Heinrich Graetz's multivolume *Geschichte der Juden* (1853–76), a staple item on most bookshelves of German Jews despite its controversial character. Though Buber

adhered to the humanistic ideal of *Bildung,* he challenged the emotionally restrained German-Jewish bourgeoisie by calling upon them to acknowledge the vitalizing power of ecstatic mysticism represented by Hasidism. This was part of the educative transformation he aspired to accomplish.[35] Hence, to mediate his vision of a Jewish Renaissance, Buber had to communicate a tradition-specific teaching to an audience unfamiliar with the mystical dimension of Judaism. As he emphasized, it was the merit of Hasidism to have mediated a life–affirmative spirituality to the Jewish masses of the East. Hence, Buber shared the general quandary of cultural Zionists, who, in search of a secular and yet distinctively Jewish culture, attempted "to recapture tradition as the substance of a new identity, with folklore functioning as a surrogate for religion."[36] To be sure, cultural Zionists also utilized religious traditions that, notwithstanding their folkloric elements, were sustained by belief in revelation and the normativity of the Law.

Buber's Anthologies and German Romantic Nationalism

As a selection of the choice literary expressions of German and European culture, the anthology played a crucial role in the shaping of popular bourgeois culture from the eighteenth century onwards. K. W. Ramler's *Lieder der Deutschen: Eine repräsentative Anthologie* (1766) was an early example of the new cultural and national self-understanding. With the rise of Romanticism in the nineteenth century, the genre was used to document the importance of folk wisdom, often only preserved in oral traditions, as a source nurturing a people's collective identity. Comprised of legends, fairytales, myths, proverbs, songs, customs, and folk wisdom, these expressions were deemed to register in pristine form a people's allegedly timeless and eternal soul.[37] This was the overarching concern of the Grimm brothers in their various collections of German folktales, of Herder in his anthology of the German folk song, and of Elias Lönnrot in his rendition of the Finnish epic.

Zionist thinkers were also initially driven by a Romantic nationalism. But it would be erroneous to view Zionist anthologies, including those of Buber, as mere imitations of the German and other models. Whereas German anthologies in the Romantic tradition refracted the view of nature as the transcendent ground of the collective identity,[38] Zionist anthologists drew upon an autochthonous religious tradition.[39] Moreover, as we noted before, what seemed to be a totally new Jewish literary creation was to a degree the continuation of "the anthological habit" (D. Stern), which can be best be described as a constant reweaving of older traditions and text units in the context of evolving cultural and social conditions.

Rediscovered and invested with new meaning by the fin-de-siècle German literary movement of Naturalism, anthologies assumed in German discourse the role of contributing to the promotion of a new national identity. The German essayist and lyric Hermann Conradi formulated through the anthology of modern poetry the credo of the new vanguard of nationally minded poets: the birth of a literature out of the "Germanic essence."[40] Shortly before the First World War, German anthologies would celebrate the rekindled national spirit and herald a "Germanic Renaissance," based on the poetry of the Middle Ages.[41] Indeed, German Romanticism "commended to each community the discovery of its primordial characteristics."[42] The advocates of the German romantic renaissance, such as Richard Dehmel and Julius and Heinrich Hart, sought to return in their anthologies to the concept of *Bildung* through the works of early German Romanticism.[43] Buber's affiliation with the Hart brothers and the Neue Gemeinschaft which they established in Berlin in 1900 left its mark on his rhetoric and on his conception of cultural renewal.

The beginnings of Buber's literary activities correspond both temporally and programmatically with the rise of German Neo-Romanticism and its search for the unadulterated, original elements of culture. The quest for spiritual unity found its analogue in the rediscovery of mystical and mythical literature.[44] Just a few months prior to Buber's emphatic call for a "Jewish Renaissance," the publisher Eugen Diederichs (1867–1930), whom Buber had befriended, had issued a circular under the title "Zu neuer Renaissance!" (1900), calling for a new cultural dawn.[45] Through his publishing house established in 1898, Diederichs became one of the principal patrons of the German Renaissance. Coining the term "Neuromantik" in 1905 to characterize the movement, the declared objective of his publishing activities was to promote "a return to a higher transcendent reality"[46]—a reality that is best apprehended through mysticism and myth. He emphatically declared that "the Germans must now pass into mysticism in order again sense the world as a whole."[47] Indeed, only after having become acquainted with Diederichs did Buber begin to consider the representation of Jewish myth and mysticism. He felt challenged by Diederichs to demonstrate the "existence of a Jewish mysticism."[48] As early as 1903 he discussed with the publisher his plans for an anthology of mystical testimonies. Due to Diederichs initial reservations, the work was postponed until 1909, when it was published under the title *Ekstatische Konfessionen*.

Buber's use of the anthology differed from that of the German romantic renaissance in that he redefined the genre and along with it the meaning of representation. His main concern was how best to create engaged readers

who would turn into active advocates of the Jewish Renaissance. Yet Buber's intellectual origins are to be located in nineteenth-century Romantic discontent with the regnant philosophical claims to epistemological certainty and the attendant crisis of representation. Through the mediation of Nietzsche and the critique of language, Buber assimilated Romantic skepticism and refracted it through his program of a Jewish Renaissance. His early anthologies of Hasidism were central to this program, but the vision inspiring these works was primed neither by nostalgia for an irretrievable ideal past nor by a desire to appropriate an exotic otherness. Hasidism, or rather the mystical aesthetics of this movement, exemplified the spiritual parameters of the envisioned cultural renaissance-cum-renewal.

CHAPTER THREE

Zionist Anthologies

Moderate Modernism: Hayyim Nahman Bialik's "Ingathering"

The discourse among cultural Zionists regarding anthologies can be divided into four phases. Given that we are examining a discourse that developed both in the East and in the West, the time frames given below offer but approximate dates to allow for a basic structural survey. In the first stage (ca. 1895–1907), the first few anthologies of Jewish literature, such as Israel B. Levner's *Kol 'aggadot yisra'el: 'arukhot 'al pi ha-meqorot ha-rishonim u-ketuvot bi-leshon ha-miqra le-fi seder ha-zemanim* (Warsaw: Tushiyyah, 1895) and Shmarya Levin's *Shirat yisra'el: mivhar ha-shirah ha-'ivrit mi-qadmutah we-'ad ha-'et ha-aharonah*, part 1 (Warsaw: Achiasaf, 1896), were published prior to the First Zionist Congress in Basel (1897) and were primarily directed to the Jewish youth in Russia and Poland.[1] Hence the institutional infrastructure necessary for the creation of an "imagined national community" that could be shaped by the executive arm of the Zionist movement was not yet in place. At the time other anthological projects were under being planned, including one by Hayyim Nahman Bialik: an anthology of the poetry of Spanish Jewry, also titled *Shirat yisra'el* and eventually published in 1906.[2] Only a few of these projects came to fruition.[3] The second phase (ca. 1908–14), preceding the First World War, witnessed the beginning of a systematic approach to anthologizing under the intellectual guidance of Bialik. This progression in anthologizing became manifest in the publication of the *Sefer ha-'aggadah*, a comprehensive collection of legends from the Talmud and Midrash co-edited with Yehoshua H. Rawnitzky. The third phase (ca. 1916–25) witnessed attempts, in particular in the West, to modify and amplify Bialik's conception of ingathering. In Germany, the Cultural Committee of the Zionist Association for Ger-

many (ZVfD), chaired from 1916 to 1931 by Salman Schocken, promoted a distinctive program of anthologies, collections to be realized in the 1930s.[4] Schocken authorized Buber to assume a leading role in the establishment of a program of collecting and presenting Jewish literary sources.[5] Both believed that the national cultural work required an educational orientation to serve the goal of Jewish adult education in Germany. Buber used this position to move ahead with the founding of an agency for the collection of folkloric Jewish traditions, with a special focus on Hasidism. This essentially archival work included the collection of handwritten and unpublished Hasidic manuscripts.[6] The fourth stage began during the Fourth Aliyah (1924–28), when eighty thousand mostly East European Jews emigrated to Palestine. Among them was Nahman Bialik, in 1924. Once there, he became increasingly attuned to the sensibilities of the Jewish settlers, the *Yishuv*. In the ancient homeland the anthology became the principal medium for the reconsideration of cultural memory.

Two at times conflicting conceptions of Jewish culture influenced the creation of anthologies at the turn of the twentieth century, namely that of the "Hebrew book" and that of the "Jewish book." Bialik argued that "it was Hebrew literature alone that refined the nation and brought us to revival."[7] In accord with the Hebraists of Eastern Europe, he made writing in Hebrew conditional for inclusion in a national anthology that would, depending on its content, reflect a Hebrew modernism. An outstanding poet, Bialik is today considered a "proto-modernist."[8] Buber, on the other hand, as the leading figure of the Jewish Renaissance in Germany, prioritized a sense of Jewishness and a modernism that did not restrict itself to a specific language.[9] Jewish youth, as he wrote in 1919, "must no longer permit itself the illusion that it can establish a decisive link to its people merely by reading Bialik's poems or by singing Yiddish folksongs; nor by the addition of a few quasi-religious sentiments and lyricisms."[10]

One leading conception of how best to pursue the realization of a national culture emerged from a distinguished circle of Hebrew writers and essayists in Odessa, who gathered around Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927) and were contributors to his journal *Ha-Shiloah*. Among the members of this circle was Bialik. Isolated creative contributions to the rebirth of Hebrew could, according to Bialik, neither rescue Judaism from oblivion nor provide a viable framework for the creation of a national literature. Consequently, anthologies were needed that would exhibit the entire range of forms and expressions of Jewish literature from the past.[11] In a series of articles—"Le-kinnusah shel ha-'aggadah ha-'ivrit" (The ingathering of the Hebrew legend, 1908), "'Al te'udat ha-kinnusiyah ha-tarbutit" (On the attestation

of cultural ingathering, 1910), and "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri" (The Hebrew book, 1913)[12]—he formulated his conception of the national anthology. Bialik's principle of *kinnus*, the cultural program of a systematic, anthological ingathering of the *'aggadah*, the Jewish legend,[13] as the nation's most unique creative asset, came to fruition in 1908 with the publication of the above noted *Sefer ha-'aggadah*.[14] Continuing the efforts of the Russian Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, to rehabilitate the *'aggadah*, Bialik promoted the transformation of the *'aggadah* into secular folklore.[15] To this end he employed the metaphor of "pruning," the careful selection of the choice literary fruits of Judaism's millennial cultural heritage.[16] "For the sake of presenting the people with a comprehensive sense of its creativity," the ingathering and pruning of the sources from all generations and their thematic reordering had to be subjected to the principles of *hatimah* (canonical closure) and *genizah* (canonical exclusion).[17] Although not meant in the traditional sense of canonical closure, Bialik's *hatimah* expressed the conviction that traditional Jewish creativity had come to a close. Yet the Jewish national Renaissance must build upon its legacy. His moderate approach to Hebrew modernism comes to bear in his self-understanding as "one who orders" (*mesader*) and rearranges the *'aggadah* into a new literature.[18] He sought to retrieve the "pearls" of the tradition, that is, the vital remains, and to winnow out that which lost its meaning for contemporary Jewish life. In his view, what decides what is to be represented is the "holy spirit of the nation."[19] Contrary to what Bialik suggested, the kind of *'aggadah* he was interested in was actually not a "classic creation of the spirit of the people"[20] but often the invention of an elite of rabbinic scholars.

Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840), a traditional Jew and leader of the Jewish Enlightenment in Galicia, offered a conception of *'aggadah* that had some relevance for Bialik. In his understanding of the *'aggadah* Krochmal was influenced by German Romanticism, specifically Herder's idea of a *Volksgeist*. He also appropriated Hegelian idealism and Vico's evolutionist philosophy of history, claiming that each nation had its distinctive spiritual principle that determines its existence and continuity.[21] The Jewish people's unique relationship to God and the Divine Presence assures what Krochmal designates as the eternal quality of the Jewish spirit, which—in distinction to other people—prompts the continuous renewal of national life.[22] In contrast to Krochmal, Bialik appealed to the "spirit of the people" not as a historiosophical construct but as a popular slogan for the Zionist mobilization of contemporary Jewry for the cause of renewal. "Every 'rebirth' [*tehiyyah*] is basically a repetition of the earlier, but on a new, shorter path."[23]

Although Bialik sought to reconcile modernism with tradition, his conception of *kinnus* and the "genuine" Jewish book was largely determined by his conviction that "secularism" was a fact that had to be accepted.[24] Given his belief in the "historicity of culture," his *kinnus* was more of an "inventory," as Nathan Rotenstreich put it.[25] In order to "rescue the *'aggadah* from the *beyt ha-midrash*" (the traditional house of Jewish learning), the particular biblical verse upon which the exegesis is based was omitted in the *Sefer ha-'aggadah*.[26] His introduction to the anthology makes no mention of the intimate connection between *midrash-'aggadah* and Torah. Rather, he wanted readers to view the classic Jewish legends simply as manifestations of folk imagination.[27] Divested of their religious relevance, the *'aggadot* would thus continue to inspire modern writers and poets. As a Hebraist, Bialik intended to incorporate the spirit of Talmud and Midrash within modern Hebrew, thereby making language the main vehicle in the nationalization of Jewish literature.[28] Although preservation was the goal, Bialik avoided any impression that ingathering seeks to renew traditional spirituality or theological principles. The nature of the *Sefer ha-'aggadah* was that of a "literary anthology."[29]

Part of the long-term agenda of *kinnus* involved inclusion of the literature of Hasidism, which was to be presented alongside oral and written folk literature. It appears that this decision was motivated primarily by the aim of completeness. On this basis, an anthology of Hasidism had to encompass selections from both the theoretical and narrative literature of Hasidism, namely "a) selected essays, discussions and aphorisms from the best of Hasidic books, ordered according to subjects, to foster an understanding of the nature and essence of theoretical and practical Hasidism in its manifold relationships, and stories and b) legends of Hasidism. Of course, the most beautiful and most distinguished among them, ordered according to time and subjects, with an introduction etc."[30]

This was but a formal recognition of the anthological value of Hasidism. Even if more moderate than Krochmal, Bialik deemed Hasidism to be a negative phenomenon. In conversation with Simon Rawidowicz, he expressed his aversion to the contemporary fascination with the Hasidic legend and folklore. He dismissed out of hand Rawidowicz's republication of the *Shivhey ha-Besht* as wasted effort. In his view, Hasidism was bereft of all value unless subjected to higher thought and turned into a "new page."[31] Advocating a modern Jewish high culture, he considered the contemporary concern for Hasidic literature as "a sign of decline in our national thought." The classical *'aggadah* of the sages, by contrast, was a cultural manifestation of Judaism's intellectuality, demonstrating the rational disposition of the Jewish mind.

Between Eastern Hebrew Nationalism and Western Jewish Renewal

Russian cultural Zionists tended to share Bialik's vision of a national Jewish culture and the secularization of the millennial literary heritage of the Jewish people. This was especially true of the Hebrew writers who gathered around Bialik in the vibrant secular intellectual and multi-ethnic atmosphere of Odessa.[32] The waves of pogroms that swept the Russian Pale of Settlement from the 1880s to the early 1920s, and Odessa in 1905, had reinforced the Jewish experience of being an isolated and threatened minority and led to renewed efforts for a Hebrew national culture. While Zionists who lived in countries in which assimilation and full emancipation were genuine possibilities were much more hesitant than Bialik and the Odessa circle to unreservedly endorse the idea of a national Jewish culture, in tsarist Russia the restrictions of the Pale of Settlement meant that Jews were socially, linguistically, and culturally isolated, and the thought of secularization did not appear to them to undermine the national character of the people.[33] Thus, while in Central Europe secularization entailed assimilation and the attenuation of Jewish identity and cohesion, Russian Zionists were not troubled by the putative link between secularization and assimilation. In light of these structural, economic and socio-political differences, Western and Central European Renaissance and Eastern European *tehiyyah* did not follow the same path.[34]

An alternative to Bialik's project of *kinnus* came from a group of Austro-Hungarian Hebrew writers who formulated their own anthological programs of ingathering, even when their anthologies were to be published by the publishing house Moriah, founded by Bialik and Rawnitzky in Odessa in 1901. The publishing program of Moriah (later renamed Dvir) reflected the objectives of *kinnus*. In order to distinguish the cultural vision of this circle of Austro-Hungarian writers from both the Zionist cultural politics of Odessa and the non-Zionist Hebrew writers of Warsaw,[35] we may designate this group as the 'Galician Zionist circle.' To be sure, this specification remains relatively arbitrary, and any subscription to sociological, geographical, or other criteria of classification is necessarily insufficient given the simultaneous participation of these writers in various cultures. However, these Jewish writers committed to Zionism shared one common denominator, namely the intention to revalorize East European Hasidism for the future national literature and culture. This enterprise entailed a unique synthesis between *hokhmat yisra'el* (lit. "wisdom of Israel," meaning Jewish Studies) and literature. The most prominent and most relevant among the Galician circle were, with respect

to Buber's anthological objectives, Shmuel Y. Agnon (Czaczkes, 1888–1970), and Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel (1883–1971). Another Galician relevant for Buber was in this context Marcus Mordekhai Ehrenpreis (1869–1951).

Although born in Vienna, Buber spent the formative years of his childhood and youth in Lemberg (Lvov), then one of the most ethnically diverse cities of the Habsburg Empire, where he came into contact with both the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and Hasidism. Though often characterized as "entirely a man of the West,"[36] Buber considered himself a "Polish [i.e., a Galician] Jew."[37] The environment of his youth was permeated with *haskalah*, but the "atmosphere of Hasidism" left an abiding mark on his Jewish self-understanding as well.[38]

Buber was close to Micha Josef Berdyczewski (Bin-Gorion, 1865–1921). Though not a Galician, he was also associated with the Galician circle. Born into a Hasidic family, he was raised in Medzibezh, Podolia, the center of early Hasidism. It seems natural that the young Berdyczewski would develop an interest in Hasidic spirituality. In addition, he was much involved in the local literary scene of Hebrew writers in Galicia, whom he accused of creating a national minority culture based on a "minor literature" with parochial horizons.[39]

Buber, Ben-Yehezkel, Agnon, and Berdyczewski held religiosity in its mystical expression to be the vital force of Jewish existence. As a wide-ranging popular movement that successfully harmonized empirical knowledge and lived experience, and body and mind, Hasidism offered an ideal basis for a psychological and emotive reevaluation of Judaism.[40] It was this cultural-philosophical interest in religious tradition which set this circle apart from Bialik's approach to ingathering. The documents that Buber, Berdyczewski, and Agnon initially deemed fundamental to their representation of the oral teachings of Hasidism were primarily selected from the formative and early period of Hasidism of the Baal Shem Tov and R. Nahman of Bratzlav. Ben-Yehezkel, who only began in the second decade of the twentieth century his project of ingathering the Hasidic legend, presented a more inclusive approach to Hasidism. All four either studied at a West European university or lived temporarily in German society and also—except for Ben-Yehezkel—published some of their works in German.[41] Living in two cultures and to varying degrees also participating in theses cultures, the Zionist writers of Galician background witnessed assimilation and were confronted with the negative dialectics of antisemitism and Jewish self-hatred.[42] Agnon was profoundly agonized by Germanized Jews' expressions of self-denial and exposed these attitudes in the prose character of Mister Lublin, who represented an extreme example of the "Jewish

parvenu." The circle's turn to Hasidism may be viewed as a response to the shame and embarrassment that bourgeois German Jews felt toward the *Ostjude*. The images of the early spiritual leaders of this renewal movement were to serve as models for an integrated Jewish identity and reunite the Jews of the East and the West.

It is important to note that these writers were interpreters *and* anthologists of Hasidism, whereas Bialik confined himself to the role of an anthologist and its technical aspects, with little interest in a reinterpretation of rabbinic Judaism. But they neither constituted themselves consciously as a circle nor did they ever convene to exchange their views directly. (Ben-Yehezkel did participate, however, together with Agnon in a circle of Galician Hebraists which gathered around Eliezer Meir Lifshitz.)[43] Thus this somewhat imaginary Galician circle materializes solely through Buber's plans for collaborative projects to anthologize Hasidic sources. Buber consulted with each of its "members" on common anthological projects and also engaged them in bibliographical and biographical research on various Zaddikim. Given their different personalities, each of them developed his own view of a modern *Jewish* (not necessarily Hebrew) anthology based on the selective representation of Hasidism through its literature. Hence one can speak not of a shared anthological approach but rather of common attitudes and agenda.[44] The Galician anthologists were, despite their admiration for the leading national Hebrew poet, reluctant to endorse Bialik's program of *kinnus* wholeheartedly. The very choice of titles they gave to their anthologies, often alluding to or directly borrowed from well-known literary predecessors in Judaism such as *Sefer hasidim* (Berdyczewski), *'Or ha-ganuz* (Buber), or *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* (Ben-Yehezkel), reflected their wish to impart to their anthologies a sense of continuity, while at the same time manifestly forging new cultural and ideological horizons.

Buber's own interest in anthologies actually reaches back to 1902. One of the first projects he intended for the Jüdischer Verlag, which Buber co-founded in 1902,[45] was an "anthology of new Jewish poetry . . . which should mainly contain translations from modern Hebrew literature" into German. He addressed none other than Bialik with an "urgent request . . . to send a list of those lyrical and novelistic creations which are worthy of being included in this anthology." As the only valid criteria of selecting the material Buber named "originality and artistic value," and he added in his letter to the distinguished Hebrew poet that "imitations of biblical and European poetry

should be excluded."[46] Echoing Ahad Ha'am's opposition to artless imitations of Western models, Buber wished to exclude anything "artistically inferior" even if it were of relevance in terms of content.[47] This request is an indication of Buber's dual approach, namely, to be associated with the primarily Russian Zionist venture, on the one hand, and to address the program of Jewish renewal from the perspective of German Jewry, on the other. Buber not only shared the concern for the shaping of a national canon but actively sought to realize its goals, even though the Hebraists would not associate him with the authoritative program formulated by Bialik. He held the establishment of the institutional structures to be a precondition for an effective collecting and representation of Jewish literary forms, including the folktale.

Unlike Bialik, who had some predecessors to a novel approach to and presentation of the *'aggadah*, Buber had hardly any models from German-Jewish literature. Only the works published in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Abraham Tendlau[48] and Bernhard Kuttner[49] could function as models.[50] Reminiscent of the work of the Grimm brothers, these two collections made the Jewish folktale popular among the German readers. Tendlau's *Das Buch der Sagen und Legenden,* a free adaptation of Jewish legends, bringing together material from Talmud and Midrash, the *Ma'aseh Bukh*, the *Kav ha-Yashar,* including oral traditions, was reprinted several times. Perhaps inspired by Tendlau, Buber initially had a general interest in anthologizing Jewish folktales. While working on *Rabbi Nachman* and *Legende*, he adapted folktales that were only published in 1934 under the title *Erzählungen von Engeln, Geistern und Dämonen*.[51] Leaving aside the fact that Buber's anthologies of Hasidic wisdom are poetic adaptations written in German, they depart from Bialik's conception of a Hebrew literary anthology as canonical testimony to the classical Jewish spirit. Buber shared Berdyczewski's distrust regarding the mechanism of canonization in Judaism, which he deemed a way of silencing the anarchic yet creative mythical religiosity of pristine Judaism. They both rejected any approach resembling that of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* which they held counterproductive to their efforts of revitalization.[52] Moreover, historical writing was bound to different principles than theirs, such as factual veracity, chronology, and coherence.[53] Hence, by contrast to Bialik, Buber did not furnish his two early anthologies of Hasidic wisdom even with a minimal scholarly apparatus.

Berdyczewski's *Sefer Hasidim*

The idea of a Zionist anthology existed prior to Bialik's formulation of *kinnus*. The first to attempt a redefinition of the role of the anthological genre

in Judaism from a spiritual Zionist perspective was Micha J. Berdyczewski.[54] Known primarily for his anthologies in Hebrew and German of the *'aggadah* of the Talmud, his initial steps as a Zionist anthologist were devoted to the adaptation of Hasidic legends.[55]

In 1900 Berdyczewski edited the *Sefer hasidim*, a one-volume Hebrew anthology of Hasidic literature.[56] His goal was not to redeem obscure exponents of the Jewish spirit from arcane sources and translate them into modern Hebrew but rather to bolster through Hasidic lore the vision of a new ethics of personality. Like Bialik, he was influenced by Krochmal and his seminal work *Moreh nevukhey ha-zeman* (published posthumously in 1851). Krochmal's observations on *'aggadah* as an often hidden substratum of the enduring spirit of Judaism encouraged Berdyczewski to render poetically the mystical substructure of Judaism.[57]

He discerned in the early Hasidism of the Besht and his adherents the model for the transvaluation of values he desired.[58] The material of the *Sefer hasidim* is largely drawn from the *Shivhey ha-Besht*—a previously noted Hasidic collection of tales about the Besht—and the *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash* (The Testament of the Besht), which presents teachings of the Besht. He found some of the material in *Shalom 'al yisra'el (*Zhitomir, 1868–70). Compiled by Eliezer Zvi Zweifel (1815–88), this volume presented a collection of texts from various works of early Hasidism, including the *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*. In some instances Berdyczewski used Zweifel's adaptations of Hasidic material without making any changes. Though he marked these as quotation, he added his own poetic elaborations to those of Zweifel.

The *Sefer hasidim* begins with an essay on the spiritual history of the movement, that is, on the soul of Hasidism.[59] Here Berdyczewski programmatically links Hasidism to the national agenda of cultural rebirth (*tehiyyah*—he adds the Latin term "Renaissance" in parentheses).[60] In his idealizing view, Hasidism revolutionized Jewish life through a fundamental reinterpretation of the relationship of man to life, nature, and the world: "I see in Hasidism and in its development an inner and fundamental liberation."[61] The movement's mystical teachings were prompted, he held, by defiance to the dominant rabbinic conception of faith as bound to normative, heteronomous practice. A self-confessing Nietzschean, Berdyczewski reinterpreted Hasidism as a life-affirmative yet spiritual ethos, and in so doing he became Buber's forerunner. To be sure, Hasidism's appreciation of nature as a realm for the divine–human encounter did not include for Berdyczewski a notion of the body, let alone one that could be reconciled with Zionism's quest for the strong Jew (*Muskeljude*). Jewish revitalization, as he saw it, was confined solely to the mind.

The introduction to the *Sefer hasidim* echoes Berdyczewski's controversy with Ahad Ha'am on the function of the Hebrew journal *Ha-Shiloah*.[62] His reservations regarding Ahad Ha'am's journal and views on the future character of Jewish literature were but a spin-off from the fundamental conflict over the objectives of cultural Zionism.[63] He objected to Ahad Ha'am's exclusive emphasis on self-knowledge[64] and instead demanded a universal orientation by removing the ideological distinction between one's "Jewishness and humanity." In his judgment Hasidism exemplified the desired paradigm shift, by promoting an all-encompassing renewal.[65] To emphasize the revolutionary direction of the envisioned rebirth, he preferred to speak of "Hebraism" rather than Judaism. With "Hebraism and humanism," Judaism and Israel witness the end of the *galut*-mentality and the birth of a new life,[66] a "life as human beings in which their [the Jews'] humanity precedes all tradition."[67] According to Berdyczewski, neither traditional Judaism nor the Haskalah provide a Jewish self-understanding that would be in harmony with general culture. By contrast, he proffers elements of Hasidism as the panacea for the identity crisis afflicting modern Jewry. Moreover, Hasidism is not only compatible with modern cultural and philosophical sensibilities but fosters individuality and plurality in method and outlook.[68]

Berdyczewski's anthology is structured into three main chapters, *'aggadot*, *partsufim we-hezyonot* ("legends," "visages," and "visions"), each containing eight subchapters. Notably, the division of the anthology into three main parts and several subchapters was adopted by Buber for his *Legende*. The legends of the first division are based on motifs and reworked excerpts from the *Shivhey ha-besht* and the *Keter shem tov*. Berdyczewski makes no effort to provide a nuanced portrayal of the historical Besht as a wonder-healer and miracle-worker but presented him as a new type of spiritual authority.[69] The first main chapter offers an account of the revelation of the Besht as a charismatic spiritual leader who "hears what the heavens narrate and the earth tells."[70] One of the eight subchapters carries the title *tehiyyah* ("rebirth"), explicitly evoking the cultural national objective. An important Hasidic motif for a renewed Jewish self-understanding is the instructive teaching of *'ahizat 'enayim* (lit. "seizing the eyesight"). The pursuit of a hedonistic self-centered life characteristic of modernity means an illusion and self-deception, as Berdyczewski warns his fellow "liberated" Jews.[71] He considerably rewrites a well-known parable from *Keter shem tov* built around the mystical metaphor *'ahizat 'enayim* (see chapter 7).[72] The Besht's unique capacity to perceive the revealed in the hidden is integral to his strivings to set Israel free spiritually, "not through Torah and commandments, statutes and customs, but through an insight, an insight penetrating the hidden

light, enveloped in the tale by a net of illusion [*ahizat 'enayim*]."[73] By internalizing the spiritualized worldview of the Besht that "everything is one, everything is God" and by affirming the principle of unity, the Jew can free himself from self-deceit and false consciousness.

The legends in the chapter *partsufim* ("visages") are primarily hagiographic narrations about the Besht and a few other early Hasidic masters. The narrations testify to the supernatural prophetic quality of the Zaddik as a spiritual leader. The subchapters bring up a variety of issues and concepts, ranging from the righteous man's fear of failing in perfect devotion and of becoming susceptible to sin (in *shenayyim 'ohazim*), the meaning of total dedication to God (an allusion to the Hasidic concept of spiritual self-sacrifice, in *'arba'ah 'avot*), the moment of religious awakening (in *ba'al teshuvah* and *metir 'asurim,* Ps. 146:7), and the priority of religious values over the punctilious observance of the commandments (in *pidyon*). The subchapter *be-ze 'ahar ze* can be read as an allegory of the quandaries of modern Jewish identity.

The concluding chapter *hezyonot* (visions) is a peculiar blend of imitations of specific genres of Jewish religious literature mingled with excerpts from unattributed Hasidic works. However, the title does not adequately reflect the content of the eight subchapters or sections. What we find here are not so much visions or instructive sermons but religious prose jostling with uncredited quotes from various Hasidic sources. Berdyczewski fuses the language of the Bible, Talmud (including Aramaisms), Kabbalah, and Hasidism into an idiosyncratic form of expression. In the subchapter *riqqudin* ("dance") he highlights means of ecstatic mysticism to achieve the "secret of unification," emphasizing dance, song, melodies, and prayer. Without identifying its scriptural origin or explaining the Hasidic meaning of the title of the subsequent subchapter, *'ani tefillah* ("I am prayer," Ps. 109:4), he offers a description of the ascent during prayer and the attainment of communion with the Shekhinah (the Divine Presence) through mystical annihilation of the self. He relates the testimony of the ecstatic experience in a first person narrative, ascribing it to the Besht. Of the several biblical verses adopted by Hasidism in support of new religious doctrine, Berdyczewski quotes only one: "I have set the Lord before me always" (Ps. 16:8).

Nonetheless, the Hebrew Bible is evoked throughout the *Sefer hasidim*. Some of the subchapter headings recall the axiological value of the sacred text. Biblical phrases such as *metir 'asurim* ("setting prisoners free," Ps. 146:7), *pidyon nefesh* (lit., "a liberation for the spirit," here: redemption of the soul, Ps. 49:9), and *'az yashir* ("I will sing," Exod. 15:1, Num. 21:17) are reinscribed into Jewish memory. The subchapter *'al ha-mazon* ("on the

meal") —which denotes in Hasidic discourse the view that God provides the nourishment necessary for spiritual ascent—is introduced by the biblical phrase "you shall eat your fill" (*wa-'akhalta we-śavata,* Deut. 6:11; 8:10; 11:15). Moreover, he constructs monologues of religious-ethical instruction by imitating Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in formulaic phrases such as "I say to you," or "you will say" and the like.[74] In concluding he reminds his readers that Hasidism demands a life that transcends existential or physical concerns, ironically recasting the original biblical expression "you shall eat your fill" to "you shall fast your fill." In *'az yashir* he takes the biblical conception of holiness grounded in the separation between holy and profane as his point of departure to illustrate the religious attitude of the Hasid, who "feels that the world is nothing but one." In the subchapter *devarim* ("things"), Berdyczewski touches upon the mystical meaning of speech and silence for the Besht, citing and paraphrasing theosophical excerpts from unaccredited Hasidic works.

The prime religious value in Hasidism, he maintains, is the spiritual coming to the mystical nothingness as symbolized in the image of the "spiritual ladder."[75] Through the doctrines of unification (*yihud*) and spiritual annihilation of the self (*bittul ha-yesh*), early Hasidism marked the achievement of absolute unity between the individual and the divine Reality. The Hasid achieves the state of unity in an ecstatic experience and then "feels his relation to the Upper Light."[76] In the ecstatic rapture he "feels the secret of [divine] vitality and the universal experience that binds generation to generation from time immemorial to the end of generations."[77] The thread of the generations is a recurrent feature in the *Sefer hasidim*.[78] The subchapter '*le-shem shamayim*' ("for the sake of heaven"), is almost entirely composed of quotations strung together from *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash.* The frequent linking of traditional Jewish values with the teachings of Hasidism is meant to provide a sense of continuity for the literary heritage. Whereas a phenomenological understanding of the process of spiritual transformation remains vague, Berdyczewski emphasizes the power of the will as expressed in the concept of mystical intention (*kawwanah*). The idea of redemption in Hasidism is, however, not a central theme for Berdyczewski, neither in its eschatological expression as the 'forcing of the end' nor in its subdued expression in the concept of 'raising the sparks.' The subchapter *sha'ar ha-yihud* opens with yet another reference to the Torah (Exod. 20:3): *'Anokhi we-lo yihiyeh lekhah* ("And you shall have no [other gods] besides Me").

Berdyczewski's anthology is explicitly interpretive and unabashedly unhistorical. The textual "adjustments," the arbitrary fusion of sources, and poetic adaptations are designed to communicate the message of a purified,

authentic soul based on the rejection of a life built on "physical pleasure" and base material needs. These appropriations serve to promote his vision of the "new Hebrew" who is liberated to realize a free, creative individuality. The contradictions entailed in harmonizing Hasidism—a mystical movement aiming at a spiritual existence—with Jewish national regeneration—which is to unfold in the mundane world of history and culture and challenged to balance mind and body—are all too evident. As the first notable neo-Hasidic Hebrew anthology of Hasidic legends and teachings composed by a cultural Zionist, *Sefer hasidim* did not earn much attention and had no impact on scholarly research on the movement. Berdyczewski's audience was limited to a small number of Hebrew readers, largely East European fellow Zionists.

Buber, however, studied the work carefully and included in his commentary to the four Hasidic values in *Legende* several of the sayings which Berdyczewski selected from Zweifel's adaptation of the *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*. Although he acknowledged his gratitude to the pioneer scholar of the "soul of Hasidism," he missed in Berdyczewski's interpretation an adequate "psychological analysis" of the movement.[79] Yet we note a striking similarity between *Sefer hasidim* and *Legende*, a similarity that is not limited to formal criteria. Both Buber and Berdyczewski transpose citations from various early Hasidic masters into an anthology and blend them with their commentary; they interpret a similar choice of mystical doctrines; and Buber would often use the same teaching of the Besht to illustrate his interpretive commentary.

Berdyczewski's interest in Hasidism did not cease with the publication of *Sefer hasidim*. Between 1903 and 1910 he worked on a Hebrew anthology of gleanings from Hasidism. The first volume of the *Yalqut ha-hasidut* was to present the "life, sayings, parables, and prayers of the Besht," to be organized in ten chapters. In summer 1907 he sent the projected content to Buber, who was at the time editing his *Legende*.[80] Two weeks later he informed Buber that he had nearly finished the first part of his "Hasidic anthology."[81]

According to his contract with the Lewin-Epstein publishing house in Warsaw, the first volume on the Besht was scheduled for publication in 1905.[82] For the following five years Berdyczewski kept postponing the submission of his manuscript until his publisher no longer felt obliged to abide by the contract. The correspondence between Berdyczewski and the historian of Hasidism, Samuel Abba Horodezky, sheds light on of this ill-fated project. Horodezky provided Berdyczewski with valuable information on the material, made editorial suggestions, and advised Berdyczewski to draw the material on the Besht from his disciples rather than from mid-nineteenth-century Hasidic

anthologies, which were often pseudepigraphic and unreliable.[83] Horodezky gradually began to express discontent to the extent of open criticism of Berdyczewski's editorial and organizational principles and the apologetic mode of presentation.[84] When Berdyczewski notified Horodezky in April 1906 that he had completed the *Yalqut,* he already envisaged expanding his anthological endeavor to twelve volumes, involving other historians of Hasidism, such as Simon Dubnow.[85] By 1910 Berdyczewski had ceased to regard Hasidism as a source of transformation of values.

Although disappointed for not having been considered by Bialik for participation in *kinnus*, the national task of cultural ingathering, Berdyczewski's reservations about ingathering grew and were finally articulated in a critical essay on the *Sefer ha-'aggadah*.[86] In this essay Berdyczewski takes issue with the self-understanding of Bialik and Rawnitzky, which Bialik outlined in his essay on the ingathering of the Hebrew legend. In order to distance his conception of a national anthology from that of these two Zionist anthologists, Berdyczewski refers to himself as a *me'asef* (collector). This self-designation implies that, in contradistinction to the "arranger," the collector harmonizes the imagination of the poet with the critical historical method of reconstruction applied by the historian.[87] Bialik in turn did not approve of Berdyczewski's synthesis of poetry and *'aggadah*, an approach already manifest in his *Sefer hasidim*, and it was possibly for this reason that he did not consider him for the national task of cultural ingathering.[88]

Although Berdyczewski actively supported the idea of an ingathering of the *'aggadah*, he looked askance at the *Sefer ha-'aggadah.* In his essay, he accused Bialik of being the one who had abandoned the true scholarly ethos. Bialik's anthology failed, in his view, to do justice to the "Ethics of the Fathers," which is epitomized in the rabbinic principle *dor dor we-dorshaf* (lit. "generation after generation"). This principle supports the legitimacy of each generation's own unique approach to the Torah. Thus Bialik and Rawnitzky did not make intelligible the spiritual essence of the *'aggadah* but only its instructive goal. Focusing on the moral-ethical spirit of the sages, they prioritized the *'aggadah* of the spiritual elite and glossed over the hidden spiritual roots that informed the literary creations of the people of Israel.[89] They rigorously applied the common definition among scholars of rabbinic literature that whatever is not *halakhah* is *'aggadah* and hence qualifies for being included. Often associated with obscurantism, *'aggadic* homilies fell by the wayside. The uncritical reliance on the version related in the Babylonian Talmud, whose editors mainly relied on late versions of an *'aggadah*, their taking license with linguistic emendations (often not

in accord with the "spirit of things"), and the marginalization of the narrative *'aggadah,* distorted what Berdyczewski treasured as the heterogeneity of Jewish existence.[90] Fortunately, he averred, not all traces of ancient Israel's unadulterated mythical and pagan culture were effaced in the early redactional processes of editing the Torah. It was precisely the task of the anthologist to recover and reinscribe the forgotten traditions into the cultural memory of the nation—a position shared by Saul Tchernichovsky. Notwithstanding the inclusive principles guiding his editorial and anthological work, the Torah remained for Berdyczewski the spiritual basis of the people of Israel.

Berdyczewski's critique of the *Sefer ha-'aggadah* resulted from his negative stance on canonization. He believed that the *Sefer ha-'aggadah* repeats the earlier, theologically motivated clearing accompanying the codification of the Talmud.[91] The novel Hebrew and Jewish anthology should resist the ideological tendentiousness of literary gleaning and its leveling of all differences. A representative Zionist anthology had to mirror the creative plurality of the people and give expression to the historical-philosophical "thread of the generations."[92] Therefore he deemed it necessary to include as many versions and divergent expressions of the people's literary imagination as possible. Berdyczewski's understanding of the role of the anthology corresponded to his conception of Judaism as a civilization shaped and continuously transformed by historical development.[93]

CHAPTER FOUR

In Search of Collaborators

The Role of Marcus Ehrenpreis

Like Buber, Galician-born Marcus Ehrenpreis was a member of the Democratic Faction within the World Zionist Organization and of the editorial board of the *Jüdische Almanach*.[1] In February 1903 Buber mentioned to Ehrenpreis his plans for a collection of occidental mysticism: "It should be a complete presentation of occidental mysticism, conceptualized as a collection [*Sammelwerk*], edited by myself and of which I will approximately write half, and that of five volumes the third shall offer a treatment of Jewish mysticism."[2] In 1904 he invited Ehrenpreis to join him in the compilation of an "anthology of Hasidism." The reasons for considering Ehrenpreis as a partner in this venture were many. Firstly, he had written his doctorate on the doctrine of emanation in thirteenth-century Kabbalah and thus had acquired some expertise in the field of Jewish mysticism.[3] His interest in the Kabbalah and Hasidism,[4] combined with his Galician background, his engagement in Zionist affairs, his erudition in German culture and language, and his reputation as one of the most prolific Hebrew writers of his generation rendered him a most valued associate. Like all the *Tse'irim*, the young cultural vanguard, he was a Nietzschean who sought liberation from "rabbinic culture" which, as the future rabbi writes, "confined us in a cage of laws and restrictions."[5] His friendship with Berdyczewski, whom Buber revered for initiating a renewed interest in Hasidism, only added to his esteem. Further, Ehrenpreis endorsed a psychological understanding of Judaism.[6] Buber recognized that the success in formulating an alternative cultural Zionist perspective to that of Ahad Ha'am would largely depend on the support by a respected Hebraist such as Ehrenpreis. Like Buber, Ehrenpreis favored a synthesis of Judaism and European culture and presented his

vision in a speech on "The New Hebrew Literature" at the Zionist Congress in 1897.[7] In advocating the renewal of myth, Ehrenpreis parted from Ahad Ha'am and his resistance to the popularization of folkloristic and nonrational elements in Judaism. According to the 1897 speech, the model for a new Jewish culture had yet to be found.[8] He shared Buber's religious sensibilities and, unlike other Zionists, he did not see an irresolvable contradiction between national culture and religion. In early 1904 Buber informed Ehrenpreis that he had "begun collecting material for a book on the Jewish soul which shall provide a survey of the Jewish folk psyche [*Volkspsyche*]."[9] Convinced that in Ehrenpreis he had found a like-minded partner, Buber proposed co-editing an anthology. The work was to include "1) a historical exposition, 2) an essay on the mystical content of Hasidism and its inner relationship to other teachings (Neoplatonism, Vedanta, Eckhart etc.), 3) a selection of significant sections from Hasidic literature in carefully [aesthetically] stylized translation."[10]

Buber does not designate the exact themes according to which the "significant sections" of Hasidism were to be selected. Such considerations may have been clarified in oral exchange. In the aforementioned letter Buber states further that he aims at a book that would be a "European-literary phenomenon, . . . a manifestation from an unknown world."[11] Ehrenpreis declined the offer. Buber's response is not extant, and we are left to speculative conjecture on the reasons for his decision. Possibly, as a dedicated Hebraist he was unwilling to compromise on the issue of Hebrew or perhaps the project itself was not to his liking. Determined to introduce the Jewish national movement to the vitality of Hasidism and at the same time to make a contribution to world literature, Buber had no choice but to pursue the project without a collaborator. With the expectation that this book would show to assimilated Western Jewry a hitherto "unknown aspect of Jewish [spiritual] productivity,"[12] the anthology came to fruition in 1906 and bore the title *Die Geschichten des Rabbi Nachman.*

Micha Josef Berdyczewski: An Ambivalent Collaborator

After the publication of his first two anthologies of Hasidic tales, legends, and anecdotes, Buber resumed his earlier search for a suitable collaborator in the editing of an anthology. Since his conception of Jewish culture as an organism that draws its vitality from lived experience had by then fully crystallized and was articulated in many essays and speeches, the pool from which to conscript fellow Zionists for the realization of his Jewish mystical

anthology was limited. Fundamental agreement on the nature of a modern Jewish culture to be mediated through anthologies was not the only precondition for a joint venture. Buber also hoped to enlist the talent of a cultural Zionist writer fluent in Hebrew and German, with a strong grounding in European culture and literature. In addition, this spiritual Zionist had to share his appreciation of Hasidism and pronounced neo-Romantic orientation as well as his understanding of the nature of Jewish literary modernity. Last but not least, this Jewish writer had to be favorably disposed to publish the work with a non-Jewish publisher. Berdyczewski seemed to meet these criteria. The first personal encounter between them probably took place in 1904.[13] Buber soon began to discuss with Berdyczewski several conceptions of Jewish anthologies. In 1907 he suggested editing a selection of Jewish mystical writings.[14] Berdyczewski, who was at the time working on the above noted "Yalqut ha-hasidut," responded that he was "not principally uninterested in participating,"[15] but reminded Buber of the philological work required for the realization of such an endeavor.[16] Shortly thereafter, Buber shared with Berdyczewski the structure for the anthology he wished to call *The Seven Books of Jewish Mysticism,* which would involve several collaborators. Diederichs agreed to publish the envisioned anthology but first asked to see a list of the potential collaborators. The anthology was to be organized as follows: "I. Talmud. II. Apocalyptic figures and Alexandrians. III. Midrash. IV. Older (Yetziritic) Kabbalah. V. Middle (Zoharitic) Kabbalah. VI. New (Lurianic and post-Lurianic) Kabbalah. VII. Chassidism."[17] In a letter Buber solicited Berdyczewski's opinion on the selection as well as "the collaborators to be approached," and "which part or parts you yourself are inclined to undertake."

In his response, Berdyczewski revised Buber's organization of the seven books and expressed a wish to enlarge the edition. His alternative suggestion shifts the focus to the "real mysticism" of the Kabbalah and its successors, which he divides as follows:

> I. a) Yetziratic Mysticism, b) Hechalitic and Zoharitic Mysticism. II. Intermediate Mysticism (from Zohar until Moses Cordowerer—"Pardes") and Luria, a) Speculative Mysticism, b) Messianic Mysticism. III. The Newer Mysticism: a) the Ethics, starting from b) the Visionaries (Caro), c) the Positivists, d) speculative-Lurianic Mysticism, e) the epigones [Ausläufer] (Luzzato and Gaon). IV. Neomessianism and Chassidism: a) Neosabbatians and Frank, b) the Besht and his main disciples (who are connected with the Lurianic Kabbalah), c) Habad (the school of Schneersohn which is connected with Pardes), d) Nachman of Bratzlav.[18]

Aside from the odd fact that he apparently dated the *Sefer yetzirah* before Hekhalot mysticism and avoids explicit mention of the pseudo-Messiah Shabbtai Zvi, Berdyczewski displays a rather comprehensive understanding of the historical development of Jewish mysticism. In his view, Jewish mysticism is determined by Kabbalah, so that even Beshtian Hasidism should be presented as a continuation of the post-Zoharic Kabbalah. Moreover, he deliberately included elements that seem to have challenged Buber's view of the Jewish mystical tradition as religious inwardness, namely, active Messianism in the historical guise of Shabbateanism and Frankism.

Parallel to the work on their respective anthologies, the writers planned other joint projects. Berdyczewski suggested editing an anthology of mystical prayer.[19] At the same time, Buber contemplated an anthology of "significant pieces of narrative literature from Talmud, Midrash, Kabbalah, and later times" that he intended to realize even prior to "the mysticism anthology" and for which he hoped to enlist Berdyczewski. Putting his potential coeditor moderately under pressure, Buber bemoaned his own lack of "competence" and "qualification" to undertake such a work and underscores that Berdyczewski is his exclusive choice as a partner in the project:[20] "for a collaboration, I could not consider anyone but you; this means that I will undertake this matter only if you are interested in it and are willing to join me."[21] Buber noted he had already compiled *'aggadot* for the section on Midrashic literature and "made different lists in general, especially about the original elements of the Maaseh books." Acknowledging Berdyczewski's erudition in Talmudic literature, he suggested that it would thus not be difficult for him to select material for the envisioned anthology. In the first phase of collaboration "a comprehensive index of the pieces in consideration is prepared and then translations are distributed."[22]

Further, Buber insisted, a translation that was merely faithful to the original meaning would be inadequate; their project would have to follow other criteria of representation in order to render the material "artistically valuable." Here he courted an intractable Buberian dilemma. In 1908 both writers began to ponder the creation of the necessary institutional framework for a comprehensive and organized collection and translation of legends. After some consideration of the meaning of "collecting the legends," Berdyczewski apprised Buber that he conceived of a plan that "would best facilitate the objective."[23] Two months later he proposed the founding of "a kind of society for the collection, editing, and translation of Jewish legends, tales and fairy tales."[24] The original texts (*Urtexte*) would be reproduced in the original Hebrew, whereas the source references, the index, and the translation would be in German. The translation, Berdyczewski stressed,

should be free, without any restriction as regards to the selection of the material and its reworking. Only a pronounced literary character, he implied, would enable it to reach also the general German readership.

In early 1909 Buber began to give practical effect to the plan for the establishment of a society with a scholarly character, devoted to the "research on Jewish myth." Among the contemplated members of a committee to be charged with the foundation of such a society Buber hoped to win over Efraim Frisch, Moritz Heimann, Paul Cassirer, Walther Rathenau, Alfred Kerr, Samuel Fischer, Ludwig von Hatvary, and Josef Winckler. There is no evidence whether this society was actually formed. Two sections were envisaged within the planned society: one to collect and edit relevant material from written literature and "the second section shall . . . attempt to garner from the vernacular as comprehensive as possible a compilation of authentic, orally transmitted material and in case of success, to sift through [the material] in scholarly fashion."[25] Both Jews and Germans would participate.[26] Among the German scholars he hoped to engage were the poet Gerhart Hauptmann, the theologian Adolf von Harnack, and the Bible scholar and Orientalist Julius Wellhausen.

The lack of concrete results in the realization of these common projects and the direction Buber sought to give them very likely contributed to Berdyczewski's mounting discontent. As an open critic of Buber's *Legende,* which he considered as reinvention and near poetry, lacking "faithfulness,"[27] he remained critical of Buber's editorial approach and disagreed with the inner organization and form the anthologies were to take.[28] The gap between the two men steadily increased. Berdyczewski criticized Buber for "overestimating the output of the oral material," and reminded him that the Jews are a "people of the book and even that [material] which one relates among the lower strata [of the people], is by and large, based on the written."[29] Although his manuscript on the "Yalqut ha-hasidut" seems to suggest otherwise, he claimed to favor a scholarly approach[30] and the format of Bialik's multi-volume anthologies, whereas Buber appears to have ultimately preferred one-volume anthologies.[31] After six years of consultations, Berdyczewski became increasingly dissatisfied with Buber's approach and, despite their continued correspondence it became clear that he no longer considered a joint project on Hasidism feasible.

In contrast to Buber, Berdyczewski could not free himself from the fundamental ambivalence involved in the conscription of Hasidism for Jewish revitalization.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Galician Circle of Elusive Collaborators

Shmuel Yosef Agnon: An Anthology Shelved

The genre of anthology was of no less importance to Agnon.[1] Like Berdyczewski, born into a Hasidic family, his interest in Jewish mysticism dates back to his youth. *Shivhey ha-'Ari* and *Sippurey Rabbi Nahman* were among the books that left their imprint on him.[2] In 1916 Agnon co-edited with Aharon Eliasberg a small volume of folktales including Hasidic legends, entitled *Das Buch von den polnischen Juden*. The collection of contributions by various authors from Poland and Galicia was meant to provide a portrait of one of the most creative and organic communities in the Diaspora and "to understand Polish Jewry from within its own culture." The editors of this volume represented the rich intellectual life of Polish Jewry through "its poetry, its fairy tales and legends, its jokes, its idioms, its legal codes, and contractual documents." By culling the disparate material "directly from the creation of a people [*Volk*] and, at the same time, from the primal source of the *Volksseele*," the editors and contributors believed themselves "to have gathered material that provides an authentic and illustrative picture of Polish Jewry." Agnon and Eliasberg felt obliged to justify nostalgia in times of radical innovation and hence requested that "for the evaluation of this volume one should take into consideration that it is neither a scholarly work, nor a handbook of folklore, nor a literary anthology that is to reflect all the trends [in Polish Jewry]."[3]

Agnon intended to record, even if but selectively, a vanishing culture and the dignity of life in the Diaspora which many Zionists denied. He also feared that this distinct cultural memory could be absorbed and effaced by Zionism's determination to shape a new unified national culture and literature. In contrast to Buber, Agnon was not concerned with an aesthetic and

hermeneutic transformation of Jewish modernity through the genre of anthology. More relevant from the perspective of the evolving anthology discourse was Agnon's intense collaboration with Buber on the collection and editing of Hasidic legends. Their correspondence on this project, beginning in 1909, attests to Agnon's striving to collect and record as many still circulating, unpublished legends as possible, in order to make them accessible to the contemporary Jewish reader. Raised in Buczacz, Galicia, the cradle of the Chortkov Hasidim, this Hasidic branch became Agnon's main source for collecting Hasidic oral traditions. He used to jot these traditions down on postcards and send them to Buber. This procedure went on for many years and took on the character of a "Hasidic discourse," centered on the ingathering of the Hasidic anecdote.[4] Buber and Agnon intended to collect and present "all the tales of the Hasidim."[5] However, Agnon's assistance to Buber was not confined to the effort of collecting. Agnon proofread Buber's adaptations of Hasidic anecdotes and legends, and provided him with rare Hasidica and valuable information on requested bibliographical references. He also traced on behalf of Buber motifs to their original sources in earlier literature, specifically in Talmud and Midrash.[6]

The cooperation entered a new phase in 1923 when Agnon and Buber signed a contract with Bialik for the editing of a four-volume *Sefer hasidut*, also referred to as *Corpus Hasidicum*, to be published in Hebrew. Much of the material they had thus far collected was now to be edited for this comprehensive anthology. The first volume was intended as an anthology of traditions on the Baal Shem Tov, to be entitled *Sefer ha-Besht*. However, shortly before its completion, the manuscript was burnt in 1924 in a fire in Agnon's home in Bad Homburg. All later efforts to resume the project failed.

We have little information on the envisaged editorial principles or overall conception of their project. That Agnon and Buber did not work according to agreed upon guidelines can be gathered from Agnon's expressed uncertainty with regard to the ordering of the material.[7] Buber was often familiar with a Hasidic legend from written collections, but not necessarily with living Hasidic lore.[8] That both thinkers had different views on how to achieve the objective became an issue only gradually.[9]

It is evident that such a Hebrew anthology would have differed considerably from Buber's previous German anthologies of Hasidic lore. This anthology would not be addressed to the sensibilities of the acculturated German Jew but to the Hebrew-speaking Jew in the Diaspora and the new generation of pioneers in Palestine. Agnon was more attuned than Buber to Bialik's conception of anthology as presenting traditional sources. He objected to Buber's poetic adaptation of Hasidic tales, his utilization of romantic

language, and the injection of thought alien to the sources. The relative indifference to Buber's anthologies of Hasidic thought among cultural Zionists of Eastern Europe and the *Yishuv* would certainly have changed had this Hebrew anthology ever been published. Agnon's own fame as a distinguished Hebrew novelist in tandem with his well-known association with Bialik, whom he held in high esteem,[10] would have earned Buber as a co-editor of such an anthology of Hasidic legends a place in the emerging canon of Hebrew literature.

Many years later, Agnon edited an anthology of Hasidic material, *Sifreyhem shel tsaddiqim* (1961), which absorbed some of the material for the ill-fated *Sefer ha-Besht*. Another anthology was published posthumously as *Sippurey ha-Besht*, which included much of the material originally collected for the *Sefer hasidut*.[11] Buber, for his part, published some of the legends in *Des Rabbi Israel Ben-Elieser, genannt Baal-Schem-Tow, das ist Meister vom guten Namen, Unterweisung im Umgang mit Gott* (1927).

After he parted ways with Buber, Agnon sought his own voice in the construction of a Jewish cultural memory on the basis of oral traditions. *Yamim nora'im* (1938), an anthology of the high holiday traditions, marked the editing of anthologies according to his own conception. With *'Atem re'item* (1959, Engl. trans., *Present at Sinai*, 1994) Agnon presented an anthology of commentaries on the event of Revelation and the giving of the Torah. In this anthology he praises the *Sefer ha-'aggadah* as the "finest of all [that establish a link between the written and the oral Torah] from a stylistic point of view."[12]

Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel: The Folklorist as Anthologist

Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel was among the vanguard of Hebrew essayists who sought to familiarize the mainly Russian-Jewish readers of *Ha-Shiloah* with the phenomenon of Hasidism and to induce a new interest in Jewish spirituality. He was also among the first Zionists to become a folklorist of Hasidic literature, which was partly due to the support of the Midrash scholar Shlomo (Salomon) Buber, Martin's grandfather.[13] In a series of Hebrew articles programmatically entitled "'Le-mahut ha-hasidut" (On the essence of Hasidism) published between 1907 and 1912 in *Ha-Shiloah* (hereafter cited parenthetically by volume and page), Ben-Yehezkel indirectly contributed to the debate on Jewish religious continuity even before he began anthologizing Hasidic legends.[14] It is not known whether Buber was familiar with these elaborate articles; it is, however, likely.[15]

Ben-Yehezkel makes no reference to specific currents, discourses, authors, or works external to Judaism. Despite some romantic inflections, he interpreted Hasidism on its own terms. Neither did he invest religious ideas with contemporary cultural relevance. He could therefore circumvent the kind of criticism that was leveled against Buber. As a synchronic presentation of Hasidism—with a focus on the "authentic" Hasidism that emerged in Poland[16]—his impassioned portrayal is a more differentiated analysis in the interpretation of certain ideas, terms, and conflicting concepts in specific generations, schools, and dynasties of Zaddikim. Ben-Yehezkel delineates Hasidism as a catalytic movement that prompted a large-scale renewal in Judaism. He notes the movement's creative assimilation of rabbinic, kabbalistic, and philosophical Judaism (17:220). Although not a student of Dilthey and thus not concerned with empathetic reconstruction and re-experiencing, his presentation of Hasidism displays an affinity to *Lebensphilosophie* and Romanticism. He presents Hasidism as an emotional and ethical-religious piety borne by the dialectic of transcendence and immanence, intellect and feeling, assigning no conceptual role to the normative structure of Judaism.

The first of these essays published in *Ha-Shiloah* addresses the basic elements of the distinctive relationship between the Hasidic mode of being and the hermeneutic quest. Ben-Yehezkel notes that in Hasidism the traditional exegetical method of Talmud-Torah underwent dramatic transformation (17:219). The shift from an "ethics of the book" to an "ethics of life" brought about a major spiritual change of both customs and practices (17:224). The leaders of Hasidism revalorized Judaism as living oral Torah, which reveals the divine vitality (*hiyyut ha-'elohit*) hidden in all corporeality. Yet God and world are not conflated in Hasidism as in the pantheism of Spinoza (17:221). The "vitality of the Torah" becomes the cardinal ideal of the movement (221). With reference to R. Levi Yitzhaq of Berdichev (d. 1809), Ben-Yehezkel endorses the interpretive openness of Torah (20:43).[17] In its emphasis on humility (*'anawah*), which cannot be an intended virtue but is an expression of the pure faith of the innocent soul, the orientation of Hasidism to life is most manifest. In Hasidism, as Ben-Yehezkel reiterates, we witness how the Torah becomes a tool for self-reflection and ethical instruction. Torah is thus not to be maintained as a routine but as "feeling." Accordingly, the Zaddik, in contrast to the rabbinic scholar, draws his teaching from inwardness (*pnimiyyut*) and self-knowledge (*hakkarah 'atsmit*) (17:229). As a mediator between the lower and the upper worlds, the Zaddik advances to the status of "ethical-spiritual leader" who "is suited to solve for them [the simple folk] the enigma of their inner world as human beings and as Jews—a solution without which their lives would not be life" (17:230).

In his second essay, which is divided into two parts, Ben-Yehezkel further dilates upon the close relationship between life and Torah in Hasidic teachings. The narrative parts of the Torah are a garment enrobing the mysteries of being that are a repository for the divine essence (20:41). The entire Torah, Ben-Yehezkel explains, becomes a "symbol in the imagination of the Zaddik" (20:42). The Hasidic master's highly creative interpretations of the symbolic universe of the Torah gained their expression in his sayings (*pitgamim*), which become, and Buber would agree, Hasidism's most prominent literary form (20:45).

However, for Ben-Yehezkel it is the ethical orientation and not the ecstatic piety that is the movement's salient, indeed defining feature. Hasidism seeks to "transform all ideas from abstract thoughts into real life" (20:163).This emphasis perforce involves a reevaluation of fear and love of God as the central religious attitudes of Judaism. In Hasidism, Ben Yehezkel observes, these are no longer purely intellectual but also emotional values which feed the movement's religious vitalism (20:167), based on the paradox of an "intuitive knowledge" (20:168).The penetration into the being of God and the mystery of life (20:163) and the disclosure of the divine comes through an understanding of existence (20:168).The "contemplation of the soul on the essence of God" and the divine spark in the soul of man leads to the fear of God (20:166, 169) rather than the fear of punishment (20:164). Man's impulse to renew the emotional bond and the intellectual comprehension of God, necessary to attain nearness to God, originates in free will. *Devequt*, the 'cleaving' of the soul onto God, is among the few Hasidic concepts mentioned by the author (22:340, 345–46).[18] The essence of Hasidism is, according to Ben Yehezkel the longing for a continuous renewal and revelation of the divine substance that inheres in one's soul. In the dialectic "of the incomprehensible intuition of the divine" fear of God leads to love of God, which is both affective and cognitive (22:169).

His third essay, which likewise contains two separate parts, is devoted to a discussion of the mental structure of worship in Hasidism, in which prayer (*tefillah atsilit-ruhanit*) takes a central position. Prayer is here a "revealing of the soul" (22:251). Ben-Yehezkel highlights the meaning of intention (*kawwanah*) for prayer (22:252). Hasidism also encourages spontaneous and silent, even wordless prayer as a mode of encountering the Divine Presence (22:259). Every prayer of the soul that springs forth from burning devotion and pure inwardness generates a new revelation of the Divine Presence (22:257). Intention and emotion constitute the main fulcrum of spiritual service (22:341). Linking oneself to the Shekhinah, in order to attain the "unification with God through nature," becomes an inner need

(22:345) which finds its outlet in burning devotion and rapture (22:347). The prayer of longing is an expression of the animating divine essence in man. Hence, as Ben-Yehezkel points out, man does not direct his prayer to some "essence" outside of himself, but to the Shekhinah (the divine aspect) immanent in his soul (22:350; cf. *Legende*, 15).

Ben Yehezkel is wary not to reduce Hasidism to a religious emotionalism. The "thinking mind" (*moah hoshev*) and the "feeling heart" (*lev margish*) are intimately bound to one another in Hasidism (25:449), as he delineates in the fourth, concluding essay. Hasidism achieved the transformation of Judaism from religious formalism to a "faith of the heart" (25:442). In his elucidation of the "spiritual process" of Hasidism (25:434), Ben-Yehezkel focuses on the dialectic of corporeality and spirituality. The spiritual aspect of realization of the divine will is epitomized in Hasidic faith in *ha-simhah ha-'atsilit* (sublime joy) (25:436), assigning however no religious value either to asceticism (25:435), or to *ha-mahshavah ha-'atsilit* (sublime thought) (25:441). Hasidism strives to harmonize the spiritual and the corporeal through a religious ethics of joy (25:439). As long as enjoyment emerges from *'atsilut musarit* (sublime ethics) (25:436) and from the thought of holiness, it is sanctioned. The experience of the sublime also marks the transformation of emotion as a natural disposition into a quality of the human will. Ben Yehezkel held this transformation to be a source of revitalization.

These essays caught the attention of Bialik, who was searching for an anthologist of Hasidism for his *kinnus* project. As early as 1913 he entrusted Ben-Yehezkel with the preparation of an anthology of Hasidic legends and hoped to co-edit the work, but Ben-Yehezkel objected.

Ben-Yehezkel submitted his manuscript for the first volume of the *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* to Bialik in the mid-1920s in Berlin. This Hebrew anthology—a comprehensive presentation of tales—would be published in four volumes between 1926 and 1929. Ben-Yehezkel was full of praise of Bialik and the *Sefer ha-'aggadah*. "Bialik did not glorify the '*kinnus*' in vain. He saw in it the soul of *tehiyyah* [revival, rebirth] in its full range, in the national, human, and literary sense."[19] Bialik knew how to "break the barrel but to preserve the wine," to present the old teachings of the Tannaim and Amoraim in a new guise, without reading external thoughts into the material.[20] Like Bialik, Ben-Yehezkel claimed to be but a *mesader,* one who presents the material in its original form and merely orders it anew. Nevertheless he indicated in the preface to his *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* his personal conception

of *kinnus*: "ingathering of the sources not for the sake of closure [*hatimah*], but for the sake of revealing the hidden light [of tradition]."[21] Since *hatimah* was a key term in Bialik's ingathering, we detect in Ben-Yehezkel's words some hesitation to associate in one breath the idea of closure with the concerted effort for a new canon.

Regardless of his claim, Ben-Yehezkel did not confine himself to the role of the *mesader*. Among his editorial principles was philological reconstruction by comparison of textual variants. This effort was geared toward a reconstruction of the most authentic version.[22] In addition to noting stylistic and linguistic changes he also reworked the material or expanded the original narrative.[23] The nature of this reworking, however, had no resemblance with Buber's poetic appropriation. The presentation was considered by his critics to be a faithful "alteration" of the sources. The *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* was hailed by its reviewers as reflecting the nation's soul and, in the words of his friend Eliezer M. Lifshitz, as a "book of the people."[24]

The first four-volume edition of the *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* was exclusively based on material from written sources. Oral legends were included in the second, expanded, six-volume edition published between 1957 and 1959. The title of his anthology placed his work in the footsteps of Moses Gaster, whose *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* (1924) presented Jewish folk legends from the Middle Ages. The anthology is a considered weave and renewal of various Hebrew literary styles that is to accentuate the historical expressions of the *'aggadah* (the medieval folktale, the mystical legends of the *Zohar, and* the hagiographic legends of the Hasidim). Similar considerations informed the chapter headings, which generally reflect both traditional motifs and dominant themes in Hasidic literature.[25] In contrast to Bialik's editorial principles, Ben-Yehezkel did not purge the tales of their superstitious elements. He considered such creative expressions of Jewish life and experience just as important to the folk imagination as religious values. Many of the central themes of the legends refer directly to commandments and halakhic problems, such as *hakhnassat 'orhim* (welcoming of guests), *pidyon shevuyim* (redeeming the captives), and *'agunot* (widows).[26] With his anthology Ben-Yehezkel created a sense of historical development from the classical *'aggadah* to the Hasidic tale and underscored how transmission and innovation dialectically ensure Jewish continuity.

Ben-Yehezkel seems to have been principally guided by educative concerns. He addressed primarily the new secular generation of Hebrew writers in Palestine. Hoping to instill an appreciation of past Jewish creativity in the Diaspora, he emphasized facets of Jewish life and customs that could be a resource for future literary creativity in the *Yishuv*. To complement his anthologies, Ben-Yehezkel prepared two books of essays presenting his con-

ception of Judaism as a synthesis of emotion and religion.[27] These, however, were never published.

In December 1961 Ben-Yehezkel and Buber were honored in Tel Aviv with the Bialik Prize. Ben-Yehezkel was cited for the second expanded edition of his *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot* (Tel Aviv, 1957–59) and awarded the annual prize in the category *sifrut yafah* (literature), and Buber received the prize for his emended and expanded Hebrew anthology of Hasidic traditions, *'Or ha-ganuz* (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, 1957), in the category *hokhmat yisra'el* (Jewish Studies). In an ironic twist of fate, this was a vindication of his later effort to forgo his aesthetic mode of representation in favor of a more philologically faithful representation of Hasidic lore. Upon receiving the Bialik-Prize in 1961, Buber was asked whether he regarded his work as part of Bialik's project of *kinnus*. His response reflects his continued ambiguity: "After one hour of consideration I allowed myself to answer this question in the affirmative."[28]

Samuel Abba Horodezky: A Silent Collaborator

Another East European Jew, albeit not a Galician Zionist, who would play an important role in Buber's production of anthologies of Hasidic oral traditions and within the Zionist anthology discourse was Samuel Abba Horodezky (1871–1957). Appreciated by Buber and Berdyczewski for his knowledge in the field, Horodezky assumed a rather unrewarding function in this endeavor. The beginnings of the relationship date back to 1905 and precede Buber's collaboration with Agnon. Contact with Horodezky was established through Buber's grandfather. Horodezky became a valuable resource for Buber (and Berdyczewski) by providing him rare Hasidic books.[29] Such borrowing of books became habitual during Buber's work on *Legende*, as did his requests for "legendary material" on specific Zaddikim.[30] Occasionally specific issues of Hasidic thought were discussed.[31] The correspondence also reveals the full scope of Buber's commitment to the goal of anthologizing and interpreting Hasidic lore. The transition between his early anthologies of Hasidic wisdom and the ones published after the First World War was uninterrupted. Already in 1916 he began working on what was planned as a multi-volume anthology called "Die Welt der Chassidim," eventually published in 1922 under the title *Der große Maggid und seine Nachfolge* (The Great Maggid and his descendents).[32]

For many years Horodezky, Buber's senior by seven years, was dependent on the latter's patronage. He served Buber over several decades as a research assistant, even if the role was not clearly defined as such. After

the First World War, Horodezky was, on Buber's recommendation, provided with a livelihood paid in the form of a monthly stipend from the Schocken Verlag. He was assigned the task of preparing a comprehensive bibliography of Hasidism.[33] He was also invited by Buber to join a planned "Society for the Research of the Kabbalah according to the Sources."[34] However, at no point did Buber conceive of him as a potential collaborator or co-editor of an anthology of Hasidic material. When Buber worked on his *Legende* he asked Horodezky for "short biographical information on the Zaddikim treated in the volume."[35] Whenever he came across the mention of a publication by Horodezky he immediately requested a copy from the author.[36] Buber critically studied and swiftly responded to Horodezky's writings on Hasidism, especially if he found any shortcoming in them. Upon reading the first volume of Horodezky's *Ha-hasidut we-ha-hasidim*, Buber brought to his attention that he erroneously attributed a tale to the Besht rather than to R. Yaaqov Yitshak of Przysucha: "I alert you to this mistake so that you can leave out the tale in the new edition."[37] He would also ask him to authenticate his sources.[38] When Buber discovered an interest in the later, more intellectual Polish Hasidism, Horodezky remained one of the main disseminators of the "cult of Beshtian Hasidism," as some critics laconically noted, which still dominated the presentation and interpretation of Hasidism. Although Horodezky approached the material as a historian of Hasidism, he too did not strictly adhere to the historical-philological method distinctive of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.[39]

After *Der Jude* ceased publication in 1928, Horodezky, who was a regular contributor to the journal, lost yet another source of income. Buber sought of ways to provide Horodezky with a regular income. He informed Horodezky that he had defined a field of research for him "that would conform to Schocken's intention." Buber added that the engagement must have nothing to do with the preparation of anthologies of Hasidic thought but with the arrangement of "critical new editions of central Hasidic works."[40] In other words, Horodezky was excluded from the literary appropriation of Hasidism and confined to the task of collecting and ordering of Hasidic material. Buber determined which Hasidica were to be examined and how to organize the material.[41] He commissioned Horodezky with cataloguing all sayings of Zaddikim and organizing them around key themes that he was expected to suggest for an "Archive of the Teaching of Beshtian Hasidism."

In March 1935 Horodezky dispatched a list of topics to Buber.[42] The list of terms was not in alphabetical order. It also lacked a conceptual approach. Terms from the lexicon of Kabbalah and Hasidism were joined by those of wider meaning in Jewish tradition (*'emunah*/faith, *galut*/exile, *ge'ulah*/

redemption, *tov we-ra'*/good and evil). Upon reviewing the list Buber asked Horodezky to add: "life and death, the Messianic era, Sabbath and the holidays, 'reasons for the commandments,' repentance, man and woman, speech, truth and lie," and further asked him to "collect what is said about important persons, such as the Great Maggid."[43] What Buber added to the list were mainly classical Jewish motifs and not, as one would assume, conceptual terms of Hasidism. That Buber sought to include material that would address what is referred to today as gender issues attests to his effort to concomitantly promote a Jewish modernism. Speech (to which we will turn in chapter 7) became likewise a concern from a modernist perspective. In July 1935 Horodezky reported to Buber on his progress: he had collected for the archive "187 sayings of the Besht transmitted through R. Yaaqov Yosef ha-Kohen."[44] This directory of themes, which was to be continuously updated and revised, included traditional motifs, such as 'good and evil' (*tov we-ra'*) and 'for its own sake' (*lishmah*). According to Buber, these concepts would also reveal the diachronic and synchronic structure of Hasidic discourse. Surprisingly absent from the three lists (3 March 1935, 22 July 1935, 13 May 1936) is the key term of Beshtian Hasidism, *hiyyut* (divine vitality) of Beshtian Hasidism.[45] Despite the relatively concentrated research activities, it seems that Buber was not strongly committed to this specific project. Possibly he had not given up hope of resuming work on the Corpus Hasidicum with Agnon, and of reconstructing the original manuscript. The research of Horodezky could have been of value for this purpose.

Typically, suggestions by Horodezky for other projects or editorial matters were usually met with indifference.[46] When Horodezky announced in a note to an article in the *Jüdische Rundschau* a forthcoming book to be published by the Schocken publishing house, Buber was distressed by the "unauthorized statement." He informed Horodezky "that the publishing house has no obligation whatsoever to a publication, and you cannot make claim to copyrights [of the Hasidica he collected], but rather it is to be transmitted by you to the publishing house to be used by it as it pleases."[47] The nature of the arrangement between Horodezky and Schocken, Buber reminded him, was not meant for the larger public.[48] One may surmise that Horodezky was either unaware of the limits of the contract or disinclined to comply with its rigid conditions. The correspondence on matters pertaining to the Schocken Archive of Hasidism continued until Buber and Horodezky immigrated to Palestine in 1938.

CHAPTER SIX

Ahad Ha'am's Theory of Culture Revised

Although not among the inner circle of Jewish anthologists, as a distinguished Hebrew publicist and spiritus rector of cultural Zionism, Ahad Ha'am somewhat polemically claimed that Hasidism could be deemed "original Hebrew literature." Hasidic literature enjoyed a special status, in his view, since original Hebrew literature had basically ceased to exist with the dawn of *Haskalah*.[1] Only original creation as opposed to imitation was an expression of the Jewish "will to live" and capable of ensuring the continuity and unity of the nation. Hasidism revived in his view the commitment to realize the national ideal, which Ahad Ha'am located in the prophets and their concrete demand for ethical perfection. Only in terms of his objective to reconstitute the Jews as a modern nation with an engaging secular and literary culture did he consider Hasidism under the aspect of renewal. His preference for a philosophically grounded *ruah ha-'am* (spirit of the people) conflicted with that of those cultural Zionists who turned to Hasidism in search for the poetic "soul of the people" as manifest in the "low" culture of folklore.

Buber regarded himself a disciple of Ahad Ha'am, whom he hailed as "the deepest thinker of Jewish rebirth."[2] The terminology is hardly arbitrary here; Buber prefers to associate Ahad Ha'am generally with rebirth rather than with the more specific program of renaissance which he wishes to associate with his own name. Notwithstanding these ideological nuances, Buber's understanding of cultural Zionism, as the previous chapter demonstrated, resonated with Ahad Ha'am's thinking. As did Buber, Ahad Ha'am sought to instill pride in Jewish identity, drew an analogy between the individual and the nation, and assigned priority to education. Both also agreed that the path to Zionism could not be driven by "the distress of the Jews" resulting from political antisemitism.

Yet there was a divide between these two leaders of cultural Zionism. Buber rejected Ahad Ha'am's evolutionism, which informed the latter's analysis of the Jewish question.[3] For Buber, this gradualism fostered inertia. Influenced by Nietzsche, he advocated revolutionary change, primed by resolute decisions of individual and collective will. Yet even Nietzsche, in spite of his rhetoric of transvaluation, failed to free himself from the "dogma of evolution."[4] Only in a critical negotiation with spiritual humanism could historical materialism serve as a method to broach the Jewish question. Buber's *Verwirklichungszionismus* (Zionism of realization) emphasized culture as a matrix of individual and existential values, as a revolution of the "inner and outer," making the transformation of the self the precondition to that of the people: "The life history of a people is, indeed, fundamentally nothing other than the projection of the life history of an [individual] member of the people onto the larger [story]."[5] This view was shared by Berdyczewski. Whereas Ahad Ha'am and his largely Russian Jewish associates advocated renewal as the recasting of formal aspects of Jewish tradition—its literature, customs, language as well as select values into secular modalities[6] —Buber understood Jewry's cultural heritage as a fount of abiding religious sensibilities, which, nurtured by primordial forces, were in essence independent of the objective expressions of culture.

For Ahad Ha'am, the "question of culture" was a complex of moral and intellectual values, a position that was confounded when he appealed to analytical constructs drawn from Social Darwinism. Ahad Ha'am thought of culture in terms of historical continuity, of preserving amidst change select national traditions. Memory and "continuity of values" rather than religious beliefs and practices were in his view the central pillars of social cohesion and continuity.[7] Ahad Ha'am regarded prophecy as "the hallmark of the Hebrew national spirit."[8] The biblical prophets advocated the "absolute idea" of "absolute justice" (*ha-tsedeq ha-muhlat*).[9] Although Buber likewise intended to ground his conception of renewal in the legacy of prophetic Judaism and its universal concern, he could not hide his discontent with the theories of renewal presented by Ahad Ha'am or Moritz Lazarus. The latter's vision of a "revival of prophetic Judaism" in the secular age was but a masked "rationalization of faith" reminiscent of Luther's revival of Christianity (i.e., reform and not radical change).[10] Buber found this mindset typical of liberal Judaism and its spirit of "negation." Ahad Ha'am fared better in Buber's eyes by virtue of his defending the prophetic ideal "of an absolute demand." But he failed in a cultural-philosophical sense to entertain the "absolute renewal" of the human being and humanity.[11] Irrespective of his proclivity for "romantic irrationalism," which is among the more elusive

labels he earned from his critics, Buber acknowledged that the Haskalah in dialectical relation with Hasidism informed—"without knowing it or intending it"—the Jewish Renaissance. Moreover, given the anti-modernity of Romanticism, it was hard for Buber to fully or exclusively conscript it for his vision of Jewish modernism. Just as he negotiated between the national and the supranational, the form and the formless, so he sought to balance the mystical with its rational antithesis; both were forces that vie one another in determining the contours of Jewish renewal.

The ideological discrepancy between Ahad Ha'am and himself placed Buber in a difficult relationship to his spiritual mentor, one that was characterized by unfulfilled hopes and expectations. Over many years Buber sought to engage Ahad Ha'am in the projects of the Democratic Faction—the grouping of cultural Zionists he helped to found in opposition to Herzl's political Zionism—with limited success. In spite of the disagreement between them, Ahad Ha'am agreed to participate in a conference on culture sponsored by the Democratic Faction, to be organized by Buber and Ehrenpreis.[12] Buber accorded Ahad Ha'am a special status and even treated as an indispensable condition of publication his participation in the first *Jüdische Almanach* (1902), the first book published by the *Jüdischer Verlag* founded by Buber, Berthold Feiwel, Davis Trietsch, and the Galician Jews Efraim M. Lilien, and Alfred Nossig.[13] The *Almanach* was designed to exhibit the power and richness of the Jewish cultural idea, to erect alongside "the Jewish-ethical ideal" the "Jewish-aesthetic [ideal]," and to "bring about within the cultural movement a unity of the soul" among Eastern European Jews, still steeped in tradition, and the Western European Jews, estranged from the Hebrew language and traditional Jewish religious practice.[14] Ahad Ha'am accepted the invitation to participate, despite the hostile reaction of the Hebraist circle in Berlin to the announcement of such journal in the German language.[15] In their view, it would further the Zionist movement's disengagement from the revival of the Hebrew language as the fulcrum of Jewish renewal. But it would be amiss to assess Ahad Ha'am's collaboration, like that of Bialik, as anything more than a formal support of Buber's journal.

Despite his Zionist affiliation, Buber doubted that "the belief in Zion" alone would be a sufficient basis to realize the rebirth of the Eastern *and* Western European Jewry and the intended revolutionary "reshaping [*Umgestaltung*] of the life of the people,"[16] its reality and self-understanding. He subtly viewed his own work as a necessary complement to Ahad Ha'am's vision of a "Spiritual Center."[17] In a letter to Ahad Ha'am inviting him to contribute to the projected inaugural issue of *Der Jude* (the first issue of the journal was published only in 1916), Buber presented in 1903 the guidelines

for the planned periodical, which revealed his intention to present Judaism not as something "that was and is closed" and not as a faith "locked into fixed formulae." Buber added: "The manifestation [*Erscheinungskomplex*] of modern Judaism should not be considered for its own sake. Rather, it should be studied in order to show the vocation of the people and, on the basis of this knowledge, kindle its will for the future."[18] "Not for its own sake" clearly meant a complementary path to Ahad Ha'am's notion of self-knowledge through knowledge of the life of the Jewish people. In accepting the invitation Ahad Ha'am decided to write an open letter to Buber, significantly entitled "Ost und West" (1903), to be published in the one of the first issues of *Der Jude*.[19] The letter was substantially an ideological statement and summary of the earlier dispute with the *Tse'irim*—the young avant garde of cultural Zionists—and an unbending reaffirmation of his position in the struggle over the cultural question. Ahad Ha'am's rejection of Buber's separation of the question of culture from that of Hebrew language was too deeply rooted to allow for his participation in Buber's cultural activities conducted exclusively in German.[20] When Buber renewed in 1915 his efforts to engage Ahad Ha'am in a revised version of *Der Jude,* the latter declined the offer cordially but frankly: "Unfortunately . . . I am not in a position now to avail myself of your kind proposal, for many reasons, both personal and others, the explanation of which would be too lengthy and in certain respects not quite convenient."[21] Buber, who was eager to include in *Der Jude* the voice of the founder of cultural Zionism in order to lend authority to his path and conception of a national culture as distinctively Jewish, had thus no other choice but to print the only document available: Ahad Ha'am's earlier letter of 1903.

Despite his personal disappointment, Buber maintained a respectful attitude towards Ahad Ha'am. On the occasion of Ahad Ha'am's sixtieth birthday, a whole issue of *Der Jude* was dedicated to honor his life and work. The esteem accorded to him was not merely an expression of formal respect. Ahad Ha'am had become the emblem of Jewish renewal.

Language and the Jewish Renaissance

Both Buber, in his project of a Jewish Renaissance, and the Russian Hebraists, with their vision of rebirth, regarded language as seminal for regaining national unity. Due to the fact that Buber devoted his efforts to the realization of a Jewish renaissance in Germany and simultaneously addressed two audiences, he necessarily resorted to German. But as a leading figure of the national movement he had to take a stance in the intricate and heated

debate on language. Speaking at the Berlin Conference of 1909 on Hebrew Language and Culture organized by Shai Ish Hurwitz, Buber was obliged by the very nature of the occasion to prioritize the role of Hebrew for nation-building. Hence he avoided pointing to the fact that Hebrew was but one language of the Jewish creative genius. Classifying the Jewish national movement as a renaissance required that one could locate its original elements in antiquity. Hebrew was the link to as "the great classical time of our people."[22] It was the Jew's *Ursprache*, the original ancestral language, in which the *Urkräfte* (original energies) of the people were stored.[23] Consequently he ascribed to Hebrew the "creative function of the spirit of the people."[24]

While acknowledging that Hebrew—as the language of the Bible and of ritual—had been historically "the shared unifying form of the people's life"[25] and consciousness, Buber did not advocate the supremacy of Hebrew for cultural rebirth. He was dissatisfied with the program of Hebraism (*'ivriyyut)*, in particular for its neglect of the nexus between language and religious sensibilities.[26] Whereas the adherents of the latter equated *tehiyyah* (lit., revival, here also rebirth) with Hebraism, Buber envisioned a concept of rejuvenation that would combine "Hebraic productivity" (the creation of modern Hebrew literature) with "Hebraic receptivity" (education in Hebrew). But East European Hebraism, as his comments imply, has not yet accomplished a mediation between the "productive ones" and the "public."[27] The lack of "an actual literary public" hampers "the contact between the small existing public and the productive ones."[28] For Buber, a renaissance could only be of long-lasting effect when the language question is lifted above the aesthetics of Hebraism and placed firmly into the context of Jewish education. Besides, it might be no more than a utopian dream to imagine that an independent Jewish state would witness the ingathering of all the cultural expressions of the Diaspora into one harmonious totality in the people's original language. Given the distance of classical texts and ideas of Judaism from the present, recovering the hidden energies of the people contained in these literary sources required, according to Buber, a hermeneutics of recovery. Framing the question from the perspective of education entailed, certainly with respect to the Jewish Renaissance in Germany, a new mode of reading, one that would negotiate the Jew's intracultural reality and practice of reappropriation. Hebraism runs the risk of creating a monoculture that would vitiate the unity in duality Buber deemed essential for Jewish modernism.

Buber did not publicly argue that the cultural reawakening could be pursued in other languages. Such a statement would have been detrimental to

the Zionist cause. However, his distinction between Hebrew and Yiddish may be instructive to buttress a wider concept of language in the context of national revival. To be sure, in contrast to German, Yiddish was a Jewish language or dialect that reflected the spirit of the people. While Hebrew expressed the "pure spiritual pathos" of the Jews, Yiddish was a living, spoken tongue: "This much-despised language has created the beginnings of a charming poetry, a melancholic, dreamy lyrics, and strong novellas based on sound observation. This dualism is the strongest symptom of the Jewish renaissance in the richness of its attempts and the pathology of its forms of expression."[29] Yiddish, by many rejected as a Diaspora dialect, was for Buber the language of "original poetry" as well as the language of a vibrant, living folk culture, including that of the Hasidim. In spite of his appreciation of Yiddish as *res sui generis* (a matter of its own kind) Buber did not seek renewal on the basis of Yiddish. He repeatedly asserted that the restoration of national unity and the spiritual regeneration of Western Jewry could be achieved only through a return to the *Urform* of the nation's spirit. By implication his views on Yiddish could also be applied to German, though for different reasons. As the language of German mysticism and the Romantics, German was formidably suited to reflect the inner grammar of unique experience and to release the spiritual energies of the people.

Buber's inconsistent attitude to Hebrew put him in an uneasy position within the larger camp of cultural Zionism and hampered his effort to bridge the distance between the Hebraists of the East and the Jews of the West. Contrary to the impression Buber tried to convey at the aforementioned conference, there is reason to assume that his lack of resolve to gain sovereign command of Hebrew was to a considerable degree a studied position.[30] In fact, his inability to express himself adequately in the "language of unity and revival" is indicative of his complex attitude to Zionism. Political Zionism and Hebrew modernism both negated *galut* (exile), while Buber navigated between rejection of *galut* and an "affirmation" of life in the Diaspora. His hesitation to endorse unambiguously the return of the Jews to Palestine as Zionism's main objective only gradually caught the attention of his fellow Western Zionists.[31] However, his acceptance of his incomplete knowledge of spoken Hebrew granted him considerable latitude to formulate a translingual and transterritorial conception of Jewish renewal. Other Western Zionists, such as Hugo Bergmann, were less sanguine about the long-term prospects for Jewish national literature in the German language and unequivocally demanded Hebraization.[32] Even after Buber's emigration from Germany to Palestine in 1938, his basic ambiguity toward Hebrew remained and was critically noted by others.[33]

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sprachkritik: The Crisis of Perception

> Thought is like a mirror. One looking at it sees his image inside and thinks that there are two images, but the two are really one.
> —Azriel of Gerona, *Perush ha-Aggadot*[1]

Buber considered the experience of the unity of being to be ineffable. Yet he also appropriated the teachings of the Hasidic masters to address not only central problems attendant to the representation of ecstatic mysticism but also issues pertaining to the *Sprachkritik*. The critique of language was at the fin-de-siècle associated above all with the philosopher Fritz Mauthner, who felt that words have only pragmatic value, since they are at best imperfect representations of sense experience.[2] Propounding a theory of language that exercised a seminal influence on Ludwig Wittgenstein, he held that language inherently lacks epistemic reliability. He therefore concluded that language is not just cognitively unreliable but also utterly unfit to address ultimate questions of life.[3] As Gustav Landauer put it in a comment on Mauthner's theory: "Language cannot bring the world closer to us."[4] In his early writings, Buber refracted the relation between language, speech, and mystical experience through the mystical teachings of the Hasidic masters. With Fritz Mauthner, Gustav Landauer, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal as his principal interlocutors, he situated himself firmly in the contemporary discourse on the critique of language.[5]

Buber's approach to language resonates with features of the new mode of linguistic analysis introduced by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure at the beginning of the twentieth century.[6] For Saussure, *langue* is the systematic code of a language, whereas *parole* is the particular meaning or message which is verbalized. *Parole* is individual, temporal, and subjective,

while *langue* is atemporal, abstract, and objective. Buber weaves Saussure's linguistic dichotomy between language and speech into his *Sprachkritik*, but with a significant difference. Whereas Saussure was interested in the structure of language and not in *parole* as the individual, contingent use of language, Buber sought to illuminate the unique ontological status of speech in the revivalist religious culture of Hasidism.

In his discussion of ecstatic mysticism Buber raises the question of the epistemic status of the concepts inscribed within Hasidic language. In linking aesthetics with the life of the soul, he also explored the relation between poetry, religion (i.e., religiosity), and philosophy. Along with metaphors from the spiritual universe of Hasidism, Buber introduced figures of speech that were also salient in fin-de-siècle circles, such as "abyss" (*Ungrund*). The abyss represented for the cultural pessimists of his day the void wrought by the collapse of the certainties of ordinary knowledge mediated linguistically. But the abyss metaphor was also a well-known in German mysticism. Prior to beginning work on his first anthologies on Hasidism, he studied German mysticism, which in turn led him to the writings of the Renaissance philosopher Nicholas of Cusa and to Jacob Boehme, on whose respective conceptions of the "principle of individuation" he devoted his doctoral dissertation in 1904.[7] Through the mediation of Wilhelm Dilthey, Buber gained his first insights into the relevance of these "two founders of the more recent metaphysical individualism" for a modern conception of personality.[8]

Boehme's remarks on the nature of God reveal his understanding of the transcendental foundation of personality. In Boehme's system, God the Father is the Abyss (*Ungrund*), the infinite, undifferentiated being (*das Nichts*), or the nameless, impersonal God prior to revelation. In his theology, the *Ungrund* reveals himself through the Son, who realizes the Father's desire to become manifest. The Holy Spirit constitutes, as it were, a divine mirror—called "Virgin Wisdom" or Sophia—reflecting back to the *Ungrund* knowledge of himself and his creative potential.[9] Buber was also cognizant of the affinities of Boehme's theosophy to Kabbalah. Boehme's Abyss is analogous to the *En Sof*, God as infinite being prior to the act of creating a finite universe through his self-limitation. Further, in the kabbalistic and Hasidic imagination communion with God is focused on the divine emanation of *Hokhmah* (Wisdom).

What Buber calls the abyss corresponds in Hasidic worship to the mystical naught (*ayin*), that is, the state of nonbeing where one experiences the root of reality, saturated with divinity, as the axis of spiritual renewal. But for the Kabbalists, God is revealed through God's word. The creation of the

world unfolded in the biblical account through speech, and it is the divine word that sustains creation. However, unlike that of the biblical prophets, the speech of the Hasidic masters does not derive its authority from divine origin. Although the language of ecstatic speech remains for Buber without discursive content, it is precisely because of its manifest inadequacy that it constitutes the corridor through which one passes, connecting the mundane order to the ultimate ground of being beyond language.[10] "No man," Buber writes, "knows the abyss of inner dualism so well as the Jew, but neither does anyone know so well the miracle of unification, which cannot be accepted on faith but must be experienced."[11] The image of the abyss as well as other metaphysical metaphors perform a more than merely ornamental role in Buber's depiction of the mystical experience. Because they open the way to experience, their significance is not limited to the projection of *Wortbilder* (word images) characteristic of visionary mysticism.

That Buber regarded speech as the bearer of mystery is evinced by his use of Kabbalistic concepts and symbols, such as *Urbeginn* (primordial beginning), *Urseele* (primordial soul), *Urmensch* (primordial man), which are meant to contrast with those "notions which are bent on establishing 'order,' "[12] above all the term *Ursache* (causality). He also coined pseudo-kabbalistic terms (or borrows them from Julius Hart), such as *All-Einung*, *Allgewohnte*, *Allgeschehen*, *Allheit*, *Alltrieb*, *Allzeugung.* Such neologisms highlight the ultimate unity of reality and accentuate a pan(en)theistic conception of God. These stylistic efforts were meant to draw attention to the epistemological status of mystical rhetoric, which Buber attributed to the ontological quality of lived experience.

According to Buber, the languages we speak, both scientific and ordinary, are subject to empirical confirmation, that is, to the experiences we have of the phenomenal world governed by time and space and thus also by causality. In contrast, "the ecstatic is . . . separated from language, which cannot follow him."[13] Ecstatic speech attests to the immediacy of *Erlebnis* as affective, lived experience. "We are listening to a human being speak of the soul and the soul's ineffable mystery."[14] Hence, Hasidism places speech above both language and silence. The paradoxical relationship between language and ecstatic speech in Hasidism is formulated by Buber metaphorically: "The word is an abyss through which the speaker strides" (L 29/F 39). The abyss is here not a metaphor for existential despair but denotes a dialectical passage by which the mystic becomes conscious of the arbitrariness of language, without, however, denying its ontological status as manifest in speech. As a metaphorical articulation or a visual image of that which cannot be conceptually represented, ecstatic speech is a

gateway from the "inwardness of reality" to the outer reality of the world of phenomena, marking the passage from spirit to body, from eternal to the temporal. Analogously, Ricoeur speaks of the poetic experience as the "non-philosophy of ecstasy": the poetic experience "expresses the ecstatic moment of language—language going beyond itself."[15]

The conundrum of language preoccupied the Jewish culture movement in its quest for a Jewish modernism. It was intrinsically related to the problem of representation in Judaism, which demanded a major reconsideration by Jewish intellectuals of Judaism's compatibility with aesthetics. As the central poet of the Hebrew renaissance in Eastern Europe, Hayyim Bialik likewise struggled with the limits of language. In his well-known essay "Hagilluy ve-kissui ba-lashon" (Revealment and concealment in language, 1916),[16] which can be read as a critical comment on Nietzsche's "Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinn" (On truth and lying in an extramoral sense, 1873), he forcefully adumbrates the divide between "internal" and "external" language that has affected Hebrew as the holy tongue. When Hebrew served as a vessel for the spirit of revelation, language was anything but arbitrary: "Some words are like great mountain ranges—others like a yawning abyss." But the spoken word could not retain forever its original substance. When words became a tool for conventional communication, they lost their distinctive meaning, their "*primeval* emotion" and "spiritual force," and became empty shells. Man has lost his sense of awe for language and lacks an awareness of "how frail is that bridge of words, how deep and dark the abyss that gapes below, and how miraculous every step safely passed."[17] Language has become a screen between the surface of the world and the inner being of things; it "stands between us and them." In the tension between concealment and revealment the scale has tipped in favor of "covering" rather than concealing. The poet, in contrast to the "speakers of prose," respects the uniqueness of language and the ephemeral moment of words that seek to express what has been grasped in a certain irretrievable moment by the mind.

Buber sought to challenge Mauthner's summary dismissal of the epistemological efficacy of language, at least of the spoken word.[18] Rather than subscribing to Mauthner's injunction to silence as the only way to preserve the uniqueness of lived experience, Buber argued that the ecstatic mystic feels impelled to give witness to the unique experience and hence to verbalize the unity of the "I and the world."[19] The ecstatic's speech is, in Buber's presentation, a form of silence; it is a "most silent speech which wants not to describe existence, but only to communicate it."[20] For Buber, language screens the ultimate ground of Being, while ecstatic speech as prediscursive

thought evokes its fullness. Inscribed in the liminal consciousness of the ecstatic mystic, the experience of the primal unity of existence cannot be expressed in the language of the world of experience (*Erfahrungswelt)*. Ricoeur's theory of metaphor provides a theoretical framework to gain access to the underlying hermeneutical issues of Buber's unmethodical reflections: "All discourse occurs as an *event* [*événement*]; it is the opposite of language as 'langue,' code or system; as an event, it has an instantaneous existence, it appears and disappears."[21] As an event, speech is ephemeral and bears the immediacy of the moment to which it is a response. It should be noted that Ricoeur is referring to the event of speech (discourse) in general, whereas Buber confines his reflections to ecstatic speech. Yet both invest speech/discourse with meaning.

The Hasidic masters are in the end not concerned with knowledge of reality per se: "The experience of ecstasy is not knowing."[22] They are intuitively aware of the inherent ontological nature and potent metaphysical meaning of ecstatic speech. In Buber's idiom: "One should speak words as if the heavens were opened in them. And as if it were not so that you take the word in your mouth, but rather as if you entered into the word" (L 29/F 39).[23] At the summit of ecstasy the phenomenal world that denies one an access to the inner essence of existence is surmounted and "*Being* is unveiled" (*Schleierlos ist das Sein*) (L 8/F 23). In the spiritual ascent, when the aesthetics of perception is transformed into an aesthetics of being, the mystic attains to a state "above nature and above time and above thought" (L 4/F 19). Unlike the prisoners of Plato's cave—which is often cited in philosophical aesthetics as the classical example of a misguided perception of reality—the mystic is not mislead to believe that the verbal representation of his lived experience could possibly provide an adequate description of Being or, from Buber's perspective, the metaphysical substratum of reality. Lived experience also supplies Buber's poetic philosophy with an ontological argument. "That phenomenon," Buber writes in *Ekstatische Konfessionen,* "which one can designate, after an optical concept, as projection [*Projektion*], the placing outside of something inward, is evident in its purest form [*Gestalt*] in ecstasy, which, because it is the most inward, is placed the furthest outward."[24] The verbal testimonies of these ecstatic experiences are such outer manifestations; they render the psychical processes—or rather mental images—through sensory metaphors. This passage from the formless to form, which is a recurrent theme for Buber, shifts the attention from (passive) aesthetic contemplation to (active) imagination. The phenomenological analogy between the altered state of consciousness of ecstatic experience and the mystic's verbal representation of an innermost experience,

his projection of a mental image, may have motivated Buber to incorporate in *Legende* a well-known mystical metaphor from the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov—namely, *'ahizat 'enayim* (lit. "seizing the eyes").[25] In Hasidic literature this trope of illusion is commonly transmitted as part of a story about "the king who built a magical palace." This parable is related in *Keter Shem Tov,* an immensely popular anthology of teachings of the Baal Shem Tov published in 1794, in the following version:

> A very wise king built walls, towers, and gates by illusion [*'ahizat 'enayim*], and commanded [his subjects] to come to him through the gates and towers. And he gave orders to dispense goods [mammon] from his treasures at every gate. Some people would come to one gate, take the goods, and return [laden with treasures], and so on. Finally the king's beloved son made an utmost effort [*hitamets me'od*] to go directly to his father the king. Then he saw that there was no barrier separating him from his father, for it was all an illusion.[26]

Thematic variations of the motif of illusion, which constitutes the epistemological core of this parable, are found in a variety of classical Jewish and non-Jewish texts (biblical, philosophic, Gnostic, apocalyptic, and Hekhalot literature). The parable evokes the classic philosophical problem of duality. Whether we consider Plato's parable of the cave, the famous water vision episode of Hekhalot mysticism, or Gnostic sources engaged in cosmogony and discussing various types of veils, especially the veil of Sophia—or the firmament—separating the spiritual and the material worlds,[27] all are but variations of the same theme, the relation between the corporeal and the noncorporeal worlds. In Judaism, these speculations are inspired by Exodus 26:31–33: "You shall make a curtain of . . . fine twisted linen; . . . so that the curtain shall serve you as a partition [*parokhet*] between the Holy and the Holy of Holies."

Hasidism adapts this well-known motif of the veil in order to cast it into a didactic parable. Although each of the numerous Hasidic adaptations of this parable illustrates a variety of concepts (divine immanence, service through corporeality, the meaning of "cleaving to God" during prayer, and mystical communion), the message remains essentially the same.[28] All adaptations of the parable allude to Isaiah 6:3 ("His Presence fills all the earth") and come to inculcate a mystical awareness of God's palpable immanence. In this belief in all-encompassing divinity, the world is regarded to be but "a divinely conjured illusion."[29] The spiritual truth of existence, the unconcealed reality, lies for the Hasidic masters beyond sensory 'illusion';

it is a mystery that can only be grasped with the "Eyes of the Mind" (mystical consciousness) and not with the "Eyes of the Flesh" (sensory experience).[30] Paradoxically, the representation of the essence of reality needs a "visible conceptuality" in order to make it part of human knowledge. The parable serves Buber as an illustration how the mystical imagination brings an abstract concept into the sensual world, what Martin Seel calls the "aesthetics of appearing."[31] Buber demonstrates that the Hasidic masters craft a language that lends itself to "an imaginative reading," where the sensuality "is generated by and consists together with an (often extended and transformed) meaningfulness of its words which in themselves are not open to sensual perception."[32]

According to Buber, what evokes the feeling of the sublime is not a represented ideal presence, as in art, but an intuited real presence of the divinity. This mystical intuition generates, as he endeavors to show, devotional attitudes. Hence, the Hasidic masters attached no epistemological significance to the aesthetic capacity of the individual, which, as Leibniz and other modern philosophers argued, is what enables one to make the metaphysical, unifying connection between an external object and one's aesthetic apprehension. Buber's version of the parable reads as follows:

> A king once built a great and glorious palace with numberless chambers, but only one door was opened. When the building was finished, it was announced that all princes should appear before the king, who sat enthroned in the last of the chambers. But when they entered, they saw that there were doors open on all sides, which led to winding passages in the distance, and there were again doors and again passages in the distance, and there were again doors and again passages, and no end arose before the bewildered eyes. Then came the king's son and saw that all the labyrinth was a mirrored reflection (*Spiegelung*), and he saw his father sitting in the hall before him (*vor seinem Angesicht*). (L 10–11/F 24)

Buber introduces various changes, endowing the parable with a radically different meaning. To begin with, he neutralizes the theocentric elements constitutive of Hasidic mystical experience. God is neither the active agent nor is divine omnipresence the focal point in Buber's version. Further, the didactic message of the parable is altered.[33] The somewhat Kafkaesque quality that the parable obtains in Buber's rendering cannot go unnoticed. Buber suggests that, lost in a labyrinth, as in the imaginary building of the parable, man himself is the source of his meandering confusions.[34] His version of the parable problematizes above all aesthetic perception.

One particular semantic shift in this parable commands our attention, namely, Buber's translation of *'ahizat 'enayim* as *Spiegelung*. In German, *Spiegelung* is a polysemous word that bears the connotations of reflection/mirroring/projection; *Spiegelung*, however, is not synonymous with 'illusion,' the established meaning of the *'ahizat 'enayim* metaphor in Hasidic literature. In Buber's translation of the parable, *Spiegelung* obtains a metaphoric sense bearing various potential meanings or references. What Buber hoped to elicit from the parable and especially its epistemological core metaphor can only be established contextually. This, of course, is also true of the original parable. In all its Hasidic versions, which do not construe the palace as a disorienting maze, it is God who produces the illusion of barriers (i.e., separation) through *'ahizat 'enayim*. This not insignificant detail is blunted in Buber's version in which the palace is portrayed as a baffling labyrinth and where *Spiegelung* connotes a subjective projection on the part of the confused princes.

But the parable as retold by Buber had yet another, extensive context in which it was to be read. Given the fin-de-siècle neo-Romantic discourse and Buber's cultural program of a Jewish Renaissance, his translation of the core metaphor of the Hasidic parable induces one to read the parable on two levels, allegorical and epistemological, appealing to the imagination to make the desired connections. Both interpretive levels condense the themes of identity, unity, and text. Mediating the absolute in a temporal context, the parable may be read as an allusion to the problem of Jewish identity and as a spiritual Zionist comment on the Jewish question. Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, regarded Western European Jewry's quest for emancipation and acceptance as an illusion, perpetuated by an insidious self-deception. The Jewish state, on the other hand, is, as he emphatically declared, no deception. In a critique of Herzl's political solution to the Jewish question, Buber averred at the time that the illusion of assimilation can only be overcome by a cultural affirmation of authentic 'Jewishness.' Although an aestheticized construct, Buber's East European Jew (the son in the parable) represents the 'authentic Jew.' Beholden to a living tradition, the Hasidic Jew is unaffected by the predicament of assimilated Western Jews caught culturally and socially in a maze, that is, in the ever-spiraling illusions of modernity.[35] Only the son attains a spiritually authentic life, whereas the princes remain ensnarled in the illusions of the physical world. Read allegorically, the king/father of the parable does not stand for God alone but in an expanded sense symbolizes the principle of unity and thus also points to the objective of reclaiming the unity of the Jewish people.[36]

The second interpretive level of Buber's rendition of the parable is epistemological and reckons with Mauthner's concept of a "godless mysticism." In Mauthner's program for a radical deconstruction of the concepts of the "I, the will, the thought, the soul," only the longing for unity constitutes an inviolable value and attests to the abiding cultural significance of the metaphysical sensibility. These four categories of consciousness are, in Mauthner's view, nothing but "illusions,"[37] which brings us back to the issue of *'ahizat 'enayim* or *Spiegelung*. Mauthner contends that "truth is fundamentally a negative concept (*Begriff*); there are unconditionally only relative truths."[38] As a corollary, he posits the fundamental "subjectivity of our knowledge of the world."[39] Focusing his critique on substantives such as 'God' and 'truth,'[40] he deems these to be arbitrary conceptual constructs and therefore superfluous and bereft of genuine content. Not without irony he notes that "the existence (*Dasein*) of a word offers no guarantee for the existence of the content of a word."[41] Therefore, truth is simply what we believe to be truth. Given the fact that language is an arbitrary product of representation, it is futile to seek the divinity behind the representation: "The critique of language alone knows the small truth, which is as simple as it is exhaustive: The world exists only once. It is fatuous to query with the language of representation (*Sprache der Vorstellungen*) about the divinity behind the representation. 'Divinity is a meaningless word.' "[42] Mauthner would also find Simmel to be engaged in a similarly futile endeavor of seeking to bridge the experienced tension between the transcendent and the mundane with a third, undefinable reality to which we belong and which is responsible for the "natural as well as the transcendent reflections" (*Spiegelungen*).[43]

Significantly, Mauthner identified Meister Eckhart as the first critic of language. The "philosophus Teutonicus" was not only a "genius of mysticism" but also a "despiser of the word and an artist of the word, but never a servant of the word" (*Diener am Wort*).[44] In this context, Mauthner considers ecstatic (or mystical) experience as the fulcrum to overcome the deception of the *Ichgefühl*: "What I can experience (*erleben*) is no longer mere language. What I can experience is real and I can experience it for a brief few hours such that I no longer know of the *principium individuationis*, such that the difference between the world and myself ceases. 'That I have become God.' "[45] Indicatively, Buber refrains from using the term 'truth' in its epistemic and propositional sense. As expressions of lived-life, religious teachings "are truth sui generis," contingent upon no other criteria beyond that of the experience itself.[46] Buber conceives reality primarily as an aesthetic form of self-reflection, including an ethos of practice and action rather

than a question of abstract knowledge. Here he is also in tune with the doctrines of the Neue Gemeinschaft of the Hart brothers, for whom truth is that which is validated by life alone.[47] The Hasidic masters avoided the fallacy of treating concepts as conveying epistemological truth claims by separating the concepts of 'inwardness' and 'outwardness' from sense perception and linking them to one's will. Guided by his will, the ecstatic mystic attains a consciousness of the unutterable, unthinkable, suprarational meaning of existence that is disclosed experientially.

In his first anthology of 1906, Buber depicted R. Nahman as a spiritual leader who anticipated the dilemma of modern Jews. Aware that Hasidism was on the brink of decline, R. Nahman's faith was borne by an act of will alone: "Thus in Nahman's heart arose the will to renew tradition and 'make out of it a thing that will endure forever'" (*Rabbi Nachman,* 25).[48] A late heir of the prophetic spirit of Judaism, R. Nahman set an example of how to renew what had become a vacuous tradition.[49] This almost defiant presentation of renewal as a volitional intention to participate in the Absolute is typical of a theology of crisis which Buber—although he would dismiss theological argumentation—found in R. Nahman.

Buber's emphasis on the will and on what he calls in his introductory remarks to *Rabbi Nachman* the Jew's most striking character trait, the "willing the impossible" (*das Wollen des Unmöglichen*), has to be seen in the context of his discontent with Kant's theory of the sublime. In sponsoring a vitalistic conception of the will, Buber critiques Kant's identification of sublimity with the will's power of restraint.[50] Kant explains in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) that sublimity is the will's resistance against sensuality; the will serves the function of controlling the senses. Buber demurs and affirms the sensuous. The creative Jew is one who "dares to *will* this abhorrent world."[51] Neither does Buber share Schopenhauer's view that the will enslaves the self by its concessions to sensuality. In portraying R. Nahman as a strong personality, attuned to the power of the will, Buber rejects Schopenhauer's "denying the will of what it wills." When the will is regarded as potentially sharing in divine creative energy, as the Jewish mystics contend, why, Buber seems to ponder, overcome the senses? While he endorses Schiller's position on the sublime, where culture is viewed as the realm "to help the human being assert his will,"[52] he does not share his negative Kantian attitude toward the senses. Although he acknowledges that Hasidism is wary of sensuality, Buber is eager to demonstrate that this attitude does not entail an ascetic hostility to life.

Buber held mysticism to be a "psychological category." God is to be found through intuition within one's inner psychological reality as well as in the

outer physical realm.[53] Buber's emphasis on the psychological, that is, the spiritual-existential dimension of mystical imagination, echoes Mauthner's insistence that in order to obviate dubious conceptual language, philosophy must be brought under the tutelage of psychology. In similar vein, the conceptual terms "immanentism" or "panentheism," which are generally used to describe the phenomenon of an all-permeating divine essence, would, as Buber implies, not adequately capture the ontological understanding of reality as experienced by the mystic. Nor, as he insisted in a debate of 1910 with Ernst Troeltsch, is the ecstatic experience to be analyzed sociologically; by its very nature it eludes all classificatory categories, and rather it is to be understood as religious solipsism.[54] This does not invalidate the ecstatic mystic's testimony, for it is epistemologically *sui generis*.

While the parable we are considering is, of course, not to be construed as a mystical confession, for Buber it serves to illustrate the need for the transformation of consciousness required by the spiritual life. This transformation takes its cue from the reevaluation of our general understanding of our cognitive perception, confounded as it is by the misleading analytical categories of 'subject' and 'object.'[55] The mystical consciousness, by contrast, is structured according to the dialectical movement between exteriority and interiority of the soul. As Buber writes in *Ecstatic Confessions*: "Consciousness puts ecstasy outside, in projection; the will puts it outside again in an attempt to say the unsayable."[56] Objectification of expressions of lived life is the province of cultural life. These observations echo Nietzsche, who held that the life of the soul unfolds independently of conceptual systems *and* language. The mind must be unconstrained by a priori categories of time, space, and causality, which, once established, tend to enslave thinking to a fixed form. The image of a labyrinth in Buber's rendering of the parable is also a prominent metaphor in Nietzsche's writings, where it represents, according to Seyhan, "the mind coping with the undecidability of cognitive perception"; the mind's labyrinth points to the problem of the representational reliability of knowledge.[57] But then again the only way out of the epistemological maze generated by the abstract-analytical method and its illusory belief in an absolute truth is to turn to metaphor as the "method" of creative imagination. Nietzsche writes, in the *Birth of Tragedy* (1871): "Metaphor, for the authentic poet, is not a figure of rhetoric but a representative image standing concretely before him in lieu of a concept."[58] Nietzsche reminds us that metaphor has always been the foundation of concepts. The thing-in-itself is an illusion. It requires courage to accept the multi-dimensional nature of phenomena, to embrace contingency, and to be creatively involved in the flux of becoming through skepticism and restless inquiry.

Nietzsche, "whose mistrust of language is limitless,"[59] as Mauthner poignantly noted, argues that what are generally called truths "are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they *are* illusions; worn-out metaphors without sensory impact, coins which have lost their image and now can be used only as metal, and no longer as coins."[60] For Nietzsche, "all claims to truth are based on a fictional configuration of metaphors," questioning the very possibility of both objective truth and access to reality.[61] It is a curious fact that in 1873, when Nietzsche wrote his previously noted essay "Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinn," Mauthner finished a first draft of his *Die Sprache* (1907), which is no longer extant. Language, like our Apollonian consciousness which generates perceptions and illusions, veils reality. That force, which draws its vitality from a life that is lived passionately and in tune with the subliminal flow of lived experience, is undermined and vitiated by what Schopenhauer called the "veil of Maya," the illusory bonds to one's body and self-centered ego wrought by a false perception of reality, encouraging us to mistake what the senses perceive for reality.[62] The veil that covers reality could only be rent through selfless identification with the suffering of others; one thereby achieves liberation and the removal of the veil beneath which all things, including the self, are believed to be one and eternal, in contrast to the individuated, transitory world of phenomenal perception. Introspection offers for Schopenhauer, as well as for Buber, another means to discover one's essence as well as the essence of the universe as a whole. For as one is part of the universe like everything else, the basic energies of the universe flow through oneself, as they flow through everything else.

Nietzsche structured his reflections on language and representation around the dual life of the artist, whose consciousness alternates between flights of reverie behind the veil of Maya and back again to phenomenal existence. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the artist's imagination is primed by the metaphysical intuition attained in his dreams and realizes that nature is nothing but "a visionary reflection of the primal oneness" (*Ur-Einen*). This unity is only accessible in the "illusion of the [artist's] dream world." Whereas Apollo in his measured restraint sets an example of how to live with the chaos of life engendered by the *principium individuationis* that makes artistic expression possible, Dionysus, in disregarding the boundaries between appearance and reality, represents the collapse of the law of individuation; intoxicated, he plunges into nothingness, the abyss of being. In the *Birth of Tragedy* (section 2),[63] Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, sees art as an escape producing an illusion necessary to distract from the agonies

of life. In contrast to reason and logic, which lack a similar self-reflexive, psychological quality, art for Nietzsche is thus, according to Azade Seyhan, a "self-conscious illusion which excites an optic desire to look beyond appearance to the abyss where comprehension faces total resistance and eventually comes to terms with the tragic vision of existence."[64] Eventually, Nietzsche came to identify art with life, an expression of that very same overflowing of life's abundance and instinctual energy that sustains the becoming of the world. We will later discuss how this doctrine of eternal becoming and the evanescence of individuated being would resonate in Buber's representation of Hasidic thought.

Buber, as noted, shared Nietzsche's positive evaluation of the will and likewise sought to overcome the millennial philosophical tradition of transcending the mundane order and turning against the human condition for a higher spirituality. But he went one step further, arguing that one need not peek *beyond* or *behind* the veil to discover "undivided oneness." Whereas Nietzsche denied the possibility of retrieving the primal oneness underlying the duality of existence, demanding that we must ultimately resign ourselves to a "will to illusion," Buber affirmed through the spiritual life of the Hasidic mystic the possibility of retrieving the ontological unity of existence—through sanctification of the divine substance in the material world.[65] What Nietzsche found in Greek tragedy, namely a successful fusion of these opposed forces (with Apollo as the god of unity and master of dreams), Buber found embodied in the Hasidic mystic, who bridges the dualistic opposition between Apollo and Dionysus and thus between the Apollonian world of appearances and illusion, on the one hand, and the Dionysian world of dynamic experience which wills to glimpse beyond the material forms into the immateriality of the metaphysical, on the other.

In his account of Hasidism, Buber presented this tension as a question both of the mind/soul and of action, while taking care to maintain the ontological distinction between aesthetics and metaphysics. The Besht was an undaunted believer of the will to perceive the invisible essence of things. Already in *Rabbi Nachman* Buber presented him as a Dionysian, "Who, undeceived by appearance [*Schein*], peers into the essence of things, and thus apprehends God."[66] The Hasidic mystic, when in the ecstatic mode, realizes in the world of becoming (a recurrent Dionysian motif in "Das Leben der Chassidim") the Dionysian passion to remove the veil of Maya. But then again the Apollonian mode of constraint reminds him that "*kawwanah* is not the will." The interaction between "perception and volition," which defines for Buber the spiritual Zionist consciousness, is realized through

the Hasidic mystic. He recognizes that the task of redeeming obliges him to confront concrete reality, including the suffering of others, and to allow "everything alien to be submerged in the inalienable divine" (L 28/F 39). Only the one who "has a soul" may, as Buber writes metaphorically, lower himself into "the abyss, bound by his thought to the rim above, as though by a strong rope, and will his return," while the one "who has only life and spirit [*Geist*] . . . will fall into the depths" (L 26/F 36–37).[67]

Hence, it would be erroneous to conclude that Buber advocates an absolute submission to the Dionysian state of drunken enthusiasm in order to attain the primordial state of unity, a state beyond the constraints of mundane existence and invidious bourgeois conceits. The two modes of representation, or aesthetic categories, which Apollo and Dionysus represent—the restrained and the unrestrained—complement each other in Nietzsche's metaphysical aesthetics as well as in Buber's pantheism or ontological monism. But while they do so undialectically for Nietzsche, who shuns the representational conceit of dialectical reasoning, they are dialectically related in Buber's representation of Hasidism. Hasidism, and here we encounter the ultimate philosophical significance of Buber's rendition of the parable, does not regard corporeal reality—the non-artistic natural human life—as an obstacle to oneness. The panentheism of Hasidism renders self-denial as well as the theme of the veil void. Buber's most definite statement on the veil of Maya is to be found in his "Der Mythos der Juden" (1916): "Whereas to the other great monotheist of the Orient, the Indian sage as he is represented in the Upanishads, corporeal reality is an illusion [*Schein*], which one must shed if he is to enter the world of truth, to the Jew corporeal reality is a revelation [i.e., an immanent manifestation] of the divine spirit and will."[68] The empirical world is not to be downgraded to an illusion or mere appearance, as in the ascetic pathos of the Vedanta as well as in the Western philosophical tradition. Mysticism, Buber avers, transforms biblical myth into an inner process and recurrent event experienced by the soul, rendering accessible in the phenomenal realm the experience of the 'living God.'

Similarly to Mauthner, who locates movement also in language and thought and not just in action per se,[69] and in consonance Wilhelm Dilthey's critique of historical reason, Buber understood speech as "deed" (here he glides without differentiation from ecstatic to ordinary speech acts). In his exposition of the Hasidic value of *'avodah*/divine service into which the *'ahizat 'enayim* parable is placed, it becomes evident that ultimate reality is to be found in this world: "In all deeds of man—speaking and looking and listening and going and remaining standing and lying down—the boundless

is clothed" (L 12/F 25).[70] Buber uses the Baal Shem Tov's teaching that every action and thought comes from God as a trajectory to develop a comprehensive religious ethos.[71]

This brings us to the ultimate objective of Buber's use of the parable. The metaphor of *Spiegelung* as denoting a projection or mirroring of an inner truth can also be conceived as appertaining to the practice of reading. Mauthner, in the words of Lutz Geldsetzer, "expounded the conception that the world and the texts alike are to be 'seen' from a certain—and for every viewer different—standpoint in a mirror-like distortion of world- and sense-pictures." Here the mirror is identified with "the thinking and knowing subject, and the object of the mirroring is assumed to be the thing-in-itself." Geldsetzer proposes a reverse order: "The object (that is, the text) is taken to be the mirror, and the subject (the interpreter) receives his own thoughts . . . by the text-mirror."[72] According to Geldsetzer's "hermeneutical mirror," an interpreted text is akin to a mirror reflecting the ideas and notions one brings to the act of reading. Interpretation conceived as an act of self-knowledge approximates Buber's understanding of reading. The text created by Buber is in this sense not a "mirror" reflecting a given reality even in its apparent 'otherness' to the assimilated German Jew, but entails an interpretive engagement on the part of the reader with the text, aiming at its appropriation, or more precisely, a plumbing of its contemporary existential meaning.

This critical hermeneutic process is, Bernhard Debatin argues, facilitated by metaphors or what he calls "reflective metaphorisation,"[73] which is engendered by the fact that by virtue of its inherently polysemic quality a metaphor cannot be limited to the actualization of one of its potential meanings. Metaphors are not just a veil for the literal sense but rather induce reflection. From this point of view, the hermeneutic process of both mystical expression and the very act of interpretation as a cognitive mirroring are enhanced by metaphor as an iconic expression. Uniquely positioned at the threshold of speech, metaphors bear the imprint of the liminal experience of the mystic. Hence, whereas *Erlebnis* cannot be translated into a propositional statement, the epistemic metaphor can, for it is not an expression of an actual mystical experience but a proposition expounded through an image. Religious imagination, as Dilthey argued, "produces a world distinct from experienced reality."[74] Moreover, metaphor transcends the primarily aesthetic function which it often obtains in art and poetry. The mystical consciousness employs metaphor as a vehicle of meaning that implicitly challenges the aesthetic delight and the purported self-sufficiency of experience. In doing so metaphor assumes an "ontological function."[75] Adopting

an ontological approach to language via metaphor, Buber's invests his text with meaning. In illustrating the transcendent aspect of a distinctive, spiritual form of being, he brings the reader to recognize the limits of language and to become sensitive to a reality or "world" in the Ricoeurian sense that surpasses language. Buber's "Das Leben der Chassidim" is therefore not of an existential order of "self-discovery" and the retrieval of meaning alone but probes the ontological significance of religious forms of expression, perception, and understanding.

In the reading process induced by Buber's novel text, the poetic function manifests itself as a dialectics of reading and interpretation, in which illusionary readings are continuously constructed and deconstructed by the interplay between memory, imagination, and anticipation. Commenting on such dialectic, the literary theorist Wolfgang Iser remarks: "As the literary text involves the reader/interpreter in the formation of illusion and the simultaneous formation of the means whereby the illusion is punctured, reading reflects the process by which we gain experience."[76] It is plausible that this is what Buber had in mind in his decontextualized re-representation of fragments of the literary tradition of Judaism in "Das Leben der Chassidim."

In focusing on the poetic dimension of ecstatic speech, Buber may have been inspired by Dilthey's elaborations on poetry as the "representation and expression of life."[77] In his *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung (*Poetry and experience, 1906), Dilthey considers how lived experience effects the intonation and the cadence of speech. But to be articulated, *Erlebnis* must perforce find expression in verbal "objectifications," a process in which lived experiences become a "memory system." While Dilthey did not relate these observations to the question of the epistemological status of language, his student Buber may very well have conscripted these reflections to develop his philosophical distinction between language and speech. *Langue* structured as it is by concepts and propositions is contrasted with *parole* marked by the propensity to give expression to the immediacy of lived experience through imagery. But Buber did not extend these insights into a consistent theory of speech. This would have required a systematic delineation of how ecstatic speech articulated principally through metaphors exemplifies the epistemic status and linguistic character of ordinary speech acts.

As an adherent of the philosophy of life, Buber was equally concerned with the phenomenological understanding of Hasidic mystical consciousness and the aesthetics of representation as expressed in the Hasidic teachings. His treatment of the parable and its key metaphor is, in fact, a revision of the existential premises of Romantic hermeneutics with its focus on the

grammatical-philological and psychological reconstruction or clarification of an author's subjective experience. In his approach to representation Buber avoids entrapment of the interpreter in self-projection. For Buber self-projection need not necessarily be conceived as subjectivity. Indeed, he seems to have regarded it as a possible hermeneutic asset. Here he anticipates what Gadamer would later call a "fusion of horizons," which Ricoeur explains as the "enlargement" of the reader's "capacity of self-projection by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself."[78] In this resulting dual referentiality, "the reference of language to reality (*Realitätsreferenz*) and to the self (*Selbstreferenz*) are inseparable from one another." The act of interpretation aims at disclosure; the "coming to language of the sense and reference of a text is the coming to language of a world and not the recognition of another" person, namely the author.[79] Ricoeur's concept of the "semantic autonomy of the text" provides yet another perspective on the implied principles underlying Buber's interpretive translation. By freeing the text from authorial intent, the inscription of its meaning is placed in the domain of the reader. Buber applied the hermeneutic principle of the autonomy of a text *avant la lettre* to perpetuate via other lived experiences a new self-understanding on the part of the Jewish reader. To be sure, Ricoeur honors the integrity of the text whereas Buber recreates the text. Hence, in contrast to Dilthey's conception of reexperiencing, which indubitably informs his hermeneutics, Buber did not view the interpretive gesture of entering the subjective world of the other as requiring the suspension of one's own historicity, identity, and existential reality. On the contrary, reexperiencing is a form of self-discovery.

In elaborating the distinction between speech and language, Buber courted a paradox. Ecstatic speech defies the conceptual and propositional injunctions of language, and yet in order to expound the epistemological and ontological characteristics of speech he would have to advance an argument embroidered with conceptual propositions. Ricoeur doubted that there could be a discourse on metaphor "that is not stated within a metaphorically engendered conceptual network."[80] The parable offered a solution to Buber's dilemma. It provided an opportunity of inflecting his translation with a metaphor that carries a propositional statement and consequently carries a designated meaning. This is achieved by a semantic transposition of the Hasidic metaphor *'ahizat 'enayim* from denoting an illusion to which one is subjected by a deceiving agent to a term devised by Buber to suggest a self-imposed delusion, or, alternatively, a projection (*Spiegelung*) of subjective attitudes. One's experience of separation, alienation, and isolation is but a projection of a false and falsifying perception of reality. A *Weltbild*

mediated by empirical knowledge alone denies one access to the fundamental unity of being. And yet projection may, paradoxically, also allow the reader to behold that deeper reality.

Each of the identified levels of meaning of Buber's parable entails a dialectical unity, presupposing a dualistic tension between the subject and its object—between the Western Jew and the delusion of assimilation; between the perceiving I and reality; between the reader and a text. In spite of the reinforcement of this tension, this duality is, in fact, a monism. Buber's monistic bias is betrayed by the ambiguity of his pivotal metaphor. Franz Rosenzweig would later label Buber's mystical monism an "atheistic theology," noting that by consistently identifying God as the principle determining man's self-realization he failed to affirm revelation and thus in effect denied the reality of the living and transcendent God of revelation and hence of genuine religious faith. Indeed, Buber avoided both theological and moral discourse. Aiming at a realization of his objective of cultural-cum-spiritual renewal, he engaged in an ontological discourse centered on the individual experience and the representation of an intuition of ultimate reality mediated through ecstatic speech and the metaphysical character of metaphor.

In spite of his appeal for the cultivation of a mystical worldview, Buber remained ensnared in a mystical monism and in turn in Mauthner's "godless mysticism," for he conscripted God as a mere metaphor for the noumenal substrate of reality, apprehended through the ecstatic experience, and not as a transcendent reality whose truth is revealed by divine grace. The shortcomings of his approach, as exemplified in the work considered here, are also betrayed by the poetic "text" he composed. His interpretive translation and poetization of Hasidic wisdom, contrary to what we may commonly associate with a free rendering of traditional texts, actually narrows the potential meaning of the original Hebrew sources to a contemporary if not univalent meaning. Without an awareness of the ramified network of meanings of a Hebrew term established by tradition, the reader has to rely on Buber's mediation of the material and the meaning he allows it to yield. Further, the text he created through the retelling of the Hasidic parable is replete with conceptual abstractions and propositional statements, carried by the contextually determined metaphor of *Spiegelung*. The latter points to the unavoidable conundrum of enjoining language to represent the ineffable, a conundrum that cast him back into the very dilemma he sought to overcome.

After this detailed illustrative example of Buber's interpretive translation and its diverse ramifications the question arises what conception of culture informs these aesthetic and hermeneutic principles.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Jewish Culture Between Mystical Aesthetics and *Lebensphilosophie*

> The Hasidic teaching is the proclamation of rebirth. No renewal of Judaism is possible that does not bear in itself the elements of Hasidism.
> —Buber, *The Legend of the Baal-Shem* (1955, xii–xiii)

In a recent study Michael Berkowitz observes that little has been said by historians of early Zionism on "what Zionists at that time saw as culture and grasped as culture."[1] In the following, I shall attempt to elucidate the fabric of the early Buber's concept of culture. While Buber is usually associated with the school of cultural or spiritual Zionists, his conception of Jewish cultural renewal was distinctive even within this group. This was largely a result of his emphasis on a Zionist politics of culture (*Kulturpolitik*), which he thought must take into account that the culture of a people is not "purely spiritual" but embraces "productivity" in all spheres of life. Zionist *Kulturpolitik* is, therefore, "the most consequential and organized striving [of the Jewish people] to direct this productivity towards freedom."[2] Influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy of culture, Buber held the liberation of Jews' creative energies to be the most urgent task. Contrary to the Ahad Ha'am, he argued it was not sufficient to reinterpret select strands of traditional Judaism and endow them with secular meaning. Similarly, he rejected conceiving culture in spiritual terms only. Rather, "productivity" and "creativity" constitute culture's self-generating transformative forces. The spiritual rebirth of the Jewish people must, therefore, precede the regeneration of its culture. In this context, Buber assigned a constructive and lasting role to the Diaspora. Although he is not explicit about this delicate issue, one can surmise from his Zionist statements that he regarded the Diaspora as a necessary prerequisite for making the inevitable dialectic of cultural petrifaction and cultural rebirth work. This tension between exile

and homeland feeds Judaism's creativity. Moreover, it generates the dialectic between "rootedness" and "tragedy" which Buber held characteristic of Jewish experience.[3] He believed that neither cultural autonomy nor political sovereignty automatically shield a culture from eventual demise. Even with the long-term prospect of a vital Jewish community in Palestine, the Jewish Diaspora would retain its raison d'être. Informing his understanding of the process of revitalization out of conflict of opposed factors (or categories) was the conception of culture advanced by Georg Simmel, with whom he studied at the University of Berlin. As a philosopher and sociologist, Simmel addressed the question of what renders a culture dynamic and creative and, inversely, what brings about a culture's decline.

Jacob Burckhardt's studies of Renaissance Italy were the first to put these questions on the agenda of European intellectuals, including Simmel. The efflorescence of creativity in the late fourteenth through sixteenth century Italy, Burckhardt averred in his negative stance on modernization, was but episodic. The Renaissance ideal of the creative individual was eclipsed by the rise of industrial democracy, the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, and materialistic values.[4] These factors would continue to affect all cultures in Europe and threaten the aesthetic development of the individual and culture. Though Simmel shared the concern that the social and economic structure of modern society tended to instrumentalize culture and hence vitiate its autonomy, contrary to many of his contemporaries he was not a Romantic and advocated an analytical investigation into the historical sociology of culture. Rejecting nostalgic longing for an idealized past, he differentiated between life—the lived life of a society's members—and the objective cultural forms that are to reflect and respond to that life. As the social manifestation of the inner life of a society, the cultural forms become spiritually degenerated, and intellectually and existentially jejune, when they are no longer in tune with the lived life of a society and cease to promote the perfection of its members.[5] On the basis of these observations, Simmel affirmed the possibility of cultural renewal or "rebirth": either the cultural forms are revitalized such that they are responsive to the lived life of the society they are to serve, or new cultural forms are established that give creative expression to the inner life experience of that society. In arguing that the cultural and spiritual life of a community can in principle be regenerated, Simmel formulated a constructive perspective to overcome Burckhardt's cultural pessimism. Although Simmel made these statements in 1918, several passages could have been taken almost verbatim from *Legende* and are in accord with Buber's beliefs. Particularly striking is in this regard the combination of "rhythm" and "renewal." The following statement by Simmel may suffice to illustrate their intellectual

affinity: "Although these forms [of life] arise out of the life process, because of their unique constellation they do not share the restless rhythm of life, its ascent and descent, its constant renewal, its incessant divisions and reunifications."[6]

In consonance with this sociological proposition, Buber spoke of a "Jüdische Renaissance," a watchword he coined in 1901. He also presented the envisaged regeneration metaphorically as an "awakening" of Jewry or even its "resurrection."[7] Buber's close associates in various but ultimately unrealized anthological projects, Berdyczewski and Marcus Ehrenpreis, founded in July 1897 the Hebrew publishing house "Techija" (rebirth) to toil for "the rebirth of our national culture."[8] Unlike Berdyczewski, Buber envisioned the Jewish Renaissance not as a rupture with traditional Judaism but as its "respiritualization." The revival of its spiritual core could not suspend continuity, but continuation as an absolute principle had to be rejected. Further, in contradistinction to Berdyzcewski's individualist aesthetic, renaissance as renewal also required the principle of community. The renewal of Judaism was, therefore, not to be conceived as "a continuation" or "improvement" of tradition but rather as "a return and revolution"[9]—a return (*Umkehr*) to the founding, primal spirit (*Urgeist*) of Judaism and its revitalization as the transformative force in Jewish life. The return to the *Urgeist* of Judaism would witness both the "spiritual elevation" of the individual alongside a fundamental "transformation of the life of the people" as well as the restoration of its unity in a shared "view of life" (*Lebensanschauung*).

Over the years Buber sought to clarify his conception of a Jewish Renaissance through a critical evaluation of Jacob Burckhardt's writings.[10] Buber had just turned twenty when he received as a gift from a fellow student and Zionist at the University of Leipzig the great Swiss historian's posthumously published *History of Greek Culture*. In a letter of gratitude, he wrote to his friend, "I have the book before me and ask myself when we will have such a work, a 'History of Jewish Culture.' "[11] Impressed by the new mode of realistic presentation, Buber turned to Burckhardt's *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (1860). Sharing Burckhardt's impatience with incremental change, Buber endorsed Burckhardt's presentation of the Renaissance as a period that effected a major transvaluation of values, leading to the refinement of the individual's aesthetic sensibility and rediscovery of the creative self which witnessed novel literary expressions of the inner life. Further, the liberation of philosophy from the intellectual shackles of scholasticism by Renaissance philosophers directly spoke to Buber's vision of reconstructing Judaism/Jewish identity beyond rabbinic learning. On the other hand, as indicated in his Preface to the 1949 Hebrew translation of *Die*

Kultur der Renaissance, Buber felt that Burckhardt's isolation of the Renaissance from a larger historical process was based on several false premises.[12] For one, the beginnings of modern individualism, as he already argued in his doctoral dissertation of 1904, can be traced to medieval Christian mysticism. Buber pointed to another aspect which he deemed relevant for the question of culture and the relationship between religion and culture. In his view the overarching impulse of the Italian Renaissance and its new vision of universal humanity were by no means as "irreligious" and secular as was the transition from the Middle Ages to a new era depicted by Burckhardt (especially in part 6, chap. 3 of *Kultur der Renaissance*).[13] In spite of a transitional relapsing into "fatalism" and "superstition," which Burckhardt considered a consequence of mounting discontent with the old church, the papacy, and its hostility to individual religion, Buber ascribed a religious quest for the unity of being to the Italian Renaissance. He regarded this spiritual search as the wellspring of the cultural transformation the Italian Renaissance brought about. Although Burckhardt did concede that a "strong urge of genuine religiosity remained alive," his desire to present the Italian Renaissance as a radically new worldview did not allow him to explore the impact of religion on the vision of renewal of the human being.

Buber, however, advocated an understanding of renaissance that aimed to advance beyond conventional historical methods. In his view, given that renaissance as a cultural-historical phenomenon is grounded in an essentially religious moment, that is, an attitudinal posture and spiritual orientation, renaissance is not confined to a particular period. Rather, it is to be conceived as a transhistorical "potentiality." Indeed, the transformative vision of the renaissance is applicable to the contemporary situation of his fellow Jews, a nation "most in need of regeneration."[14] Cultural activity had first to serve the therapeutic function of kindling individual creativity. "The body" was an important concept on the path to a healthy and "unified personality."[15] The "freedom of personality" had to precede the "rebirth of the whole individual,"[16] and eventually the people as a whole. "Culture," as Buber tersely remarked against the critics of cultural Zionism, is not to be misunderstood as a replacement for "bread."[17] Cultural Zionism must, accordingly, assume the task of restoring "organic spirituality," and adopt a program of what he called *Verwirklichungszionismus*. This Zionism of realization had to unfold along a practical and educational trajectory, inducing the transformation of the individual and the people. Unlike other nineteenth-century liberation movements, the Jewish national movement had to aim above all at "the development toward self-determination," which Buber described as a "holy war."[18] This was not a call to defend or protect a faith

against some external threat, but rather a call to struggle against one's own cultural-religious atrophy. As a paradigm for revitalization, the Italian Renaissance gave priority to education and poetry, which, as refined artistic expressions of the inner life, were to inspire the visual arts. Yet culture, Buber insists, is not an end in itself: "We do not seek 'culture,' but life."[19] With this candid call he distinguished his vision of a Jewish Renaissance from that of his fellow cultural Zionists. Clearly culture was not to be identified with aestheticism.[20]

What figured in Buber's Zionist thought as a concrete spiritual process of "redemption," or the mystery of "self-redemption"[21] through the "unfolding of its [the people's creative] energies,"[22] was, for instance, for Bialik the redemption or the historical "ransoming" of the literary sources of the Jewish people from their "captivity" by rabbinic Judaism. To be sure, Bialik, like other East European Zionists, addressed a constituency whose Jewish reality was quite different from that of the Western Jews to whom Buber directed his message. Buber was cognizant of the difference. In a correspondence from 1903 with Marcus Ehrenpreis about the organization of a conference on Jewish culture to be sponsored by the Democratic Faction,[23] Buber expressly distinguished between the path taken by the Jewish Renaissance in the East and the West. With respect to assimilated Jewry of Western and Central Europe, the question was "how to awaken, cultivate and promote Jewish cultural distinctiveness," whereas for East European Jewry the issue was how "a Jewish [national] culture [could] emerge from their [existent] Jewish cultural distinctiveness."[24] As a Habsburg Jew Buber was keenly aware that his fellow East European Jews, the *Ostjuden*, even when secularized, were still deeply immersed in a distinctive Jewish way of life; the vast majority continued to regard Yiddish as their mother tongue and, further, had an abiding and intimate familiarity with Jewish tradition. But the situation in the West was utterly different. For the Western Jew, he bemoaned, Jewishness had become no more than an emotional bond with little cultural and spiritual substance. For this reason he gave priority to a solution of the cultural problem of the Jewry of the West.[25]

Advocating a *Kulturpolitik* uniquely designed for Western Jewry, Buber called for a comprehensive educational program of the people and *Kulturarbeit* (cultural-work).[26] In order "to gain modern Europe as an ally"—one with which Western Jewry was bonded by dint of its acculturation—it was indispensable to demonstrate the future universal significance of the "Jewish people, with particular creative possibilities all of its own."[27] Although Buber believed that Judaism could only fully develop its cultural potential on its native soil, he contended against the critics of cultural work in the

Diaspora that "a Jewish culture [already] exists, and has never ceased to exist."[28] In other words, Jewish culture need not and cannot be artificially created, nor can it be made fully dependent upon the return to the organic "mother soil."

The Jewish Renaissance would make obvious the Jewish contribution to "Goethe's dream of a world literature"[29] and to the modern movement of culture. These statements illustrate to what extent Buber's project followed different parameters than Bialik's *kinnus*. The Russian Hebrew poet and anthologist expressly sought to counter the cosmopolitan tendencies of secularized Jewish intellectuals with his program for the "nationalization" of Jewish literature. The conception of ingathering was above all, as Dov Sadan observed, a project of translation into a "pure" Hebrew as the only authentic vessel of the "spirit of the people." Devoted to a translation of classical Hebrew and Aramaic works and those of Jewish writers from all epochs and languages into modern Hebrew, the *kinnus* would rescue the national genius from its "exilic forms."[30]

The platform of the Democratic Faction, which Buber co-authored, further highlights the differences between his conception of Jewish renewal and the cultural program of Bialik and Russian cultural Zionists. For one, the platform projected a dynamic or symbiotic relation between Jewish and universal culture in which literature would play a central role: "[Jewish] cultural activity is always to be grasped as a synthesis of Jewish spirit and general culture."[31] Buber regarded "synthesis" as an integral part of the Jewish sensibility in the Diaspora. In celebrating this aspect of diasporic life, he parted company with Russian cultural Zionists, who tended to denigrate Israel's exile (*galut*) as utterly void of national dignity and genuine cultural creativity. Although Buber too criticized some of the distorted manifestations of the "*galut* mentality," he did not share the perception of the Diaspora as utterly void of spiritual and cultural achievement. According to the dominant Zionist view, a genuine Jewish culture could only flourish anew in Hebrew and in Eretz Yisrael. But, as Buber argued through the example of Hasidism, a phenomenon of the Diaspora, the axis of Jewish spiritual and cultural rebirth need not be in Palestine, nor need it be in Hebrew. Accordingly, the Yishuv, the Jewish settlement in Palestine sponsored by Zionism, would neither render the Diaspora meaningless nor anachronistic.

Buber distinguished his notion of synthesis from the often insipid and undignified fawning over European culture by Western Jewry. Here he concurred with Ahad Ha'am, who made a sharp differentiation between two forms of imitation, "self-effacing" and "competitive." Through the latter, Jews selectively incorporate values and ideas from other cultures into the

autochthonous culture of Judaism. But in his view "competitive imitation" could only occur when Jewry would firmly be rooted in a "Spiritual Center" in its ancestral homeland. The spiritual center—whose intellectual and imaginative life would be sustained by the rebirth of Hebrew as the national language of the Jewish people—would radiate its creativity to the periphery, to the Diaspora, preventing its cultural disintegration.[32] Although Buber endorsed the idea of a "Spiritual Center," he did not tie it to the creation of a homeland in Palestine and instead regarded it as a key element in the realization of *Kulturpolitik* as "politics without polis."[33] But in spite of his utopianism Buber remained equally realistic in his prognosis of the effect such a center would have on the Jewish communities outside of Palestine: "In all probability such a settlement would also have an invigorating and cohesive influence on Jewish life in the Diaspora. But it could not guarantee a renewal of Judaism in the absolute meaning of the term."[34]

Whereas for Ahad Ha'am "competitive imitation" was a necessary strategy to contend with the allure of European culture, for Buber the creative adaptation and transformation of "alien" ideas into its own reality was Judaism's proven life-sustaining talent. Renewal implies reclamation of this ability: "We therefore see in the profound unity of becoming the amalgamation of general and national culture."[35] This aptitude for a creative synthesis grounded in the founding sensibilities and distinctive values of Judaism has historically ensured Jewish continuity.[36] Buber repeatedly reminded his fellow Zionists of their existential obligation "to hold on to [this] continuity."[37] On the other hand, he conceded that a "continuity of personality and creativity" is lacking in the Diaspora.[38] In his view continuity was not a given subject to transformations alone but something that had to be restored by virtue of probing the people's idea of destiny.

By affirming Judaism's primal spiritual disposition, the Jewish people's talent for creating ever new forms of synthesis would *eo ipso* be reinstated: "At the time of the prophets and early Christianity, [Judaism] offered a religious synthesis; at the time of Spinoza, an intellectual synthesis; at the time of socialism, a social synthesis. And for what synthesis is the spirit of Judaism preparing itself for today? Perhaps for a synthesis of all those syntheses."[39]

To be sure, "synthesis" is a concept that figures prominently in Buber's writings, where it denotes above all the reciprocally creative meeting of the Orient and Occident. By addressing the spiritual faculties rather than the intellect, Renaissance Neoplatonism, according to Buber, paved the way for renewal of the entire human being. In the eighteenth century, Hasidism appropriated through the Kabbalah the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation, thereby bringing about a "synthesis of the worldly and sacred order, a

fusion of fundamental religious consciousness with the unaffectedness and fullness of natural life."[40] Now, well over a century later, and in contrast to the either-or approach of many fellow Zionists, Buber sought not to sever religion and nationality but to reconcile them via religiosity as constituents of the new, non-assimilatory yet cosmopolitan Jewish identity. Whereas the content of the resulting synthesis would remain specifically Jewish, its form should be supranational.[41]

Not to gainsay the valuable insights gained from a more recent consideration of Buber's affinity to the historian of the Italian Renaissance, Jacob Burckhardt, it can be sufficiently documented that Buber's conception of renaissance and renewal was principally guided by the epistemological and hermeneutic presuppositions of the philosophy of life as defined by Dilthey and, as already noted, Simmel. Buber conceived of renaissance essentially in cultural-philosophical terms and was concerned with its paradigmatic value. When renaissance is understood as an ever-recurrent possibility rather than a closed historical period or category, then the task is to probe its nature and the inner dialectic of its revitalization. The Jewish Renaissance would exemplify, to people increasingly affected by cultural pessimism, how a change in attitudes and spiritual orientation could lead to cultural change. For Buber, the path to a renewed Jewish culture led through culture itself: "There is only one way to a great Jewish culture: Through culture."[42] In developing his conception of a "Hebrew humanism," which he alternatively called "biblical humanism," he frequently drew upon Scripture as the formative canon for Jewish renewal. This was often done in an impressionistic manner, for instance when the Hebrew *hiddesh* ("to renew") in Isaiah 65:17, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth," is read to suggest an existential meaning of renewal as the "complete renewal" of the human being. "This," Buber comments, "is no metaphor, but immediate [lived] experience."[43]

In rethinking Jewish modernism, Barbara Mann has pointed out that "the relation between text and image is one of the abiding tensions within modernism."[44] Buber's early work on Hasidism is to be seen in the context of the debate on Jewish aniconism and the alleged lack of Jewish aesthetics, a position which has been challenged and even "conclusively debunked"[45] in the past years. The "aniconic sensibility" and its implications for visual representation and cultural creativity was an integral aspect of a Jewish modernism in the making. The issue was undoubtedly vital to the project and successful realization of a Jewish Renaissance and its vision of a new self. Buber explicitly included the poet (and thus himself) among the artists of the Renaissance.[46] He sought to resolve the traditional text-image divide

in his adaptation of Hasidic literature by employing what Mann calls "Jewish imagism."[47] The poetic quality of the Hebrew Bible, especially the Wisdom literature so prevalent in Hasidic teachings, served Buber as a bridge to the visual; it was for him the seam joining the unrepresentable and the representable. In *Rabbi Nachman* Buber transforms the traditional dichotomy of seeing-hearing into that of the "sensory" (Greek/pagan culture) and the "motory" disposition (Judaism). Visual language as opposed to the visual arts was the Jew's forte. To explain this seeming paradox, Buber turned his gaze eastward and constructed his image of the Jew as the archetype of the Oriental, who was more alert to the temporal dimensions of human experience than the Occidental type of human being, whose preeminent spatial-sensuous sensibility is characteristic of Hellenistic culture. Hence, Jews' general neglect of visual representation. Although he promoted the visual arts from a social and cultural perspective as an aspect of the Jewish renaissance, he cautioned against an uncritical adoption of Occidental sensuality, for the latter was indifferent to the relationality so central to the Jew's perception of (social) reality. Thus his resolute opposition to the fascination with Hellenistic paganism that seeped into cultural Zionism and found its most blunt articulation in Saul Tchernichovsky's call for a return to Israel's pre-biblical, sensuous, heathen roots as the necessary condition of a new Hebrew culture.[48] Such unredeeming oppositions between the old and the new could in Buber's view hardly become exemplary for the cause of the Jewish Renaissance.

Buber's affirmation of what Kalman Bland calls the "typological distinction between Hebraism and Hellenism made familiar by Heine, Formstecher, Steinheim and Graetz"[49] is not to be mistaken as an endorsement of Jewish aniconism. Whereas these thinkers, according to Bland, "championed the notion that the spirit of Jewish ethical monotheism was inimical to the visual arts but altogether compatible with the verbal arts of poetry, especially the religious poetry of the Bible,"[50] Buber held the unproductive social conditions of exile to be responsible for the lack of aesthetic creativity and thus for the absence of Jewish visual arts. The Emancipation changed this condition and allowed nineteenth-century Jewish painters such as Moritz Daniel Oppenheim to reconsider and explore the limits of the ban on images. To be sure, God would not become in Jewish art the object of mimetic reproduction. Buber refused to accept the lack of Jewish art as a given ethnic deficiency, let alone to celebrate it with the Jewish Kantians as a virtue. As a medium of creativity, visual art was for Buber invested with "sacrality" (*bildnerische Heiligkeit der Kunst*).[51] Unlike Hermann Cohen's insistence on Judaism's mission against all forms of idolatry, Buber

did not see the foundations of Judaism to imply an unbending commitment to the abstract and disembodied; his proclivity to philosophical vitalism did not limit his conception of Judaism to the ethical. Nor would Franz Rosenzweig's positive "revaluation of vision" for culture as expounded in *The Star of Redemption* have fully satisfied Buber,[52] although he shared Rosenzweig's criticism of Christianity's representation of God in lasting images. Certainly, Rosenzweig treasured art as a catalyst for self-creation and self-interpretation essential to the formation of the human being. Buber, however, saw the merit of art primarily in its sociological and anthropological function, as a medium of self-reflection and self-confidence.[53] "We no longer translate the overflowing movement of our soul into isolated intellectualism but into an activity of the entire organism and, through this activity, into lines and sounds, into living being, which again awakens living appreciation."[54] In linking art and community, Buber's call for a "rebirth of Jewish creativity" followed a different agenda than the neo-Kantian defense of Judaism as a religion of reason. The Jewish cultural renaissance had to disclose anew the historic Jewish aesthetic impulses, which were preserved in its autochthonous folklore.

When understood as a phenomenological paradigm, the Renaissance represents a subjective cultural moment that could be retrieved or emulated. Buber, in fact, presents Hasidism through this paradigm rather than as a stage in a unilinear development of Jewish mysticism and civilization. Adopting Dilthey's methodological presuppositions, Buber approached Jewish culture as a particular historical instantiation of a given "psychophysical form" of history, in which he included a wide range of "expressions of life," such as "a folk song, a dance, a wedding custom, a metaphor, a legend, a belief, a long-held prejudice, a menorah, a tiara, a philosophical system, a social deed."[55] Each of these manifestations of life—what Dilthey called the "objective spirit"—allow for an understanding of the ontological basis of any given culture.[56] Although historicity accrues to all cultural expressions as soon as they are absorbed into the objective spirit, their outer form always points to their inner *Erlebnis* and thus to the subjective spirit which created them. The dialectical relationship between past and present, and between the identification of the inner subjective spirit of a cultural expression and its *Verstehen,* that underlies Dilthey's hermeneutics would determine Buber's unhistorical, or more accurately, trans-historical presentation of Hasidism. He employed Dilthey's method to identify a particular moment of Hasidim as its constitutive core, and through an aesthetic re-contextualization of the experience (*Erlebnis*) of that moment sought to give the reader access to that moment as the possibility of his or her own spiritual reality as it unfolds within his or her present

cultural *and* existential context. The overarching philosophical intent of this method is especially patent in Buber's critique of the institutional forms of Jewish historical memory.[57] In a manner reminiscent of Nietzsche's polemic against historicism and its deleterious affects on German culture, Buber suggested that Western Jewry had displaced a creative *engagement* with its spiritual heritage with the memory of Israel's past as crafted by historians. Historical memory (*Gedächtnis*) must be replaced by an existentially engaging recollection (*Erinnerung*). In 1911, Buber remarked: "The past of a people is his [the Jew's] personal memory, the future of his people is his personal task."[58] If Judaism is to become once again a spiritual possession and not just a set of memories embalmed in history books, the past must flow into the future. Judaism, as he noted in 1932, is traditionally an "*Erinnerungsgemeinschaft*,"[59] a community that recalls its past as a "living reality," and it must reconstitute itself as such.

Buber's critique of historical memory as vitiating Judaism as a community of living memory anticipates the debate launched by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982).[60] As a Jewish historian, Yerushalmi's confessed he is burdened by the "ironic consciousness" that his vast knowledge of the Jewish past no longer serves him—and perhaps cannot because of his incorrigible historicist stance—as a living memory, shaping the existential and spiritual substance of his life. There is, he argues, an unbridgeable divide between the historian's knowledge and religious memory. Buber would concur, but he also poses a question that few of those engaged in the ramified discourse initiated by Yerushalmi's seminal book have considered: How is one to restore the power of religious memory for a generation of Jews whose relation to the past as a vital presence has been severed by the historian's pen and who are legitimately in Buber's eyes estranged from the contemporary spiritual configurations of both traditional and liberal Judaism? As an antidote to the reigning historical relativism, he proffered the aesthetics of renewal.

As a movement of renewal that emerged in a time of crisis, Hasidism embodies, analogous to the biblical prophets, the ontological ground for renewal in Judaism. While in his essay "Jüdische Renaissance" of 1901 Hasidism was regarded as a "sick phenomenon," two years later it became the model for the spiritually and thus culturally regenerated Jew. But only in 1912 did Buber expressly align renewal with religiosity, a term he acknowledged borrowing from Simmel.[61] The revivification of Jewry from a petrified to a young and vibrant culture "can in the first instance find no other expression than a religious one."[62] Religiosity is the animating and "creative principle."[63] It persists even when the formal institutions of religion (the

"organizing principle") may have been undermined by the forces of secularization and abandoned. On the other hand, unbound to normative expressions and commitments, religiosity becomes a free-floating sensibility that may lead Jews astray and beyond the Jewish community. Thus the challenge facing Zionism, as Buber sees it, is to harness this subjective religiosity for the envisioned national culture, which could be viable only if grounded in the religiosity of *Urjudentum*.[64]

Rather than as an overcoming of form, Buber envisioned Jewry's primordial aptitude for renewal as a dialectical moment in a continuous process of transformation of cultural and life forms. Tradition is such a form. In his critique of "official Judaism" he did not deny that "to establish and maintain a community, indeed, to exist as a religion, religiosity needs forms; for a continuous religious community, perpetuated from generation to generation, is possible only where a common way of life is maintained."[65] The Nietzschean phrase of a "fullness of life" comes to denote for Buber, in the words of Schaeder, the "inexhaustible, eternal source of ever-developing forms."[66] Buber's difficulty was not with form per se but with the disjuncture between form and substance which he, like Nietzsche, identified with the ethos of historical positivism. Buber explained in 1913 the relationship between culture (form) and religiosity (the formless lived experience) as a dialectic, even symbiotic interrelationship: Culture is the stabilization of the life impulses and the [objective cultural] forms of life between two religious upheavals. Religiosity is the renewal of the life impulses and the life forms between two cultural developments.[67] The creation of "new forms of human coexistence"[68]—a recurrent theme in Buber's Zionist writings—must be preceded by a (self-) renewal of the individual and by a consciously renewed relationship to life and the "meaning of life."[69] Buber believed that a renewal of culture occurs in high cultures according to a pattern of decline and renewal. Yet a phase of decay, a harrowing "breaking" of the forms of a culture and life, may, when duly perceived as a crisis, bear the seed for renewal and pave the way for a radical change (*Umschwung*). For Simmel, this pattern followed the inevitable law of culture: life expresses itself spontaneously, but when eventually institutionalized in objectified cultural forms it is pinioned by the very cultural forms which it brought forth and loses its spontaneity, eventually triggering new creative impulses to undermine and challenge the institutions of cultural petrifaction. The new cultural forms so generated do not of course necessarily lead to a renewal of the old. Buber feared that the spiritual stirrings of many acculturated and deracinated Jews of his day would find expression in non-Jewish cultural forms, if they could not be convinced of the possibility of realizing their quest within the bounds of their ancestral religious heritage.

Because it combines feeling and deed, Buber saw Jewish religiosity as the driving force for the realization of the life-experience in cultural forms.[70] Even when he revised his conception of religiosity and developed a more theistic position after World War I, he continued to view the fundamental religious impulse as unfettered by specific normative contents of faith. In an essay of 1919 he declared that "all genuine spirit possesses the longing for *religion,* not as a longing for doctrines and customs, but as a finding and redeeming of one another in the common addressing of God."[71] Buber's insistence that neither the future national culture nor the religious principles upon which this culture must be founded could be defined by prescribed contents endowed his conception of Jewish renewal with an existential tension in which the dialectic of form and formlessness ultimately remains unresolved, as it must in his eyes. As Avraham Shapira observes, Buber's thought is structured "principally on polarity," which places him in the romantic tradition of striving for a synthesis of binary opposites. Consequently, Buber did not conceive of opposing realms as "mutually exclusive dichotomies," but "as conditioned upon each other." Indeed, the polarity-structure also impacted Buber's "hermeneutic methods."[72]

Buber's lack of consistency and conceptual rigor requires us to be cautious when we try to evaluate his comments on form and formlessness, which, to be sure, were often vague. An example par excellence is the color–form polarity he maintains in his essay on "Lesser Ury" (1901), an impressionist-expressionist Jewish artist known for his strong, bold colors.[73] In his enthusiastic appraisal of Ury's paintings, Buber celebrated "color" over "form" (conceptual abstraction), claiming that "form separates, color unites." However, in his "Das Leben der Chassidim," the central creative text in which he exemplifies his mystical aestheticism and the thinking in dualities illustrating his philosophic and hermeneutic views, we note surprisingly the total absence of color, although colors were important in the Jewish mystical imagination since the Kabbalah. In order to integrate color into his representation and to make it part of the new Jewish aesthetics, Buber would have needed to sift through the theoretical literature of Hasidism. As a further indication of his inconsistency, we find in Buber's early writings many affirmative statements on the cultural significance of form. Three years prior to the publication of *Legende,* he claimed that the founders of Hasidism "did not negate the old forms, but infused them with new meaning, and thus liberated them."[74] In the same essay he asserted that the "formless potentiality of culture" must be complemented by a "formative cultural deed" (*gestaltungskräftiger Kulturtat*).

A similar dialectic also informs the dualities or dichotomies which are so salient in Buber's thought. Rather than constituting mutually exclusive

polarities, I argue that the respective polar ends of Buber's dualistic pairs affect each other dialectically. One such pair is that of religiosity and religion, which, as previously noted, he borrowed directly from Simmel. Religiosity, which is in Simmel's definition "a kind of contemporalization [*Vergegenwärtigungsart*] of particular conceptual contents,"[75] cannot exist without religion. However, religion as an institutional, objective cultural form is life-sustaining and of cultural significance only as long as it can make claim to, in Buber's terms, "authenticity." Buber's aesthetics of the religious life illustrates a complex interaction and dialectic reciprocality of presence and absence, of contemplative solitude and community, of mystical communion and selfhood. And here indeed, it is not content *per se* but the rhythm of these subjective conditions of being through which Buber refracts Hasidic ecstasy as a most recent expression of the meaning of renewal in Judaism. We will return to this aesthetic aspect of Buber's textual appropriation in our analysis of his phenomenological representation of Hasidic spirituality.

When Buber immigrated to Palestine in 1938 and assumed the chair at the Hebrew University's nascent department of sociology, his lectures and seminars focused on, in the words of his first doctoral student, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, "the possibilities of cultural creativity and social regeneration."[76] On the basis of his lecture notes Buber published in Hebrew a theoretical essay on the sociological function of culture. Here he viewed culture as a complex "life-system of a people as opposed to a specific system of thought."[77] The unity of Jewish culture was in 1943 described as a "hidden and felt principle." This principle, Buber argued, cannot be intellectually formulated or conceptualized but can only be hinted at. Whereas he was more ambiguous about "form" in his early writings,[78] "form" is in his late reflections on culture nothing to be overcome. Each organic culture has one vital principle and one characteristic form of life.[79] In contradistinction to the progressive rationalization inherent to the process of civilization, culture is the "movement of the human soul for the sake of expression only, its striving and seeking to give form to its essence; whatever exists over-and-against this movement is nothing but 'material' to be shaped into this form."[80]

Excursus on Ecstasy and Temporality

Before we turn to an examination of Buber's presentation of the inner life experience of the Hasid, some comments on the cultural significance of ecstasy from the perspective of a Jewish modernity may be in place. How do we have to read Buber's well-known reply to Ernst Troeltsch of 1910 that

"mysticism negates community"? If Buber sees ecstasy primarily as a value beyond community, what then is the relationship between a mysticism of *Erlebnis* and the community? How do we harmonize these aspects with the motif of interaction which permeates Buber's socio-psychological conception of the dialectic between life-experiences and their representation? In addition, the notion of ecstasy challenged bourgeois values and was considered by many a threat to the social-moral code. Buber sought to resolve these contradictions in presenting the ecstatic human being as a counter-model to the passivity of the subject cultivated at the time in Protestant culture. Although ecstatic mysticism exhibits a strong vertical spiritual orientation, it does not abandon the horizontal realm and therefore lends itself to a Zionist reading. The early Buber's appropriation of Hasidism has been faulted for overtly cultivating a solipsistic inwardness, and yet "Das Leben der Chassidim" yields ample evidence that he did not eschew the question of how to combine inwardness as epitomized by Hasidic ecstatic mysticism with a spiritual exteriority that facilitates social action.

Yossef Schwartz has recently suggested that we reconsider Buber's turn to Hasidic spirituality as a "politicization of the mystical."[81] Indeed, even in his *Erlebnis*-mysticism period Buber regarded community as the core value of Hasidism by virtue of which it could be used as a model for social and political transformation. How Buber's "politicization of the mystical" shows in his phenomenological account of Hasidic spirituality will be discussed in chapter 8.

Anticipating Émile Durkheim (*The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* 1912), Buber proposed a cultural-philosophical understanding of ecstasy, one that would extend beyond its role in the religious life. Whereas Durkheim would examine the civilizational function of ecstasy, Buber sought to disclose its potential power to induce an expanded, heightened consciousness and thus creativity. Here again Buber engaged in a much larger debate. Driven by an aversion to ascetic ideals embodied in the "life-inimical" type of the "ascetic-priest" (*Genealogy of Morals,* 3.11), Nietzsche triggered the debate on ecstasy and asceticism.[82] He associated asceticism with "self-discipline, guilt feelings, and morality." Durkheim and Max Weber reconsidered the negative role assigned to ecstasy. Both conjoined in different ways asceticism and ecstasy as two elementary forces in establishing and sustaining social life and/or order. Weber, as is well known, identifies asceticism as the driving force of the Protestant work ethic and the spirit of capitalism, whereas ecstatic experiences as emotionally charged conditions took on for him a rather negative role, serving essentially as the foundation of charismatic power.

Although not intended as a contribution to the sociology of religion, Buber's representation of Hasidism exposes the limited value of these approaches. Hasidism cannot be comfortably fit into either the Durkheimian conception of ecstasy as collective agitation or into Weber's conception of ecstasy as enhancing charismatic rule. In spite of its cult of the Zaddik as charismatic leader, Hasidism does not support an escapist use of asceticism nor the kind of "innerworldly asceticism" which Weber detected, for instance, in Buddhism.

Buber privileged ecstatic experience over asceticism precisely because of its inversion of conventional social values. He described ecstasy both as an individual experience of overcoming one's physical boundaries and as an emotional-devotional experience of the social dimension of religious fellowship, because the ecstatic's quest for communion with God takes place within the community of his fellow Hasidim. It is particularly in prayer, which preeminently takes place in the community, that the Hasid's spiritual journey to transcendence has a distinctive social dimension. Ecstasy transports one to a realm outside of the self, and hence also outside of history, especially when identified with progress, into timelessness. In this regard the ecstatic experience of time, if we are to extrapolate from Simmel's critique of historical time, discloses a fundamental flaw of historicism, or of what he also refers to as "historical realism." Historical knowledge and its demarcation of discrete temporal units and discontinuities, as Simmel contended in a lecture of 1916, "Vom Wesen des historischen Verstehens" (The essence of historical understanding), perforce leads to *Entlebendigung* (the divesting of life).[83] The historian's gaze dissolves lived experience into historical, that is spatial and temporal, categories which are locked in the past. The eternal spirit is, however, supra-historical and transcends the historic process. Consequently, Simmel argued, it can also not be grasped through the historical process. He already suggested in 1905 that one should resume Kant's framing of the problem and investigate the "a priori dimension of historical knowledge," whereby the individual could be regained as the "maker of history" and "creative ego."[84] The path to a "liberation from naturalism which Kant achieved must now be won from historicism." The successful recovery of the human spirit and its "form-giving creativity"[85] hinges on the philosophical foundation of life.

In Buber's presentation, the Hasidic mystic implicitly projects a critique of historicism. Ecstasy as presented by Buber through documents of Hasidic life offers an alternative access to and understanding of time. Devotional ecstatic life, when examined in its relational structures, challenges the conventional view of time as primarily that of events which are temporally and spatially bound. In the perception of the Hasidic mystic, being-in-time

is a continuous process impervious to the rhythms of history (although he is not unaware of it); his lived experience is at one with the flow of a living reality and the process of 'becoming.' In his autobiographical reminiscences Buber concedes that the philosophical problem of time preoccupied him "in a far more tormenting fashion" than that of space. "I was irresistibly driven to want to grasp the *total world process* as actual, and that meant to understand it, 'time,' either as beginning and ending or without beginning and end."[86] The latter Aristotelian view stood, of course, in fundamental conflict with the traditional Jewish conception of time, which posits a beginning and a teleological trajectory. A causal construction of history, which Buber associates with the method of the natural sciences, does not account for the process of the spirit and creativity. Thus Buber calls for a reevaluation of time from the perspective of subjective experience. "Historical humanity," Buber exclaims in 1902, "can only be grasped teleologically."[87] In this conception of time, the durée of eternity coalesces into presence and vice versa. Yet redemption as the meta-narrative of the Jewish people always points to the future. By virtue of one's actions the individual participates in the work of redemption and the overcoming of (the condition of) exile. Buber intends to mediate Hasidism's transhistorical experience of time or rather eternity by presenting its timeless quality: "In ecstasy all that is past and that is future draws near to the present. Time shrinks, the line between the eternities disappears, only the moment lives and the moment is eternity" (L 5/F 20). The ecstatic consciousness presents a distinctive perception of time which empowers the moment. This presentness is what Walter Benjamin calls *Jetztzeit* (time filled by the presence of the now); eternity and the promise of redemption are experienced in the moment, a temporal sequence that is free of historistic references to the past and instrumental goals.[88] Ecstatic religiosity presupposes an understanding of time that finds itself in fundamental conflict with modernity, which subordinates life to the laws of speed and acceleration. But because it is dynamic it can bridge the gulf between the "goal of history" and the "recurrence of eternity." Modernity (by semantic definition) celebrates the "now," and through its radical presentness and disintegration of traditional values it denies transcendence. This transposition of historical time into eternity was also typical of the work of Simmel—certainly in the judgment of Siegfried Kracauer.[89] Whereas the historicist grip on culture or what Nietzsche bemoaned as the "excess of history" had made the past the measuring rod of the present, hampering an unbound creativity and originality, the ecstatic feeling of life reorients one towards the life of the spirit, that is, to the spiritual content of being. At the same time Hasidism as mysticism takes the "beyond" back into the "this-

worldly" and lets the physical be transformed by the spiritual.[90] Hasidic ecstatic spirituality teaches participation in the eternity of creation, that is, in the process of creation. According to Buber's argumentation, ecstasy is the prerequisite for creativity, for currently it alone leads (back) into the ontological essence of being and thus into a reality beyond representation. This, as noted, does not amount to saying that Buber negates representation. At the apex of the mystical experience one attains a mystical fusion of, in Shapira's words, "the momentary-historical" with the "eternal-monumental," which only with Buber's later philosophy of dialogue yields to an existential conception of the self and rejection of mysticism.[91]

As a unique state of mind, ecstasy also increases one's creative potential, as the Greek philosopher Longinus argued and whom Buber credits in his early essay "On Schopenhauer's Theory of the Sublime" (ca. 1897–98) as the source of his own conception of *ekstasis*. For Buber, ecstasy marks pure inwardness; it quickens "holy creativity." Through the awareness of one's inextinguishable uniqueness one may experience infinite time: "Uniqueness is the eternity of the single one." With one's uniqueness, "the human being lies in the lap of the timeless" (L 31/F 41). Solitude is also the destiny of the artistic individual and a necessary prerequisite to discover a new sense of the self.

The ecstatic's consciousness of self, as Buber contends, is engendered by a cathartic and transformative psychic eruption. Such a cathartic release diminishes the tension created by the essentially prelinguistic and untranslatable, ineffable reality experienced through the imaginative power of myth, primed—as it is in the case of Hasidism—by ecstatic experience. The experience of ecstasy is not, however, a means artificially introduced by Buber into the faith of Judaism to render it compatible with the *Zeitgeist*. In fact, Buber argues, ecstatic God-intention is a deeply rooted aspect of traditional Jewish faith. The yearning for contact with the divine, he further contends, is the most characteristic phenomenon of Oriental spirituality, of which the Jew is an exemplum. In contrast to the knowledge-oriented Occidental personality, the Jew has access to the redeeming "unity of self and world." The ecstatic vision of God of the prophet Elijah is, as Buber claims in *Rabbi Nachman*, indicative of Judaism's appreciation of the "power of the incomprehensible" (*Rabbi Nachman*, 6) attendant to ecstatic experience.[92]

Another cultural theme implicit in Buber's discussion of ecstasy and its temporal coefficients is that of the stranger and the wanderer. He depicts the dialectical tension between the two poles in the (non-Hasidic) metaphors of the "rope" and the "bridge." The ecstatic mystic is a stranger in the material world. Seclusion and solitude are the path the mystic must tread

for a spiritualized life seeking completion (mystical communion) in ecstasy. The life of the solitary one (*der Einzelne*) is hazardous; he transverses in Buber's imagery the "rope" above the abyss. In contradistinction, community—which does not strive for completion—moves forward on a "bridge." Thus, community provides the formless spiritual movement of the *Einzelne* with structure, though not necessarily with form. Buber's rejection of form in favor of formlessness, which he first articulated in his essay on Schopenhauer, also comes to the fore in his poetic description of Hasidic concepts. Challenging the latter's view that the sublimity of an object requires a form, he presents the kabbalistic doctrine of raising the fallen sparks [*Seelenfunken*] back to their supernal source as an act of liberation from form, for "each form is her prison" (L 24/F 35). Mystical perception and *ekstasis* are primed by the quest for the formless. The soteriological power of the "human deed" demands one to redeem: "Each man has a sphere of being in space and time which is allotted to him to be redeemed through him" (L 25/F 36)—that is, to be released from its spatio-temporal form.

In spite of his pursuit of the ecstatic mode of life, Buber was wary of presenting ecstasy as an antithesis to community. Here he adheres to the same conceptual guidelines as spelled out for *Die Gesellschaft,* namely to present, as Buber writes to Hermann Stehr in 1905, "psychic realities, which emerge from the cooperative action of human beings."[93] But the social question is not just an ethical one, as Simmel stated, but as in socialism—and Buber advocated a religious socialism—also an aesthetic one. Socialism, as a social ethic, requires the aesthetic cultivation of inner dispositions and sensibilities in support of a socialist ethos.

The metaphysical foundation of community, as conceived by Buber, broaches the vertical level of existence central to the mystical way of life: the movement between below and above. Those united in service are the "wanderers on the bridge," and to "the wanderer on the bridge the hall of the king will open" (L 17/not in F). Similar to the rope, the bridge is bipolar. The bridge, however, denotes metaphorically a durable, firm connection between two ends. One may argue that Buber arbitrarily uses the image of the bridge in the process of his adaptation. The advantage of such a position is the avoidance of over-reading and thus misreading. But in accord with my thesis that *Legende* is a textual construction fashioned according to a set of given considerations, I must counter such a claim. While this and other artificially inserted words could easily be swallowed up in the flow of reading, one should rather perceive of them as signifiers of cultural criticism. As we have reached the end of this chapter it must suffice to illustrate this thesis through the example of the bridge.

Hence a few points are warranted here about the general cultural context at the time. The German art group "Die Brücke" (the bridge), founded in 1905 in Dresden by four students of architecture, namely Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, and Karl Schmidt, was the core of the nascent Expressionism, aiming at a major renewal in art and revision of art theory. On a theoretical level, the group was among others influenced by Simmel, who offered a sustained critique of art in the context of modernity in his *Philosophie des Geldes* (Philosophy of money, 1900). As a major critique of the all-pervasive monetary economy and materialism, in this work Simmel regards the arts as the last *refugium* of spiritual values. His article on "Aesthetic Quantity" (1903) dealt directly with the problem of representation in art, exposing the vacuity of the belief in the sovereignty of art.

A year after the publication of *Legende*, no other than Simmel also reflected upon the bridge, deeming it worthy of a cultural-philosophical interpretation. In his essay "Die Brücke und die Tü" (The bridge and the door, 1909), he depicts the bridge as emblematic of the human will's capacity to overcome spatial separation. Beyond its practical purpose and architectural aesthetics, the bridge is a visualization of connectedness, an expression of the human will for connection. In its aesthetic value, Simmel maintains, the bridge cannot be apprehended or mediated through abstract reflection. It also becomes apparent from Simmel's later discussion of Expressionist art that his interest in aesthetics was primarily cultural-philosophical, as was Buber's. A main cultural merit of Expressionism, a heterogeneous current in art that manifested itself years before the name was actually coined, was from Simmel's stance its rejection of art as mimesis. Expressionism undermines the traditional concept of both form and representation in visual art. Expressionist artists rejected the understanding of art promoted by naturalism. Relying on the depiction of realistic objects, naturalism offers, in the eyes of its critics, but a mere extension of external reality. Expressionism breaks out of the narrow conception of reality. Form is no longer imposed upon the impulse to express oneself. Neither has form significance in itself, as Simmel points out, nor is it part of the artistic intention or consideration. Expressionism challenges the conventional understanding of art in that the creative impulse brings to spontaneous and immediate expression the inner emotion as experienced by the artist. In this new kind of impulsive painting, of which the visualization of free movement is a central objective, art no longer stands in the service of representation. The artistic process remains open and even unfinished as it extends itself as a mode of existence into the artistic expression.

Literary Expressionism was guided by analogous concerns and prioritized spiritual expression over the formal constraints which the forms of objective

culture would impose. *Legende* is replete with elements that would later become distinctive of Expressionism and displays the movement's predilection for neologisms. Indicatively, Buber's *Ekstatische Konfessionen* of 1909 is widely held to have had a seminal influence on literary Expressionism. Both works, as well as *Rabbi Nachman,* give literary expression to the altered state of consciousness of ecstatic experience and can be considered proto-Expressionist. The spontaneous expressions of a unique inner experience, which the Ha-sidic teachings represent, contain subjective emotions, responses to an extra-ordinary experience that can hardly be accommodated in form. As bearers of a metaphysical spirit that escapes accurate verbalization, they transcend given structures and forms and point to the ultimate unity of life.

Although Buber chose a mode of presentation whereby the content would not be absorbed by the form or considerations of form, it would be erroneous to assume that form lost all its importance for him. The anthology, or rather the unconventional manner in which Buber employed the genre, both provides form and allows for a crafting of the material. Furthermore Hasidism's creative genius emerges out of a distinct form of existence. For that reason, Buber was concerned with a representation of the basic features of the Hasidic form of existence, which he endeavored to illustrate through its spiritual ethos. Thus Expressionism and its celebration of the spontaneous life in the artistic process meets its limits in Buber's aesthetics of renewal on the basis of Hasidic mysticism, in particular due to the hermeneutical interests underlying his creative project.

What has crystallized thus far, at this stage of our study of the early Buber's method of representation, is his use of a hybrid of literary forms and narrative perspectives. Even if the notion of literary hybridization is commonly applied to novels, one could indeed argue that Buber's unconventional anthology is a hybrid genre. Hybrid genres aim at the dissolution of boundaries between literary forms, including fact and fiction and other elements of traditional writing in Western culture. Clearly, the shift from an external reality that can be represented objectively to subjective reality as well as the constructed nature of *Legende* would justify such a reading. In addition to blending anecdotes, aphoristic teachings, and tales, Buber's *Legende* tends to blur lines between the author—the Hasidic masters and the commentator—and himself.

In his *Legende* Buber combines an Expressionist approach to Hasidic ecstatic mysticism and its representation with a phenomenological hermeneutics as propounded by Dilthey, whereby consciousness and feelings are expressed in forms or in accord with given aesthetic principles. These principles, Dilthey asserts, are "nothing more than the representational expression for the fact that it is experienced in feeling."[94] Although mediated by

representation, and perhaps even engendered by representation, feelings in and of themselves are not causally derived from representations. Inner states are to be described independent of the representations. Works of art, like language, are expressions of lived experience (*Erlebnisausdrücke*). The hermeneutical task thus entails extracting the inner meaning expressed in external objectifications. Dilthey's study of the new turn to the nature of arts lent itself to the Expressionist focus on the realm of feeling and emotion.

We will now proceed to a close textual analysis of "Das Leben der Chassidim," the literary core of *Legende*, in order to determine how Buber's phenomenological account of Hasidic spirituality is related to and interacts with his hermeneutical objectives and Zionist commitment. "One should not," as Buber wrote in 1904, "confine the term creativity to the creation of the artist. Everyone creates, who expresses out of his inner life something wholly original (*etwas Selbstständiges, Ganzes*). All genuine work of the people (*Volksarbeit*) is creativity."[95]

CHAPTER NINE

A Phenomenology of Hasidic Mysticism

> Religiousness in its pure essence, free of all empirical material, is a *life*; the religious person is somebody who *lives* in a certain way peculiar to himself, and whose spiritual processes display a rhythm, a key, an arrangement, a proportion of spiritual energies that are unmistakably distinct from those of a theoretical, artistic, or practical person.[1]
> —G. Simmel, *Die Religion* ([1906] 1912, 15)

Prefatory Remarks and Basic Religious Ideas

In "Das Leben der Chassidim" Buber presents a phenomenological introduction to Hasidic piety. Following this introductory essay, the remainder of *Die Legende des Baalschem* consists of his retelling of Hasidic tales. Though Buber never explicitly stated his objectives, it is evident that he hoped to sensitize the acculturated reader to a unique aesthetic experience that would open up a noumenal reality beyond ordinary sensate apprehensions of the self and concrete reality. Somewhat surprisingly, Buber draws upon Hasidic teachings rather than marshalling testimonies of ecstatic experience to illustrate this possibility. For the Hasidic masters as well as for Buber these aphoristic teachings are a pedagogic device; they are meant to be instructive and are employed to illustrate an intuitive mode of apprehension. Hasidic religious experience retains, as many of the aphoristic and epigrammatic teachings selected by Buber highlight, the social structure of Jewish faith. The teachings are thus also cultural artifacts that emerge from the concrete forms of a religious tradition.

The unconventional poetic and archaic style of *Legende*, which Buber preferred over analytic language, as well as the hybrid structure of the book, have militated against a proper assessment of the work's hermeneutical

objective. However, the use of archaic language, whether by intention or not, indicated that Judaism had retained a sense of heritage, tradition, and spiritual roots and that its modernism was, contra all turn-of-the-century prejudice, not a radical but a moderate form of modernism. Not disguising his disappointment with the reception of this book, Buber wrote to his friend Gustav Landauer, with whom he shared a profound interest in the anarchistic impulse and revitalizing power of mystical language: "The book, which contains a good piece of my life, seems to have been accorded much less understanding than the incomparably more literary Nachman. It had received much praise, but no genuine word of understanding."[2] The Jewish intellectual Friedrich Gundolf, who was asked to write a review of the book, dismissed *Legende* summarily: "It seems to me that this work suffers from the incontestable opposition between contemporary education [*Bildung*] and the religious impulse which is the archevil of contemporary spiritualized [*beseelte*] Judaism."[3] Others criticized Buber for his proclivity to abstraction. Clearly, the combination of a presentation of mystical aesthetics with hermeneutical concerns hampered an understanding of the phenomenological contours of Hasidic spirituality.

Hasidism, Buber avers, is primarily a "mode of being" best understood through a phenomenological description of its "forms of life" (*Lebensformen*), particularly Hasidism's four primary "life-forces"—*hitlahavut* (ardor), *'avodah* (service), *kawwanah* (mystical intention), and *shiflut* (humility).[4]

Simmel, as we have seen, distinguishes between "religion" and "religiosity." The former is social, while the latter is a "primary quality that cannot be derived from anything else."[5] With burning enthusiasm and devotion among its most distinctive expressions, the religious "life dynamic" (*Lebensbewegtheit)* functions as an a priori category and power. But the primary energy of religious life may be, as Simmel explained, overwhelmed and rarified by social and cultural forms: "It is characteristic of such religious life that it becomes objectified in the form of the absolute, drawing its content from social facts (as well as from other facts of empirical life) and projecting these in absolute form into the transcendent sphere."[6] This dialectic led Buber to emphasize the "subjective culture" of the religious life process and to distinguish it from the formal structures and doctrines of Hasidism.

Buber composed his representation of Hasidic aphoristic teachings as a skein of quotations that are in themselves quotations-within-quotations. Here he practiced to some extent what has been labeled in poststructuralist theory "intertextuality." According to this theory every text is framed by other texts and exists only in relation to other texts; writing is tantamount to rewriting. Apparently Buber understood Judaism as an intertextual weave

of diachronic traditions that are in constant flux and hence continuously rewritten. As a consequence of his non-authorial view of tradition, he was not concerned with questions of authorship and regarded it unnecessary to identify either the author or the source of the Hasidic teachings that illuminate his interpretation of the mystic path. In these teachings we not only find material adapted from the mystical tradition but also from the Mishnah (L 12/F 25),[7] Gemara (L 9/F 23),[8] and Midrash (see below). Further, he marked paraphrases as quotations, and left it to the reader to recognize the scriptural verses behind the restated source. This disregard for careful citation of the sources is, however, somewhat in consonance with Hasidic practice. The Hasidic masters considered the Hebrew Bible as a fount of figurative language to be drawn upon in fostering their new religious doctrines. By a considered use of figurative language Buber induces the Jewish reader to engage the text experientially. By simultaneously disclosing and concealing, metaphorical expression reflects the duality of ecstatic experience. The mystic's continuous striving to overcome duality is also emblematic of the challenge posed by the abiding condition of exile and alienation experienced with particular acuity by modern Jews.

On a pedagogic level, scriptural metaphors and figures of speech serve Buber as a means of reorienting his readers from viewing Judaism as a normative religion to seeing it as a spiritual faith. Whereas the Hasidic masters freely scan Scripture for symbols and metaphors that would express the spiritual life of the ecstatic mystic, Buber in fact interprets these metaphors. In this process of appropriation the original meaning of the figurative language is frequently transgressed and its original meaning altered.

Prominent among these are metaphors for the modern condition of alienation and homelessness—the stranger and the wanderer. King David represents in Hasidic imagination the archetype of the ecstatic mystic, as Buber indicates by quoting Psalm 119:19, for which King David is credited in Jewish tradition: "I am only a stranger in the land." This outcry, *ger anokhi ba-arets,* serves in Hasidic literature as a metaphor for the *via solitaria* of the ecstatic mystic. The biblical *ger* generally means "stranger" (*Fremder*) and denotes anyone who resides in a country of which he is not a full native or landowning citizen.[9] But *ger* is in some non-concordant Bible translations rendered "sojourner" or "guest," blurring the biblical distinction between the *ger* and the *ger toshav* (the resident alien). That Buber translates *ger* as *Fremder* and not poetically as *Gast* ("guest," as does Luther)[10] is another indication that his translations or lexical choices were made in consideration not only of 'faithfulness' to the original but also of the needs of the discourse. Tellingly, in his German Bible translation of the Book of Psalms,[11] Buber

renders the *ger* of Psalm 119:19 as *Gast,* indicating a change in the principles of translation.

In the year of the publication of *Legende,* Simmel identified the stranger in an essay of the same name as one of the sociological forms of modern culture. Potentially liberated from spatial fixation, the stranger nonetheless resides within prescribed social boundaries. He "presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics" (spatial liberation/spatial fixation), which is concurrently the "unity of nearness and remoteness, which contains every human relation."[12] Proposing to understand the stranger not as "the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow," Simmel sees him as "the *potential* wanderer." The stranger's independence from both the society in which he resides as a guest as well as from his native society are his defining characteristics; he is in a most comprehensive, that is, existential, sense no "owner of soil." Yet, he is "fixed within a group" and its boundaries and also changes the dynamic of the group by importing, through being a stranger, qualities into it. Simmel explicitly mentions the European Jew as the "classical example" of a stranger "who intrudes as a supernumerary" into a group.[13] With the rise of racial and political antisemitism the theme of the stranger gained new relevance and had lost the aura of innocence and melancholy that was attached to it as a literary trope in German Romanticism.

Suggesting that he is directly quoting a Hasidic source, Buber, like Simmel, presents the stranger as "someone who came from afar." In this specific wording he alludes to Simmel's definition of alienhood (*Fremdsein*) as a dialectical interaction between nearness and remoteness. Only in the perception of the other is the stranger "someone who came from afar." One can make the point even sharper: without the distant other and the experience of being perceived by others, one would not feel a stranger. Buber's mystic as stranger shuns the concerns of the mundane, material life, such as honor and possessions. As extraneous life impulses, these desires denote a lower level of existence. Whereas Simmel presents the stranger as one who challenges the conventional understanding of spatial relations and feels nowhere at home, Buber's mystic is preoccupied solely with the "return" home. Paradoxically, the mystic can feel at home in space, for he is likened to the stranger by circumstance or choice who strives "to return home to the town of his birth," cognizant that "nothing can possess him, for he knows: This is alien, and I must return home" (L 7/F 21–22).[14] In this poetically misleading phrasing, Buber presents the stranger-as-mystic as someone who, like the sociological stranger, once had a physical home, suggesting that physical homecoming is a real possibility. Thus the ontic difference between the

experience of the mystic and the sociological stranger is minimized. However, in Hasidic literature the life with God and life in this world are commonly depicted in irresolvable tension.

In contrast to Simmel, Buber is here not concerned with the stranger as an initiator of social change or embodiment of an "objective mind," or with alienhood as a particular form of social interaction, nor with the imponderables of identity and alterity. Rather, his conceptual interest is self-actualization, namely the asymptotic quest for proximity with the divine. The Hasidic mystic represents the cosmic point, so to speak, of intersection of the transcendent and the physical world. The Zaddik is a "Wanderer" as well as a *Wandelnder* (L 4/F 19),[15] that is, one who continuously strolls or traverses (between the material and the metaphysical worlds), paradoxically without physically moving or relocating. To broaden the semantic field, Buber also uses in this passage the term *Fremdling,* an archaic, poetic word for "stranger" that was used frequently by the German Romantics (Novalis, "Der Fremdling," 1798), albeit in a different, often patriotic connotation, and also in the unrevised Elberfeder Bible translation of 1905 for Psalm 119:19.

Buber proceeds to describe metaphorically the two forms of mystical love: the concealed and the revealed or public expression. As publicly manifest, the sibling love between brother and sister is considered in Hasidism as the higher form of love of God, for it denotes the yearning for mystical communion with God (*devequt*) that is to be achieved in the material world and in the social realm. The Hasidic masters derived this new interpretation of *devequt* as the beginning of the mystical ascent from Song of Songs 8:1: "Oh that you were really my brother, who had sucked the breasts of my mother, that I might find you in the street and kiss you." Buber cites this scriptural verse—which the Kabbalists interpret to mean that the divine essences can only be contemplated by "sucking" and not by knowing[16]—to illustrate the true meaning of *avodah* (divine service) and not, as one would expect, to describe *hitlahavut* (ecstasy) or for that matter mystical communion. *'Avodah* is not limited to prayer and ritual but is extended to the public sphere in which one mingles with one's fellow human beings while clinging with one's heart to the divine Presence. The hidden love, which, as Buber indicates, is on a lower level in the Hasidic hierarchy of values, represents the traditional concept of 'love of God' attained through the study of the Torah, prayer, and the performance of the commandments.

Hasidism's tendency to endow scriptural metaphors and images with new meaning is shared by Buber and particularly evident in his rendering of Psalm 84:8: "They go from strength to strength, appearing before God in Zion." The metaphor "from strength to strength" is paraphrased in Buber's

phenomenology of *hitlahavut* to articulate a subdued critique of halakhic practice: "When man moves from strength to strength and ever upward and upward until he comes to the root of all teaching and all command, to the 'I' of God, the simple unity and boundlessness—when he stands there, then all the wings of command and law sink down and are as if destroyed. For the evil impulse is destroyed since he stands above it" (L 4/F 19). Buber uses the poetic phrase from Psalm 84 as a model for the creation of similar phrases, such as "from world to world," "from end to end," "from rung to rung," and "from form [*Gestalt*] to form," which permeate his phenomenology of Hasidic spiritual life and are meant to employ Scripture as an idiom for a new Jewish prose.

Buber uses in his presentation of *'avodah* one of the most recurrent images in Hasidic literature, namely, the image of 'man as the ladder.' This trope for the process of the mystical ascent and descent is drawn from Jacob's dream: "He had a dream; a stairway [*sulam*] was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it" (Gen. 28:12). Stairway is usually rendered with ladder. The 'ladder set up on the earth' has become the image which signifies the service through prayer for both the ascent of prayer and that of the soul. While the image of the ladder has a variety of denotative meanings in Hasidic literature, Buber limits its semantic scope.

The earliest Hasidic source for linking Genesis 28:12 to the concept of '*avodah be-gashmiyyut* (service through corporeality) is *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*. R. Ya'aqov Yosef ha-Kohen of Polonnoye (d. ca. 1782), author of the *Toledot*, teaches that when the service through corporeal things is linked with thought, *yihud* (unification) can be effected in the upper worlds. With recourse to the verse from Genesis, R. Ya'aqov Yosef seeks to convey the importance of conjoining oneself to the Zaddik for the spiritual ascent. The common men are the 'legs' (symbolizing the body) who abide and remain in the material world; yet through good deeds they can prompt the Zaddikim to ascend higher.[17] R. Ya'aqov Yosef differentiates here between two types of pious men: the first type ascends the ladder to the world-to-come through preparation and the merit of his deeds (i.e., through the performance of the commandments), the second type, which is the Zaddik as the 'spiritual man,' in addition knows how to descend the ladder.[18] The Zaddik occasionally falls from his higher spiritual rung of *gadlut* (expanded state of consciousness) to the lower level of *qatnut* (restricted state of consciousness), but only to continue to ascend to a higher rung than the one he achieved in his previous ascent. R. Moshe Hayyim Efrayim of Sudylkow (d. ca. 1800) likewise relates the scriptural verse and image allegorically to the doctrine of the Zaddik, and

specifically to the problem of *gadlut* and *qatnut*.[19] R. Elimelekh of Lyzhansk (d. 1787) detects in the identical numerical value of *s(u)lam* and *sinai* (symbolizing the giving of the Law) a reference to the value of humility. He holds that the words *muEsav 'arEsah* ("set on earth") denote "great humility," which is required to attain holiness.[20] R. Levi Yizhak of Berdichev (d. 1810) considers the image as a symbol for exile which, due to the captivity of the Shekhinah, is said to "reach unto heaven,"[21] and Habad Hasidism understood the image to signify "the realm in which the *Yesh* and the *'Ayin* unite, i.e., human understanding and its divine source."[22] In the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, the image of the ladder is connected to the concept of study of the Torah *lishmah* (for its own sake).[23]

Citing faithfully the first part of the verse according to its most common Hasidic formulation, Buber narrows the image of the ladder to a simple univocal message: "Man is a ladder, placed on earth and touching heaven with its head. And all his gestures [*Gebärden*] and affairs [*Geschäfte*] and speaking [*Reden*] leave traces in the higher world" (L 13/F 26)[24] Both sentences are marked as a quotation from Hasidic literature, although the second sentence is apparently but a paraphrase. In Buber's rendering, the ladder does not symbolize the Zaddik who joins the people of Israel to God but refers to man in general.

In focusing on the emotional aspect of Hasidic worship and inner experience, Buber omits 'thought' or the cognitive ascent on the ladder in his representation of the original teaching. The Baal Shem Tov taught that the world was created through "thought, speech, and deed" and that man can affect the cosmic order through each of these activities. Thought is held to be an important feature in worship, for it precedes speech and deed. An interpretation of the image of the ladder which is closer to Buber's view of Hasidic spirituality is found in *'Imrot Tehorot* of R. Moshe of Kobryn (d. 1858) and marked by Buber in his personal copy:

> "And behold a ladder set up on earth." By virtue of this every Israelite is to be strengthened, this is what is meant by, "You have restored me to health and revived me" [Isa. 38:16]. "And behold a ladder set up on earth," even though I am [but] a "potsherd of earth" [Isa. 45:9], thus his [man's] head reaches the heavens, his soul [*nefesh*] emanates from the heavens above and his deeds reach heaven. And behold, the ascent and descent of the angels from above is dependent on the deeds of human beings.[25]

R. Moshe of Kobryn indeed assigns here no role to thought or a conscious cognitive process in attaining a nearness to God. The ladder symbolizes man's

spiritual condition in this world. Man continuously ascends or descends, going either to a higher or a lower spiritual level. Even though man dwells primarily in the material world, he can reach through spiritual perfection and the uniting of body and soul a status similar to that of the angels.

Although Buber relates the image of 'man as the ladder' to the goal of unification, his interpretation differs from the above-noted Hasidic readings. He prefers a non-midrashic mode of interpretation. Consequently, he neglects the possible meanings, connotations, and the intrinsic polysemy of each word in the scriptural verse in favor of a simple message which is both comprised in one sentence and intelligible even without the scriptural verse. The plain didactic message of Buber's rendering is that every activity in this world can facilitate the ascent of the soul.

Hasidism achieved, as Buber noted a few years later, a "de-schematization of mystery."[26] To be sure, mystery constituted for Buber the essence of both religion and life. But, as scholars have observed, Hasidism's reorientation from abstract kabbalistic theosophy to ecstatic experience did not lead to an abandonment of all theosophical interest. Hasidic literature is replete with theosophical formulae such as "the mystery of speech," "the mystery of *yihud*," or the "mystery of *hiyyut*."[27] Buber narrows these recurrent idioms in Hasidic literature solely to processes bespeaking duality. *Hitlahavut* and *'avodah* determine the experiential rhythm of the Hasidic mystic whose spiritual life oscillates between "having and seeking" of God, between presence and absence. *Hitlahavut* denotes in Buber's poetic commentary "the mystery of unity," *'avodah* "the mystery of having and seeking," *kawwanah* "the mystery of redemption," and *shiflut* "the mystery of community." For Buber, these interrelated aspects of religious devotion determine the process of "raising the corporeal to the spirit." In the process of retransformation of the corporeal to its spiritual essence, things are restored to the state prior to primeval sin.

The text Buber creates reintroduces the Jewish reader to basic religious themes that have not lost their actuality, above all exile and redemption. Jewish identity is shaped by these two grand narratives which so profoundly structure Jewish sensibilities. Hasidism's paradoxical interpretation of the notion of exile from a barren state of consciousness to a (positive) condition that engenders spiritual renewal was judged by Buber to be the most significant change in the messianic idea. Throughout his rendering of the four central devotional Hasidic values he refers to an idea found already in rabbinic literature, namely that of the exile of the Shekhinah—the divine Presence/Indwelling—from God. Similar to the destiny of the Shekhinah, the Hasidim "wander over the earth" (L 8/F 22). As noted above, the Hasidic

masters embody the archetype of an existential stranger, which strikingly echoes the existential strangeness that became characteristic of modernity. Duality and the exile of the Shekhinah began, Buber asserts in allusion to Lurianic myth, with "the created world and its deed" (L 14/F 26). As a result of "human deed" (i.e., the sin of Adam), God has "fallen into duality," that is, into the now concealed divinity, "Elohut," and the revealed Shekhinah.

By broaching the question of human deeds, Buber leaves the realm of religiosity to consider the moral dimension of religion, from whence he shows how the theme of duality works itself out with respect to the opposites of good and evil and the corresponding notion of redemption. Buber relates in this context primarily to the theory of the transmigration or the wandering of the souls (*gilgul ha-neshamot*) and the task of uplifting of the sparks from their state of captivity in the corporeal world. In his interpretation of *kawwanah*, he notes that the sparks sank "at the time of the original darkening of the world or through the guilt of the ages" (L 24/F 35). Primeval sin caused a separation of the soul from its divine source and a fracturing of the divine unity. This event is referred to in kabbalistic symbolism as the "cutting of the shoots" (L 15/F 27). Although episodic, Buber's acknowledgment of kabbalistic metaphors in Hasidism, such as the "root of the tree of the world" (L 9/not in F), and Gnostic images, such as the demonic "other side" (L 34/F 44), is undoubtedly a result of his desire to adumbrate the communal function of myth in the Hasidic imagination.[28] Myth offers patterns of understanding of the "nexus of life" and provides a high level of identification with a culture's destiny in which the individual is situated. This may also explain why, despite Buber's general tendency to deemphasize eschatological theology, he highlights the messianic hope and the yearning for the personal Messiah. Ambiguous statements, for example "As a sign of this [the process of restoration], the Messiah will appear and make all beings free" (L 23/F 33),[29] seem to contradict his interpretation of Hasidism as quietism. Occasionally it is hard to gather from the collage of excerpts and his commentary whether the reference to the redemptive act(s) is to every individual or to the messianic redeemer alone: "Places which are fettered wait for the man who will come to them with the word of freedom" (L 25/F 36). He does, however, capture the paradoxical tension between Hasidism's messianic yearning, on the one hand, and redemption as the spiritual task of the individual, on the other: "Others, however, are aware of the progress of the stride, see the place and hour of the path and know the distance of the Coming One" (L 23/F 34). In the messianic age, which Buber deems the most original idea of Judaism, the mystical ethos and ethics merge harmoniously.

Hitlahavut—On Ecstatic Immediacy

Buber regards *hitlahavut* as "the primal principle [*Urprinzip*] of Hasidic life" (L 29/F 40). *Ekstase*, *Wonne* ("bliss"), and *Inbrunst* ("fervor," "ardor") are synonyms employed to translate the term *hitlahavut*. Indeed, the words derived from the Hebrew root *l-h-v* (burning, flame, to be inflamed) evoke several of the central features attributed to Hasidic mysticism. Although *hitlahavut* "is the burning," it is not to be confined to the ardor of ecstasy, but is the value denoting the enthusiasm that "unlocks the meaning of life" (L 2/F 17).

For Buber, burning devotion rather than the peak experience of mystical communion (*devequt*) is at the core of Hasidic worship. He underscores the centrality of this value with his metaphor of "the eternal key" (ibid.), which one would not commonly find in Hasidic literature. Ecstasy, as the beginning of the mystical ascent, informs all other dimensions of Hasidic spirituality and, unlike mystical communion, can be practiced by everyone. Scholem would demur, for he regarded *devequt*, the doctrine of the constant cleaving to God, to be the distinctive aspect of worship of God in Hasidism.[30] Yet Hasidic literature does contain formulations that lend themselves to emphasize *hitlahavut* over *devequt*. In Buber's personal copy of a late Hasidic collection of teachings, *Ma'aseh tsaddikim*, the following sentence is marked: "The roots of Hasidism are three: humility [*shiflut*] and joy [*simhah*] and burning fervor [*hitlahavut*] in all things of worship."[31] Because of its non-normative nature, the valence attached to *hitlahavut* as a supererogatory emotion was undoubtedly in accord with Buber's religious anarchism. *Devequt,* on the other hand, even if it gains a new meaning in Hasidism as an emotional-devotional value, nevertheless echoes the biblical injunction "You shall cleave to God" (Deut. 10:20; 11:22; 13:5).

Buber refers in his presentation to *hitlahavut* as the "highest rung" of mystical experience, the end and apex of mystical ecstasy in which one transcends all being (L 6/F 21). He acknowledges the importance of "cleaving to God,"[32] without, however, noting that this practice requires the intellectual effort of the meditative fixation of one's thoughts on the divine attributes. The early Hasidim continued the practice of the Kabbalists, who meditated upon the sacred Hebrew letters (*Eserufey 'otiyot*) and on binding one's thought to the root of Torah for the sake of perpetuating unification in the upper worlds. Although Buber alludes in his interpretation of *kawwanah* to the practice of meditation on the Hebrew letters, he clearly does not wish to associate the use of theurgic techniques with Hasidic spirituality.

Buber also neglects, as noted, the role of the intellect in Hasidism. But the Baal Shem Tov, in spite of his cultivation of ecstatic and spontaneous

religiosity, stressed that man's thought determines in which realm he dwells spiritually.[33] "Sometimes one serves God with the soul alone, that is with thought, and the body stands [still] in its place."[34] By means of thought man divests himself of corporeality, cleaves to the Shekhinah, and raises the holy sparks or, in the language of the Besht, "overcome a rupture."[35] Spiritual worship meant for the Besht to serve God through the purity of one's thought, for the divine essence enveloped in every created thing is not accessible to sensual perception. The Zaddik can receive mystical revelations or apprehend supernal truths through the attaching of his thought and spirituality (*mahshavato we-pnimiyyutaw*) to the spirituality (*pnimiyyut ha-ruhaniyyut*) contained in the Hebrew letters.[36] But more important, this mental effort of concentrating on the letters is the path to spiritual perfection and mystical communion with God and, according to the Baal Shem Tov, is the inner meaning of Song of Songs 1:2, as "the mystery of 'He kissed me with the kisses of His mouth.' "[37]

In Hasidic literature the observance of the commandments with *hitlahavut* leads one by means of detachment from the physical world (*hitrahaqut mi-ha-homer*) to the cleaving to the "inwardness of the commandment" (*pnimiyyut ha-mitswah*) or to the "inwardness of Torah" (*pnimiyyut ha-torah*).[38] These concepts point to the esoteric dimension that the original kabbalistic doctrine of *devequt* retains in Hasidic thought. Apparently for this reason, Buber places at the core of Hasidic piety the emotional state of *hitlahavut*, which makes the desired proximity to God attainable to everybody. But when Buber acknowledges that true communion with God can be attained only in solitude (*hitbodedut*), he defines an aspect of *devequt* rather than of *hitlahavut* (L 13/F 26).[39] The same is true when he describes *hitlahavut* not as a "sudden sinking into eternity" but as an "ascent to the infinite from rung to rung" (L 3–4/F 18–19), which means in Hasidic semantics from one level of holiness to the next higher level of holiness.[40] Indeed, *devequt* is not confined in early Hasidism to the state of mystical communion with God but includes devotion. The absorption of aspects of *devequt* into *hitlahavut* is a consequence of Buber's nigh-single focus on the phenomenological evocation of the dynamic and emotional pathos of Hasidism.

The Hasid's spiritual movement from "rung to rung," which Buber highlights, points to the central role of rhythm for aesthetics. One of the distinctive features of modernity is precisely the condition of continuous change, the feeling that everything is in constant motion and transformation. Rhythm and movement are intimately dovetailed in the mystical prose Buber crafts to facilitate his aesthetics of renewal. For Buber, movement is a term with epistemic qualities and germane to the philosophical anthropology he endeavors

to attune to cultural Zionism: "Good, rich, and simple words should not be wasted. Not the word movement either. We should only speak of movement if there is an upward movement of deeds."[41] In *Legende* reading resonates with Seel's hermeneutic rule that it "execute its imaginative projections on the basis of receptivity to the prose's rhythm, acoustics, and gestures."[42] But sensual perceiving is here not the end of the reading experience. One could argue that *Legende* creates on the basis of ecstatic mysticism a form of literary Expressionism. The spiritual motion of the Hasid as re-presented by Buber resonates with the aesthetic concerns of Expressionism, where the vertical and horizontal structure of motion would find a few years later an innovative expression in art. The affinity between Buber's early representation of Hasidism and distinctive elements of Expressionism (specifically the religious branch in German Expressionist art) has been noted, and the influence of the Austrian art historian and leading mind of modern formalist criticism Alois Riegl, with whom Buber studied in Vienna, can hardly be overestimated.[43] Riegl's perceptual theory evolved around the visual representation of temporality and on rhythm and temporality, themes that struck a cord with the young Buber, who translated these aspects in his artistic representation of Hasidism into an "ethics of perception."[44] In Hasidic mysticism, Buber contends, rhythm structures the moral act: the ardor of the Zaddikim is "manifestly structured in the rhythm of their deeds" (L 10/not in F) and, one is tempted to add, "the rhythm of their speech." Rhythm, central to the motion-centered Jew as Oriental, is also a significant technical term of *Lebensphilosophie*. For Simmel, rhythm is the "formal bearer of understanding."[45] He regards the "increased dynamic nature of life" as the presupposition for understanding the reality and individuality of another human being. Not the macro-social structures and social institutions but the microcosm of a human life and of "human beings in the stream of life" is the point of departure of Simmel's social theory, which aims at no less than an understanding of the "totality of reality" or of "life." Buber applies Simmel's approach—the identification of the details of life as the foundational elements of the totality of its meaning—to his representation of the meaning of life in Hasidism. The metaphysical *Allheit* in "Das Leben der Chasidim" can be read analogous to Simmel's "totality." Undoubtedly Buber shared Simmel's conviction that this totality can only be apprehended aesthetically and that the mystical-ecstatic mode of life was a unique intuitive way to grasp this totality. Just as art has the impulse to discharge and communicate emotional states through expression and so provides the emotional basis for dance, poetry, and music, so does Hasidism give expression to its God-experience through spontaneous forms of worship, such as singing and dance. Buber understands social

actions analogously; they are "essentially transformations of the life of the soul in rhythm, tempo, and intensity of expression."[46] Rhythm indicates on the one hand a sense of spatio-temporal unity and on the other points to the very motoric quality which Buber claims as a quasi-biological feature of the Jewish people. Buber discerns this motoric energy in a variety of Hasidic concepts, e.g., the oscillations of ascent and descent and in the deed of "raising" (the sparks).

Turning to another Hasidic trope, Buber depicts the Zaddik as "the man who is detached [from earthly existence]" and becomes a "friend of God" (L 8/F 22). By virtue of his burning enthusiasm he "raises everything corporeal to spirit" (L 2/F 18) and in attaining to a spiritual state of being reverses the sin of the first man. This presentation of the concept of abstracting oneself from corporeality is, however, deficient, for the state of removing oneself from concrete reality requires in Hasidic thought not only fervor but paradoxically the intellectual effort of a total voiding of thought. Buber simplifies the complexity of this mental effort: "Thus ecstasy completes itself in its own sublation [*Aufhebung*]" (L 6/F 21). In using the word *Aufhebung* he associates the inner motion of the Hasidic master with Hegel's dialectic of annulment and preservation. In this state of unity the existential contradiction of life in the mundane, material world and in the spiritual world, which defines the existence of the mystic, are sublated. This, however, can only be a transient sublation, for the goal cannot be the annulment of the ontological structure of existence. This philosophical term somewhat mitigates the extreme implications of the notion of the mystical annihilation of the self (*bittul ha-yesh*). The German *Leugnung des Selbst* ("denial of the self") and *Nichtung des Selbst* ("annihilation of the self") conflict with the personality ethics of Buber's time. Possibly Buber feared that mystical self-effacement could be identified with a total self-denial, which would run contrary to Zionist sensibilities.

In his poetic description of *hitlahavut*, Buber tends to conflate the various concepts that denote in Hasidism either different spiritual states of the mystical path or the mental efforts connected to *hitlahavut,* such as *hishtavut* (mystical equanimity of the soul), *hitbonenut* (contemplation), *hitkalelut* (mystical absorption), *hitpa'alut* (ecstatic rapture), and *hitpashtut ha-gashmiyyut* (the divesting oneself of corporeality).

The spiritual act of divesting oneself of corporeality is, as Buber indicates, a process of alternating states of being. The mystic is an agent of (cosmic) renewal,[47] for he reverses the process of divine creation and transforms corporeal reality back to its spiritual essence. This spiritual conversion of things involves a dual movement: "It enlarges the soul to the All. It narrows

the All down to nothing," and, as Buber adds, citing from a Hasidic source that reflects the teaching of R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech (d. 1772), "they [the Zaddikim] turn the something back into nothingness" (L 9/F 23). Buber repeatedly refers to the activity of the attainment of the state of nothingness as the eternal beginning of (the activity of) Creation. He offers but a vague phenomenological description of what occurs at the apex of the ecstatic experience. "If it appears to offer an end, arriving, an attaining, an acquiring, it is only a final no, not a final yes: it is the end of constraint, the shaking off of the last chains, the liberation which is lifted above everything earthly" (L 4/F 19). It is unclear whether the attainment of "simple unity" is to be understood as a submersion of the self into the absolute divine Presence. Buber's reading of *hitlahavut* is confined to the dialectic of the "primeval duality," epitomizing a pantheistic view: "Everything is God. And everything serves God" (L 10/not in F). His single focus on the "earthly life of *hitlahavut*" compels Buber to detach the dialectical movement of the world of Creation from that of the world of emanation. He fails to indicate, however, that the task of transformation—the spiritual transporting of "things" back to their primordial nonexistence—is one that reenacts the eternal movement of contraction and expansion within God. His account of the mystical path is but a truncated presentation of the dialectic of *yesh* (something) and *'aiyn* (naught), the "paradigms" of the mystical ascent (Rachel Elior). The mystical ascent is attained by the "stripping away of corporeality" (through the nullification of will) whereas the mystical descent entails the bringing down of the supernal influx into the corporeal world (i.e., the materialization of the divine will).[48]

Through the stripping away of individuality, as Buber notes, the soul becomes a vessel for the divine influx and prepares itself for the renewal of creation. For creation is a continual dual process, an active creating (to identify the divine with the material, created world in an intense spiritual act) and the converse, a passive 'being-created' (the emptying of the spirit in order to become a vessel for the divine life-force): "For creating means to be created: the divine moves and overcomes us" (L 30/F 40).[49] With oblique reference to the teachings of R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech, Buber presents this process as an act of divine grace and identifies God as the animating force and source of renewal.[50] He may have been inspired by R. Pinhas of Korets (d. 1791), who emphasized that renewal of creation is a continuous process in which both man and God participate: "God wants to renew His world."[51] Further, Buber stresses the process of bringing oneself to mystical passivity and points to the overcoming of selfhood required for a transformative experience: "Only he who sinks into the nothing of the Absolute receives the

forming hand of the Spirit" (L 30/F 40).[52] The anthropomorphic metaphor of the "hand of the Spirit" is another prominent biblical image interpolated by Buber. More importantly, it is the most common biblical metaphor to denote divine Providence, individual and national. The corresponding phrase in Hasidic literature is "Hand of Holiness" (*yad ha-qedushah*). The prophet's transformative experience of the Spirit of God, which is described in 1 Kings 18:46 as a moment of seizure in which "the hand of the Lord had come upon Elijah,"[53] alludes in Hasidism, as Buber suggests in his choice of the metaphor, to the state of mystical rapture. The various metaphors related in Hasidism to the description of the flow of the divine energy into the world of emanation—e.g., the divine fullness, light, or vitality[54]—are subsumed in Buber's commentary under the generic term grace. Yet without a distinction between the technical Hebrew terms *shefa* (divine energy) or *hiyyut* (vitality), one can hardly gain a proper understanding of the process of spiritual renewal in Hasidism.

Apparently these technical terms do not easily lend themselves to metaphorization. Thus Buber preferred metaphors of the ecstatic experience, of which *devequt* is central. Although scholars have noted that the kabbalistic conception of *devequt* underwent a radical change of meaning in Hasidism, where it became the prime religious value,[55] what *devequt* denotes specifically is anything but clear.[56] Indeed, it was a basic principle of early Hasidism that the "fruit of the Torah is cleaving to God."[57] According to Moshe Idel, *devequt* signifies in a much wider, non-elitist sense "the performance of a pious deed with devotion and enthusiasm"[58] and not strictly the objective of the ascent, the communion with God, attained by a few. The understanding of *devequt* as first and foremost an emotional value crystallized only with the generations succeeding R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech.[59] But *devequt*, as Piekarz points out, also serves a specific socio-religious function.[60] He refers to the teaching of Ya'aqov Yosef of Polonnoye, who made it mandatory for every believer to realize adhesion to God, although he conceded that only the Zaddikim can truly fulfill the commandment of "to Him you shall cleave" (Deut. 11:22; 13:5).[61]

In principle, Buber would have agreed with Scholem's contention that the doctrine of *devequt* became in Hasidism "a starting-point" rather than "the end" of worship.[62] But he remains unclear whether in mystical ecstasy the Hasidic masters indeed attained *unio mystica*, that is, a state of absorption of the soul into the divine Reality.[63] Phrasings such as "it is given to man at every place and any time to unite with God" or "ecstasy seeks nothing but completion in God" are in Buber's text ambiguous and can be read to mean either *unio mystica* or mystical communion (*Rabbi Nachman,* 15).[64]

'Avodah—On Mystical Self-Sacrifice

The second value that Buber interprets is *'avodah* (lit., "work"; here: divine service). *'Avodah* is nigh-synonymous in Hasidism with prayer and epitomizes spiritual worship. Divine service is considered in early Hasidism more important than the study of Torah. The Hasidic masters attach special power to prayer, which they consider the primary means for the inner ascent of the soul to God, that is, the path to the rapturous mystical encounter with the divine. They were fully cognizant of the function prayer assumed in Judaism when, after the destruction of the Temple, it came to replace sacrifice. The remembrance of the atoning function of the ancient sacrifice is part of the traditional liturgy specifically on the Day of Atonement. *'Avodah* thus evokes in particular the religious concepts of sin, repentance, atonement, and purification. The recital of prayer—beyond the goal of unification of the Shekhinah and God (L 14/F 27)—is understood in Hasidism in a literal sense as sacrifice, as a giving of oneself to God in form of a spiritual *Kiddush ha-Shem* (which refers traditionally to the sanctification of God's Name through martyrdom).

Accordingly Buber distinguishes the two spiritual modes of *'avodah* and *hitlahavut* by use of symbolism from the sacrificial cult: "*Hitlahavut* is the mystical meal; *Avodah* is the mystical offering" (L 10/F 24). The "mystic meal" is indeed in Jewish mysticism traditionally a symbol for the ecstatic bliss of mystical communion with God, and it points to man as the recipient of the divine *shefa* (the divine energy) which sustains the world of emanation. By contrast, *'avodah* entails the notion of self-sacrifice and points to man's unconditional movement of total subservience to God as the ideal attitude required for ecstatic prayer.[65] However, only the reader with knowledge of Hebrew is able to discern that this metaphorization of sacrifice is nurtured by the Hebrew root *q-r-b,* which means "to draw near." The common German translation of *qorban* (sacrifice) as *Opfer* does not inspire such innovative reading.[66]

Buber holds that Hasidic worship entails the polar experiences of preparatory mystical contemplation (internalization) and religious-spiritual activity directed to the physical world (externalization). This blurring of boundaries between inside and outside, between self, other, and world resonate with the aesthetic theory promoted by abstract Expressionism. To evoke an association with new art forms may have been in his mind when he penned sentences like the following: "Here the inner meaning of *'avodah* is intimated, coming from the depths of the old Jewish secret teaching and not clarifying but obfuscating the mystery of the duality of ecstasy and service,

of having and seeking" (L 14/F 26). The having and seeking of God as the spiritual movement of the Zaddik corresponds, as Buber explains in his essay "Sinnbildliche und sakramentale Existenz im Judentum" (1935), to the unity of passion and action in the life of the prophet.[67] This having and seeking of God (with reference to Prov. 8:17) is the axis of spiritual worship in Hasidism. It is a seeking of the divine within oneself. In contradistinction to ecstatic communion, *'avodah* cannot be confined to isolated inwardness, for it demands communal God-intention or a communal God-seeking: "In the narrow room of self no prayer can thrive" (L 15/F 28).

Through the congregational service of prayer one transcends the self. Hence communal prayer counterbalances the seclusion of the self required for mystical ecstasy and expresses the collective will to establish a unity below and above. Prayer is "all action bound in one" (L 12/F 25) and as such symbolizes for Buber the "secret of community" (L 16/F 29). "The willing ones [*die Wollenden*] bind themselves to one another for greater unity and might" (L 17/F 29). In contrast to *hitlahavut*, *'avodah* is based on directed intention (*kawwanah*), that is, on a volitional act of drawing near to God. Buber stresses, through the previously noted parable of the Besht about the "human ladder," the mutual dependence of the Zaddik and the Congregation of Israel (*knesset yisrael*): "The lower need the higher, but the higher also need the lower" (L 16–17/F 29). Here he captures an important phenomenological and psychological aspect of prayer in Hasidism. The Zaddik and the congregation experience together and through one another the mystery of holiness. As a mediator between God and man, the Zaddik assists others in the ascent of their prayer (L 16/F 28). He binds himself "with the whole of Israel."[68] The reciprocal interaction between the Zaddik and the ordinary pious individual is necessary to realize the unification of all souls towards their ultimate restoration in the supernal root. This denotes in Hasidic semantics the "*All-Einung*," the unification of totality (L 29/F 40).

The life of the Zaddik is devoted to the attainment of holiness; it unfolds between potentiality and actuality. Although Buber indicates the superior religious rank of the Zaddik, he is not overtly concerned with elucidating the doctrine of the Zaddik. Similarly, the difference between the Zaddik and the ordinary pious person is often blurred: "But if it is only those blessed ones who can plunge tranquilly into the darkness in order to aid a soul which is abandoned to the whirlpool of wandering, it is not denied to even the least of persons to raise the lost sparks from their imprisonment and send them home" (L 26/F 37).[69] "The righteous" (*der Gerechte*) or "the saint" (*der Heilige*) is primarily presented by Buber as the helper of God who draws the truly devoted souls of Israel near to God.

The dual nature of divine service is one of communion (implying spiritual passivity) and intention (implying spiritual activity): "He who thus serves in perfection has conquered the primeval duality and has brought *hitlahavut* into the heart of *'avodah*" (L 20/F 32). This fusion of spiritual passivity and spiritual activity, which Buber believes can be found in Hasidic thought, constitutes a new understanding of the nature of worship. On the "altar of the soul" the Zaddik offers himself unreservedly unto God: "When the holy man brings ever new fire that the glowing embers on the altar of his soul may not be extinguished, God Himself says the sacrificial speech" (L 11/F 24).[70] Buber describes the dialectic informing this extreme religious experience of cleaving to God as the "grace of ecstasy."[71] Indeed, the Besht held that continuous *devequt* would necessarily imply the death of the body.

In the theoretical literature of Hasidism the symbolism of "the soul as an altar to God" points to a cluster of ideas related to the concept of mystical annihilation of the self. Hasidism uses the concept of *mesirut nefesh* (lit., "giving one's life") which, in associating devotion with an act of 'sacrificing oneself' to God, accentuates the intensity required for spiritual worship.[72] In prayer, according to R. Moshe of Kobryn, "we sacrifice ourselves before you [God] in the place of the animal sacrifice."[73] For the Besht and his followers, this spiritual attitude is indicated in the law of the burnt offering (Lev. 6:6): "A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar, not to go out." R. Moshe Hayyim Efrayim of Sudylkow compares the burning devotion expected from the Zaddik to the sacrifice offered by the ancient priest for atonement. The Zaddik has to keep the fire of *hitlahavut* burning all night in his heart, as if it were on the altar, in order to take upon himself the sufferings of the Shekhinah (i.e., the condition of captivity in the night of exile) until dawn (i.e., the morning of redemption).[74] Buber uses the metaphorical expression of the "altar of the soul" to epitomize the total devotion of soul and body required by ecstatic prayer in Hasidism.[75] This intensely visual image of prayer as the giving of oneself to God, to be understood as the withdrawal of the soul into God, is associated with sacrifice and mystical death. The Hasidic masters also evoke the image of the 'kiss of God' (Songs 1:2), which denotes traditionally the martyrological love of God.[76] Buber provides some key words for his readers to recall those aspects of Jewish liturgy that inspired the imaginations of ecstatic mystics. Clearly, Buber was preoccupied with aspects of primal religiosity, in particular sacrifice and its unifying power as well as "symbolic experiencing."[77] This interest was generated by two factors, namely the rhetoric of demise and degeneration that had become a facet of the national reawakening in Europe at the close of nineteenth century, and the concrete experience of death and self-sacrifice in the Zionist *Yishuv* in Palestine.

A typical pattern in the Zionist transfiguration of sacrifice and the reconfiguration of death to account for the heroism of the Jewish pioneer was the "nationalization of individual death" and the "individualization of national death."[78] When Buber speaks of "the idealists of self-sacrifice"[79] he uses the mystical trope *mesirut nefesh* to establish a link between traditional religious values grounded in an uncompromising belief in God's oneness, martyrdom through the sanctification of the divine name, and the sacrificial courage connected to nation-building. But in contradistinction to many mainstream political Zionists, he did not envision a replacement of the traditional meaning of *'avodah*—as an eternal spiritual task that linked the generations—by physical labor. Neither was Buber willing to regard exile *per se* akin to death, nor did he wish to cater, even at this early stage of settlement in Palestine, to a cult of the fallen.[80] For him it was sufficient to describe a concrete reality, for death was an unavoidable reality of the Jewish return to the ancestral homeland. Nonetheless Buber remained wary of a nationalistic coding of Jewish identity and, unlike Jacob Klatzkin and many others, rejected the equation of Judaism and nationalism. In spite of his reservations regarding nationalism, Buber did not deny the intimate bond between religion and peoplehood in Judaism nor did he "confessionalize" Judaism, as did so many liberal Jews in Germany at the time. Revitalization and reconstruction of Jewish identity were by far more important than religious reform or secular-mystical constructs such as that of the "redeeming function of labor" in Palestine associated with Aaron David Gordon (1865–1922).[81]

Due to his concern with the translatability of sacred notions into secular reality from a humanistic stance, Buber tended to gloss over important aspects attendant to the concepts he touches upon. The mystic's prayer qua self-sacrifice requires, for instance, the recital of specific prayers with the intention of *kiddush ha-Shem*, namely, the Shema (Hear, O Israel) and its benedictions.[82] The Shema also serves as a means for attaining the ecstatic withdrawal into the divine. In its proclamation of the unity of God, the Shema locates the purpose of service in the unification of the lower world with the supernal one.[83] The Besht regards ecstatic prayer with *kawwanah* as the prime means for realizing the mystical ascent and the state of utter attachment to God.[84] Buber's reading of prayer as ecstatic service of the heart and mind does not imply that he ignored the traditional Jewish paths to holiness: "through teaching and prayer and the fulfillment of the commandments [shall one serve God]" (L 13/F 26). But mystical prayer is, as he emphasizes, only one aspect of worship. The process of transforming the incomplete back to its original harmony includes "every deed" (L 12/F 25). According to Buber, every deed that originates "from a unified soul" (L 18,

20/F 30–31) realizes spontaneous devotion and attests to lived reality. Deed obtains in Buber's thought a very broad meaning, assuming the role of the commandments. "For he who has ascended from *'avodah* to *hitlahavut* and has submerged his will in it and receives his deed from it alone, has risen above every separate service" (L 20/F 31–32).

As underscored in Buber's poetic commentary on the aforementioned teachings, Hasidism provides insights into the contemporary problem of alienation and offers an alternative perspective. Through its emphasis on spiritual perfection Hasidism teaches ways of overcoming individuation. The modern experience of individuation in the empirical world need not be understood as a constricting, irreversible process of alienation. By virtue of free will and in conjunction with a yearning for nearness to God, the ecstatic mystic can attain an experience of oneness and can link himself spiritually to the (supernal) "root," the ontological source of oneness. In what appears to be an argument on the meaning of divine Providence in the modern world, Buber suggests that it is in the power of the individual to gather into one "the multiplicity within himself." An unidentified Hasidic source serves Buber as a prooftext for this assertion:

> And as when the world began to unfold and He saw that if it flowed further asunder it would no longer be able to return home to its roots, then he spoke "Enough"—so it is that when the soul of man in its suffering rushes headlong, without direction, and the bad [*das Übel*] becomes so mighty in it that it soon could no longer return home, then His compassion awakens, and he says "Enough!"
>
> But man too can say "Enough" to the multiplicity within him. When he collects himself and becomes one, he draws near to the oneness of God—he serves his Lord. . . . All action bound in one and the infinite life enclosed in every action: this is *'avodah* (L 12/F 25).

Here we have yet another example of how Buber incorporates into his representation of Hasidic teachings themes from the corpus of traditional literature. In Midrash Genesis Rabbah 44.5 the divine name *Shaddai* is interpreted as *Sha-dai*, the one who says "*dai!*"—enough!—during the process of creation of the world, thus placing through His attribute of justice a limit to the initial expansion of the cosmos.[85] Buber elsewhere differentiates his understanding of divine justice as the "giving justice," instead of "a recompensing and compensating justice" which is typical of rational theodicies. God as the "just creator gives to all His creatures His boundary, so that each may become fully itself."[86] This boundary or "fixed measure" bestowed upon each individual

is necessary for the realization of one's potential for self-perfection. *Imitatio dei* or emulation of divine justice thus means to reverse in a mystical modus operandi the limiting exteriorization of the divinity in the act of creation. *Imitatio dei* is effectuated by the transformation of one's human condition of spiritual fragmentation into a condition of nonduality, i.e. into a state of spiritual oneness. The Midrash thus obtains in Buber's appropriation cultural-philosophical relevance. Moreover, Buber re-reads this rabbinic explanation of one of the divine names with reference to the problem of evil. The phrasing, "the soul of man in its suffering rushes headlong, without direction" introduces the question of theodicy, and 'direction' provides a key term central to Buber's treatment of the issue in later years.[86]

Kawwanah—On Redemptive Devotion

Beyond calibrating metaphors, Buber employed interpretive translation to facilitate his phenomenological portrayal of Hasidism. He used archaic German words whose meanings elicit distinctive conceptual and emotional associations. In light of Hasidism's rather determinate semantics, this procedure is problematic. A special case in point are the terms he employed in his interpretation of *kawwanah* (focused mystical intention). Though this term is well-attested in the classic sources of Judaism, it gained a new meaning in mystical practice and was adopted by Hasidism from the Kabbalah. In Hasidism *kawwanah* denotes the act of directing one's prayer through intense mystical meditation toward "unification" (*yihud*). This process constitutes an essential and unique component of prayer in Hasidism. It denotes the unification of the masculine aspect of God with the feminine, the Shekinah. As the tenth Sefirah in the configuration of the ten divine potencies or emanations, the Shekhinah is the emanation closest to the created world and constantly in danger of being separated from the divine realm, the Tree of Life, through sin which offsets the cosmic balance.

In German works on Hasidism of the time, *kawwanah* is often translated as *Andacht* ("devotion").[88] But *Andacht* does not quite capture the unique devotional and intentional quality of worship in Hasidism. Searching for a German equivalent for *kawwanah* unencumbered by kabbalistic inflections and meditative practices, Buber's choice fell upon the term *Weihe* ("consecration"). While eliciting the sublime aura of religious inwardness, this term with its archaic reverberations was familiar to German readers and frequently used in the poetry of German Romanticism as well as in the rhetoric of the Neue Gemeinschaft.[89] Although this distinctive term is occasionally used today by scholars of Hasidism, it is not conceptually anchored

in Judaism. Further, it belongs in its historical semantics to the lexicon of Christian faith and has distinctive ecclesiastical connotations. It is indeed difficult to find a word in German that fully captures the meaning of *kawwanah*. Yet within the context of the fin-de-siècle in which Buber's *Legende* is situated, the semantic resonances of the term *Weihe* raise questions regarding its appropriateness to capture the conceptual and phenomenological nuance of *kawwanah* in Hasidism.[90] As a general observation it may be noted that Buber's poetic composition occasionally displays distinctively Christian inflections, such as *Becher der Gnade* ("goblet of grace") and *Sohn Gottes* ("son of God").

Buber defines purity and consecration of the soul as constitutive of man's relation to God. In Simmel's definition of the religious category as a spiritual way to live and to experience, *Weihe* is a characteristic subjective feature of the existential mood that generates an objectified form (*Objektivation*): "The important point here is that the religious hue does not emanate from a transcendent power that is believed to exist, but is a particular quality of feeling itself, a focus or impetus, a solemnity (*Weihe*) or sense of remorse that is in itself religious."[91] For Buber, consecration denotes the special aura of total dedication of the self that is required for the religious act: "At times it [*hitlahavut*] expresses itself in an action, which it consecrates and fills with holy meaning" (L 5/F 21). But consecration can also describe a passive spiritual condition: "The man of ecstasy [*der Inbrünstige*] rules life, and no external happening that penetrates into his realm can disturb his consecration [*Weihe*]" (L 5/F 20).[92] Apparently Buber refers here to the preparatory state necessary to achieve mystical ecstasy. But the term *Weihe* is also misleading because it denotes in its ecclesiastical use a ritual modus operandi. The act of spiritual concentration is in Hasidic rites referred to as an act of self-sanctification. One sanctifies and purifies oneself (*leqadesh we-letaher 'et 'aEsmo*).[93] This principle constitutes a contemplative exercise whereby one brings down upon oneself holiness, empowering one to perform a religious act with due spiritual concentration.[94] While the term "consecration" does capture this feature of Hasidic practice, it hardly covers its full range of meaning, for as R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (d. 1788) warned, in contrast to the Zaddik the ordinary person cannot achieve the requisite spiritual focus solely on one's own.[95] Nor does the term adequately convey the transformative power of the contemplative process to render the self a mystical naught (*'ayin we-'efes*).

Buber's absolute spiritualization of worship often compels him to resort to apodictic assertions, such as "it is not the matter [*Materie*] of the action, but only its consecration [*Weihung*] that is decisive" (L 27/F 37). The

mystical discipline of contemplation, which entails a heightened level of mental concentration, is transformed by Buber into an unspecified act of consecration. In this, Buber attributes exclusive importance to the power of the devotional attitude by which the deed turns into a sacramental act—one that can awaken, release, or redeem the sacred essence in things.[96] For to redeem is to renew: "Through him [who does everything in holiness] the fallen sparks are raised and the fallen worlds redeemed" (L 27/F 38).

The term *Weihe* was already appropriated by the German Romantics in their rediscovery of the Greek mystery cult.[97] However, the religious use and semantic meaning of the term was established in German translations of the Bible. The biblical *locus classicus* for the use of the term "consecration" (as dedication to holiness) is Exodus 28–29, the account of the induction of Aaron and his sons into the office of priesthood. The initiation ritual opens with the grammatically difficult formula לקדש אותם לכהן לי (Exod. 29:1), translated, for instance, by standard Catholic Bible translations and by Luther as "to consecrate [*weihen*] them," or by Zunz "to sanctify [*heiligen*] them" for priesthood.[98] In the standard German Bible translations we find both "consecration" and "sanctification" used for the Hebrew stem *q-d-sh* ("to sanctify," "to make holy").[99] However, the most significant technical term in this chapter is derived from the *pi'el* of the Hebrew root *m-l-a* ("to fill"). In relation to this term we find *Weihe* applied to symbolic acts of initiation, such as the "filling of the hands" (*mile'at 'et yadam*), which marks the receiving of priesthood and the obligation to ritual purity, and the offering of the *milu'im*, the ram of initiation.[100]

In contrast to these German translations, the central concept in the Hebrew Bible is not one of consecration but rather one of holiness. In Exodus 28–29 holiness is not a mental act but a status achieved through the performance of a prescribed ritual. In biblical monotheism, as the founder of German Neo-Orthodoxy, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, emphasized, nothing is made holy such that holiness can be concentrated in it, separating it from the profane, but everything shall strive to become holy.[101] Sanctification of one's whole being is an imperative deduced from the holiness of God (Lev. 19:2). The performance of the commandments as God's will sanctifies Israel. Thus German-Jewish Bible translators of the nineteenth century either tend to avoid the term *Weihe* or—as in the case of Zunz—apply it only in those instances where it cannot be confused with the biblical concept of holiness.[102]

Through his use of the term *Weihe* Buber implicitly narrows his phenomenology of Hasidic devotional practices to those acts which promote spiritual ascent only. The state of expanded spiritual consciousness (*gadlut*), in which divinity is brought into the physical realm, is presented by Buber as

the norm of the mystical experience. He, in fact, exclusively emphasizes the upward movement of the soul. His description of the four Hasidic values conveys no insight into the dialectic between ascent and descent and lacks any hint of the inevitable disruption of the blissful state of mystical communion, the 'falling down' to the state of restricted spiritual consciousness (*qatnut*). These aspects are in Hasidism related to the prime task of an uninterrupted cleaving to God. Yet the Baal Shem Tov maintained that *kawwanah*, paving as it does the path to *gadlut*, is not always possible to sustain. Ordinary men can attain this state of consciousness only by attaching themselves to the Zaddik.[103] According to the Baal Shem Tov, one should read the prayers from the prayer book in the state of *qatnut* as a preparatory means to return to the higher spiritual state.[104] This technique was also applied in early Hasidism to storytelling.[105] Buber interprets the act of storytelling in Hasidism as "the consecration of a holy deed,"[106] a description that obscures not only the dialectic thrust of this act but also its potentially theurgic power.[107]

Buber's preeminent concern was, however, to mediate the attitude of devotional purity and sanctity that characterizes Hasidic spirituality. Yet the term "consecration" does not help the reader to understand correctly this feature of spiritual worship in Hasidism. Consecration should not be confused with sanctification, with the mystical meditation required for prayer, or with the performance of a religious act. In normative Judaism, including Hasidism, the concept of holiness is bound to the observance of the commandments, prayer, and the study of the Torah.

Indeed, Hasidism demanded a direct contact with God in all one's actions ("In all your ways acknowledge Him," Prov. 3:6). For R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech and his followers this meant above all the development of one's ability to relate through contemplation to the divine vitality that inheres in all things,[108] and even to activate it by an "intense mystical effort."[109] The mystical effort also has magical powers, generally referred to in Hasidic literature by the metaphor "drawing power" (L 35/F 44).[110] Alan Brill has recently argued that for R. Moshe Hayyim Efraim of Sudylkow *hiyyut* is not only a universal life force directed from below to the world above; the Zaddik is also a vessel for the divine influx and transfers the divine energy descending into the physical world to objects, channeling and increasing it, and finally himself drawing vitality from it.[111] Buber does note the significance of Proverbs 3:6 for the spiritual fabric and rhythm of Hasidic spirituality, which he refers to by way of paraphrase, "God wills that one serve Him in all ways." Buber interprets this verse to mean that "each motion [*Bewegung*] of the humble soul is a vessel of consecration and power" (L 12/F 25; cf. L 13/F 26). But this rendering, proffered by his own metaphor, fails to convey the divine

origin of the individual's power to sanctify the profane, a fact underscored by the Baal Shem Tov, for "every motion and thought is from God."[112]

The concepts of *kawwanah, hiyyut, devequt* and the spiritual processes they bring about are conflated in Buber's use of the term *Weihe*, and hence their highly differentiated nature is lost to the reader. As a consequence the theurgic aspect of Hasidic spirituality remains obscure. Moshe Idel regards the power by which the Zaddik brings down the divine illumination from the upper worlds as an indication of the synthesis of mysticism and magic in Hasidism.[113] Buber includes the image of drawing power but neutralizes its magical associations by use of the term "consecration." Thus he diverts attention from the theurgical quality that has been ascribed to *kawwanah* in Hasidic worship.[114] In his attempt to distance Hasidism from the stigma of magic, Buber claims in his interpretive commentary to the Hasidic teachings he cites that releasing the sparks is not to be achieved through theurgical formulae or magic (L 27/F 37). Although he concedes that *kawwanah* has the theurgical power to effect unity, he is careful not to refer to the Zaddik's capacity for "drawing power" in his interpretation of *kawwanah* (where he would be obliged to emphasize its magical aspect). Rather he relegates it to his description of the ethical-religious value of *shiflut* (L 35/F 44). For Buber, "drawing power" is to be understood as a bringing down the divine effluence in order to channel it not into the world but into the soul of the God-seeker. Only one who "rests in himself as in the nothing" can become a vessel of the divine influx. Buber's use of the term "consecration" elides the fact that it is God's will which dictates the mystical path. As Rachel Elior observes, Hasidism sees one's task to be "the realization of the will of God to be manifest in perfection,"[115] that is, to reveal the divine substance in everything in this world. In heeding this task, one is granted the opportunity for ever-renewed contact with the divine.

In his dialogical period, Buber became increasingly alert to the need to differentiate both Hasidic mystical experience and the function of the Zaddik from magical practices: "The consecration of the everyday stands beyond all magic."[116] In light of this phenomenological distinction, the act of *yihud* as a process of meeting the divine is not identical with the circular causality of the magical act in which man is both the initiator and end.[117] For Hasidism, the object of performing *yihudim* is God.[118] The sacred form of existence is divine service and not the exertion of power over the holy power inherent in all things.[119] Buber links consecration with *kawwanah* and the idea of redemption so as to call to attention the "cosmic-meta-cosmic power of responsibility of the human being,"[120] also referred to as "the eternal redemptive power of man's intention."[121] He stresses the paradoxical nature

of redemption, claiming that every individual can have an effect on redemption, but no one could bring it about alone (L 25/F 35).[122]

Intrinsic to Buber's approach is a marked tendency to essentialism. This is evident in his representation of the concept of mystical unification as the objective of *kawwanah*. In describing *yihudim* he omits the erotic inflections of mystical love and the terminology and imagery of the language of lovers—the Bride and Bridegroom drawn from the Song of Songs that resonated with the Jewish mystical imagination. Buber's account of the mystical path leading to the state of "suspension of ecstasy" is strikingly de-eroticized. Metaphors of erotic content would conflict with the ideal of a pure spiritual love which Buber hopes to convey. The 'kiss of God' signifying the mystical communion is but one of the symbols which is unnoted in Buber's account. His interpretation is focused on the imagery associated with the semantic field of *hitlahavut* (altar / great glow / fiery sword / fire / flame / sacrifice) rather than that associated with mystical illumination (channels / fount / spring / river / water), which are given to the symbolism of sexual union. We thus find no reference in Buber's presentation to a central concept in kabbalistic theosophy, namely that *yihud* requires the unification of the male (*Tif'eret*) and female (the Shekhinah, also referred to as *Malkhut*) within the mystical shape of God.[123] According to the Kabbalah and the Baal Shem Tov, unification can be effected not only by prayer but also through physical unification in the world below. The important concept that God takes "delight" (*ta'anug*) in the sexual deeds of human beings is only alluded to in the phrase "holy enjoyment" (L 30/F 40).

Buber stresses that mystical intention contains the twofold dialectical nature of the mystical experience, which corresponds to two different psychological realities. One mode is passive reception (*Verinnerung des Außen,* "internalization of the outer") and the other is active giving of oneself (*Veräusserung des Innen,* "externalization of the inner"). "Thus the *will* of the Hasidic teaching of *kawwanah* is twofold: that enjoyment, the internalizing of that which is without, should take place in holiness and that creation, the externalizing of that which is within, should take place in holiness" (L 30/F 40, my emphasis). In commenting on this dialectic, Buber amplifies the meaning of redemption: "Not only to wait, not only to watch expectantly: man can work toward the redemption of the world. Just that is *kawwanah*: the mystery of the soul that is directed to redeem the world" (L 25/F 35). In this context Buber suggests a vague phenomenological affinity between *kawwanah* and magic, when in a footnote he characterizes the focusing of the soul as the "magical tension of the soul directed towards a goal" (L 63/not in F). In his prewar Zionist writings, where the term is

occasionally used to accentuate the self-sacrificial ethos of the pioneer (*halutz*), Buber describes *Weihe* as "the intention on the divine."[124]

Kawwanah thus entails both passivity and activity, receiving and giving. In this interaction it also reflects a central ideal of the aforemention quasi-mystical, Neo-Romantic group headed by Julius and Heinrich Hart, known as the Neue Gemeinschaft, of which Buber was a member.[125] Releasing the sparks posits the "*kawwanah* of reception" as opposed to the "*kawwanah* of giving." It is the former that "binds worlds to one another" (L 28/F 39), while in relation to the latter Buber wrote: "He who knows the secret melody that bears the inner into the outer . . . he is full of the power of God" and creates anew (L 29/F 39). Melody, rhythm, and motion are dynamic aspects of lived experience. Buber asserts that the intentionality required for *kawwanah* "is not will" (L 22/F 33). Perfect *kawwanah* is generated by emotional intentionality. Although *kawwanah* certainly demands a personal decision based on free will, it is not to be confused with the will as acceptance of the commandments. Hasidism, as the parable discussed in chapter 7 illustrates, does not demand a (non-rational) "leap of faith" into ultimate reality. "No leap from the everyday into the miraculous is required" (L 27/F 37), as Buber somewhat apodictically asserts.

A fleeting mention of a key phrase of Kierkegaard serves Buber to point out the implications of their respective arguments for religious aesthetics. But let us first establish some affinities between the two thinkers. Both are poets of religious faith with a more or less pronounced anti-historicist orientation and rejection of historical thinking in favor of the spiritual power, even when suffused in the collective memory with myth, of a religious figure, event, or phenomenon. Both shared a concern for renewal, selfhood, the single individual, and both contributed to modernism in their aesthetic representation of religious faith and experience. With respect to aesthetics both thinkers elucidate "movement" and "motion" as central features of lived experience. In his *Fear and Trembling* Kierkegaard maintains that the "movement of faith," which he situates contra Hegel in the dialectic of life rather than of reason, "must constantly be made by virtue of the absurd."[126] Truth is of a nondogmatic quality; it is essentially a movement of the human being in time. In his readiness to sacrifice his son Isaac out of loving faith and not out of love or fear of God alone, according to Kierkegaard, Abraham transcended the "infinite movement of resignation"[127] and thereby fulfilled the condition for attaining the "eternal consciousness" of one's love for God. In attesting to religious belief in the face of the absurd, Abraham reached the highest level of faith; he became a "knight of faith." Faith so conceived epitomizes the fundamental "paradox of existence." In placing such an ethical/existential

paradox at the core of faith, one's relationship to God is considered of greater import than one's relationship to the community.

Here Buber parts with Kierkegaard. The spiritual ethos of Hasidism, as Buber attempts to demonstrate, does not support the notion of the absurd and the irreconcilable juxtaposition of faith and the ethical which results from it. Though Buber likewise presents faith through Hasidism as a continual renewal of the individual's subjective relationship to God, faith is not a result of a contradiction between the infinite passion of inwardness and the objective uncertainty. Rather, faith is governed by relational attitudes. Similar to Kierkegaard in his critique of Hegel's dialectic, for Buber neither the aesthetic and ethical are sublated in the highest level of religiosity (or the "religious stage" for Kierkegaard); rather, they are annulled *and* preserved, that is, transformed in a synthesis.

Kierkegaard's conception of the single individual posits the relationship between man and God as an absolute that manifests itself through a teleological suspension of the ethical (which is concomitantly as suspension of the communal). The Hasidic master, by contrast, has an immediate yet not an absolute relationship to God. Kierkegaard's religious aesthetics of the tragic singles out and absolutizes the momentous existential "leap of faith." This radical existentialist interpretation of faith negates objective comprehension of God and mediation of God's will. Thus it undermines the role of religious instruction and education. Kierkegaard's paradoxical one-time act of faith stands in stark contrast to Hasidism's understanding of faith as a fundamental life orientation that is rhythmically structured in patterns of devotion. As noted, for the Hasid sacrifice is inverted into spiritual self-sacrifice.

Similarly, as a devotional posture of directing one's senses and actions to God, *kawwanah* illustrates that Jewish spirituality is of a different phenomenological fabric than a theocentric faith that is built on risk and confronts the individual with "tests" or "tasks." The ecstatic mystic is the one who paradoxically "rules life" by virtue of redemptive consecration (L 5/F 20):

> It is not the substance of the action that is decisive, only its consecration [*Weihung*]. Just that which you do in the uniformity of recurrence [*Gleichmass der Wiederkehr*] or in the disposition [*Fügung*] of events, just this answer of the acting person to the manifold demands of the hour, an answer acquired through practice or gained through inspiration, just this continuity of the living stream is redemptive when performed in consecration [*Weihe*]. (L 27/F 37–88)

Consecration means here the manner in which deeds are carried out, as Buber elaborates elsewhere; it is the "power of decision" that expresses itself in action and the underlying "consecration of intention."[128] The phrase "the uniformity of recurrence" is an oblique reference to Nietzsche's interpretation of time, based on his adaptation of Heraclitus' doctrine of "the eternal recurrence of the same."[129] Its use in this context is another indication of Buber's attempt to modify Nietzsche's critique of modernity. Buber understood this doctrine not as a cosmological theory, nor as an extreme expression of nihilism, but as an effort to formulate an alternative to the ascetic ideal through a radical affirmation of the meaning of each and every lived moment. One of the messages that Buber intended to draw from Hasidism was that every moment in time contains eternity.[130] While a few years earlier the seventeen year old Buber read Nietzsche's doctrine of the "eternal recurrence" in decidedly non-ascetic terms "as an interpretation of *time*," praising it as "the utterance of an ecstatically lived-through possibility of thought played over with ever new variations,"[131] his gradual liberation from the spell of Nietzsche led him to complement the 'Dionysian pathos' by conjoining it with a religious metaphysical-cum-ontological perspective. Such a perspective implies—and here he is in line with Simmel's reading of this Nietzschean doctrine—moral responsibility. "Redemptive consecration" goes beyond an affirmation of "the recurrence of the same," which Nietzsche uncompromisingly demanded and "which Zarathustra loves as *fatum*."[132] Zarathustra's affirmation of becoming, Buber now observed, was a unilateral mode of active becoming which denied its negation and opposite: passive becoming. When transvaluation of values is understood as a conversion to the higher mode of existence by overcoming of the lower, as in Nietzsche's thought, then there is no horizon for unity. As a consequence, the life-sustaining dynamics of a divine *coincidentia oppositorum* is rendered null and void. Hence, Buber counters Nietzsche's transvaluation as a conversion with a dialectical perspective: "For creating means being created. . . . And to be created is ecstasy" (L 30/F 40). His early fascination with Zarathustra and his "most abysmal teaching," which celebrates a circular eternity acknowledging no end or beginning, was soon understood by Buber as a major challenge to Judaism and one of its fundamental paradoxes, namely, the teaching according to which human existence is bound to time, yet lives in eternity.[133] To be sure, Nietzsche and Buber both profess a non-Hegelian dialectic—their respective conceptualizations of the dialectical process do not develop towards a teleological resolution. It could not have escaped Buber's attention that in his *Erlebnis und Dichtung* Dilthey likewise addresses the relationship between time and experience from an anti-historicist perspective, questioning

the experienceability of the present when conceived, as it is in historicism, as but a cross-section between past and future. In order to overcome the discontinuities characteristic of the historicist representation of time, one must draw lived experience into a continuum, specifically of meaning. By recognizing the "being-ful-filled with reality" as the constant factor in the "continuous stream which we call time,"[134] we affirm life in the present or the presentness of life. In his approach to representation of lived experience Buber certainly shared Dilthey's intention to ensure the "dynamic unity" of time and experience. Following Dilthey's emphasis on the qualitative, that is, affective aspect of lived experience, Buber resists the view that, once absorbed into memory, lived experience can only be represented as a fact of the past. On the contrary; in his opinion, it is determined by the present. Once elapsed into past, lived experience can, as Dilthey claimed, still be "experienced as a force reaching into the present."[135]

Rather than the artist's "will to power," Hasidism intends in Buber's reading a "will to redemption." The Hasidic vision of redemption as processes in the soul blends mystical pantheism (pointing to affirmation) with the idea of metempsychosis (pointing to negation, punishment). The mystical theory of the wandering of the souls describes for Buber a cathartic process of renewal in which the soul strives to return to the primal soul as the source of oneness. Likewise, the meaning of recurrence lies in the possibility and cathartic aspect of individual perfection qua redemption (L 31/F 41).[136] The souls caught in the process of transmigration are the "wanderers [*Irrfahrer*] of eternity" (L 25/F 36). They realize, contra Nietzsche, eternity in time. The attitude of consecration becomes the precondition for the lifting of the divine sparks for the redemption of the imprisoned souls (L 24/F 37). Through his reading of *kawwanah* Buber joins the active mode of consciousness to human passivity engendered by *hitlahavut* and, in doing so, courts a contradiction to be resolved in his exploration of the inner structure of the value *shiflut*/humility.

Moreover, the cyclical nature of transmigration breaks through Judaism's linear and eschatological conception of time. In contrast to the Greek cyclical view of history, this implies a suspension neither of the goal nor of human effort and responsibility. The goal, to be sure, is in Hasidism and for Buber not historical or teleological but soteriological, that is, the salvation of individual souls. The warrant for hope for the future lies in the spiritual process itself—Simmel's "life stream of becoming"—and in the goal of that process: redemption. "But there are no goals," Buber writes, "only *the* goal" (L 22/F 33, my emphasis). This view, which presents redemption as the goal of spiritual history, reconciles the linear and the cyclical conception of time.

This view, which presents redemption as the goal of spiritual history, reconciles the linear and the cyclical conceptions of time. Like to creation, redemption is conceived not as a one-time historical event but as an eternal process. The recurrence of events undermines temporality. Bracketed as it is by a definite beginning and end, earlier and later as the conceptual cornerstones of historical time, temporality *eo ipso* vitiates the singularity of those very events. As an intellectual construct, Simmel observes, history legislates, as it were, structure and meaning to events and their human agents that are inherently singular. "Consider the subject matter of history," he counsels, "the ephemeral event as such, the purely objective and atemporal significance of experience, and the subjective consciousness of human agents. . . . The science of history imposes forms upon its raw material. These forms are the consequence of the intrinsic requirements of history; they are peculiar to the province of history as a science."[137]

The Austrian dramatist and critic Hermann Bahr (1863–1934), whom Buber discussed alongside Peter Altenberg, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Arthur Schnitzler in his first published article, written in Polish, regarded the "knowledge of the eternal becoming and disappearance of all things in ceaseless flight and insight into the connectedness of all things" as the "peculiar character of modernity."[138] As a leading thinker of the Young Vienna and author of *Studien zur Kritik der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1894), Bahr established modernism as a literary term. Buber certainly shared the interest of the Austrian avant-garde in literary and artistic modernism and in its representation of the discontinuous experience of time. For Buber, the event or the "concrete deed" is determined not so much by a point in time but by the spiritualization of continuity, that is, by the metahistorical affirmation of the momentous event and the individual uniqueness through which the moment is completed. Hence, the Hasidic path challenges a consciousness structured by the conception of historical time. Further, by redefining exile and redemption, Beshtian Hasidism inverts key ideas of the traditional Jewish view of history, in particular exile and redemption. With its emphasis on spiritual-devotional practice, it also liberates the individual's psychic energies from an all-absorbing focus on memory and hope. In Hasidic thought the life of the individual evolves along the recurrent trajectory of creation and redemption, marking a continuous process of spiritual renewal.

Shiflut—On Relation

The last of the four qualities that Buber considers fundamental to Hasidism is *shiflut,* which can only vaguely be translated as humility or *Demut* in German.

Shiflut marks in Buber's account the transition from religious aesthetics to religious ethics. By concluding his description of Hasidic spirituality with this quality, he leads the reader to encounter religiosity as the synthesis of the aesthetic and the ethical elements of Jewish faith. It is important to note that religiosity is here not preservation but rather the dialectical principle of religious renewal. What transpires is that Buber's conception of synthesis does not correspond to the Hegelian dialectic. His envisioned dialectic does not entail a sublation but a Nietzschean "new beginning" that revitalizes the inherited aesthetic and ethical faith structures.[139] The Hasidic masters regard *shiflut* as the quality which includes all other qualities. It is considered the existential presupposition of the religious-ethical task to be assumed by Jews; without pure humility, cleaving to God is held to be impossible. In the theoretical literature of Hasidism *shiflut* is related to the doctrine of *bittul ha-yesh* (annihilation of the self) and to *hishtawwut* (equanimity, the indifference of the soul to praise or blame). Hasidism considers *shiflut* both as a means for the ecstatic experience and as a supreme religious value. The one who lowers himself (*ha-mashpil 'et 'atsmo*) diminishes his value (*pehitut 'arkho*) to the point where he totally ceases to think of himself and transcends his own being to become a vessel for the divine vitality. S*hiflut* in the sense of self-deflation (*shiflut ha-ruah*) is thus an intense mental exercise and a precondition of all other spiritual values.

Hasidism associates the mystical term *shiflut* with the biblical term *'anawah* and occasionally uses both as synonyms. However, *'anawah*, as the common Hebrew term for humility, is in the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature understood in ethical terms. The medieval Kabbalists likewise use the term *'anawah,* which they associate with *Keter* (Crown), the first emanation in the system of the *Sefirot* or divine potencies. In contrast to the concept of *shiflut*, *'anawah* is not associated with the mental exercise of the Zaddik whereby one thinks of oneself as nonexistent in order to approach the incomprehensible naught of God. In Hasidism, one attains the attribute of *'anawah* through the practice of *shiflut* (lowliness), to whose understanding Buber wishes to direct the reader. "At the goal of *shiflut*," explains R. Pinhas of Korets, one resembles the mystical nothingness."[140] The Zaddik must constantly acknowledge his deficiencies, eschew excessive pride, and continually question whether he is worthy of approaching God.[141] Without true humility, the Zaddik has no "drawing power." Whereas humility represents in Hasidic thought the "outward manifestation of the process of transforming the self to the *'aiyn,*"[142] pride and awareness of selfhood impede the flow of *hiyyut*, the divine vitality, into the world of emanation and the soul of the Zaddik. Representing mainstream early Hasidic thought, R. Dov Baer

of Mezhirech contends that the repudiation of selfhood is a necessary condition of humility.[143] Clearly the term *shiflut* denotes in Hasidism a more demanding attitude than the biblical notion of humility.

In the modern period Jewish thinkers tended to present humility as a virtue central to ethical monotheism and Jewish self-understanding. For Nietzsche, whose impact on spiritual Zionists has been often noted, however, humility was among the corrupting moral ideals of Judeo-Christian culture. Nietzsche established a direct nexus between the origins of a given morality and the attitude it fosters. The morality of humility, he reasoned in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), was the result of a "slave revolt in morality," in which the downtrodden and disinherited managed out of resentment of their masters to turn poverty, humility, and meekness into virtues in order to exalt their own low place in society. In cultivating submissiveness and self-abnegation, the morality of the unprivileged runs contrary to the aristocratism of Aristotelian ethics, which considers humility a vice. From the perspective of Nietzsche's masculine heroism, humility is tantamount to weakness; it undermines a positive affirmation of the self. As a consequence, humility as a relic of the hegemony of religion renders artistic passion impossible. Nietzsche propounded his vision of the creative genius as the superman of modernity against such self-deflating attitudes and cultural dispositions. His transvaluation of values from morality to art "as the true metaphysical activity of man" (*Birth of Tragedy*, section 6) was a consequence of his contempt for the German bourgeois culture and its rote Christian pieties. Evidently, Nietzsche's radicalism was too undialectical and relativistic for Buber and at variance with his vision of personality.[144] Parenthetically, Buber's valorization of humility was also at odds with Hermann Cohen's rejection of humility (*Demut*) as a religious value. In his *Ethik des reinen Willens* (Ethics of pure will), published in 1904, Cohen associated humility with self-abasement. Consequently, he deemed humility in fundamental conflict with the ethos of scientific thought and—since he defined the task of ethics to justify science as ethical work—such considerations were of far-reaching conceptual implications. It was Cohen's firm conviction that ethics needs irony, in particular self-irony. Modesty shared the self-critical posture expressed through irony. Hence Cohen preferred modesty (*Bescheidenheit*) to humility for the ethical life.[145] "Modesty," he adjudged, "is the guide toward genuine ethical self-consciousness."[146]

The Hasidic conception of humility, even when rendered as *shiflut*, encouraged Buber to map an approach to culture where body and soul, the community and the individual would interact in light of the ideal. Therefore Buber begins his interpretation of *shiflut* by linking it to the concept of the

uniqueness (*Einzigkeit*) of every individual, which in turn allows him to provide it with the desired metaphysical foundation. Here he cites a popular teaching of R. Nahman of Bratzlav: "God never does the same thing twice" (L 31/F 41).[147] Buber interprets R. Nahman's teaching as an exemplum for the process of spiritual perfection which originates in the divine essence of each soul:

> That which exists is unique and happens but once. New and without a past, it emerges from the flood of returnings, takes place, and plunges back into it unrepeatable. . . . Uniqueness is the essential good of man that is given to him to unfold. . . . For pure uniqueness and pure perfection are one, and he who has become so entirely individual that *no otherness any longer has power over him* or place in him has completed the journey and is redeemed and rests in God. (L 31/F 41, my emphasis)

R. Nahman understands the cultivation of the divinity of one's soul as a supreme creaturely responsibility; that is to say, each individual must acquire knowledge of the Torah according to one's intellectual capacity.[148] Individual uniqueness as the development of one's unique vocation and creativity is portrayed by Buber as the avenue to redemption. He is explicit about this nexus in his Zionist writings: "Creativity has long been denied [the Jew] and has even today not yet been bestowed upon him its ultimate secrets—self-release, self-expression, self-redemption."[149] Aesthetic individuation is the premise for the completion of personal existence.[150] The ideal and hope of attaining unity cannot be fully realized without a religious or rather mystical understanding of the concept of uniqueness. In allusion to the philosophical doctrines of Heraclitus and Hegel, Buber presents individuation as an integral aspect of the world's becoming which constitutes the ontological basis of individuality. Even though the soul is of metaphysical substance and therefore undifferentiated, just as an unrefracted beam of light is without color, it still has, Buber explains, an existence of its own (*Eigendasein*). "The colors of the world do not blend with one another, rather each soul stands before him [God] in the majesty of its particular existence" (L 36/F 45).

But Buber's Hasidism-as-pantheism poses a major threat to the idea of separate existence and undermines the modern value of individuality. From Simmel's sociological point of view with special attention to the conditions for personality, pantheism removes the "separateness and the independence of things."[151] Simmel rejected the formlessness of pantheism. Pantheism promotes a conception of unity (an *All-Einheit*) that negates all differentiation of being; nature is identical with God. This "identity of essence"

(*Wesensidentität)*, of course, would render culture in its interaction with society impossible. Buber is challenged to bring the pantheistic conception of unity into accord with the notion of individual uniqueness and community in Hasidism. He does so in two steps, following Simmel's form/content dichotomy. First, he notes Hasidism revalorizes the direct relationship to God as the axis of religious life, which corresponds to Simmel's category of content. Second, he shows how this relationship gains expression in man's social life and thus brings it into accord with Simmel's category of form. Through social interaction the religious content achieves social reality.

Similarly to Simmel, Buber conceives of unity as reciprocal interaction, though his rhetoric of *Allheit* (totality, or metaphysical unity) appears to undermine the structure of interaction in favor of a monism. Buber seeks to bring his conception of Hasidic pantheism into accord with the notion of interaction. Interaction as interdependency requires a relational end outside of the self and not just an essence in things. Therefore he hastens to complement the monolateral pantheistic principle "God is everything" with the aspect of reciprocality, "everything serves God" (L 10/not in F). But this complementary phrase at most mitigates the immanentism. Hasidism, as Buber acknowledges, supports a panentheism rather than a strict pantheistic identity. God includes the world without being identical with the world (which is a necessary condition for free will). This conceptual nuance becomes manifest in the centrality of the value of uniqueness, to which we will attend below. God as the unity of being is the bearer of this unity, the focal point, *coincidentia oppositorum*, or, to use Simmel's metaphor, "field of energy" in and through which all exchange of energy takes place.

Being part of the whole and totality is, as Buber suggests, not automatically in conflict with the need for individuated, autonomous existence, necessary for the ontological necessity of being a self-actualizing "Single One" (L 33/F 42). The idea of a comprehensive interdependence or dynamic interconnectedness is an aspect of Buber's cosmopolitan perspective, but it is also a reference to what Simmel called "the fallacy of separateness." In contrast to Schopenhauer, whose conception of the *principium individuationis* dominated religious as well as philosophical epistemologies at the fin-de-siècle, Buber neither conceives of individuation solely as a negative process nor equates individuation with alienation. As read through Hasidism, individuation and differentiation are part of the dynamic process of being and creation/creativity and thus a presupposition for culture. Individuation engenders the conditions for human uniqueness and perfection. It is the task of each human being to "unfold" one's potential in order "to become entirely individual" (L 31–32/F 41). The realization of the metaphysical source of individuality

attests to diversity and plurality as the goal of creation. The mystic's awareness of the incompleteness of existence alerts him to the moral responsibility of developing his individuality, which, in turn, becomes the stimulus for the task of unification (*Einung*).[152] This notion Buber derived from Jacob Boehme's panentheistic view of divine creation as unfolding through the individuation of being. He illustrates the creative scope of individual uniqueness by highlighting the distinctive contribution to the Hasidic way of life made by some of the movement's outstanding personalities.

The demanding exercise of self-criticism, which *shiflut* requires for the perfection in Hasidism, is, however, not indicated in Buber's rendering. He also minimizes the tension between passivity (*shiflut*) and activity (*'anawah*), and presents *shiflut* primarily as an ethical-religious virtue to be realized in the social realm; uniqueness "proves itself in life with others" (L 32/F 42). While this reading overlooks the attitude of the Zaddikim towards the social sphere as the lowest level of mystical activity, it is in accord with Simmel's interpretation of religion as a social realm that ideally constrains competition, minimizing the clash of interests and egocentric ambitions.[153] As a cooperative social framework religion is conducive to perfection as well as to the development and expression of personal uniqueness. Further, individuation as differentiation can be accomplished through a being-with-one-another; body (community) and soul (the individual) complement one another. Religious life absorbs and adapts the forms of social existence to render them compatible with the basic categories of the soul. Evading any association with a rational foundation of religious ethics, Buber presents the Hasidic ethic of humility not as a virtue by which one attains happiness through the realization of ends but as an end in itself. From the various historical forms of love, his presentation is governed by love as *agape*, i.e. as true altruism. For only by humbling oneself is one in the position to help others. "Aid is an artery of existence" (L 43/F 48). Given the modernist rejection of normative ethics, Buber maintains that humility results from spontaneous emotion—what he would later refer to as a "pure heart." In this view, which tends to interpret Kant's foundation of morality as an act of self-coercion under the moral law, Hasidism cultivates a humility that is utterly bereft of "coercion" or of the will yielding to duty. Appealing to a fully autonomous self, humility is not to be confused with Kant's "duties of love." Like *kawwanah*, humility is not volitional: "Humility . . . is no willed and practiced virtue. It is nothing but an inner being, feeling, and expressing" (L 35/F 44–45). Humility is presented as a religious value *sui generis*. The religious deed borne of humility is a deed without any motive other than realizing its own perfection—or, in mystical thought, the perfection of the divine essence in man.

As a spontaneous emotion humility is indivisibly related to love. Originating in one's undivided self, as Buber notes, love should be the cardinal motive for a person's deeds. He further presents love as ideally an undivided psychic power. Love is the unifying power par excellence which subjects multiplicity to its ontological unity. He illustrates this quality with a teaching attributed to the Baal Shem Tov: "This is one of the primary Hasidic teachings [*Grundworte*]: to love more" (L 40/F 47). In his single emphasis on the love of God, Buber sunders the coupling of fear and love of God as the ground of true worship in Hasidism: "That is how it is meant: Love of the living [*zu den Lebendigen*] is love of God and greater than any service" (ibid.). Yet 'fear of God,' the complementary aspect of religious love, is held by the Baal Shem Tov to be the pathway to the 'love of God.'[154] Parenthetically, the numerical equivalence between *'ahavah* (love) and *'ehad* (one, unity) nourished in addition the efforts of the Hasidic masters to achieve the unity of God.

In spite of their shared attributes, ethics and religion, Buber points out in his interpretation of humility, are not identical in Hasidism. The duality-structures on which Buber's thought is predicated are not diametrical dichotomies to be overcome but rather, as Leora Batnitzky convincingly argues, are mutually dependent realities; Buber promotes an "ethical ontology" which is fully expressed only is his later philosophical writings.[155] The ethos of Hasidism is, as Buber intimates, not based upon a transitory feeling of pity (*Mitleid*, lit., "suffering with [the other]") that silences sudden negative feelings, nor is it induced by negative emotions such as remorse or commiseration with the suffering of others. Hasidism attributes no value to the feeling of pity.[156] Some Hasidic masters were concerned that pity as a reaction to pain and suffering of others might be prompted by arrogance or self-centeredness. Further, the release of negative emotions impedes a proper, i.e., ecstatic and joyful, relationship with God. Buber introduces the concept of *Mitleben* (lit., "living with the other") as a phenomenological gloss on the Hasidic conception of humility. *Mitleben* is here not an arbitrary neologism but a conceptual term indicating a kind of cognitive empathy. *Mitleben* was also used by Dilthey to denote the 'inverse operation' of understanding as a reliving through the process of psychological transposition. Thus *Mitleben* leads the contemporary reader back to the hermeneutical quest.[157] *Mitleben* as an empathic act is directed through love to interpersonal relationships and as such negates the theory of isolated existence of the self. Compassion as *Mitleben* overcomes Schopenhauer's conception of personality as 'passive character' and the guilt-driven emotions that are evoked by the common German word *Mitleiden*.[158] Buber offers a critique of a purely conceptual approach to suffering in which the fellow human being remains a solitary self.

In his essay on "Nietzsche and the Values of Life" (1900) Buber credits the revered iconoclast for an active and positive social ethics, and for having replaced a "thin and lame [*lendenlahmen*] altruism" with an "egotism of one's own personal development," transposing "*Mitleiden*" (compassion) into "*Mitfreude*" (shared joy) and into "*Mitthun*" (lit., "co-doing," i.e., co-participation, or co-creating).[159]

In contrast to his later writings on Hasidism, Buber acknowledges in *Legende* the theosophical-kabbalistic context of Hasidic teachings. He specifically alludes here to the monistic view of the Kabbalist Yizhak Luria (d. 1572) "that all souls are one" (L 45/F 49)—that is, to the idea of the *Urseele* (L 24/35), the primordial soul, and the concept of the *Urmensch* (primordial man). For Luria, all Israel constitutes—consonant with the unity of God—one spiritual organism, containing the souls of every individual Jew. This mystical bond between each member of the Congregation of Israel mandates mutual responsibility. The Baal Shem Tov interpreted this belief as a demand for a socio-religious commitment in which one should recognize the imperfection of 'the other' as one's own and strive to correct the corresponding defect in the cosmic order. Buber illustrates this concept of "the saint [who] can suffer for the sins of a man as if his own" through an anecdote of R. Zusya of Hanipoli (d. 1800), a disciple of R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech (L 37/F 45, anecdote omitted). He refers in this context to the oft-cited metaphor of the "broken heart" (*lev nishbar*), but typically offers no explanation that would assist the reader to understand the mystical connotation of this metaphor and its scriptural meaning. The Baal Shem Tov, according to R. Zusya, once scolded a Hasidic master for his self-righteous punishment of a sinner: "You have never felt the meaning of sin and you have never felt the meaning of the broken heart" (L 37/not in F). Hasidic masters were wont to speak of the spiritual condition of the "broken heart," denoting the awareness of distance created between oneself and God by wrongdoing. This feeling of remorse gained from critical self-examination induces the yearning for reconciliation, which gives an impetus to the cathartic renewal of one's relationship to God. Hasidic masters ascribe an important function to the spiritual condition of the "broken heart" in one's spiritual effort. The biblical *locus classicus* for the metaphor of the broken heart is Psalm 34:19: "God is close to the brokenhearted." This theme is recurrent and resumed in Psalm 51:19: "True sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart [*lev nishbar*]." In Psalm 147:3 the metaphor reappears; God is the one who "heals their [Israel's] broken hearts, and binds up their wounds." The metaphor of the broken heart points for Buber, paradoxically, to the ideal of service of God out of a unified heart.

Buber's commentary on humility would remain incomplete had he not elucidated how this posture, grounded as it is in love and perfection, is interconnected with another seminal moral value in biblical monotheism, namely justice. Justice, of course, entails the question of community. What Buber describes is not transcendent justice. Rather, humility as empathy with the suffering and sin of others is redeemed by justice. He considers the basis of justice to be the capacity "to feel the others like oneself and oneself in the others" (L 33) despite the awareness of one's own uniqueness. In his posthumously published *Religion of Reason* (1919) Hermann Cohen would offer a rational analogue to Buber's poetic remarks on the other. In Cohen's conception of the other as the fellow man, the other as *Mitmensch* constitutes one's existential and moral community.[160] Whereas Buber focuses on *Mitleben* as emotional empathy, Cohen conceptualizes the suffering other as the condition of the moral self. However, Hasidism did not develop an understanding of suffering as social injustice resulting from unjust social conditions. The understanding of compassion as a reflexive reaction or as a passive moralistic posture is alien to Hasidic thought. "*Mitleben* alone is justice" (L 37/F 45), for its main impulse is unconditional love. Love rather than pity generates the ethical will: "not to help out of pity, that is, out of a sharp, quick pain which one wishes to expel, but out of love, that is, out of living with the other" (L 43/F 48–49). *Mitleben*, borne by the acknowledgement of the uniqueness of every being, overcomes the separating effect of "otherness" (*Anderheit*): "Living with the other [*Mitleben*] as a form of knowing [*Erkennen*] is justice. Living with the other as a form of being is love" (L 38/F 45). These select but representative teachings are meant to present Hasidism as a constructive critique of post-Enlightenment and modern conceptions of the self.

Buber's reading of *shiflut* requires a modest reevaluation of the prevailing view that the notion of the deed, which was an overarching theme in his articles and speeches since his essay "The Jewish Renaissance" of 1901, was vacuous and "did not bear concrete personal obligation."[161] Buber avoided the ethico-theological discourse of the neo-Kantians. However, in the much overlooked text, "Das Leben der Chassidim," *shiflut* and to a degree also '*avodah* do point to ways of behavior that were to be emulated by the community and entail communal responsibility grounded in free will. Even if "humility is no willed and studied virtue" and thus free of any causal considerations, Buber's presentation of Hasidism as an ethics of empathy implies a self-transcendent posture. Further, the Zaddik unites and synthesizes in his person the core values of Judaism and humanity: justice, love, and responsibility. He is "mixed with the multitude," and yet "untouchable" (meaning "without contact"), "devoted to the multitude and collected in his uniqueness" (L 45/F 49).

Mystical qualities are not primarily transposed into ethical values in Buber's rendition. They retain their metaphysical nuance in the religious psychology he seeks to convey. They furnish the spiritual ethos of the nation. The vitality inherent in these qualities provides a bridge of continuity even for secular Jews who no longer inherit Jewish identity but construct it out of elective strands of the religious tradition.

CONCLUSION

Addressed to Jews and non-Jews alike, Buber's anthologies were designed, alongside the objective of Jewish revitalization, to promote Jewry's historical role as intercultural mediator. Throughout their life in the Diaspora, Jews have encountered various cultures, were responsive to them, and selectively integrated aspects of these cultures into their own traditions. By way of these "formidable mimetic forces"[1] Jewish communities across the Diaspora operated on the basis of synthesis. Blending the universal and the particular allowed them to engage external thoughts and practices without abandoning allegiance to Judaism. The modern period with its cosmopolitan vista presented Jews with a propitious opportunity for generating, in Buber's view, a "synthesis of all syntheses." Judaism had become a cultural and intellectual tradition of universal significance. Yet it was not sufficiently presented or perceived that way. In particular, its original autochthonous religious development, out of which the paradigm of renewal of the human being was born, awaited full recognition by the general culture. It was Buber's conviction that the envisioned new and grand synthesis would inspire the spiritual formation of a new humanity, where religion—here represented in its animating force—enhances human potential, development, and individuality. This synthesis would transverse religious and cultural boundaries and conceive of diversity as inherent in unity.

Such is the content of Buber's modernism. Buber's Zionism exemplifies the transformation of a trans-territorial people into inhabitants of a cultural space the semiotic contours of which are determined by their collective memory. Zionism thus brings forth a shared (and reinhabited) cultural or semiotic space. For Buber, the Jewish semiotics of redemption (the Messiah, the fallen sparks), which is woven into the spiritual quiltwork of Hasidism, entails a variety of markers of what is absent. In Judaism the idea

of redemption cannot, regardless of the neutralization of the messianic idea, be detached from space. But transfigured into unity, it is not bound by space either. One can indeed argue that one aim of representing these signs in the context of spiritual/cultural Zionism is to restore a language of presence. This is also accomplished by showing the relevance, translatability, and adaptability of Jewish religious ideas.[2]

By refracting this message, Buber's early anthologies raise in a particularly acute manner the question of the limits of interpretation and representation; they similarly exhibit the function of the anthological genre as a form of intercultural translation and synchronic transmission. German philosophers acknowledge the ambiguities of representation by marking it with two separate and epistemologically distinct terms, *Darstellung*—to represent what is there concretely, and *Vorstellung*—to re-present imaginatively what is absent and not there concretely. But even that which is there concretely and objectified, such as a text or oral saying, also has a dimension which is absent or at least not visible, namely a lived experience that animates the inner subjective reality. German Romantics thus conceived of representation not only as an epistemological problem but also as a hermeneutical one. In order to gain knowledge of the nonempirical structures of experience, they held, one must interpret traces or signs etched in the concrete by that which is obscured from sight. Epistemologically, the semiotic traces of the absent, be it of the historical past or the experience of others in the present, are to be construed as spatial deposits of what is essentially temporal, exteriorizations of lived experience registered in the empirical world. But these semiotic articulations of the hidden world pulsating behind the external signs cannot be but fragments, discontinuous moments of a temporal process. Similar to the Romantics, Buber deemed figurative speech as best suited to represent the unrepresentable. In reconstructing and conveying the experience furnishing Hasidic religious revivalism, Buber faced a similar set of issues. He regarded the complexity of the task ahead as follows: "Whoever longs for such a renewal wants a Judaism that is once more alive with all its senses, active with all its forces, joined together as a holy community."[3] Hasidic literature, as mediated by Buber, processes lived experience primarily through imagination, which encourages spontaneous and creative expression. Due to the reliance of poetic representation on "associating, remembering, and compounding," the rules of synthesis are at work.[4] Hence poetic representation is an important pillar in Buber's attempt to forge the synthesis of all syntheses that would sustain a meaningful modernity and accomplish "a fusion of fundamental religious consciousness with the unaffectedness and fullness of natural life."[5] As an element of this practice he

synthesizes representation as *Darstellung* in the sense of reproduction with representation as *Vorstellung* in the sense of contemporalization.

Buber's primary hermeneutical concern was neither epistemological (as was the case of the early Romantics) nor historical (as it was for the later Romantics) but ontological. Whereas the early Romantics (e.g., the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, and Schleiermacher) sought to apprehend the truth of a text, albeit as necessarily reconfigured through the interpretative act, later Romantics, among them Dilthey, endeavored to reconstruct the experiential context of past events as recorded in documents and other forms of expression. While Buber drew elements from both of these hermeneutical schools, he nonetheless set for himself a different objective. His representation of Hasidic legends and teachings was so construed as to prompt the readers to imaginatively and emotionally identify with the experiences of the Hasidic masters and their ecstatic apprehension of the ultimate meaning of life. To facilitate this process he employed an aesthetic technique that anticipated features of Expressionism. Similar to the painters who first employed the term to characterize their desire to avoid the representation of external reality and, instead, project their inner experience, their literary counterpart attended to imagery, figural speech, and rhythm (even to the point of violating the rules of punctuation and syntax) in order to evoke the perception of inner realities. Buber also employed images to reproduce pictorially the emotional cadences of ecstatic consciousness experienced by the Zaddikim during their continuous journey of ascent and descent. Movement, another key element and feature of modernity which figures prominently in Buber's text, stands for an unrestricted, liberated life; as such it is also a marker of change and affirmation of the present and future.

He did not, however, confine his attention to the Hasidic master's experiences beyond time. The ecstatic returns to the quotidian precincts of community, bringing with him the experience of time-beyond-time and thereby liberating his followers from the parameters of ordinary time, bound by the divisive dictates of space. Extrapolating from Simmel's sociology of forms, Buber presents the ecstatic as exemplifying the revivification of cultural forms through grounding them anew in (the revitalizing force of) lived experience. Judaism as the culture of a living people must be re-connected to the lived experience of the Jews. In other words, it is through lived experience and a national education that deracinated and secularized Jews could gain access to Judaism as an existentially compelling reality. This perhaps explains why Buber evinced greater interest in the temporal and experiential rather than the spatial aspects of Zionism and in the vision of reestablishing sovereignty over the ancestral homeland. In his redefinition of religion

through the category of religiosity Buber offers an original approach to a conception of modernism that need not be bound to a specific culture. By elucidating the spiritual fabric of Jewish existence and by concomitantly showing its cultural relevance, Buber is among the first to have shown the meaning of the religious impulse for culture and its renewal. If one were to rephrase his program of renewal in light of the ongoing debate on the role of religion, one could say "revitalization not of religion but from within religion." Hence, modernity requires a new translation of "the religious" into the cultural realm, not its obituary.

In times of increasing inner Jewish dissent and factionalism, Buber considered it a priority of cultural Zionism to help reclaim a sense of national unity.[6] By reinscribing traditional attitudes that could appeal to Zionists and non-Zionists, to the secular as well as to the religious Jew, Buber hoped to initiate a renewed "interaction between different segments of the people" towards unity.[7] The mystic path as presented in the specific hybrid work of *Legende* anticipates the transformation of consciousness required for the national Jewish project as Buber conceived it. Zionist "work in the present" first had to induce *hitlahavut*, a burning devotion and a quasi ecstatic enthusiasm, if it wanted to impel the individual towards Jewish education. It was Buber's deep conviction, against the opinion of many political Zionists, that religion could not be replaced with nationalism. Neither could a secularized messianism ensure Jewish continuity. As a construct in the service of Jewish nationalism, such a messianism could not express the inner reality of Jews. In his "four-value-ethos" Buber appealed to the messianic hope for its emotive religious power. Upon realizing that the messianic longing is the basis of Jewish continuity, Jews would naturally turn actively to service (*'avodah*). The Hasidic interpretation of *'avodah* could thus be adapted to the cultural politics. "Every movement and deed" is legitimate for cultural work when it is fulfilled with the right intention (*kawannah*). This intention must be directed both to participation in the redemption of the world and that of the self, including national (self-) liberation through new creative deeds. However, Buber avoided linking the religious notion of redemption to a physical return to Palestine. In his view, redemption meant above all to overcome the mentality of exile; here Hasidism served Buber as a paradigm for revitalization.

The reading practice he hoped to engender through his Hasidic anthology and its hermeneutical principles is a vital aspect of his vision of Jewish renewal. By engaging the reader emotively in the text, he hoped to occasion a "reciprocal interaction" between the lived experience behind the Hasidic teachings, which cannot be fully grasped, and the lived experience of the

reader. In Buber's experimental approach to reading, the reader's interaction with the otherness of Hasidism may pave the way to new avenues of self-understanding. Here, the interplay between imagination and interpretation is central to Buber's aesthetics of renewal. Therefore, the text he created is an intertextual weave of random scriptural citations with phrases from the classic texts of Judaism as they are cited by the Hasidic masters wedded to their own commentary. In order to mediate diverse expressions of lived experience as a unified discourse Buber created out of fragments of Hasidic tradition an accessible text that he construed in a non-linear fashion, without a necessary narratival beginning or end. This procedure takes into consideration that what remains in the cultural memory of an assimilated or acculturated Jewish readership are but fragments of a lived tradition. Today we have grown accustomed to examining Judaism in an interdisciplinary manner. Buber, however, was among the first to have read a distinctive expression of Judaism through an aesthetics that offers an interdisciplinary vista as well as through general hermeneutic method(s) in order to sharpen an understanding of the "varieties" of Judaism.

The main thrust of this new reading practice is not the restoration of Judaism as what Moshe Halbertal has aptly called a "text-centered culture," but a reconciliation of textuality and visuality. Buber places the Hebrew Bible at the center of the renewed Jewish curriculum, but it is to be read without rabbinic mediation, i.e., the commentarial tradition (Oral Torah) of Judaism. When the forms of a religious tradition lose their efficacy and no longer resonate with the lived experience of the Jews, they must, so Buber's uncompromising judgment, be subject either to a fundamental transformation or even replacement by new cultural forms. In detaching the cultural forms of Judaism from its purported spiritual substance, Buber confronted the ambiguities that would continue to plague his thought in later years. Indeed, what is Judaism bereft of well-defined cultural forms? In one of his last essays, Simmel trenchantly criticized his disciples for their naïve attempt to liberate lived experience from cultural forms. Form and content can be separated analytically, but in practice, as part of social reality, they cannot.[8] And even more pointedly, Simmel observed, the quest for "pure immediacy" unmediated by external, objective forms of culture is a chimera**.** We do not have a record of Buber's response to this critique, but he would have undoubtedly explained his cultural anarchism to be but a transitional necessity, for at this juncture in history the exigent need is to revitalize the relationship of Jews to Judaism's core experience. The question regarding which cultural forms and contents would be most appropriate for the spiritually renewed Judaism were, for Buber, contingent upon practice alone. It

must be noted that cultural Zionism and its educational agenda assumed in Buber's vision the role of a cultural form.

Further, as one who embraced Simmel's modernism he questioned all inherited cultural forms, and here he decisively departed from Neo-Romanticism. He learned from Simmel to resist resolutely all nostalgia for an irretrievable past and to accept modern civilization, albeit critically. As a Zionist, Buber recognized that contemporary Jewish life was shaped and configured not only by the political and economic dialectics of modern civilization, as Herzl argued, but also by its cultural and cognitive horizons. Jewish spiritual renewal would thus have to be firmly anchored in the discourse of modernity. This position set the parameters for his approach to representation.

Buber's interest in mysticism and religion was also in accord with his modernism. In fact, he initially questioned the traditional conception of God. In the first of his *Three Addresses on Judaism* in 1909, he explicitly stated, "we" moderns are no longer capable of "devotion" to the God of the Bible.[9] In all editions of this address published after 1919, the year marking his reaffirmation of the God of revelation, this passage was deleted. His early approach to religion and mysticism is characterized by isolating experience from the doctrines of faith. When he did speak of God in more emphatic terms, such as in his explication of Hasidic pantheism or medieval Christian mysticism, God was a symbol of the noumenal reality of unity; the personal God of biblical faith receded into the distant background. Significantly, he preferred to speak of the Absolute, the Unconditional, and particularly the *Allheit*. An "atheistic theology" reaches back to the seventeenth century and to even earlier attempts to develop a new metaphysics and re-think ultimate reality without recourse to biblical conceptions of God.

Anticipating the existential turn of twentieth century thought, Buber turned his attention away from metaphysics as a mode of apprehending the world. Truth is to be approached not through the conceptual and rational language of philosophy but rather as a mode-of-being in the world, attained by assuming a particular posture and attitude by which one engages existence. In contrast to the metaphysical tradition beginning with Aristotle, he regarded art and literature as the realm in which a true life is to be pursued. Similar to the early German Romantics he used metaphor or the symbol not merely as figurative references to a concept but as having an ontological status of their own. By a considered use of metaphor, scriptural and non-scriptural, amplified by a phenomenological evocation of the inner life of the Hasidim, the represented fragments of Hasidic wisdom become a prism of the socio-psychological reality of ecstatic mysticism to be accessed

experientially, through the rhythm of the experience it engenders. By simultaneously disclosing and concealing, metaphorical expression preserves for Buber the mystery of ecstatic experience.

In the wake of World War I, Buber distanced himself from the mysticism of *Erlebnis* and its attendant aesthetics of representation. Although he continued to anthologize Hasidism, he ceased to explore the movement from a phenomenological perspective as exemplification of the principles of spiritual renewal. His later anthologies, among them *Der grosse Maggid und seine Nachfolge* (1922), *Das verborgene Licht* (1924), and *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* (1949), consisted largely of material he published earlier, supplemented by additional legendary anecdotes. He now offered a more literal translation of the texts before him and provided for the latter an elaborate theoretical introduction. As a philosopher of dialogue he selected primarily anecdotes and teachings reflecting a dialogical situation. The terminology and thought of the philosophy of life gave way to the language of dialogue.

Buber's later anthologies lost the mode of poetic and associative imagistic evocation that made his earlier representation of Hasidism original and unique. In the earlier anthologies, these aesthetic techniques allowed him to restructure Jewish cultural memory such that it would ideally speak to acculturated German Jews. Through his representation of the Hasidic mystical worldview, Buber projected Jewish cultural memory as a dynamic, continuously reinterpreted and reexperienced body of teachings, and not simply as a repository of canonical knowledge. In this process readers are challenged to acknowledge those qualities of the tradition that still inform their lives in the present. Buber facilitates the process of recognition by the occasional use of archaic German to disrupt habitual reading practices and prompt a reflective response. Confronted by the unfamiliar, the familiar gains for the reader a commanding salience. In this respect, reading becomes a spiritual exercise in the service of Jewish renewal.

The mystic, as portrayed by Buber, exemplifies how to transpose the struggle with dualities which is constitutive of the experience of modernity to the level of a constructive inversion. Challenging the boundaries of interiority and exteriority, image and word, unity and plurality, this inversion encourages the individual to transcend those boundaries and blend them into unitive whole. Although writing in German and thus unbound by Hebrew's classical authority, Buber avoided the tendency of the modern Hebrew poetry of his time to strip language of its referential qualities. However, his negative stance toward rabbinic Judaism and his failure to redefine the concept of tradition kept him from articulating a more constructive relationship between religion and culture.

As fruits of an idiosyncratic approach to *kinnus* Buber's two early anthologies of Hasidic spirituality were products of a short-lived *Zeitgeist*. The intricate weaving together of textual and pictorial reference, on the one hand, and the philosophical subtext, on the other, rendered the work in its aesthetic and hermeneutic thrust too abstract. By pushing representation beyond its cognitive limits, these anthologies, in particular *Legende*, could not achieve among their intended readers the unceasing popularity of Bialik's and Rawnitzky's *Sefer ha-'aggadah,* which was also a result of the rebirth of Hebrew as a modern language.

In conclusion I wish to make a hypothetical point. Had Buber not abandoned his aesthetics of renewal and confined his poetic representation to a phenomenological commentary, while allowing select excerpts of Hasidic lore to speak for themselves in their distinctive diction and style, he might have developed a truly novel kind of anthology. Although he maintained an active interest in Hasidism, he ceased to experiment with the anthological genre. His later anthologies, particularly his *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim*, became literary anthologies proper and, indeed, approached the model of Bialik's *Sefer ha-'aggadah*. Not surprisingly, then, in 1961 he was awarded the Bialik Prize for the Hebrew version of the former collection of Hasidic tales, '*Or ha-ganuz.* By then he no longer had to strive how best to mediate the importance of the mystical imagination for spiritual renewal, for ironically the sober political vision of his earlier adversary, Theodor Herzl and his slogan "If you will, it is no fairy-tale" had long become reality.

APPENDIX

Buber's Sources for *Die Legende des Baalschem*

"Das Leben der Chassidim" is a composite of material drawn from the theoretical as well as the hagiographic literature of Hasidism. Whereas Hasidic sources commonly relate the author of a teaching, Buber presents most of the aphoristic teachings, proverbs and parables without attribution. Occasionally he provides the first name of a Hasidic master, primarily followers of the Besht and their disciples and the followers of R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech. Conspicuously absent is any reference to the latter, who laid the groundwork of theoretical Hasidism. Buber frequently introduces the citations from Hasidic sources through formulae, most often "it was said of a Zaddik," or "a Hasidic master said." The teachings are drawn from the two main types of Hasidic tales: those told by the Zaddik and those in praise of the Zaddik. The Hasidic and pseudepigraphic works that could be identified as Buber's sources are, in the first printed editions: *Beyt Aaron* (Brody, 1875), *Butsina di nehora* (Lemberg, 1879), *Derekh 'emet* (Lemberg, 1930), *Devarim 'arevim* (Munkács, 2 parts, 1903–1905), *Divrey Elimelekh* (Warsaw, 1890–91), *Divrey Moshe* (Munkács, 1900), *'Emunat tsaddikim* (also know as *Qahal hasidim he-hadash*, Lemberg, 1902), *Kenesset Yisra'el* (Warsaw, 1906), *Keter shem tov* (part I, Zolkiev, 1794, part II 1798), *Liqqutim yeqarim* [of R. Pinhas of Korets] (Chernobyl, 1864), *Ma'aseh tsaddiqim* (Lemberg, 1865), *Midrash Pinhas* (Lemberg, 1872), *Minorat zahav* (Warsaw, 1902), *Or ha-hokhmah* (Munkács, 1897), *Qahal hasidim* (Lemberg, 1860), *Rematim tsofim* (Warsaw, 1881), *Seder ha-dorot he-hadash* (Lemberg, 1865), *Shivhey ha-Besht* (1815), *Sihot ha-RaN* (Ostraho, 1816), *Sippurim nor'aim* (Lemberg, 1875), *Qevutsat Ya'aqov* (Przemyslany, 1896), *Zikhron tov* (Pietrkov, 1892), *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash* (Zolkiev, 1794), *Toledot baaley shem tov* (also known as *'Or Yisra'el*, Königsberg, 1876).

Several of these works are from Beshtian Hasidism. Of these early Hasidic works Buber tended to rely on late editions. To be sure, the reconstruction of Buber's Hasidica remains fragmentary and to a degree based on conjecture, for we do not know when he acquired a particular volume. Most of the teachings cited or paraphrased by Buber incorporated into this section of *Legende* were republished in his *'Or ha-ganuz* (part 1, 1946, part 2, 1947, rpt. in one volume in 1957)[1] and partially, though often rendered differently, in *Der grosse Maggid* (1922). *'Or ha-ganuz* was published more than a decade later in German as *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* (Zurich: Manesse Verlag, 1949). Several of the sayings and legendary anecdotes in *Legende* are also presented in late-nineteenth-century collections of Hasidic narrative material. For the parable of the human ladder Buber gives *'Or ha-hokhmah* (Leszow, 1815) of R. Uri Feivel of Ravenki as his source, but it is also printed in *Hitgalut ha-tsaddiqim* (Warsaw, 1901), a widely circulated collection of Hasidic sayings and anecdotes compiled by Shlomo Gavriel Rosental. In the source index to *Der grosse Maggid* and to *'Or ha-ganuz* Buber occasionally lists two sources. The anecdote "The Whistle," which Buber claims to have drawn from *Qevutsat Ya'aqov* of Yaakov Margaliot, also appears in the later *'Emunat tsaddiqim* of Yitzhak Dov Baer ben Zvi Hirsch.[2] Due to the fact that most of the citations are rather short and decontextualized, it is difficult to establish with certainty the version he consulted.

Although the legends are an integral part of Buber's conception of a Hasidic anthology, a discussion of their representation requires an extensive textual analysis that is beyond the scope of this book. I shall confine myself to a few remarks. Given the anthological perspective, the question arises in what sense the different parts of *Legende*—the programmatic preface, the phenomenological depiction of Hasidic spirituality, and the retold tales—are meaningfully related to or complement one another. The tales yield the spiritual fabric Buber so imaginatively described in "Das Leben der Chassidim," which precedes them. He conceded in later years that the retold tales in *Legende* are basically "autonomous poetry composed from traditional motifs" (*Mein Weg,* 22). By his own admission the legends do not constitute a coherent whole, and one could even say that they are secondary to his depiction of Hasidic spirituality. Put differently, the tales alone would not foster an understanding of the spiritual grammar of Hasidism.

Buber kept exploring the relation between representation of Hasidic wisdom and a new reading practice. In the "Buberheft" of 1913,[3] a collection of introductions to previously published works, "Das Leben der Chassidim" appears in fresh garb. The four Hasidic qualities are now rendered almost completely without the illustrative support of quotations from the

Hasidic sources. Significantly, Buber's interpretive "commentary" becomes here the text itself, though in a shortened version. The transitory sentences between the cited teachings are omitted and whole passages deleted. Speaking with the authorial voice of the Hasidic master, Buber portions his interpretation into short memorizable units. As such they can be easily taught and transmitted and serve as cornerstones of a new cultural memory.

Buber sought an approach to Hasidic myth that would reflect its resilience in the face of historicism. Therefore he presents the vita of the Besht in the form of an epic cycle: "The legend of the Baal Shem . . . unfolds not in accord with a temporal sequence, but in the three circles of consecration" (L vii).[4] These tales were elaborately presented in his introduction to *Legende* as a classical example of *mythos*, highlighting the nexus between religious inspiration, imagination, and creativity. By way of a definition, he characterizes myth as an expression of the "fullness of existence." However, reflecting the spiritual process of the Jewish people, the Hasidic tales he retells are neither myth proper nor technically legends but hagiographic tales. Though purporting to have biographical credence, hagiographic tales are not concerned with historical truth. They tend to disregard factual accuracy, chronological consistency, and narrative coherence. Their ahistoricity was a virtue for Buber, who discerned in them transhistorical, eternally contemporary expressions of the creative genius of Hasidism (and Judaism), rendering them "eligible" for revitalization. The credibility of these tales mattered to Buber only in so far as they were relevant to the image of the saintly founder of Hasidism he wished to convey.[5]

Contrary to what one would assume after having read through Buber's phenomenological account of the four basic spiritual qualities fostered by Hasidism, the legends of *Shivhey ha-Besht* do not portray the Besht as an ecstatic mystic. Buber does follow nonetheless the tradition established in *Shivhey ha-Besht* to present the founder of Hasidism as the superior charismatic spiritual leader of the movement. Buber discards information that would provide a context. While the Hasidic tales provide the names of the main Hasidic masters and their followers, Buber, as noted, rarely refers in his retold legends to Hasidic masters by name and if so only by their first name—often not even faithfully. In a similar vein, he consistently omits details of time and place or paradoxically adds them when missing in the source.[6] He also disregards the Hasidic practice of transmitting the tales in the name of the transmitter and glosses over the date and the occasion on which a specific tale was told. But such information is, however, important in Hasidic culture, where storytelling also served the purpose of religious instruction. Buber's indifference to historical facts clearly outdoes that of the Hasidic masters.

The three circles, which are each subdivided into seven legends, present the hagiographical vita of the Besht. The first circle of the legends is devoted to the revelation of the Besht as the spiritual leader. The material seems to be extrapolated from *Shivhey ha-Besht*, although many of these tales are also reprinted *Qahal hasidim* (Lvov, ca. 1866) of Aaron Walden (1838–1912), a follower of R. Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, and could thus also have been drawn from this source. The second circle of *Legende* is dominated by the motif of transmigration of souls, and the third circle by the motif of the theurgic "forcing of the end," presented in such a manner that it leaves no doubt about Buber's reservations regarding the apocalyptic conception of redemption. In contrast to the first circle, the legends of the second and third circle are not drawn from *Shivhey ha-Besht*. Here Buber culled several of the legends about the Besht from *Devarim 'arevim* and *Qevutsat Ya'aqov*,[7] and from the anthologies of Hasidic legends compiled by Menahem Mendel Bodek (1825–74), primarily from *Ma'aseh tsaddiqim* (1865). Bodek's collections contain Hasidic lore from various sources, but also pre-Hasidic tales.[8] Together with Michael Levi Rodkinson and Aaron Walden, Bodek was the most significant nineteenth-century collector of Hasidic tales. At the turn of the century, Rodkinson, Walden, and Bodek's Hebrew anthologies provided a first contact with the literature of Hasidism for many Jews, among them Buber and Agnon.

When Buber worked on his second anthology, he seems to have found in Bodek, who was among the first to have approached Hasidism as a nonadherent of the movement, a master of the Hasidic anthology. *Legende* seems to have been modeled upon the structure of Bodek's anthology, but whereas Bodek structured seventeen legends in *Pe'er miqedushim* (Lvov [Lemberg], 1865) into three "gates," Buber structured twenty-one legends into three "circles." The formal resemblance also affects the content. Buber shared Bodek's preference for tales that revolve around the kabbalistic doctrine of transmigration (*gilgul*). This theme, which was fully developed in sixteenth-century Lurianic Kabbalah, is prevalent in the narrative and theoretical literature of Hasidism. Transmigration is intimately related to the idea of redemption and to a mystical quietism that corresponds to Buber's anti-apocalyptic stance. He found in Hasidism a model for what Max Weber called, in his diatribe against apocalyptic politics, deeds "in pianissimo."[9]

In the following, the titles of the legends in *Legende* are followed by the Hasidic sources Buber used for his retelling of the tales.[10] The legends presented in the first circle appear to be from *Shivhey ha-Besht* (1814, Hebrew;

1815, Yiddish), although they also appear in *Qahal hasidim*. Given the inaccessibility of these editions, the page citations for these are to the recent critical edition *Die Geschichten vom Ba'al Schem Tov. Schivche ha-Besht,* part 1: Hebrew with German translation, part 2: Yiddish with German translation, ed., trans., and annotated by K.-E. Grözinger in cooperation with R. Berger et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997).

The first circle:
Der Werwolf (The Werewolf): , Hebrew 7, 8, 9/Yiddish 6, 7, 8.
Der Fürst des Feuers (The Prince of Fire): H 15, 16, 17/Y 15, 16.
Die Offenbarung (The Revelation): H 28/Y 31.
Die Heiligen und die Rache (The Martyrs and the Revenge): H 157/Y 167.
Die Himmelwanderung (The Heavenly Journey): Imaginative Narration.
Jerusalem: motifs from H 23, Y 144, 145.
Saul und David: H 252, 254.

The second circle:
Das Gebetbuch (The Prayer-Book): *Devarim 'arevim*, fols. 9a-b, siman 26.
Das Gericht (The Judgment): *Qahal hasidim*, 7b-c.
Die vergessene Geschichte (The Forgotten Story): *Qahal hasidim*, 9c-10b.
Die niedergestiegene Seele (The Soul Which Descended): *Devarim 'arevim*, 4a-c, siman 7.
Der Psalmensager (The Psalm-Singer): *Devarim 'arevim*, 11b-12a, siman 31.
Der zerstörte Sabbat (The Disturbed Sabbath): *Mif'alot ha-tsaddiqim,* tale 26.
Der Widersacher (The Conversion): *Qahal hasidim,* 24 [*Schivche ha-Besht,* ed. Grözinger, H 64, 65, Y 47, 100].

The third circle:[11]
Die Predigt des neuen Jahres (The Sermon of the New Year): *Qevutsat Ya'aqov*, 52a-b.
Die Wiederkehr (The Return): *Pe'er miqedushim*, tale 1.
Von Heer zu Heer (From Strength to Strength): *Devarim 'arevim*, 10a-b, siman 28.
Das dreimalige Lachen (The Threefold Laugh): *Qahal hasidim*, 15c-16a, *Toledot ba'aley shem*, 106–10.
Die Vogelsprache (The Language of Birds): *Schivche ha-Besht,* ed. Grözinger, H 261/Y 194.
Das Rufen (The Call): *Schivche ha-Besht,* ed. Grözinger, H 58/Y 44, *Toledot ba'aley shem*, 99–102.
Der Hirt (The Shepherd): *Devarim 'arevim,* 7a-b, siman 19.

NOTES

WORKS BY BUBER THAT ARE FREQUENTLY CITED IN THE NOTES ARE ABBREVIATED AS FOLLOWS:

Cherut	*Cherut: Eine Rede über Jugend und Religion*
Maggid	*Der grosse Maggid und seine Nachfolge*
First Buber	*The First Buber: Youthful Zionist Writings of Martin Buber*

WORKS AND ARCHIVES THAT ARE FREQUENTLY CITED IN THE NOTES ARE ABBREVIATED AS FOLLOWS:

MB-A	Martin Buber-Archive
MBW	*Martin Buber-Werkausgabe*
ME-A	Markus Ehrenpreis-Archive

INTRODUCTION

1. Martin Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," in *Mamre: Essays in Religion*, trans. G. Hort (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), 152.

2. On the category of "meaning" for religious action, see A. Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence: Theological Essays* 1930–1939 (Hanover, N.H., and London: Brandeis University Press, 1991), 16–29.

3. Gershom Scholem, "Martin Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism," *Commentary* 32 (1961): 305–16; rpt., idem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 228–50. See K. S. Davidowicz, *Gershom Scholem und Martin Buber: Die Geschichte eines Mißverständnisses,* with a preface by G. Stemberger (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 104–43.

4. R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, "Man's Relation to God and World in Buber's Rendering of Hasidic Teaching," in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, ed. P. A. Schilpp and M. Friedman (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1991), 403–34.

5. See in this context P. Schäfer, "'Die Philologie der Kabbala ist nur eine Projektion auf eine Fläche': Gershom Scholem über die wahren Absichten seines Kabbalastudiums," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (1998): 1–25.

6. For a critical review of some of these positions, see J. Gellman, "Buber's Blunder: Buber's Replies to Scholem and Schatz-Uffenheimer," *Modern Judaism* 20, no. 1 (Feb. 2000): 20–40.

7. As an indication of the antagonism towards Buber's interpretation of Hasidism, many of the critics saw no need to advance from a rather general criticism to a detailed comparative discussion of his various anthologies of Hasidic lore. It is often unclear to which of his anthologies the criticism is directed. Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer, for instance, confines herself to Buber's late works on Hasidism.

8. All references are, unless indicated otherwise, to the first German editions of Buber's writings. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated. References to the English edition of *Legende* (*The Legend of the Baal-Shem*, trans. M. Friedman, New York, 1955) will be given in parentheses. Friedman's translation is based on the considerably revised 1932 edition of *Die Legende des Baalshem*. Many sections that are seminal to my analysis of the early Buber are omitted in the later revised editions of *Legende*.

9. For Werblowsky, Buber's phenomenological method was prompted by an existential concern. An ardent critic of the hermeneutic turn in Jewish Studies, Werblowsky writes: "It would probably simplify matters at this juncture if I could use the term 'hermeneutics,' were it not for my acute allergy both to the term and to the role it plays on the various fashionable bandwagons of contemporary religious studies. Buber dealt with religious texts and with facts of religious history because they challenged or, in his own words, 'addressed' him in a way that demanded a response by the totality of his being." R. J. Z. Werblowsky, in *Martin Buber: A Contemporary Perspective*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr (Jerusalem: Syracuse University Press/The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2002), 166.

10. The *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* ignored Hasidism because of an aversion to its Gnostic and superstitious elements. Among the few essentially non-scholarly works on Hasidism that were published before Buber began his work on R. Nahman and which were among his personal library, and may have served him as sources of information, are A. Marcus (Verus), *Der Chassidismus: Eine kulturgeschichtliche Studie* (Pleschen: Jeschurun, 1901); A. Katz, *Der Chassidismus* (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1904); S. Schechter, *Die Chassidim*, trans. Olga Tausig-Leipzig (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1904).

11. G. Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 166–67.

12. Jon D. Levenson offers a well-reasoned critical review of Buber's approach to Hasidism. Encouraged by the attempts of Steven Kepnes and Laurence Silberstein to reevaluate Buber's legacy, Levenson outlines their respective hermeneutical positions as follows: "Whereas Kepnes depends upon the tradition of continental hermeneutics, in which he situates Buber, Silberstein argues more from contemporary literary theory and seeks to delineate 'modes of discourse' in which Buber and Scholem functioned." See J. D. Levenson, "The Hermeneutical Defense of Buber's Hasidism: A Critique and Counter-

statement," in *Modern Judaism* 11, no. 3 (1991), 297–320; S. Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 32–36; L. J. Silberstein, *Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought: Alienation and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), 59–70, quotation at 62–63.

13. K. E. Grözinger, "The Buber-Scholem Controversy about Hasidic Tale and Hasidism—Is there a Solution?" in *Gershom Scholem's "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism" 50 Years After*, Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism, ed. P. Schäfer and J. Dan (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993), 327–36. See also M. Idel, "Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem on Hasidism: A Critical Appraisal," in *Hasidism Reappraised*, ed. A. Rapoport-Albert (London and Portland, Ore.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), 389–403.

14. S. N. Eisenstadt, in his introduction to *Martin Buber: On Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity*, ed. and with an Introduction by S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 8.

15. A. Shapira, *Hope for Our Time: Key Trends in the Thought of Martin Buber*, trans. J. M. Green (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1999).

16. S. Brody, "'Open to Me the Gates of Righteousness': The Pursuit of Holiness and Non-Duality in Early Hasidic Teaching," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, new ser., vol. 89, nos. 1/2 (Jul.–Oct. 1998): 3–44.

17. S. Magid, "The Intolerance of Tolerance: *Mahaloket* (Controversy) and Redemption in Early Hasidism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2001): 341.

18. S. T. Katz, "Martin Buber in Retrospect," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. M. Zank, Religion in Philosophy and Theology 22 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 259. For his earlier criticism of Buber's method, see Katz, "Martin Buber's Misuse of Hasidic Sources," *Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), 52–93.

19. As regards Buber's philosophical thought, Leora Batnitzky advances the by no means common claim "that Buber presents a philosophically coherent program." L. Batnitzky, "Renewing the Jewish Past: Buber on History and Truth," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003): 340.

20. L. J. Silberstein, "The Renewal of Jewish Spirituality: Two Views," in *Jewish Spirituality*, vol. 2: *From the Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present*, ed. A. Green, World Spirituality Series, vol. 14 (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 407.

21. S. Spector, "Modernism without Jews: A Counter-Historical Argument," *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 4 (Nov. 2006), 617. With regard to a methodology of 'Jewish modernism' Spector proposes to characterize the heterogeneous discourse "by its operation." By focusing on "operation" rather than "contents," he seeks a definition not of "what is or was Jewish modernism, but what work does and did the figure 'Jewish modernism' do for its users."

22. M. Seel, *The Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. J. Farrell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

23. Although there are notable differences between literary texts, the visual arts, and music, "the text of a literary reading possesses its own presence" (ibid., 131).

24. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica* (Frankfurt, 1750; facs. rpt.

Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), p. 1, § 1. Baumgarten (1714–62) develops this doctrine of sensible cognition in the first part, chapter 1, of his book, §§ 14–27. He attempted to overcome the opposition between rationalism and sensualism and thereby contribute to the improvement of human knowledge and cognition: "Aesthetics finis est perfectio cognitionis sensitiuae, qua talis" (*Aesthetica*, p. 6, § 14). For a detailed discussion of Baumgarten's aesthetic theory, see S. Gross, "The Neglected Programme of Aesthetics," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 42, no. 4 (October 2002), 403–14.

25. Zachary Braiterman, *The Shape of Revelation: Aesthetics and Modern Jewish Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 143–51. Unfortunately Braiterman's book was published after I had completed my manuscript. Therefore I was unable to consider fully the implications of his analysis of Buber's religious thought in light of abstract Expressionism.

26. Repudiating the biased view of Judaism as lacking a genuine inner life—widespread as a result of the "Essence debate" launched by the sixteen lectures on *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1900) of the Protestant theologian Adolf von Harnack—Buber declares Jewish mysticism to be a vital, indivisible principle of the Jewish people. On the debate, see P. Mendes-Flohr, "The Essence of Judaism Debate," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 3, *Integration in Dispute:* 1871–1918, ed. M. A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 338–47.

27. Given his sociological orientation, Lublinski had other thematic preferences and suggested instead that he write a monograph on "the author" or "the intellectual," a proposal to which Buber either did not respond or which he turned down. See the postcards of S. Lublinski to B, dated 12 Nov. 1907 and 22 Nov. 1907. MB-A Arc. Ms. Var. 350/455:7.

28. D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1986), 39.

29. G. Simmel, *Die Religion* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1906), 67 [*Die Gesellschaft*, ed. M. Buber, vol. 2].

30. S. Eisenstadt, "Martin Buber in the Postmodern Age," in *Martin Buber: A Contemporary Perspective*, 182.

31. L. Stein, *Die Juden in der neueren Philosophie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Hermann Cohens*, Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, Sammlung ausgewählter Vorträge Nr. 1 (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1919), 14f.

32. W. Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience*, vol. 5 of *Selected Works*, ed. R. A. Makkreel and F. Rodie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 211.

33. For a discussion of the role of aesthetics for the early Buber, see G. G. Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal,* 1897–1909 (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), chap. 2.

34. A. D. Biemann, "Aesthetic Education in Martin Buber: Jewish Renaissance and the Artist," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, 88 and 104–105.

35. W. James, *Die religiöse Erfahrung in ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit: Materialien und Studien zu einer Psychologie und Pathologie des religiösen Lebens*, trans. G. Wobbermin (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907).

36. W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 31.

37. See C. Taylor, *The Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 24.

38. Silberstein, "The Renewal of Jewish Spirituality," 409.

39. Buber, "Die Schaffenden, das Volk und die Bewegung," in *Jüdischer Almanach* (5663) 1902, 21; *First Buber*, 142.

40. Y. Elman and I. Gershoni, "Transmitting Tradition: Orality and Textuality in Jewish Cultures," in idem, *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 2.

41. See M. Brenner, *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 19.

42. M. Buber, *Werke,* vol. 3: *Schriften zum Chassidismus* (Munich and Heidelberg: Kösel-Verlag und Verlag Lambert Schneider,1963), 991–98.

43. Buber, "Zur Darstellung des Chassidismus," *Werke,* 3:984.

44. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," *Philosophy of Martin Buber*, ed. Paul A. Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), 731.

45. Buber, *Cherut:* Eine Rede über Jugend und Religion (Vienna and Berlin: R. Löwit, 1919), 19; *On Judaism*, ed. N. N. Glatzer with a foreword by R. Kamenetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 162.

46. A. Seyhan, *Representation and Its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 69.

47. P. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. J. B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 145.

48. See A. Rapoport-Albert, "Hagiography with Footnotes: Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism," in *Essays in Jewish Historiography*, ed. A. Rapoport-Albert, with an introduction and appendix by J. Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 119–59.

49. G. L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), 134.

50. M. Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 129–34.

51. Ibid, 2.

52. Ibid, 92.

53. Magid, "The Intolerance of Tolerance," 367.

54. M. Halbertal, *People of the Book*, 92. See also G. Shaked, "Midrash and Narrative: Agnon's 'Agunot,'" in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. G. H. Hartman and S. Budick, trans. by M. Bregman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 285–303.

55. See D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 24.

56. Among his models was the Yiddish writer Y. L. Peretz, whose prose has, in Buber's judgment, "music and mystery." Buber, "Von Jüdischen Dichtern und Erzählern," *Jüdischer National Kalender* 5677 (Wien: Verlag der Jüdischen Zeitung, 1916), 119–23.

57. A. LaCocque and P. Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xvi. See also P. Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, ed. M. I. Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), esp. 35–71.

58. Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 58.

59. Buber, "Der Mythos der Juden," *Vom Geist des Judentums,* 91; Engl. trans. *On Judaism*, 105. In his positive reevaluation of myth, Buber follows the Orientalist

Ignaz Goldziher, who refutes the regnant prejudice of Renan and others that the "Semitic race" cannot produce myth. Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern und seine geschichtliche Entwicklung: Untersuchungen zur Mythologie und Religionswissenschaft* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1876), xv.

60. Buber, *Cherut*, 2; *On Judaism*, 150.

61. R. Posner, *Rational Discourse and Poetic Communication: Methods of Linguistic, Literary, and Philosophical Analysis* (Berlin and New York: Mouton, 1982), 119.

62. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 143.

63. S. Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation: *Ostjuden* and German Jews," in The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War, ed. J. Reinharz and W. Schatzberg (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1985), 195–211.

64. Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern*, 139–58.

65. M. Idel, "Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah," *Midrash and Literature*, ed. G. H. Hartman and S. Budick, 152; cf. idem, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 234–49.

66. Ibid., 143.

67. M. Fishbane, *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 62.

68. I. Tishby and J. Dan, "Hasidut," *Ha-Encyclopedia ha-'Ivrit*, vol. 17, col. 770. According to the authors, new ideas can be found to a degree in Bratzlav and Habad Hasidism.

69. L vi/F xii-xiii.

70. Buber, "Noch einiges zur Darstellung des Chassidismus," in Buber, *Werke,* vol. 3, 993.

71. With respect to his mature philosophical thought, as Jochanan Bloch has noted, Buber employed a "mediation of pointing to [something]." This involved a hermeneutical paradox: the pointing to the mystery that cannot be revealed and, because it evades the possibility of conceptual and terminological definition, can also not be taught. In *Legende* the mystery is primarily "experienced." See J. Bloch, *Die Aporie des Du: Probleme der Dialogik Bubers* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1977), 19–24.

72. *Mein Weg zum Chassidismus,* 18.

73. Brenner, *Jewish Renaissance*, 29.

74. D. Koigen, "Im Lande der Seligen," *Der Jude* 7, no. 1 (1923): 20.

75. Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience*, 225.

76. Ibid., 223.

77. M. Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 225.

CHAPTER ONE

1. See H. Birus, "Zwischen den Zeiten: Friedrich Schleiermacher als Klassiker der neuzeitlichen Hermeneutik," in *Hermeneutische Positionen: Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer,* ed. H. Birus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 23. In

the same volume see also H. Anz, "Hermeneutik der Individualität. Wilhelm Diltheys hermeneutische Position und ihre Aporie," 66–88.

2. G. L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 214.

3. W. Dilthey, "Die Struktur der Geisteswissenschaften" (1910), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7: *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*, 6th ed. (Stuttgart and Göttingen, 1973), 213–20 (hereafter, *GS*).

4. W. Dilthey, "Das Verstehen anderer Personen und ihrer Lebensäußerungen" (1910), *GS*, 7:208–10.

5. See W. Dilthey, "Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik" (1900), in *GS*, vol. 5: Die geistige Welt: Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens. 1. Hälfte. Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften 2d ed. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1957), 317–38.

6. Ibid., 318.

7. See W. Dilthey, "Die Kategorien des Lebens," *GS*, 7:240–41.

8. See W. Dilthey, "Das Verstehen anderer Personen und ihrer Lebensäußerungen," *GS*, 7:215–16.

9. See Buber, "Bücher, die jetzt und immer zu lesen sind," *Wiener Kunst- und Buchschau*, nos. 9–10 (1914): 7 (*MBW*, 1:280).

10. Buber's friend Gustav Landauer likewise sought to restore the anarchic impulse of mystical experience. He edited in 1903 the writings of Meister Eckhart. On the influence of Landauer's political interpretation of mysticism on Buber's *Erlebnis-mysticism*, see Y. Schwartz, "The Politicization of the Mystical in Buber and his Contemporaries," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. Michael Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 85–110.

11. B. to Horodezky, 27 April 1910, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, vol. 1: 1897–1918, ed. G. Schaeder (Heidelberg, 1972), 281.

12. Buber, "Ein Wörterbuch der hebräischen Philosophie," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Literaturblatt, 4 Feb. 1929.

13. Buber's reevaluation of Jewish hermeneutics is also attested by the motto he chose for his speech delivered in 1919 on the education of Jewish youth. The title of the address, "Cherut," is an allusion to Exodus 32:16. Buber offers an alternative reading of the biblical verse: "The tablets were God's works, and the writing was God's writing, incised (*harut*) upon the tablets." Instead of the Masoretic text, which vocalizes this Hebrew word as *harut*, Buber suggests a different vocalization, namely *herut* (freedom). Buber uses this as an example to illustrate the openness of the biblical text and the freedom of interpretation ensured by the Oral Torah.

14. Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," in *Mamre: Essays in Religion*, 150. Even in his philosophy of dialogue Buber would maintain this position.

15. See P. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. J. B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 178.

16. M. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. J. Farrell (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), 130.

17. Ibid., 132.

18. Batnitzky, "Renewing the Jewish Past: Buber on History and Truth," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003): 346.

19. Buber, "Der Jude und sein Judentum," in *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1911), 20.

20. On the young Buber's affinity to *völkisch* thought, see A. Shapira, "Le-meqorot tefisato ha-le'umit shel Martin Buber ba-romantiqah ha-germanit" (The sources of Martin Buber's concept of the nation in German Romanticism), *Ha-Tsionut* 15 (1990), 76–106. Buber, as argued by Shapira, reads the spiritual history of the Jewish people through the terms "determination" and "fate," linking the collective and the individual inextricably. Clinging to the vision of a German-Jewish symbiosis, Buber infused his conception of Jewish renewal with terms that were already part of the anti-Semitic semantics of race. But it should be emphasized that in none of his writings did he define the Jews in terms of a racial superiority.

21. J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 12.

22. Buber, "Der Mythos der Juden," *Vom Geist des Judentums,* 91; *On Judaism,* ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 105.

23. See G. Schaeder, *The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber*, trans. N. J. Jacobs (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 84.

24. E. Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, trans. S. K. Langer (New York: Dover Publications, 1953), 8.

25. See Schaeder, *Hebrew Humanism*, 295–97; see also D. Avnon, *Martin Buber: The Hidden Dialogue* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 8.

26. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 159.

27. Ibid., 192. A recent attempt to show "how 'world' functions as a working concept in Buber's [later] analysis of the religious phenomenon" has been offered by Rémi Brague, "How to be in the World: Gnosis, Religion, Philosophy," in *Martin Buber: A Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr (Jerusalem: Syracuse University Press and The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2002), 133–47.

28. G. Nigal, "New Light on the Hasidic Tale and its Sources," in *Hasidism Reappraised*, ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert (London and Portland, Ore.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), 345.

29. Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences,* 164.

30. Ibid.

31. Azade Seyhan, *Representation and Its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 103.

32. Ibid., 95.

33. Buber, *Cherut,* 21; *On Judaism,* 164.

34. On Buber's understanding of "Urjudentum," see P. Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 214–15.

35. "The decisive factor for the nature and greatness of Chasidism is not found in a teaching, but in a mode of life." Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," 149.

36. M. Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 90. Idel argues that "the impulses that characterized Hasidism" would be more fruitfully analyzed were one to consider the "hermeneutical devices" introduced by the Hasidic masters, rather than follow Buber and "speculate" about their innovative practices (234).

37. *Maggid,* xxiv.

38. Buber, "Sinnbildliche und sakramentale Existenz im Judentum," *Deutung des Chassidismus: Drei Versuche* (Berlin: Schocken, 1935), 91.

39. Ibid., 90.

40. *Maggid,* xxix.

41. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem und der Zionismus," 206; *First Buber,* 177.

42. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism,* trans. G. Lichtheim, rpt. from the 3d rev. ed. (New York: Schocken, 1988), 342. As Scholem observed, the Kabbalists read Scripture for possible hints to the mystery of the Godhead and of the cosmic process, whereas Hasidism reads the word of Scripture allegorically, as allusions to the anthropological history of man. Even if one accepts Scholem's view that in Hasidism everything was transformed from the rational nuance of kabbalistic mystery into a total mystification of religious values, it must be added that the mystical speculations of a R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech and of the later Habad branch of Hasidism retain a level of theosophical sophistication.

43. S. Magid, "The Intolerance of Tolerance: *Mahaloket* (Controversy) and Redemption in Early Hasidism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2001): 329.

44. R. Moshe Hayyim Efrayim of Sudylkow contended in this controversy that the scholars study to acquire social standing and prestige, which conflicts with the primary Hasidic value of humility. As a response to the perceived disintegration of study and *devequt* (the constant cleaving to God), R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech gave priority to *devequt* as a pure contemplative value over discursive study. An integrative position was taken again by the third generation of his disciples, who enhanced the concept of Torah study with *devequt.* On the problem of Torah study in Hasidism, see R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism: Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 310–25.

45. A. Green, "Typologies of Leadership and the Hasidic Zaddiq," in *Jewish Spirituality,* vol. 2: *From The Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present,* ed. A. Green (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 128.

46. R. Elior, *The Paradoxical Ascent to God: The Kabbalistic Theosophy of Habad Hasidism,* trans. J. M. Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 3.

47. Buber, *Gog und Magog: Eine chassidische Chronik* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1948), 401–2.

48. Buber, "Replies to my Critics," in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber,* ed. P. A. Schilpp and M. Friedman (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), 738.

49. See Seyhan, *Representation and Its Discontents,* 84.

50. Green, "Typologies," 151. Green emphasizes that the fusion of the rabbinic scholar and the Zaddik into one person did not imply an undermining of halakhic authority.

51. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," 731; "Noch einiges zur Darstellung des Chassidismus," *Werke,* vol. 3: *Schriften zum Chassidismus* (Munich and Heidelberg: Kösel Verlag and Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1963), 992.

52. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," 731.

53. See R. Posner, *Rational Discourse and Poetic Communication: Methods of Linguistic, Literary, and Philosophical Analysis* (Berlin and New York: Mouton Publishers, 1982), 124.

54. See Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 161.

55. *Jewish Mystical Autobiographies: Book of Vision and Book of Secrets* (Hayyim Vital, *Book of Visions*, and Yizhak Safrin of Komarno, *Book of Secrets*), trans. and intro. M. M. Faierstein, with a preface by M. Idel (New York and Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1999), 294.

56. Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," 152.

57. See A. Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence: Theological Essays* 1930–1939 (Hanover, N.H., and London: Brandeis University Press, 1991), 17.

58. Buber, *Cherut*, 19; *On Judaism*, 162.

59. Buber, *Cherut*, 29; *On Judaism*, 169. Illuminating in this context is the position of Franz Rosenzweig and that of his interpreter, Leo Strauss. Despite his anti-historicist position, Strauss, in his preface to Spinoza's *Critique of Reason*, supports the view that the ceaseless reshaping of tradition in Judaism is elementary to its continuity. Rosenzweig, in contrast, validated truth in *Star of Redemption* as constituted by history (i.e., conditioned by the "situatedness" of the interpreter). He nevertheless confirms revelation as a historical event and thus reconciles, as Batnitzky has argued, the philosophical dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity. See L. Batnitzky, "On the Truth of History or the History of Truth: Rethinking Rosenzweig via Strauss," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (2000): 223–51.

60. Buber, *Cherut*, 25; *On Judaism*, 168.

61. G. Simmel, "Vom Wesen des historischen Verstehens," in *Brücke und Tür: Essays des Philosophen zur Geschichte, Religion, Kunst und Gesellschaft*, ed. M. Landmann (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler Verlag, 1957), 83.

62. On the distinction between *interpretatio* and *explicatio* in the Jewish hermeneutical tradition, see S. Rawidowicz, "On Interpretation," in *Studies in Jewish Thought*, ed. N. N. Glatzer (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974), 45–80. Fishbane stresses that Judaism favors a hermeneutics of *interpretatio* rather than *explicatio*. The latter tends to restrict the meaning of the text to its original historical context, whereas it is constitutive of Jewish hermeneutics to approach Scripture as a unique communication that continuously calls for "creative retrieval of meaningfulness." Divine revelation marks "an ever-present mythical moment in the imagination and the soul, a moment when one is hermeneutically present to the divine voice once eternally given. . . ." M. Fishbane, "Hermeneutics," in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought*, ed. A. A. Cohen and P. Mendes-Flohr (New York: Free Press, 1987), 357–59.

63. Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," 153.

64. Cf. Buber's Preface to *Ecstatic Confessions:* "I have translated the lyrical pieces into prose, since only in this way could I attain the degree of fidelity I needed" (xxxv).

65. See Buber, "Zu einer neuen Verdeutschung der Schrift," supplement to *Die fünf Bücher der Weisung* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), 32–33.

66. Buber, "Das Wort, das gesprochen wird," *Logos: Zwei Reden* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1962), 29.

67. Ibid., 27.

68. Among the Hasidic masters, R. Menahem Mendel of Kotzk explained the meaning of '*emunah* (faith) with *ne'emanut* (faithfulness). Buber, '*Or ha-ganuz: sippurey hasidim*, 2d ed. rev. (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1957), 429–30.

69. See Simmel, "Vom Wesen des historischen Verstehens," 59–85. Simmel sought to ensure the essential *Fürsichsein* of the "category of the Thou" and its incommensurability with other experiences, and hence objected to thinking, as Dilthey did, that the "inner-outer experience of oneself" (*Eigenerfahrung*) was the "key to the outer-inner experience of the other" (*Fremderfahrung*). Ibid., 63.

70. *Cherut,* 24; *On Judaism,* 156.

71. Buber, "Jüdische Religiosität," *Vom Geist des Judentums,* 51; *On Judaism,* 80. Cf. "Religion is detrimental to an unfolding of the people's energies only where it concentrates . . . on the minute differentiation between the permitted and the forbidden." Buber, *Cherut,* 13; *On Judaism,* 158.

72. See the letter of B. to Horodezky, 20 June 1906, *Briefwechsel,* 1:244. Buber sought to call this anthology "Das Buch Baalschem," which would have been a more traditional Hebrew title. See B. to Horodezky, 24 April 1907. He began working on the third cycle in 1908. See letter of B. to Horodezky, 18 Aug. 1908, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:113, and 21 Aug. 1908, *Briefwechsel,* 1:263.

73. For the reworked edition of 1932 Buber prepared an index of motifs, following Horodezky's edition of the *Shivhey ha-Besht* (Berlin, 1922). See folder MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:16/dalet.

74. B. Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 211.

75. Avnon, *Martin Buber,* 13.

76. Buber, "Universität und Volkshochschule," *Kampf um Israel* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1933), 307, emphasis mine.

77. Ibid. Buber shared his critique of the Science of Judaism with Ahad Ha'am, the spiritus rector of cultural Zionism. "Jewish Science," he wrote in 1902, "became nothing more than a memorial tablet to our dead spiritual activity." Ahad Ha'am, "The Spiritual Revival," *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha-'Am,* ed. and trans. L. Simon (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1944), 276.

78. See D. N. Myers, *Resisting History: Historicism and Its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 54–55.

79. *First Buber,* 39. The article "Jüdische Wissenschaft" was originally published in two separate issues of *Die Welt* 5, no. 41 (11 Oct. 1901) and no. 43 (25 Oct. 1901), 1–2 in each issue. *First Buber,* 34–39, 39–41.

80. Buber's view that Judaism as an academic discipline has no methodology of its own but needs to be investigated with the methods of a variety of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences resonates with a new self-understanding of Jewish Studies that is in particularly salient in the United States.

CHAPTER TWO

1. The Bund is an abbreviation for the *Algemeyner Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poylen un Rusland* (General Jewish Worker's Union in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia). A Jewish socialist party founded in Tzarist Vilna in 1897, the popular Bund strove for national-cultural autonomy and favored Yiddish as the language of the Jewish masses over Hebrew.

See *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Bund at* 100, ed. J. Jacobs (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

2. J. Klausner, *Geschichte der neuhebräischen Literatur*, ed. H. Kohn (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1921), 77.

3. D. Pforte, "Introduction," *Die deutschsprachige Anthologie*, vol. 1: *Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Theorie und eine Auswahlbibliographie des Zeitraums* 1800–1950, ed. J. Bark and D. Pforte (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1970), xiii–cxxiv: xxiv, emphasis mine.

4. Ibid., xxv.

5. P. J. Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 98.

6. Ibid., 99.

7. Ibid., 100.

8. Ibid., 98.

9. Ibid., 100.

10. Ibid., 97.

11. Ibid., 98.

12. Ibid., 100.

13. See in this context B. M. Benedict, *Making the Modern Reader: Cultural Mediation in Early Modern Literary Anthologies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

14. I will use Hans-Peter Ecker's differentiation between literary genre and literary form and will refer to the anthology as the genre and to the Hasidic legend or saying as literary form. H.-P. Ecker, *Die Legende: Kulturanthropologische Annäherung an eine literarische Gattung* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1993), 3 n. 18.

15. D. Stern, "The Anthological Imagination in Jewish Literature," *Prooftexts* 17, no. 1 (1997): 3–4. See the entry on "anthology" in *Ha-Encyclopedia ha-'Ivrit*, vol. 4, cols. 689–93. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* has no entry on the anthology.

16. Three issues of *Prooftexts* were devoted to the "Jewish anthological imagination": vol. 17, no. 1 (Jan. 1997) and no. 2 (May 1997), and vol. 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1999).

17. In particular the halakhic midrashim directly related to the Bible were held in rabbinic exegesis to be hermeneutically mediated revelation. "Afterword," *Prooftexts* 19, no. 1 (Jan. 1999), 85.

18. See Scholem, "Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in Judaism," in *The Messianic Idea and Other Essays in Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 282–303.

19. Griffiths, *Religious Reading*, 98.

20. Ibid., 94.

21. Ibid., 84.

22. Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," in idem, *Mamre: Essays in Religion*, trans. Greta Hort (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), 150.

23. Griffiths, *Religious Reading*, 83.

24. Ibid., 81, 82, 86.

25. Ibid., 85.

26. Ibid., 81.

27. Ibid., 91.

28. Scholem, "Revelation and Tradition," 287.

29. The attempt of present-day editors of Hasidic literature to define the concept, role, and function of the genre of anthology has led Joseph Dan, Gedalya Nigal, and Eli Yassif among others to acknowledge the lack of a clear generic definition of the Hebrew tale and its late Hasidic version. For a survey of the debate, see Y. Elstein, *Ha-eqstazah we-ha-sippur ha-hasidi* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1998).

30. See Z. Gries, *Sefer, sofer we-sippur be-reshit ha-hasidut: Min ha Besht we-'ad Menahem Mendel mi-Qotsq* (Tel Aviv: Ha-kibbuts ha-me'uhad, 1992), 26.

31. See *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Jewish Culture* 1890–1918, ed. E. D. Bilski (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 64.

32. I am using here Moshe Halbertal's distinction between a "formative" and a "normative" canon.

33. Buber, "Vorlesungsabende," *Die Welt* 5, no. 46 (15 Nov. 1901): 10.

34. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem und der Zionismus," *Die Stimme der Wahrheit*, ed. L. Schön (Würzburg: N. Philippi, 1905), 207.

35. Buber's redefinition of *Bildung* can be seen, as recently noted by Biemann, as "*Umbildung* in an arguably modernist sense." Aesthetics was central to this process. Biemann, "Aesthetic Education in Martin Buber," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber,* ed. M. Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 87.

36. M. Kiel, "*Sefer ha'aggada:* Creating a Classic Anthology for the People and by the People," *Prooftexts* 17, no. 1 (1997): 83. See also P. Mendes-Flohr, "Cultural Zionism's Image of the Educated Jew: Reflections on Creating a Secular Jewish Culture," *Modern Judaism* 18 (1998): 235.

37. Buber's representation of Hasidic lore coincided with the rise of ethnography in Germany and the general cultural reevaluation of folk culture and myth in the national consciousness of a people. The variety and originality of folk and fairy tales became the yardstick for a culture's potential for rejuvenation. Max Gruenbaum, Max Grunwald, and Moses Gaster were among the Jewish scholars in the folkloristic research. See M. Brenner, *Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 29–30.

38. Among the many anthologies were L. Jacobowski, *Aus deutscher Seele: Ein Buch Volkslieder* (1899); M. Bern, *Neue Deutsche Lyrik* (1911); E. Wasserzieher, *Deutsche Lyrik* (1907); W. von Scholz, *Deutsches Balladenbuch* (4th ed., 1904); and the reprint of Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. For a survey, see E. Kalkschmidt, "Neue Anthologien," *Kunstwart* 18, no. 8 (1905): 572–76, and W. Holzamer, "Anthologien," *Das literarische Echo* 8 (1905–06), cols. 628–32.

39. The Zionists first had to recreate a national literature and determine its relationship to the general culture. The Jewish and Hebrew twentieth-century anthologies reflected the tension between a national literature, as envisioned by the Romantics, and a world literature as envisioned by Wieland and Goethe. See W. Woesler, "Die Idee der deutschen National-literatur in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Nation und Literatur im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit,* Akten des I. Internationalen Osnabrücker Kongresses zur Kulturgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit, ed. K. Garber (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1989), 732–33.

40. Hermann Conradi, "Unser Credo," in *Moderne Dichter-Charaktere*, ed. W. Arent and K. Henckell (Berlin: Kamlak, 1885), i–vi. Richard Dehmel edited in 1893 an anthology of spring poems to demonstrate the "reborn will of unity."

41. *Germanische Renaissance: Charakterisken und Kritiken ausgewählt und eingeleitet durch J. Körner*, Pandora, vol. 10 (Munich: Georg Müller und Eugen Rentsch, 1912).

42. B. Giesen, *Kollektive Identität: Die Intellektuellen und die Nation*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999), 276.

43. Giesen and Junge examine this Romantic definition of the nation in the context of the "Self-affirmation of the romantic intellectual vis-à-vis the *Bildungsbürgertum* and Klassik." B. Giesen and K. Junge, "Vom Patriotismus zum Nationalismus: Zur Evolution der Deutschen Kulturnation," *Nationale und kulturelle Identität: Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewußtseins in der Neuzeit*, ed. B. Giesen (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 281.

44. He published in 1907 in Maximilian Harden's *Die Zukunft*, one of the main organs of the Neo-Romantics, one of his retold Hasidic legends from his then forthcoming *Legende*.

45. *Eugen Diederichs: Selbstzeugnisse und Briefe von Zeitgenossen*, ed. U. Diederichs (Düsseldorf and Cologne: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1967), 352. In a letter to H. Zehrer (2 Dec. 1929) Diederichs declares religion and the irrational as the chief constituents of the new "life feeling" (311). He follows Nietzsche in this antithetical juxtaposition of culture and literature.

46. G. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 54.

47. Eugen Diederichs cited in *Eugen Diederichs: Selbstzeugnisse*, 328.

48. Letter of B. to E. Diederichs, dated 21 Feb. 1907, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, ed. G. Schaeder, 3 vols (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1972–75), 1:253. See also P. Mendes-Flohr, "Fin de Siècle Orientalism," in idem, *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 89–90.

CHAPTER THREE

1. These anthologies were also immensely popular in the first Jewish settlements in Palestine.

2. One example was *Shirat yisra'el: mivhar ha-shirim ha-'ivriyim mi-yeme Rabbi Shemu'el ha-Nagid we-'ad ha-yom* (Krakow, 1906), an anthology of the poetry of Spanish Jewry. Bialik began working on this anthology together with Y. H. Rawnitzky and S. Ben-Zion at the end of the nineteenth century, but the book was published only in 1906. See S. Katz, *Bialiq be-hevley ibn Gavirol* (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1999), 85–94.

3. For instance, the failed plan of Reuben Brainin and Micha J. Berdyczewski to collect and edit together with the assistance of Ze'ev Jawitz and others the legends of the rabbinic scholars of the first two centuries C.E. to be published as a "Corpus Tannaiticum." See M. J. Bin-Gorion (Berdyczewski), *'Amal-yom we-haguto: Pirqey yoman*, trans. R. Bin-Gorion, ed. E. Bin-Gorion (Tel Aviv: Moreshet Mikhah Yosef, 1975), entry of 29 April 1907, 81; and further entries of 1907: 12 May, 82 n. 2; 14 July, 83; 25 July, 84; 20 Nov., 91; 24 Nov., 92; 15 Dec., 93–94.

4. Schocken's unbiased attitude toward folkloristic material would later allow Buber to publish revised editions of his two early adaptations of Hasidic teachings and tales.

5. For background information see V. Dahm, *Das jüdische Buch im Dritten Reich,* vol. 2: *Salman Schocken und sein Verlag* (Frankfurt a.M.: Buchhändler Vereinigung GmbH, 1982), esp. cols. 407–50.

6. Letter of B. to Salman Schocken, 28 Nov. 1917, Schocken-Archive, 539/821.

7. H. N. Bialik, *Dvarim she-be'al peh* (Speeches), vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Po'alim, 1965), 148. Cited in M. Gluzman, *Politics of Canonicity: Lines of Resistance in Modernist Hebrew Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 71.

8. B. Mann, "Visions of Jewish Modernism," in *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 4 (Nov. 2006), 675.

9. Salman Schocken sponsored in his publishing program the creation of a new model of both the Jewish and the Hebrew book. Many of the books Schocken published were in Hebrew or were bilingual. See V. Dahm, *Das jüdische Buch im Dritten Reich,* 2:433–34.

10. *Cherut*, 159–60.

11. S. D. Breslauer, "Bialik's View of the Great Jewish Books," *The Solomon Goldman Lectures*, vol. 7, ed. D. P. Bell (Chicago: Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies Press, 1999), 210.

12. H. N. Bialik, "Le-kinnusah shel ha-'aggadah ha-'ivrit," *Ha-Shiloah* 19 (1908), 19–24; "'Al te'udat ha-kinnusiyah ha-tarbutit," a lecture delivered at the Congress for Hebrew Language in Kiev, 1910; "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri," *Ha-Shiloah* 24 (1913): 413–27.

13. The *'aggadah* originated as a rabbinic device for religious instruction but refers to the non-legalistic text in classical rabbinic literature. The three main types of the *'aggadah* are homiletic, exegetic, and narrative. But even the narrative legend is often imbued with the sophistication of rabbinic hermeneutics.

14. H. N. Bialik and Y. H. Rawnitzky, *Sefer ha-'aggadah: Mivhar ha-'aggadah she-ba-talmud u-va-midrashim*, 3 vols. (1908–11; rev. ed., Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1946).

15. For an analysis of the various reinterpretations of *'aggadah* in the modern period, including Bialik's transformation of the *'aggadah* into folklore, see M. W. Kiel, *A Twice Lost Legacy: Ideology, Culture and the Pursuit of Jewish Folklore in Russia until Stalinization, 1930–1931*, Ph.D. diss., Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 1991, 82–235. Kiel argues that folklore was an essential component of cultural expression for the Jewish national movement in Russia.

16. Traditional Judaism rejected the German Romanticist identification of folk wisdom with the essence of culture and was alert to the danger of a subversive distortion of theistic faith. The nationalist implications of the romantic reading of the *'aggadah* were also feared by the scholars of the Science of Judaism, who maintained the purity of the *'aggadah* as the hermeneutic mediation of God's will by normative Judaism. They objected to presenting *'aggadah* as folklore. Zunz defended *midrash-'aggadah* as rabbinic sermon. The didactic and morally edifying quality of the *'aggadah* was not disputed by Zunz, Krochmal, Rapoport, and Frankel. In their view, the "spirit of Judaism" and the "soul of the people" were not to be confused. Isaac Margolies (*Erzählungen Jeshuruns: Charakter, Bilder und Sagen* [Berlin, 1877]) initiated the retelling of *'aggadot*, emphasizing their didactic quality. Ze'ev Wolf Jawitz (*Sihot u-shemu'ot mini qedem* [Warsaw, 1887]) likewise stressed the moral character of the *'aggadot*, but also anticipated national goals. His presentation of the *'aggadah* as a vessel for Jewish self-esteem and dignity influenced Bialik. I rely here largely on the analysis of Kiel, "Twice Lost Legacy," 112–43; see also M. R. Niehoff, "Zunz's Concept of Haggadah as an Expression of Jewish Spirituality," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 43 (1998): 3–24.

17. Bialik, "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri," 416. Bialik envisioned the creation of the Hebrew book that would be subordinated to a "supreme idea," and to an "a priori fixed plan." Ibid., 415.

18. Bialik and Rawnitzky, *Sefer ha-'aggadah*, x.

19. Bialik, "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri," 417.

20. Bialik and Rawnitzky, *Sefer ha-'aggadah*, vii.

21. N. Krochmal, *Moreh nevukhey ha-zeman*, in *Kol kitvey R. Nahman Krokhmal*, ed. with an Introduction by S. Rawidowicz (2d enlarged ed., London and Waltham, Mass.: Ararat, 1961), portal 7, 36. See also J. M. Harris, *Nachman Krochmal: Guiding the Perplexed of the Modern Age* (New York: New York University Press, 1991). Harris emphasizes Krochmal's selectivity in his evaluation of the *'aggadah* and its significance for the national Jewish consciousness. He disinherited *'aggadot* with anti-rabbinic tendencies, consigning them to *genizah*. "Rather, portions of this literature [of *'aggadah*] had to be acknowledged as an expression of sublime philosophical concepts, while other portions had to be recognized as the rantings of foolish people, and excised from the Jewish cultural patrimony" (269). On Herder's notion of civilization as defined by "fixed and uniform" psychological characteristics, see R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), esp. 90–91.

22. *Kol kitvey R. Nahman Krokhmal*, portal 8, 40.

23. Bialik, "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri," 417.

24. Indeed, as Harshav has noted, in important respects all Jews were assimilated to some degree into general modern culture. The intrinsic distinctiveness of the Jewish 'revolution' consisted in its objective of creating a Jewish equivalent to that of general culture. To be Jewish would no longer denote a religious category but an ethnic affiliation to a given culture and nation. B. Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 13, 41.

25. N. Rotenstreich, *Tradition and Reality: The Impact of History on Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: Random House, 1972), 106.

26. J. Heinemann, "'Al darkho shel Bialik be-'aggadah ha-talmudit," *Molad* 31 n.s., no. 6 (April-June 1974): 86. Cf. *Sefer ha-'aggadah*, xii. See also the introduction by D. Stern to the English edition, though the original introduction is here omitted: *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, trans. W. G. Braude with an introduction by D. Stern (New York: Schocken, 1996), and E. E. Urbach, "Bialik we-'aggadot hazal," *Molad* 17 (1959): 266–74.

27. Bialik's attitude toward rabbinic Judaism was not free of nostalgia. Like Berdyczewski, he studied at the Volozhin Yeshiva, then headed by the renowned Talmudic and halakhic authority R. Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin. Despite his immersion in traditional learning he could not resolve his ambivalence towards rabbinic Judaism.

28. Bialik, "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri," 426. In his essay "Halakhah we-'aggadah" (1917), Bialik criticizes the single focus of his generation on *'aggadah* as the soil of a Jewish and Hebrew consciousness. The unity of "two unique forms of life," namely *'aggadah* and *halakhah,* must, he claimed, be guarded. Krochmal's *Moreh nevukhey ha-zeman* (Lemberg, 1851) should serve as a model.

29. *Sefer ha-'aggadah*, xi. "There is nothing in the world of the legend but literary matters in various forms which all merge into one general and specific form which is called 'aggadah.'"

30. Bialik, "Ha-sefer ha-'ivri," 425, my translation.

31. S. Rawidowicz, *Sihotay 'im Bialiq* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1983), 102. See also Kiel, "Twice Lost Legacy," 209–10 and n. 234. On Krochmal's contempt for Hasidism, see Harris, *Nachman Krochmal*, 12. See also S. Nash, *In Search of Hebraism: Shai Hurwitz and his Polemics in the Hebrew Press* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 254.

32. See S. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (London: P. Halban, 1993), 27. Most of the Jewish intellectuals who gathered in Odessa came, as Zipperstein observes, from towns dominated by Ukrainian Hasidism. See also Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794–1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

33. In Buber's assessment a broad assimilation in the East was unfeasible, for the Jews as *Wirtsvolk* ('pariah people') were "culturally weaker" (*kulturschwächer*) in the East than in the West. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem und der Zionismus," *Die Stimme der Wahrheit*, ed. Lazar Schön (Würzburg: N. Philippi, 1905), 208; *First Buber*, 180.

34. See in this context, B. Schäfer, "Jewish Renaissance and Tehiyya—Two that are One?" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003): 320–35.

35. D. Sadan, *'Al sifrutenu* (Jerusalem: Histadrut ha-tsionit, 1951), 51–52.

36. A. Sofer, "'Im ha-'anaqat pras-Bialiq," in *Hapo'el Ha-tsa'ir*, 26 Dec. 1961.

37. Buber, *Gog und Magog: Eine chassidische Chronik* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1949), 406. Fritz Mauthner (*Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 8 [1963]: 147) also saw in Buber a Polish Jew. See also G. Scholem, "Martin Buber's Conception of Judaism," *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays*, ed. and trans. W. J. Dannhauser (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 130.

38. Notwithstanding his traditional upbringing, and in contrast to Agnon and Ben-Yehezkel, the young Buber had a relatively fragmentary knowledge of Hebrew and the traditional literary sources. See A. Eliasberg, "Aus Martin Bubers Jugendzeit," *Blätter des Heine-Bundes* 1, 1 April 1928, 4.

39. H. Hever, "The Struggle over the Canon of Early-Twentieth-Century Hebrew Literature: The Case of Galicia," in *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age*, ed. S. Kepnes (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 256–70.

40. The Russian Hebraist Shai Hurwitz discarded Hasidism. It presented in his view an anachronistic, mythic response to the challenge of nationalism. In "sweetening the exile," Hasidism posed a threat to the Zionist agenda. He praised the anti-Hasidic Krochmal as the true precursor of nationalism who advocated a rationale for survival of the Jewish people through the concept of a cultural mission, independent of traditional religious categories. *Ha-Melits* 19 (1883): 618. See Nash, *In Search of Hebraism*, 72–87.

41. Ben-Yehezkel outlines in almost prototypical manner how he and many Galician and Polish Jews accessed German culture, namely through the aegis of Mendelssohn's Bible translation and his philosophical writings, the study of Lessing, Herder, and the German classics, the reading of works of the Hebrew Haskalah, and the poetry of Y. L. Gordon and Peretz Smolenskin. M. Ben-Yehezkel, "Avtobiyyografyah," *Ha-Do'ar* 50, no. 12 (22 Jan. 1971): 185.

42. The majority of the German Jews concurred with the assimilationist policy of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (CV) and its rejection of Jewish nationalism. See S. M. Lowenstein, "Ideology and Identity," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 3:281–304.

43. Among them are R. Benjamin (Yehoshua Radler), Asher Barash, Hanokh Distenfeld (Yalun), Shmuel Y. Agnon, Hayyim Brenner, and Gerschom Shofman. See G. Kressel, "Sippurey ma'asiyyot be-nusah Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel," *Ma'ariv*, 22 Dec. 1961; P. Goldwasser, "R. Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel Baal 'Sefer Ha-Ma'asiyyot,'" *Ha-Tsofeh*, 17 Dec. 1971.

44. Historians of Hasidism, in particular Shmuel A. Horodezky, Simon Dubnow, Abraham Kahana, Zvi M. Rabinowitz, were likewise consulted or involved at different levels and stages of Buber's anthological endeavors.

45. For a survey on the publishing program of the Jüdischer Verlag, see: *Jüdischer Almanach*, 1902–1964 (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1964).

46. Letter of B. to Bialik, 28 May 1902. H. N. Bialik Archives, Beyt Bialiq, Tel Aviv.

47. Ibid.

48. A. M. Tendlau, *Das Buch der Sagen und Legenden jüdischer Vorzeit*, 3d ed. (Frankfurt a.M.: J. Kauffmann, 1873). In the preface to the first edition Tendlau claims to have collected only those tales, "in which . . . a poetic life, an idea, or character comes to expression." He further published a volume on proverbs and idioms, *Sprichwörter und Redensarten deutsch-jüdischer Vorzeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: H. Keller, 1860).

49. B. Kuttner, *Jüdische Sagen und Legenden für jung und alt gesammelt und wiedererzählt* (Frankfurt a.M.: J. Kauffmann, 1902).

50. Buber's retelling of a Hasidic legend which he apparently culled from the Hasidic work *Devarim 'arevim* and entitled "Von Heer zu Heer," is a curious example of the process of transmission and adaptation in which he situated himself. The legend is of pre-Hasidic origin and the motif of 'a promise is to be kept' can be traced back to the thirteenth century *Sefer hasidim* of Yehudah he-Hasid (ed. Yehudah Wistinetzky, based on MS Parma, Berlin, 1891, siman 324, 102). One finds adaptations in the popular sixteenth-century *Shalshelet ha-kabbalah* of Gedalyah ben Joseph ibn Yahyah (Venice 1587, Jerusalem, 1962, 138–39), and in the *Kav ha-yashar* of Zvi Hirsch Koidonover (Frankfurt, 1705; ed. Avraham Sheinberger, Jerusalem, 1999, vol. 2, ch. 88, 458–59). Tendlau included in his *Sagen und Legenden* (1873, 47–49) a German adaptation of the legend based on the version of *Kav ha-yashar*, reworking the ethical-religious motif into a poem entitled "Die beiden Freunde."

51. With one exception, the tales collected in this small volume had been previously published by Buber between 1906 and 1914 in journals. He reworked the material for the 1934 edition. This anthology comprised one legend from the early eighteenth-century *Kav ha-yashar*, three Hasidic legends, one legend from R. Yisrael of Ruzhin, and one from a volume called *Neue Erzählungen des Rabbi Nachman*, whose existence I could not verify.

52. This position was reflected in Buber's editorial policy of his journal *Der Jude*. He reprimanded Horodezky for excessive bibliographical references, requesting that he reduce them in accord with the journal's basically "non-scholarly character." See letter of B. to Horodezky, 1 Nov. 1916, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:27.

53. Israel Bartal indicates that the roots of modern Jewish endeavor of *kinnus* were already evident in the academic study of Judaism. See I. Bartal, "The *Kinnus* Project: *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the Fashioning of a National Culture in Palestine," in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion*, ed. Y. Elman and I. Gershoni (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 312.

54. Berdyczewski compiled several multi-volume anthologies, some published posthumously: *Die Sagen der Juden zur Bibel* (1913–27, 5 vols.), *Der Born Judas* (1916–23,

6 vols.), and *Mi-meqor Yisra'el* (1939). For background information on Berdyczewski's progression as an anthologist of the *'aggadah*, see Z. Kagan, "*Homo Anthologicus:* Micha Josef Berdyczewski and the Anthological Genre," *Prooftexts* 19 (1999): 41–57.

55. For a discussion of Berdyczewski's ambivalent relationship to Hasidism, see S. Werses, "Ha-hasidut be-'olamo shel Berdychevsqy," *Molad*, New Ser., 1, no. 4 (1968): 465–45.

56. *Sefer hasidim* (Warsaw: Tushiyyah, 1900). The eliciting of the thirteenth-century ethical work of Yehuda he-Hasid for his endeavor strikes one as odd, for Berdyczewski did not endorse the commandments as the basis of Jewish ethics.

57. See M. J. Berdyczewski, "'Goyim we-'elohaw,'" *Kitvey Micha Yosef bin Gorion [Berdyczewski]: Sippurim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1960), 7.

58. See D. C. Jacobson, "Neo-Hasidic Tales: Micha Yosef Berdyczewski and Y. L. Peretz," *Modern Midrash: The Retelling of Traditional Jewish Narratives by Twentieth-Century Hebrew Writers* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 17–43.

59. "Nishmat ha-hasidim [Histaklut]," *Mi-mizrah u-mi-ma'arav*, 4 (1899). Reprinted: M. J. Berdyczewski [Bin Gorion], *Mahberot hazon: Sefer hasidim* (1900), *Ma'amarot* (1903), with an Introduction by Imanuel bin Gorion (Tel Aviv: Reshafim, 1983). On the *Sefer hasidim*, see also F. Lahover, *Toledot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit he-hadashah*, vol. 3, part 2 (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1957), 55–58.

60. *Sefer hasidim*, 14 (all references are to the original edition).

61. *Sefer hasidim*, 15.

62. The birth of Jewish culture had been accompanied by several controversies preceding and extending into the anthology discourse. The first decisive debate led to a schism between Ahad Ha'am, then editor of *Ha-Shiloah*, and Berdyczewski. Ahad Ha'am sought a slow and moderate process of change (as indicated in the journal's name, an allusion to Isa. 8:6). The essays published in the journal under his editorship were to serve the aim of improving the self-understanding and knowledge of the Jewish people of its past. Knowledge of the evolution of the 'soul of the people' would help to resist cultural imitation of the gentiles.

63. Ahad Ha'am, "Te'udat ha-Shiloah," *Ha-Shiloah* 1 (1896): 1–6; see the response of M. J. Berdyczewski, "'Al parashat derakhim. [Mikhtav galuy 'el Ahad Ha'am']," ibid., 154–59, and Ahad Ha'am's response, "Tsorekh we-yekholet," ibid., 268–74. See also J. Klausner, "Yahadut we-'enoshiyyut," *Ha-Shiloah* 9 (1902): 335, who in a similar vein asked for the end of Jewish separatism and a more universalistic perspective. For a discussion of this episode, see F. Lachover, *Bialiq: Hayyaw wi-yitsirotaw* (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Dvir, 1955), 242–50; S. Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness*, trans. I. Friedman (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1987), 118–29; H. Hever, "The Struggle over the Canon," 245–50.

64. Ahad Ha'am, "Te'udat ha-Shiloah," 3.

65. *Sefer hasidim*, 13.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., 13.

68. Ibid., 15, 49.

69. For the different and conflicting views on the image of the historical Besht among Eshcoly, Dubnow and Dinur, see G. Scholem, "Demuto ha-historit shel R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov," *Molad* 18, nos. 144–45 (Aug.–Sept. 1960): 335–56, esp. 341; rpt. in idem, *Devarim be-go* (Tel Aviv, 1975), and in *Tsaddiq we-'eda: Heybetim historyim ba-heqer*

ha-hasidut, ed. D. Asaf (Jerusalem: Mirkaz Zalman Shazar, 2001), 66–92. See also M. Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism: The Quest for the Historical Baal Shem Tov* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

70. *Sefer hasidim*, 36.

71. Ibid., 7.

72. *Keter shem tov* (Lemberg, 1858), 1:7a.

73. *Sefer hasidim*, 34.

74. This style of sermon is also reminiscent of Jesus preaching to the apostles. See Matthew 11:24; Luke 18:8; 21;32; 22:37.

75. *Sefer hasidim*, 88. On the status of the commandments in Hasidism, see R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism: Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought,* trans. J. Chipman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 111.

76. *Sefer hasidim*, 74.

77. Ibid.

78. See ibid., esp. 42.

79. Buber, *Maggid,* xxxii.

80. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 2 July 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/38.

81. Letter to B., 18 July 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/70.

82. See S. Werses, "Ha-hasidut be-'olamo shel Berdychevsqy le'or hiburo she-nignaz," *Mikhah Yosef Berdychevsqy: Mehqarim we-te'udot,* ed. A. Holtzman (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2002), 217.

83. Ibid., 222–23. He primarily drew upon Michael Levi Rodkinson's *'Edat tsaddiqim*, *Sippur tsaddiqim*, and *Toledot ba'aley shem tov.*

84. Ibid., 230–31.

85. Ibid., 223. See Werses, "Ha-hasidut be-'olamo shel Berdychevsqy," 470. See also Y. Keshet, *M. J. Berdychevsky: Hayyaw u-fe'olo* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Magnes Press, 1958), 281–82.

86. M. J. Berdyczewski, "Sefer ha-'aggadah," *Kitvey Micha Yosef bin Gorion [Berdychevsky]: Ma'amarim,* 3d ed. (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1966), 249–50.

87. M. J. Berdyczewski (Bin Gorion), *Me-'otsar ha-'aggadah*, vol. part 1: *Mi-yemey qedem we-ha-talmud* (Berlin: Ahisefer, 1913), xiv.

88. Bialik responded with reserve to the manuscript "Hayye Moshe," sent to him by Berdyczewski in 1904. He was concerned that poeticization would transform the '*aggadot* into a synthetic work. See Keshet, *Berdychevsqy*, 285; see also Kagan, "*Homo Anthologicus,*" 44.

89. Keshet, *Berdychevsqy,* 290.

90. Berdyczewski, "Sefer ha-'aggadah," 249.

91. Ibid.

92. *Me'otsar ha-'aggadah,* xiv. Kagan defines this recurrent term, which Berdyczewski coined to distinguish his anthological approach, as denoting a "historically dynamic rather than static memory." Kagan, "*Homo Anthologicus,*" 42.

93. With *Me-'otsar ha-'aggadah* (1913) and *Tsefunot we-'aggadot* (1924, 2 vols.) Berdyczewski presents two counter-models for a fresh rendering of Judaism on the basis of its oral traditions. In particular in *Tsefunot we-'aggadot*—an anthology of material drawn solely from the folk tales—he merges old and new, folk tradition and contemporary literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. The Democratic Faction was founded in 1901 as grouping of cultural Zionists opposed to Herzl's political Zionism. Among the founders and those aligned with the organization were Martin Buber, Berthold Feiwel, Ephraim M. Lilien, Leo Motzkin, Alfred Nossig, and Chaim Weizmann. The group believed that a political solution to the Jewish Question was by itself insufficient and needed to be complemented by the shaping of a Jewish culture. They prioritized aesthetic and scientific education as well as the revival of Hebrew. It dissolved around 1906. See M. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry Before the First World War* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 40–98. For a discussion of the opposition to political Zionism and Buber's role in the debate, see B. Schäfer, "Zur Rolle der Demokratischen Fraktion in der 'Altneuland- Kontroverse'," in *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1995): 1–17.

2. Letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 11 Feb. 1903, Marcus Ehrenpreis-Archive, Jewish National University Library (hereafter, ME-A), Arc. Ms. Var. 4°672/7.

3. The dissertation *Entwicklung der Emanationslehre in der Kabbalah des XIII Jahrhunderts* was submitted to the University of Erlangen in 1895 and published in the same year. Scholem criticized this work on the early Kabbalah and rejected most of its assertions as "erroneous from the point of view of history as well as the history of ideas." G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed. R. J. Z. Werblowsky, trans. A. Arkush (Princeton: Jewish Publication Society, 1987), 388, n. 59.

4. Ehrenpreis had a great interest in Hasidic literature, specifically the material on the Besht, which he sifted for his planned history of Hebrew literature. *Ginzey Mikha Josef. 'Arkhiyyon M. J. Berdychevsqy, Qovets* 5, ed. A. Holtzman (Tel Aviv, 1995), 79.

5. Cited in E. Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement, 1882–1904,* trans. L. J. Schramm (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1988), 172.

6. In a letter to Berdyczewski of 8 March 1896, Ehrenpreis writes: "I wish to present a psychology of the Jewish people of the latest period; the books and writers about which I will speak [in his book an Hebrew literature] will just be manifestations of the same soul of the people, to which I intend to descend into its depths and to reveal its consciousness." Ibid.

7. On the role of Ehrenpreis within cultural Zionism, see M. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 46–49.

8. In an article based on his lecture of 1897, Ehrenpreis discusses the poetic style of Bialik and Tchernichovsky. Although both are poets of the "problem of transvaluation" focused on "the question of revision within the transmitted cultural concepts [*Kulturbegriffe*]" and work towards the "*liberating synthesis,*" Ehrenpreis remains critical of their respective approaches: "We will not follow one [Bialik] into the house of study [*bet ha-midrash*] and the other [Tchernichovsky] to the statue of Apollo [in reference to Tchernichovsky's article "In Front of the Statue of Apollo," 1899]. The new Jewish culture, which we seek, lies elsewhere: it will not be a polished up [aestheticized] tradition, but also not a Hellenistic or Aryan culture." Ehrenpreis, "Junghebräische Dichtung," in *Jüdischer Almanach* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902), 35–36, 43. Cf. Buber, *Cherut*, 12; *On Judaism*, ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 157. See also B. Mann, "Visions of Jewish Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 4 (Nov. 2006): 684–85.

9. Letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 18 Feb. 1904, ME-A.

10. Letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 13 Sept. 1904, ME-A.

11. Ibid.

12. Letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 30 June 1905, ME-A.

13. See W. Cutter, "The Buber and Berdyczewski Correspondence," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (Spring-Summer 2000): 164.

14. This information is gathered from Berdyczewski's reply to B., 24 July 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/42, and 25 July 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/56.

15. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 24 July 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/42.

16. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 25 July 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/56.

17. Letter of B. to Berdyczewski, 15 Aug. 1907, in Cutter, "Buber and Berdyczewski Correspondence," 173.

18. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 20 Aug. 1907, in Cutter, "Buber and Berdyczewski Correspondence," 174.

19. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 2 Oct. 1907, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/52.

20. In the first edition of *Legende*, Buber criticizes the positivistic method applied by Dubnow and Horodezky to the representation of the vita of a personality revered as a saint (i.e., the Besht). Berdyczewski, on the other hand, is "before all others the most suited" to present Hasidism in its fullest significance. That Buber omitted this note in the 1916 edition is an indication that by then his relationship to Berdyczewski had cooled.

21. Letter of B. to Berdyczewski, 22 Dec. 1907, in Cutter, "Buber and Berdyczewski Correspondence," 178.

22. Ibid.

23. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 12 July 1908, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/58.

24. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 5 Sept. 1908, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/63.

25. Letter of B. to Berdyczewski, 26 Feb. 1909, M. J. Berdyczewski archive, Holon, Israel.

26. Letter of B. to Berdyczewski, 18 April 1909, M. J. Berdyczewski archive.

27. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 9 April 1908, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten,* ed. Grete Schaeder, 3 vols. (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1972–75), 1:261.

28. See letter of Berdyczewski to B., 1 Jan. 1909, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/67.

29. Letter of Berdyczewski to B., 28 Feb. 1909, *Briefwechsel,* 1:273.

30. Berdyczewski expressed reservations about Buber's retelling of the legends in *Legende* and their aesthetic-poetic polishing (letter to B., 9 April 1908). In his diary entry of 29 March 1908, he bemoans Buber's exiguous knowledge of the sources and the "irresponsible and tiring" language of retelling. See W. Cutter, "The Buber and Berdyczewski Correspondence," 180.

31. Berdyczewski to B., 8 Aug. 1911, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:89/89.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Many of Agnon's novels display anthological tendencies. He absorbed into his stories many passages and anecdotes from late collections of Hasidic legends. See G. Nigal, *Shai Agnon u-meqorotaw ha-hasidim: 'Iyyun be-arba'a mi-sippuraw* (Ramat Gan: Makhon Kurtsveil, 1983); G. Nigal, *Mi-liqqutey ha-sippur ha-'ivri* (Jerusalem: Carmel and

G. Nigal, 1995), 43; see also A. Wineman, "The Metamorphosis of a Hasidic Legend in Agnon's 'Al 'Even Ahat," *AJS Review* 3 (1978): 197–201.

2. See *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism*, ed. T. M. Rabinowicz (Northvale, N.J. and London: Jason Aronson Inc. 1996), s.v. "Agnon," 10.

3. Ahron Eliasberg, epilogue, *Das Buch von den polnischen Juden* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1916), 262.

4. See D. Laor, "Agnon and Buber: The Story of a Friendship, or: The Rise and Fall of the 'Corpus Hasidicum,'" in *Martin Buber: A Contemporary Perspective*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr (Jerusalem: Syracuse University Press and The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2002), 57.

5. S. Y. Agnon, *Mi-'atsmi 'el-'atsmi* (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1976), 271.

6. S. Y. Agnon, "Mikhtavey S. Y. Tshatshqis (Agnon) 'el Martin Buber, 1909–1924," *Qovets Agnon*, 55–99, esp. 82–83, postcard dated 27 Aug. 1919. At Buber's behest, Agnon also searched for specific religious terms in kabbalistic sources (ibid., 69, undated letter).

7. Postcard of Agnon to B., 27 Feb. 1924, "Mikhtavey," 96.

8. Agnon, *Mi-'atsmi*, 270.

9. Defending Buber against his critics, Agnon pointed to the shortcomings of those who preceded or paralleled Buber in their work on Hasidism. Dubnow "did not learn from the material he compiled in his book," Kahana turned the Hasidic legend into history, Zeitlin lacked a critical distance to Hasidism, Peretz undertook a literarization and reinvention of Hasidism, and Berdyczewski offered but an imaginative reinvention. Although Agnon eschews Buber's early representations of Hasidic lore as a fusion of external ideas with Hasidism, he praises his later, more faithful presentations of Hasidic anecdotes as "an example for anyone who writes on Hasidic legends." Agnon, *Mi-'atsmi*, 261–63.

10. Agnon embodied for Buber the principle of faithfulness. See *Treue: Eine Sammelschrift*, ed. L. Herrmann (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1916).

11. During his stay in Bad Homburg from 1913 until 1924, Agnon occasionally met with Ahad Ha'am and Bialik, and he introduced Buber at some occasions to the leading Hebrew writers of the time. See H. Beer, *Gam 'Ahavatam, Gam Sinatam: Bialiq, Brenner, Agnon* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1994), 188–89.

12. *Present at Sinai: The Giving of the Law*, commentaries selected by S. Y. Agnon, trans. M. Swirsky, with an introduction by J. Goldin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 8.

13. See D. Sadan, "Ba'al sippurey ha-ma'asiyyot," *Moznayim* 32, nos. 4–5 (March/April 1971): 340. It is uncertain when Martin Buber first became acquainted with Ben-Yehezkel's work. The archival material solely documents their correspondence on issues pertaining to Buber's work on *Gog u-Magog*, beginning in 1939.

14. *Ha-Shiloah* 17 (1907): 219–30; 20 (1909): 38–46, 161–71; 22 (1910), 251–61, 339–50; 25 (1912): 434–52. In contrast to some of his close lifelong companions such as Hans Kohn and Ernst A. Simon, Buber never published in this important Hebrew Zionist organ.

15. All efforts to locate the literary Nachlaß of Ben-Yehezkel have failed. It first remained with the widow of his former student Pinhas Goldwasser, at whose home in Jerusalem Ben-Yehezkel spent his last years. Thereafter all traces of the Nachlaß are lost. See A. Malkiel, "Morenu rabbenu Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel, z"l," *Ha-Tsofeh*, 30 Jan. 1987.

16. *Ha-Shiloah* 17 (1907): 219–20. Ben-Yehezkel draws among other works from *Qedushat Lewi*, *No'am 'Elimelekh*, *Keter Shem Tov*, *'Ohev Isra'el*, *Darkhey Tsedeq*, *Degel Mahaneh 'Efrayim*, *Seder ha-Dorot ha-Hadash*, *Torat ha-ReMaL ha-Shalem*, and from *Tanya,* the central work of Habad Hasidism.

17. Cf. *Qedushat Lewi*, 'wa-ethannan,' s.v. "we-yarad h' 'al har sinai."

18. He also mentions the concept of *bittul ha-yesh*, the mystical annihilation of the self.

19. M. Ben-Yehezkel, "Wa-yihi ha-yom," in *Bialik: Yetsirot le-sugeyha be-re'i ha-biqqoret*, ed. G. Shaked (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1974), 340.

20. Ibid., 348.

21. *Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot*. Collected from books and through oral transmission, corrected for print, 6 vols., 4th ed. (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1975/76), ix.

22. See E. M. Lifshitz, "Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot" [book review, lacking name of journal on photocopy] (Sept.-Oct. 1962), 32 (Genazim Archive).

23. Two examples for retelling are the legends "Ha-mitpallel betokh 'emet ha-yamim" (*Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot*, vol. 1, 281–84) drawn from *Mif'alot ha-tsaddiqim,* and "Tiqqun hatsot" (*Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot*, vol. 4, 173–81) from *Ma'aseh tsaddiqim*.

24. Lifshitz, "Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot," 33.

25. Original Jewish motifs were, e.g., *hakhnassat kallah*, *ha-tsaddiq ha-nistar*, *middah ke-neged middah*, and *sekhar mitswah be-'olam ha-zeh*.

26. Singular '*agunah* (lit., 'chained') denotes a woman who cannot remarry, either because her husband refuses to give her a *get* (divorce), or because it cannot be verified whether or not he is dead, or because he is incompetent to give a divorce for medical reasons.

27. See Y. Even-Hen, "Mordekhai Ben-Yehezkel Ba'al 'Sefer ha-ma'asiyyot'" [book review], *Ha-Tsofeh*, 22 Dec. 1961 (Genazim Archive).

28. Buber, "Du-siyah beyn ha-netsah we-ha-rega,'" *Ha'arets*, 22 Dec. 1961.

29. Already for the writing of *Rabbi Nachman* Buber requested from Horodezky *Hayye MoHaRaN*. B. to Horodezky, 4 Oct. 1905, MB-A, Arc. Ms.Var. 305:31. Horodezky published several monographs on the Besht and R. Nahman, among them *R. Isra'el Besht: Hayyaw we-torato* (1909), a book entitled *Rabbi Nachman von Bratzlaw: Beitrag zur Geschichte der jüdischen Mystik* (1910), a new edition of the *Shivhey ha-Besht* (1922), and *Torat R. Nahman mi-Bratslav we-sihotaw* (1923).

30. B. to Horodezky, 19 Aug. 1908, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:12. Rarely could Buber reciprocate and provide Horodezky with references or material. See B. to Horodezky, 11 March 1909, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:14.

31. B. to Horodezky, 9 Sept. 1908, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:13; 305:12.

32. B. to Horodezky, 2 June 1916, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:23.

33. B. to Horodezky, 11 Jan. 1916, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:21.

34. B. to Horodezky, 26 Nov. 1917, MB-A, no file number.

35. B. to Horodezky, 4 July 1919, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:37 and his letter of 23 Sept. 1916, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:26. Like Agnon and Ben-Yehezkel, Horodezky wrote his letters to Buber in Hebrew, whereas Buber corresponded in German, occasionally inserting Hebrew words.

36. See the letters of B. to Horodezky from the MB-A: 4 June 1907, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:7 (B. asks to obtain a copy of *Die mystischen Strömungen der Juden Polens*), 30 Jan 1908 (B. read Horodezky's essay "Ha-Gera' [Gaon of Wilna] we-ha-BeShT," Arc. Ms. Var.

305:9, 29 Dec. 1920, Arc. Ms. Var 305:39; 24 Jan. 1921 (an essay on R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk), Arc. Ms. Var. 305:40.

37. B. to Horodezky, 23 Oct. 1923, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:43. Buber further informs Horodezky that the source of this legend is *'Ateret le-rosh tsaddiq* and not *Derekh 'emunah*.

38. B. to Horodezky, 26 Dec. 1923, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:44.

39. S. A. Horodezky, "Milhemet ha-regesh we-ha-sekhel," *Ha-Shiloah* 18 (1908): 540.

40. B. to Horodezky, 16 Jan. 1934, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:51.

41. For example, the biographical-legendary material on R. Nahman was to be organized chronologically. B. to Horodezky, 10 Dec. 1934, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:53.

42. Horodezky to B., 3 March 1935, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:16.

43. B. to Horodezky, 11 March 1935, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:54.

44. Horodezky to B., 22 July 1935, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:18. He sent another list on 24 Dec. 1936, and on 13 May 1936, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:19.

45. Horodezky to B., 13 May 1936, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:19, adding entries to the list of 1 Jan. 1936, among them many of theosophic and kabbalistic connotation, such as *histaklut* (apprehension), *da'at* (knowledge), *'emet* (truth), *bereshit ha-hawayah* (beginning of experience), *hishtalshelut ha-'olamot* (succession of the worlds).

46. Horodezky suggested the preparation of the letters of R. David of Kalisz and R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk on 'the land of Israel' (*Erez Yisra'el*) for the Schocken Bücherei. Horodezky to B., 23 July 1934, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:15.

47. B. to Horodezky, 21 Dec. 1936, MB-A, Ms. Var. 305:57.

48. B. to Horodezky, 24 Dec. 1936, MB-A, Ms. Var. 305:58. Cf. V. Dahm, *Das jüdische Buch im Dritten Reich,* vol. 2: *Salman Schocken und sein Verlag* (Frankfurt a.M.: Buchhändler Vereinigung GmbH, 1982), col. 623, n. 472.

CHAPTER SIX

1. "Tehiyyat ha-Ruah," *Ha-Shiloah* 10 (1902): 399.

2. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," *Ost und West* 2, no. 10 (Oct. 1902), 663; *First Buber*, 118.

3. See Buber, "Die Erneuerung des Judentums," in *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1911), esp. 59–61. See further, J. Reinharz, "Ahad Ha-Am, Martin Buber, and German Zionism," *At the Crossroads: Essays on Ahad Ha'am*, ed. J. Kornberg, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 142–55.

4. Buber, "Erneuerung des Judentums," 61; *On Judaism*, ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 35.

5. Buber, "Der Jude und sein Werk: Eine Ansprache," *Jüdischer Almanach* 5670 (1910): 9.

6. See E. Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement,* 1882–1904, trans. L. J. Schramm (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1988), 160.

7. Ibid., 161.

8. Ahad Ha-am, "Priest and Prophet" (1893), *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha'-Am,* trans. L. Simon (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1944), 132.

9. Ibid., 133.

10. Buber, "Erneuerung des Judentums," 65–66.

11. Ibid., 68–69.

12. In an elaborate letter, Ehrenpreis formally invited Ahad Ha'am and asked for active participation. See his letter to Ahad Ha'am, 10 Jan. 1903, Arc. 4°791/23, Ahad Ha'am Archive. Buber was repelled by the attack of Nordau on Ahad Ha'am. See the letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 16 March 1903, ME-A, and the letter of Ehrenpreis to B., dated 12 March 1903, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten,* ed. Grete Schaeder, 3 vols. (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1972–75), 1:186. The conference never took place.

13. See letter of B. to Ahad Ha'am, 30 May 1902, MB-A, Ms. Var. 350:57/15.

14. Introduction to the first issue of the *Jüdischer Almanach* 5663 (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902), 12, 13–14. An inspirational source for the Almanac could have been Israel B. Levner's *Kereistomatyah* (Chrestomathy), ^{3}1908.

15. Buber refers to the hostile response of the Hebraists in Germany in his letter to Ahad Ha'am of 30 May 1902, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:57/15.

16. Buber, "Ein Wort zum Fünften Congreß," *Jüdische Volksstimme* 2, no. 24, 3, no. 2 (15 Jan. 1902, 15 Feb. 1902): 2; *First Buber*, 95.

17. A term first used in the Zionist context by Leon Pinsker in 1892. See B. Schäfer, "Jewish Renaissance and Tehiyya—Two that are One?" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003): 324.

18. Prospectus of 1903 to announce the new, but then postponed, journal, *Der Jude: Revue der Jüdischen Moderne*, publ. Ch. Weizmann, ed. Buber and B. Feiwel. The prospectus states that Judaism will not be presented as a "phenomenon of the past or something that is banned in rigid formula." A second prospectus with a slightly changed text was published in 1904. Founded in 1916, in the midst of the First World War, which witnessed the intensification of invidious nationalism and political antisemitism, *Der Jude* offered a prism for Jewish cultural sensibilities and the contemporary Jewish experience in Europe. On the development and ideological orientation of the journal see E. Lappin, *Der Jude* 1916–1928*: Jüdische Moderne zwischen Universalismus und Partikularismus* (Tübingen: [J. C. B. Mohr] Paul Siebeck, 2000).

19. *Der Jude* 1, no. 6 (Sept. 1916): 354–58.

20. See Ahad Ha'am's letter to B., 23 June 1911, *Briefwechsel,* 1:296–97.

21. See the letter of B. to Ahad Ha'am, 28 Nov. 1915 (MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:57/23), and the response of Ahad Ha'am, 22 Dec. 1915 (MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 350:57/8). Presumably due to the exigencies of wartime regulations the letter had to be written in English and is here cited from the original.

22. Buber, "Die hebräische Sprache," *Jüdische Rundschau* 15 no. 2 (14 Jan. 1910): pt. 1, p. 13; *First Buber*, 201.

23. Ibid., pt. 1, p. 13; *First Buber*, 201.

24. Ibid. pt. 1, p. 14; *First Buber*, 202.

25. Ibid., pt. 1, p. 13; *First Buber*, 199.

26. In 1918 Buber asserted: "Not Hebraism but Hebrew Humanism—the term understood in its great historical sense—must be the core of a Jewish Renaissance." Buber, *Zion als Ziel und Aufgabe: Gedanken aus drei Jahrzehnten*, mit einer Rede über Nationalismus als Anhang (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1936), 40–41.

27. "Die hebräische Sprache," pt. 2, p. 26; *First Buber*, 203.

28. Ibid.; *First Buber*, 204.

29. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem und der Zionismus," *Die Stimme der Wahrheit*, ed. L. Schön (Würzburg: N. Philippi, 1905), 208; *First Buber*, 181.

30. At the Conference for Hebrew Language and Culture in Berlin, on 19 Dec. 1909, Buber confessed his difficulties in formulating in Hebrew thoughts that originated in German and thus declined to deliver his paper in Hebrew. "Die hebräische Sprache," pt. 1, 13.

31. Scholem records on 2 April 1915 in his diary: "This time it occurs that at the conclusion of his third [address on Judaism] Buber is dead-quiet regarding emigration to Palestine. . . . I fear that according to him one could even and sufficiently justify remaining here [in the Diaspora]." *Gershom Scholem: Tagebücher nebst Aufsätzen und Entwürfen bis* 1923, vol. 1, ed. K. Gründer and F. Niewöhner with H. Kopp-Oberstebrink (Frankfurt a.M.: Jüdischer Verlag, 1995), 100.

32. See H. Bergmann, "Das hebräische Buch und die deutschen Zionisten," *Der Jude* 4, no. 6 (Sept. 1919): 287–88.

33. See Klausner's letter to B., 2 Aug. 1932 (*Briefwechsel*, 2:444), in which he criticizes Buber's unwillingness to embrace Hebrew and the lack of citation of Hebrew sources in his work.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Azriel of Gerona, *Perush ha-Aggadot*, 40; cited in D. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco: Harper, 1995), 113.

2. See M. Kutzreiter, *Sprachkritik als Ideologiekritik bei Fritz Mauthner* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fritz Lang, 1993).

3. F. Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1901), 616–22 and 646–51.

4. G. Landauer, *Skepsis und Mystik: Versuche im Anschluß an Mauthners Sprachkritik* (Berlin: F. Fontane & Co, 1903), 3.

5. See M. Idel, "Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. S. T. Katz (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 65. In overcoming the esotericism of the Kabbalah, "language serves [in Hasidism] more as a ladder to reach the divine in a unitive experience and less to contemplate it or decode its structure." Buber is not concerned with the cosmogonic power ascribed by the Kabbalists to Hebrew, or with the relationship between language and hermeneutics (the midrashic mode of interpretation), or with the relationship between ritual and language (e.g., prayer) in the process of cleaving to God.

6. For a nuanced discussion of the critique of language and *Rabbi Nachman,* see A. Biemann, ed., *Sprachphilosophische Schriften: MBW*, vol. 6:9–68. Biemann's observations on *Rabbi Nachman* bear directly on my analysis of *Legende*.

7. See Buber, *Between Man and Man*, trans. R. G. Smith (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 184. See also his essay, "Über Jakob Böhme," *Wiener Rundschau* 5, no. 12 (5 June 1901): 251–53.

8. Preface to his Ph.D. dissertation, *Zur Geschichte des Individuationsproblems: Nicolaus von Cues und Jakob Boehme* (Vienna, 1904), 1 (typescript; MB-A, Jewish National University Library, Ms. Var. 350/A2). See G. Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative*

Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909 (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 34–44, esp. 35.

9. J. Böhme, "De incarnatione verbi, oder Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi," *Sämtliche Schriften*, ed. W.-E. Peukert, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Frommans Verlag, 1957), 8.

10. In his early writings Buber is evasive about the traditional conception of the Torah as the revealed Word of God. The ambiguity of a content-less Word of God is compounded by his ambivalence towards the traditional concept of divine revelation. For the early Buber, the Word is "realized" through experience and not heard as an address from a transcendent, self-revealing God. Similarly, in the dialogical meeting it is not substantive content that is conveyed, but divine "fullness." See N. Rotenstreich, *Immediacy and its Limits: A Study in Martin Buber's Thought* (Chur and Reading: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), 45–47.

11. Buber, "Jüdische Religiosität," *Vom Geist des Judentums,* 55; *On Judaism,* ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 82.

12. *Ecstatic Confessions,* collected and introduced by Martin Buber, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr, trans. E. Cameron (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), xxxi [xv]. All references in brackets are to the German edition, *Ekstatische Konfessionen*, 5th ed. (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1984).

13. *Ecstatic Confessions*, 5 [xxix]. Mauthner was skeptical whether a clear distinction between language and speech could be sustained. See G. Weiler, *Mauthner's Critique of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 95.

14. Ibid, xxxi [xv].

15. P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. R. Czerny et al. (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 249.

16. The article was originally published in *Kol kitvey H. N. Bialiq* [Collected Writings] (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1964). 303–305. An English translation was prepared by Y. Lotan and published in *The Heart and the Fountain: An Anthology of Mystical Experiences*, ed. J. Dan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 255–61. See also '*Al gilluy we-kissuy ba-lashon: 'Iyyunim be-masato shel Bialiq*, ed. Z. Luz and Z. Shamir (Ramat Gan: University Bar Ilan, 2001); A. Yadin, "A Web of Chaos: Bialik and Nietzsche on Language, Truth and the Death of God," in *Prooftexts* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 179–202; and B. Mann, "Visions of Jewish Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 4 (Nov. 2006): 684–85.

17. *The Heart and the Fountain*, 256–57; *Kol kitvey H. N. Bialiq,* 257.

18. Biemann, "Introduction," *Sprachphilosophische Schriften,* 43.

19. *Ecstatic Confessions,* 2 [xxiv].

20. Ibid., 7–8 [xxxiif.].

21. P. Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," *New Literary History* 6 (1974–75): 97. Originally published as "La métaphore et la problème central de l'herméneutique," *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 70 (1972): 93–112.

22. *Ecstatic Confessions,* 6 [xxx].

23. The original Hasidic source could not be identified.

24. *Ecstatic Confessions*, 3 [xxv], emphasis mine.

25. Although '*ahizat 'enayim* was one of the two forbidden types of magic, it was considered a moderate form of magic, for it merely "creates the illusion of such an act [of

magic] or its effect" (*ha-'ohez et ha-'enayim*). It does not operate with the aid of demons, in contrast to the practice of magic which produces a discernible effect (see T. B. Sanhedrin 67b; Yoreh De'ah 179:15). See also J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 3d ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1975), 19.

26. *Keter shem tov* ([Zolkiev, 1794] Lemberg 1858), I, 7a, my translation. For a discussion of this parable in the context of medieval Jewish philosophy, see A. L. Gluck, "The King in His Palace: Ibn Gabirol and Maimonides," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 91, nos. 3–4 (January-April 2001): 337–57.

27. See C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism: A Source-critical and Tradition-historical Inquiry* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 152ff.

28. Joseph Weiss argued that the meaning of the parable has long been misinterpreted by scholars. Rather than denoting "pantheistic and acosmistic teaching," it comes to teach the new principle of service through corporeality. Weiss, "Reshit zmihtah shel ha-derekh ha-hasidit," *Zion* 16, nos. 3–4 (1951): 97.

29. N. Lamm, *The Religious Thought of Hasidism: Text and Commentary* (Hoboken, N.J.: Yeshiva University Press, 1999), 11.

30. R. Elior, "The Paradigms of Yesh and Ayin in Hasidic Thought," in *Hasidism Reappraised*, 172ff. Whereas some Hasidic masters conceived this teaching as a threat to the traditional belief in divine transcendence, others regarded the panentheistic or acosmistic view merely as a shift of emphasis, from inaccessible remoteness to the possibility of experience, without obfuscating the ontological otherness of God.

31. M. Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. J. Farrell (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), 70f.

32. Ibid., 132.

33. Such a shift of meaning is not untypical for Zionist adaptations of Hasidic wisdom. Through Michael Levi Rodkinson's mid-nineteenth-century pseudepigraphic collection *Toledot ba'aley Shem Tov* (Königsberg: Bi-defus Hirsh Petsell, 1876), 78f., the Hasidic parable found its way into Zionist discourse. In his *Sefer Hasidim* (Warsaw, 1900, 33ff.) Berdyczewski was the first to have presented the parable as an allegory of cultural Zionism.

34. Whereas the main variants of this parable all mention the treasures as a means of distraction, emphasizing the idea of "testing" the servant's loyalty and determination, Buber replaces this detail with a confused orientation engendered by a maze. Although he returns to the theme of seeking God, he deflects the plain message of the parable, namely, that man's spiritual comprehension and *effort* of devotion bring him near to God. The son in Buber's version does not gain an awareness of his father's presence as a result of an effort to "find" him. As a consequence, the spiritual value of perfect devotion is lost. That the son "saw his father sitting in the hall before him" is the most considerable deviation. Buber uses the language of Psalms; in the ascent of one's soul during prayer one seeks "God face to face."

35. The parable has been adapted in Carl Friedman's *Twee Koffers vol* (1993) where it is indeed used as an allegory for the illusion of assimilation. *The Shovel and the Loom*, trans. J. K. Ringold (New York: Persea Press, 1996), 45–46.

36. This understanding of *Spiegelung* as mirroring self-deception was known to Buber from the very first lines of Gustav Landauer's *Skepsis und Mystik*. Elaborating

on Mauthner's theory of language and its relation to a mystical epistemology, Landauer opens with an allegory, voicing his reservations about the chimera of the mystic's quest to transcend the phenomenal world: In a dream a man wanders in hugged, high mountains, his way blocked by the glistening of the sun. He suddenly confronts his image in the shimmer of the bright light, and joyously believes that he alone exists and that the world has vanished. But then the voice beckoned him to take a closer look at the reflection, and saw that he was but a part of the reflected world around him and still "bound in chains." *Skepsis und Mystik*, 4.

37. Mauthner, *Atheismus*, 4:446.

38. Ibid., 4:417.

39. F. Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, vol. 1: *Zur Sprache und zur Psychologie* (1901–02; Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969), 417.

40. Mauthner, *Atheismus*, 4:441.

41. Ibid., 4:443.

42. Ibid.

43. See Simmel's diary, cited in the introduction to *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* trans. K. H. Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1964), xxi.

44. F. Mauthner, s.v. "Mystik," in idem, *Wörterbuch der Philosophie: Neue Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (Munich and Leipzig: Georg Müller, 1910), 2:127.

45. Ibid., 132.

46. Buber, *Cherut,* 18; *On Judaism,* 161.

47. Founded by the writers and critics Heinrich and Julius Hart in Berlin, the Neue Gemeinschaft was dedicated to forging a community beyond the invidious *principum individuationis*.

48. See also Buber, *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman,* trans. M. Friedman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 25.

49. Buber, "Jüdische Renaissance," *Ost und West*, 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1901): 10; *First Buber*, 32.

50. Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years*, 31. Schmidt argues that a life-affirmative self-preservation "became the single most important characteristic of Buber's new concept of personality."

51. Buber, "Die Schaffenden, das Volk und die Bewegung," *Jüdischer Almanach* 5663 (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902), 22; *First Buber*, 144.

52. Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years*, 32.

53. Buber also echoes here Goethe's reflections about the intuitive mode of thought which does not allow for a bifurcation of nature into inner and outer manifestations.

54. Buber, "Mystik als religiöser Solipsismus: Bermerkungen zu einem Vortrag von Ernst Troeltsch,"*Verhandlungen des ersten deutschen Soziologentages vom* 19.-23. *Oktober* 1910 (Tübingen: Schriften der deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie, 1911), 206–207.

55. Similarly, Mauthner prefers to speak in the language of psychology of inner and outer reality: "We can, therefore, never again split our inner-life into a subject and an object. It is only due to the nature [*Eigenheit*] of our senses, whereby we accommodate ourselves to our outer-world, and thus separating the outer-world as an object of our inner-world, the subject. Thereupon arises the paramount question of metaphysics and language criticism, whether the outer-world or the inner-world is true reality." Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, 1:323, 416–18.

56. *Ecstatic Confessions*, 7.

57. A. Seyhan, *Representation and Its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 140.

58. Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke,* kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, and Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), Bd. 1, p. 60.

59. Mauthner, *Beiträge*, 1:366. Mauthner even goes so far as to ascribe a "hatred of language" to Nietzsche. Ibid., 368.

60. Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinn" (On truth and lying in an extra-moral sense, 1873), in *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, ed. and trans. S. L. Gilman, C. Blair, and D. J. Parent (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 250.

61. Seyhan, *Representation*, 137.

62. For Kant, the world of appearance need not be an illusion but the basis of empirically real representations which are also the objects of empirical knowledge. On the basis of his ontological monism, our knowledge of reality is not mediated by transcendental intuitions, which are representations of appearances.

63. See also Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 4, section 151.

64. Seyhan, *Representation*, 138.

65. See L. Batnitzky, "Renewing the Jewish Past: Buber on History and Truth," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003): 345. Batnitzky cautions that Buber's "re-experiencing" does not mean a subjective re-experiencing of the past. Rather it posits the possibility "to get back to the ontological reality of the Jewish past," retrieving it for the present.

66. Like the Hart brothers, Buber rejects the Kantian thing-in-itself and endorses their view of duality as a unity in multiplicity.

67. The Hasidic source cited by Buber could not be identified.

68. Buber, "Der Mythos der Juden," *Vom Geist des Judentums*, 92; *On Judaism*, 105.

69. "Sprechen oder Denken ist Handeln." Mauthner, *Beiträge*, 1:517.

70. The Hasidic source cited by Buber could not be identified.

71. As Arnold Eisen has observed with respect to Buber's early cultural-religious coding of Zionism, "Judaism meant the search for unity in the self, the community, and the world." As a spiritual quest for the unity of self and action, ritual retains meaning for Buber. A. M. Eisen, *Rethinking Modern Judaism: Ritual, Commandment, Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 190–91.

72. L. Geldsetzer, "Truth, Falsity and Verisimilitude in Hermeneutics" at <http://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/philo/geldsetzer/truth.htm> (11 February 2005). A first version of this article was presented at the Symposium "The Analytical Philosophy and Philosophy of Science," 23–25 July 1996 at the Beijing Academy for Social Sciences in Bejing, and published in Chinese translation by Hu Xin-he in *Journal of Dialectics of Nature* 19, no. 1 (Beijing 1997): 1–15.

73. B. Debatin, "Metaphorical Iconoclasm and the Reflective Power of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Rational Discourse*, ed. B. Debatin, T. R. Jackson, and D. Steuer (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1997), 154.

74. Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience,* vol. 5 of *Selected Works,* ed. R. A. Makkreel and F. Rodie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 242.

75. See in this context, K. Harries, "Metaphor and Transcendence," in *On Metaphor*, ed. S. Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 72.

76. W. Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. J. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 64.

77. Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience,* 237.

78. Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics," 107.

79. Ibid., 106.

80. Ricoeur, *Rule of Metaphor*, 287.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. M. Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 5.

2. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem und der Zionismus," in *Die Stimme der Wahrheit*, ed. L. Schön (Würzburg: N. Philippi, 1905), 210; *First Buber*, 183.

3. Buber, "Das Volk, die Schaffenden und die Bewegung: Einige Bemerkungen," *Jüdischer Almanach* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902): 21; *First Buber*, 143.

4. Biemann argues that Buber, influenced by Burckhardt's reading of the Italian Renaissance, held "transformation as a genuine renaissance concept." A. D. Biemann, "Aesthetic Education in Martin Buber: Jewish Renaissance and the Artist," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. M. Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 100.

5. Simmel spoke of culture as the progressive "refinement of the spiritualized forms of life" resulting from the "inner and external work [on life]." Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (1900), ed. D. Frisby, trans. T. Bottomore and D. Frisby, 2d ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1999). On Simmel's conception of culture, see *Der junge Simmel in Theoriebeziehungen und sozialen Bewegungen*, ed. K. C. Köhnke (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996), 350–54.

6. Simmel, "The Conflict in Modern Culture" (1918), in idem, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. and trans. D. N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 375.

7. Buber, "Jüdische Renaissance," col. 7; *First Buber*, 31. The rhetoric of rebirth and renaissance, as Asher Biemann has noted, was already current in Zionist discourse before Buber penned his programmatic reflections on a "Jewish Renaissance." Biemann, "The Problem of Tradition and Reform in Jewish Renaissance and Renaissancism," *Jewish Social Studies* 8, no. 1 (2001): 61.

8. In a circular Berdyczewski and Ehrenpreis called for the purchase of shares in "Techija." MB-A, Ms. Var. 350:189/1.

9. Buber, "Erneuerung des Judentums," in *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1911), 61; *On Judaism*, 35.

10. For a detailed discussion of the conceptual nuances of the term "Renaissance" in the context of the German-Jewish Renaissance and the influence of Jacob Burckhardt, see A. Biemann, "The Problem of Tradition and Reform," 65–66.

11. A. Eliasberg, "Aus Martin Buber's Jugendzeit: Erinnerungen," *Blätter des Heine-Bundes* 1, no. 1 (1 April 1928): 5.

12. Buber, "Divrey Petihah," [Foreword to] J. Burckhardt, *Tarbut ha-renesans be-'italiyah*, trans. Y. Steinberg (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1949), vi.

13. For Buber this vision was preeminently exemplified by the teachings of Joachim of Fiore and Francis of Assisi, who sought to revive what they regarded as the pristine Christian ethos that aligned personal salvation and collective historical redemption. Their respective visions, as much as that of the later Italian Renaissance, were in his view nourished by the pathos of the biblical prophets.

14. Buber, "Ein Wort zum Fünften Congreß," *Jüdische Volksstimme*, 3, no. 2 (15 Feb. 1902): 2; *First Buber*, 95.

15. Buber, "Jüdische Renaissance,"col. 10, *First Buber*, 33.

16. Ibid., col. 8; idem, "Kultur und Zivilisation: Einige Gedanken zu diesem Thema" (1901), *Frühe kulturkritische und philosophische Schriften*, 1891–1924, *MBW*, 1:158. See also Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years*, 16–20.

17. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 213; *First Buber*, 188.

18. Ibid., 206; *First Buber*, 178.

19. Buber, "Kulturarbeit: Zu den Delegiertentagen der deutschen und holländischen Zionisten," *Der Jude* 1, no. 12 (March 1917): 792–93, at 792.

20. I tend to disagree here with the assessment of G. G. Schmidt, who maintained that for Buber "culture has one purpose only, and that is to create beauty." *Formative Years*, 18.

21. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 207; *First Buber*, 179.

22. Buber, "Jüdische Renaissance," col. 10; *First Buber*, 33.

23. The Democratic Faction was founded in 1901 by Buber, Ehrenpreis, Berthold Feiwel, Leo Motzkin, and Chaim Weizmann for the promotion of cultural Zionism. The Faction devoted its activities exclusively to the cultural question. Failing to find a consensus among its members, it dissolved a few years later. Already in early 1904 Buber pondered the disintegration of the Faction "in order to make room for new healthy affiliations." Letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 18 [1904] Feb. 1904, ME-A. For a discussion of the opposition to political Zionism and Buber's role in the debate, see B. Schäfer, "Zur Rolle der Demokratischen Fraktion in der 'Altneuland- Kontroverse,'" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1995): 1–17.

24. Letter of B. to Ehrenpreis, 8. Nov. 1903, ME-A.

25. Ehrenpreis objected to Buber's "vivisection" of the problem of Jewish culture. Letter of Ehrenpreis to B., 29 Oct. 1903, MB-A, Ms. Var. 350:189/16.

26. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," *Ost und West* 2, no. 10 (Oct. 1902): col. 668; *First Buber*, 127. Buber's advocacy of concrete cultural work in the Diaspora preceded the adoption of the program of "work-in-the present" even before the political objectives of the Zionist movement were realized—by the Russian Zionists at their Helsingfors Conference in 1906.

27. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 210; *First Buber*, 184.

28. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," col. 668; *First Buber*, 125.

29. Buber, "Jüdische Renaissance," col. 7; *First Buber*, 30.

30. See D. Sadan, '*Al sifrutenu* (Jerusalem: Histadrut ha-tsionit, 1951), 43.

31. "Programm der Demokratisch Zionistischen Fraktion," 16 (Jewish National University Library, Manuscript Division, 37B 103). See E. Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and*

Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement 1882–1904, trans. L. J. Schramm (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1988), 183; see also Buber, "Der Jude und sein Werk: Eine Ansprache," *Jüdische Almanach*, 5670 (Vienna: Vereinigung Bar-Kochba, 1910): 15. The Democratic Faction planned, for instance, the foundation of a "general association of Jewish writers." Letter of M. Ehrenpreis to B., 29 Oct. 1903, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 189:16.

32. Ahad Ha'am, "Imitation and Assimilation" (1893), *Selected Essays,* trans. L. Simon (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1944), 123. See also M. Brinker, '*Ad ha-simtah ha-teveriyanit: Ma'amar 'al sippur u-mahashavah bi-yitsirat Brenner* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990), 165. On Ahad Ha'am's policy regarding the function of Jewish literature to be published in *Ha-Shiloah,* see S. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (London: P. Halban, 1993), 118.

33. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 209; *First Buber*, 183.

34. Buber, "Erneuerung des Judentums," 69; *On Judaism*, 39.

35. Buber, "Jüdische Renaissance," col. 7; *First Buber*, 30.

36. In an odd statement of secular messianic coloration, Buber presents his generation as the one, which, by virtue of witnessing "the rebirth of the Jewish spirit," has "entered into the period of continuity." Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," col. 672; *First Buber*, 127.

37. "Ein Wort zum Fünften Congreß," *Jüdische Volksstimme* 2, no. 24 (15 Jan. 1902): 3.

38. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 216; *First Buber*, 193.

39. Buber, "Das Judentum und die Menschheit," in *Drei Reden*, 54; *On Judaism*, 32.

40. Buber, *Cherut,* 13–14; *On Judaism*, 158.

41. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 208; *First Buber*, 181. See Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years*, 118–26. Schmidt interprets Buber's synthesis as one that seeks to assimilate the "form from secular models" to the Judaic content (121).

42. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 213; *First Buber*, 188.

43. Buber, "Die Erneuerung des Judentums," 61–62; *On Judaism*, 35.

44. B. Mann, "Visions of Jewish Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 13, no. 4 (Nov. 2006): 673.

45. Ibid., 674.

46. Buber, "Referat über jüdische Kunst," Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Zionisten-Congresses in Basel, 26.-30. December 1901 (Vienna: 'Erez Israel,' n. d.) 154; *First Buber*, 49.

47. B. Mann, "Toward an Understanding of Jewish Imagism," *Religion and Literature* 30, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 23–46.

48. See in this context A. Hirschfeld, "Locus and Language: Hebrew Culture in Israel, 1890–1990," in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. by D. Biale (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 1012ff.

49. K. P. Bland, "Anti-Semitism and Aniconism," in *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History*, ed. C. M. Soussloff (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 55; see also K. P. Bland, *The Artless Jew: Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), and M. Olin, *The Nation without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 99–126. Lionel Kochan identifies the "unfinished" as a main

principle of Jewish aesthetics rather than a total ban on images. The prohibition to make images, according to Kochan, only applied to a representation aiming at totality and thus reification. Completeness of form in mimetic art destroys the reflective activity. See his "The Unfinished and the Idol," *Modern Judaism* 17, no. 2 (1997): 125–31.

50. Bland, "Anti-Semitism and Aniconism," 47.

51. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 217; *First Buber*, 194.

52. See L. Batnitzky, *Idolatry and Representation: The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig Reconsidered* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 85.

53. How committed Buber was at the turn of the twentieth century to developing Jewish art becomes evident in his many initiatives in behalf of this cause. He founded a department for Jewish art and science in the Berlin Zionist organization. For Buber on art see his "Jüdische Kunst," *Die Welt* 5, no. 46 (15 Nov. 1901): 10; "Eine Sektion für Jüdische Kunst und Wissenschaft," *Die Welt* 5, no. 13 (29 March 1901): 9; his speech on the issue to the 5th Zionist Congress in Basel in 1901, and his introduction to the volume he edited, *Jüdische Künstler* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1903). For further background, see G. G. Schmidt, *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901: Heralds of a New Age* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

54. Buber, "Referat über jüdische Kunst," 154. *First Buber*, 49.

55. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," col. 669; *First Buber*, 125.

56. See W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 7: *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* (1910), 145–46. "Each word, each sentence, each gesture, or polite phrase, each work of art and each historical deed can only be understood, because a common ground (*Gemeinsamkeit*) connects the expression with the one who understands."

57. See Buber, "Jüdische Wissenschaft," *Die Welt* 5, nos. 41 and 43 (11 and 25 Oct., 1901): 1–2 each issue.

58. "Das Judentum und die Juden," in *Drei Reden*, 20. Remarkably, in the same speech he states the same proposition somewhat more ambiguously: "As for inner reality, Jewish religiosity is a memory, perhaps also a hope, but it is not a presence."

59. Buber, "Warum gelernt werden soll," in idem, *Kampf um Israel* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1933), 136. Buber's critique of the memory as shaped by historians and cherished out of sentiment by assimilated bourgeois Jewry is in accord with his anti-historicist position. In her philosophical rereading of Buber, Leora Batnitzky characterizes the notion of renewal in Buber's thought as a "self-realization through recollection." Accordingly, she argues that Buber attempts an "inner making of knowledge by way of memory" (in the sense of *Erinnerung*) or a "renewal of truth by way of recollection." Batnitzky, "Renewing the Jewish Past," 346–49.

60. Y. H. Yerusalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982).

61. Buber, "Die Zukunft," *Selbstwehr* 6, no. 37 (12 Sept. 1912): 9. Buber sent Simmel a copy of his essay on "Jewish Religiosity," duly acknowledging his reverence for the latter. See his correspondence with Simmel, dated 10 April 1916, Buber, *Briefwechsel* 1:426–27.

62. Buber, "Die Zukunft," 9.

63. Buber, "Jüdische Religiosität," *Vom Geist des Judentums*, 51; *On Judaism*, 80.

64. The term *Urjudentum* stood for the "primal, authentic Judaism" and was part of Buber's ecstatic view of spirituality. See P. Mendes-Flohr, "Buber and the Metaphysicians of Contempt," *Divided Passions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 214–15.

65. "Jüdische Religiosität," 70; *On Judaism*, 91.

66. G. Schaeder, *The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber,* trans. N. J. Jacobs (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 31.

67. Buber, "Die Zukunft," 9.

68. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 210; *First Buber*, 184.

69. Ibid.

70. Buber, *Der heilige Weg: Ein Wort an die Juden und die Völker* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1919), 53.

71. Buber, *Worte an die Zeit: Eine Schriftenreihe,* First issue: *Grundsätze* (Munich: Dreiländerverlag, 1919), 7.

72. A. Shapira, *Hope for Our Time: Key Trends in the Thought of Martin Buber,* trans. J. M. Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 2, 194.

73. Buber, "Lesser Ury," *Ost und West* 1, no. 2 (February 1901): 114–28; *First Buber*, 64–71.

74. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 206; *The First Buber*, 178.

75. G. Simmel, "Beiträge zur Erkenntnistheorie der Religion," in *Brücke und Tür: Essays des Philosophen zur Geschichte, Religion, Kunst und Gesellschaft,* im Verein mit M. Susman, ed. M. Landmann (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler Verlag, 1957), 108.

76. Buber, *On Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity,* ed. and with an introduction, S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 11.

77. Buber, "'Al mahutah shel ha-tarbut," *Mahberot le-Sifrut* 2, no. 4 (1943), 4. For a translation of excerpts of this essay, see *Buber, On Intersubjectivity*, 9–10. The title of this essay evokes Simmel's article "Vom Wesen der Kultur" (1908). But already in 1905, Buber defines "the essence of culture" in Simmelian terms as "living interaction" and is convinced that, for instance, a territorial solution in Palestine would allow for a "renewed interaction between the diverse elements among the people" (*Volkselementen*). Culture as *Kulturarbeit* would have to face the demands of colonization and national education. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 215; *First Buber*, 183.

78. See Shapira, *Hope for Our Time*, 3–5.

79. Buber, "'Al mahutah shel ha-tarbut," 5.

80. Ibid., 3.

81. Y. Schwartz, "The Politicization of the Mystical in Buber and His Contemporaries," in *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, 216–18.

82. M. Riesebrodt, "Askese und Ekstase als Grundlagen von Gesellschaft: Anmerkungen zur religionssoziologischen Debatte um 1900," in *Religion, Fiction, and History: Essays in Memory of Ioan Petru Culianu*, ed. S. Antohi (Bucharest: Nemira, 2001), 2:139.

83. Simmel, "Vom Wesen des historischen Verstehens," in *Brücke und Tür,* 60f.

84. Simmel, "How is History Possible?" in *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings,* ed. and trans. D. N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 4. Originally published in Simmel, *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie*, 3d ed. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1907), vii–ix.

85. Ibid., 5.

86. Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* ed. P. A. Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), 11, emphasis mine.

87. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," col. 664; *First Buber*, 120.

88. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in idem, *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt, trans. H. Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 261.

89. See D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1986), 41.

90. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem," 206; *First Buber*, 178.

91. See Shapira and his analysis of "Moment—Eternity" as one of the dominant themes in Buber's structure of dualities, Shapira, *Hope of our Time*, 183.

92. Elijah is, according to the prophecy of Malachi, the messianic precursor, announcing the imminent Messiah. In Hasidic imagination Elijah is one of the most recurrent biblical figures.

93. Letter of B. to H. Stehr, 20 May 1905, *Briefwechsel*, 1:230.

94. Dilthey, "Die geistige Welt: Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens," Zweite Hälfte: *Abhandlungen zur Poetik, Ethik und Pädagogik*, ed. G. Misch, 3d ed. (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner; Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 6:150. Cited in R. A. Makkreel, *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 119.

95. Buber, "Was ist zu tun"? *Die jüdische Bewegung*, 1:136.

CHAPTER NINE

1. G. Simmel, *Essays on Religion*, ed. and trans. by H. J. Helle in collaboration with L. Nieder, Foreword by P. E. Hammond (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 143f. The translation is based on the second revised and expanded German edition of 1912.

2. Buber to G. Landauer, 21 Sept. 1908, in *Briefwechsel*, 1:265.

3. Letter of Friedrich Gundolf to B., 4 July 1908, *Briefwechsel*, 1:262. Gundolf's critique was published in *Preußische Jahrbücher* 1 (Berlin, July 1908), 149–51. On the reception of the *Legende*, see also S. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers* (Madison, 1982), 133.

4. For a brief discussion of Buber's reading of the four "life-forces," see also Schaeder, *The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber*, trans. N. J. Jacobs (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 78–83.

5. Simmel, *Essays on Religion*, 212.

6. Ibid., 209.

7. "From every deed an angel is born, a good deed or a bad one. But from half-hearted and confused deeds which are without meaning or without power, angels are born with twisted limbs or without a head or hands or feet" (F 25). Cf. Pirkei Avot, chap. 4: Mishnah 13a.

8. "The last miracle is greater than the first" (F 23). Cf. B.T. Taanit 24a.

9. The patriarch Abraham, by contrast, identifies himself as a *ger toshav*, a resident stranger (Gen. 23:4). The *ger* (stranger) is to be distinguished from the *nokhri* (foreigner).

10. In the Buber/Rosenzweig Bible translation the *ger toshav* of Gen. 23:4 is curiously rendered *Gast und Ansasse/guest and resident* rather than literally *resident stranger*.

11. *Das Buch der Preisungen*, Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935.

12. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. K. H. Wolff (New York: Free Press, 1964), 402.

13. Ibid., 403.

14. Franz Rosenzweig reads Psalm 119:19 as a metaphysical explication of the historical fate of the Jewish people: "And even when it has a home, this people . . . is not allowed full possession of that home. It is only a stranger and a sojourner." Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. from the 2d ed. 1930 by W. W. Hallo (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 300.

15. Buber cites here an unidentified Hasidic source. Cf. *Maggid,* xxxiii.

16. See D. C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 113 and 201. In this stage of contemplation the mystic reaches the point of "annihilation of thought." This marks the moment of the joining of the soul with the source of being, "when the mystic imbibes from the source to which he is joined." The source of this phrase is Isaac of Akko, *Commentary on Sefer yetzirah* (ed. Scholem), *Qiryat sefer* 31 (1956): 383.

17. *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef* (Jerusalem, 1962), 'wa-yezeh,' fols. 22b-c.

18. R. Ya'aqov Yosef distinguished between the Zaddik as the "spiritual man" and the common man as the "physical man." Such a differentiation contradicts, however, the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov. Cf. R. Elior, *Herut 'al ha-luhot: ha-mahshavah ha-hasidit, meqoroteyah ha-mistiyim we-yesodoteyhah ha-qabbaliyim* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defence, 1999), 240.

19. In '*Arevey Nahal* ('wa-yezeh') all of Israel is likened to "a ladder placed on earth, that is, the weaker ones (*ha-pehotim*) are the aspect of the legs and stand on earth, and behold, the angels of God, that is, the Zaddikim, ascend and descend on it." R. Ya'aqov Yosef refers to the principle that "all of Israel must join together as one" as the "bonding between the great and the small."

20. *No'am Elimelekh* (Jerusalem, n.d.), 'wa-yezeh,' fol. 12a (23).

21. *Qedushat Lewi* (Jerusalem, 2001), 'wa-yezeh,' s.v. 'we-al zeh,' fol. 64a.

22. See Elior, *Herut*, 66.

23. *Keter Shem Tov*, part I, Lemberg 1858 [Zolkiev 1794], 12a.

24. Cf. M. Buber, *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* (Zurich, 1949), 325, 643. The source for Buber's interpretation could have been *Ma'aseh tsaddikim* (Lemberg, 1897), 49. In his personal copy of his work Buber marked in the margin the following two teachings: "There is no deed and movement (*tenu'ah*) which does not unify wonderful unifications (*yihudim nifla'im*);" and "Man effects through his speech during prayer and his teachings divine abundance in all the worlds" (*Ma'aseh tsaddikim*, 54–55). Buber's personal collection of Hasidica is housed in the MB-A.

25. '*Imrot Tehorot* (Warsaw, 1910), 'wa-yera,' s.v. 'wa-yihlom,' 6. Though '*Imrot Tehorot* was only published in 1910, the interpretation of R. Moshe of Kobryn may have been recorded in an earlier collection of Hasidic teachings.

26. *Maggid,* xxiv.

27. See *Degel Mahaneh 'Efrayim* (Jerusalem 1995 [Korets 1810]), 'tezaweh,' s.v. 'shetey,' fols. 113ab.

28. G. Scholem, "Martin Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism," in idem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 231. On this section of the *Legende*, see M. Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work*, vol. 1: *The Early Years*, 1878–1923 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 115–19.

29. Cf. L 18/F 30; L 25/F 36; L 32/F 42; L 34/F 43.

30. G. Scholem, "Devekut, or Communion with God," in idem, *Messianic Idea*, 203–27, esp. 203.

31. *Ma'aseh tsaddikim* (Lemberg, 1897), 50.

32. "Wenn der Mensch sich an Gott schliesst" (L 3); "Gott immerdar anhängen" (L 9).

33. *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash* (Lemberg, 1797 [Zolkiev 1794]), siman 69. Cf. *Keter shem tov*, I, 7b, 24a. שכמו שאדם מחשב הוא ואם לא היה בעולם העליון ולא היה מחשב כלל.

34. *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, siman 84.

35. *Keter shem tov*, I, 7b.

36. Ibid., I, 6a-b.

37. Ibid., I, 6b.

38. Cf. *Qedushat Lewi* (Jerusalem, 2001 [Slavuta, 1788]), 'devarim,' s.v. 'dibber mosheh;,' fol. 333b; *Maor wa-shemesh*, 'bereshit,' s.v. 'wa-yomer'; *Degel Mahaneh 'Efrayim*, 'wa-yera,' s.v. 'yoqeah.'

39. See *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, siman 80. Green identifies these spiritual conditions as the development of two kinds of Zaddikim in the early writings of Hasidism, the one "who is only for himself," and the one "who is for himself and for others," a concept referred to in *'Or Torah* of Dov Baer and in *No'am Elimelekh*. See A. Green, "Typologies of Leadership and the Hasidic Zaddik," in *Jewish Spirituality,* vol. 2: *From the Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present,* ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 135. See also M. Piekarz, "Hasidism as a Socio-Religious Movement," in *Hasidism Reappraised*, ed. A. Rapoport-Albert (London and Portland, Ore.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), 237.

40. See M. Buber, *Ich und Du* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1923), 108.

41. Buber, "Die Schaffenden, das Volk und die Bewegung," *Jüdischer Almanach* 5663 (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902): 21 (JB I, 70); *First Buber*, 142.

42. M. Seel, *The Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. J. Farrell (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), 130.

43. The affinity between Buber and Expressionist art has already been noted by the art collector Rosa Shapire. See R. Reisenfeld, "Collecting and Collective Memory: German Expressionist Art and Modern Jewish Identity," in *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History,* ed. C. M. Soussloff (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 123. Cf. M. Olin, *Nation without Art: Examining Modern Discourses on Jewish Art* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 109, 113. See also M. Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

44. See Olin, *Nation without Art*, 116. Olin points out that "Buber's interpretation of perception, which preserves the notion of the nonvisual Oriental, incorporates Riegl's perceptual adaptations of unity and separation" (121).

45. Simmel, "Vom Wesen des historischen Verstehens," *Brücke und Tür: Essays des Philosophen zur Geschichte, Religion, Kunst und Gesellschaft*, ed. M. Landmann (Stuttgart: K. F. Koehler Verlag, 1957), 81.

46. Buber, preface to the series *Die Gesellschaft,* in the first volume of the series, Werner Sombart, *Das Proletariat* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1906).

47. See Buber, "continual renewal is the actual life-principle of the Zaddik," *Maggid,* xxxiii.

48. R. Elior, *The Paradoxical Ascent to God: The Kabbalistic Theosophy of Habad Hasidism,* trans. J. M. Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 31.

49. Ibid., 61.

50. See Buber's description of *'avodah*: "God works in man, as He worked in the chaos at the time of the world's becoming" (L 11); see also his reading of *shiflut*: "and God pours His Glory into him" (L 35).

51. *Midrash Pinhas ha-Shalem* (Ashdod 2001 [Lemberg 1872]), 32, siman 46.

52. See L 72/F 69: "And he felt the kneading hand of the spirit."

53. This metaphorization of the ecstatic union as an act of divine grace denotes in the Hebrew Bible the power that creates the psychological precondition necessary to induce the prophet's revelatory state of mind. See 2 Kings 3:15; Ezek. 1:3; 3:22.

54. Among the expressions used in Hasidism as tokens for experiencing the divine Presence are: "the light of the divine Glory" (L 21/F32); "he is full of the power of God" (L 29/F 39); "the vessel pours from out of its fullness" (L 33/F 42); man can "bring down the overflowing blessing" (L 33/F 43).

55. See I. Tishby and J. Dan, "Hasidut," *Ha-Encyclopedia ha-'Ivrit*, 17:cols. 800, 805.

56. Mendel Piekarz claims that a clear-cut delineation of Hasidic concepts is in particular difficult with respect to defining the precise meaning of *devequt*. It can denote a state of mind without distinct content, or piety in general ("Hasidism as a Socio-religious Movement," 229). Scholem faced the same problem with regard to *yihud* ("Devekut, or Communion with God," 214). For a review of the scholarly evaluations of the concept of *devequt*, see I. Etkes, "Ha-BeShT ke-Mistiqan u-Va'al be-Shurah be-'Avodat h,'" in *Zaddik we-'Edah*, ed. D. Asaf (Jerusalem, 2001), 120–21, 125–27. See also Z. Gries, *Sefer, sofer we-sippur be-reshit ha-hasidut: Min ha BeShT we-'ad Menahem Mendel mi-Qotsq* (Book, writer and story at the beginnings of Hasidism) (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbuts Ha-Me'uhad, 1992), 96–98.

57. *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 'hayye Sarah' (Jerusalem, 1962), fol. 20a.

58. M. Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*. (Albany: State University of New York Press), 1995, 237. Yet the observance of a *mitswah* is also a means to attain *devequt*. See *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 'hayye Sarah,' fol. 20a.

59. See R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism: Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought,* trans. J. Chipman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 323.

60. Shaul Magid argues that through its "messianic antinomianism" Hasidism formulated a social critique in promoting a democraticization of *devequt*. Magid, "The Intolerance of Tolerance: *Mahaloket* (Controversy) and Redemption in Early Hasidism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2001): 344–45.

61. Piekarz, "Hasidism as a Socio-Religious Movement," 232. See also *Zofnat Pa'aneah*, fol. 95a. According to Scholem, it is hard to establish, whether this was a binding commandment or an ideal for the pious alone ("Devekut," 205).

62. Scholem, "Devekut," 208.

63. Gershom Scholem and Joseph Weiss have pointed to the scant evidence of such unifying experiences in Jewish mysticism, where ecstasy and ecstatic practices "played a much less important part than, for example, in Christian mysticism." J. Weiss, "Some Notes on Ecstasy in Habad Hasidism," in idem, *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, ed. D. Goldstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 207.

64. See L 17/F 29: "*hitlahavut* is the individual way and goal." Scholem argued that Jewish mysticism, including the Kabbalah, does not support the concept of unio mystica but rather that of communion with God, which preserves the ontological distance between God and man ("Devekut"). For a counter position, see M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 59–73. See also Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, 46–50. Scholem responds here also to the widespread belief among Christian theologians and scholars of religion that Judaism lacks the vitality that defines a living faith evolving around unio mystica. Friedman attempted to correct the view that Buber portrayed the apex of the mystical experience as an absorption into the deity: "He did not see the mystic experience as the Christian unio mystica or as an encounter with a power that accosted and seized him, but as a turning inward to some ground of being beneath the individual 'I.'" M. Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work*, 1:86.

65. The mystical idea of self-sacrifice plays also a central role in the theology of the Orthodox thinker Rav Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, who interprets this religious attitude as an aspect of devotional suffering. For Soloveitchik, the religiously sanctified privilege of self-sacrifice is a fundamental expression of one's freedom to choose unconditional faithfulness to God. Rather than a substitute sacrifice, God demands the entire human being. The "unreserved offering of soul and body is the foundation of Judaism." *Soloveitchik on Repentance*, ed. P. H. Peli (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), 142.

66. In his Bible translation, Buber rendered *qorban* not as *Opfer* but rather as "drawing near" (to God).

67. Buber, *Deutung des Chassidismus: Drei Versuche* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), 65.

68. Ibid. In his poetic commentary to the Hasidic teachings Buber retains the concept of 'the Congregation of Israel' but avoids its particularistic nuances, e.g., as expressed in the ideal of the "love of Israel" ('*ahavat yisra'el*).

69. See L 25/F 36. Cf. *Maggid,* xlvi. Scholem criticized Buber for obscuring the difference between the Zaddik, as the true spiritual man, who alone can achieve the highest ideal of worship, and the simple man. See Scholem, "Martin Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism," 237.

70. See *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, siman 43.

71. Buber, *Rabbi Nachman,* 17; cf. *Tales of Rabbi Nachman,* trans. Friedman, 14–15. Only through the divine *shefa* does man remain alive after prayer. See *Keter shem tov*, I, 19a and *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, siman 35. The spiritual descent and reentry into the physical world is considered by early Hasidism a necessary aspect of ascent. Without the experience of reentry into the material world, one would not become aware of the rapture experienced in the process of *devequt*. See I. Etkes, "Ha-BeShT ke-Mistiqan," 135–36.

72. *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, siman 43. *Midrash Pinhas ha-Shalem*, 4, siman 2. See also Elior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 185–89.

73. '*Imrot Tehorot* (Warsaw, 1910), 47.

74. *Degel Mahaneh 'Efrayim* (Jerusalem, 1995), 'zaw,' s.v. 'wa-yedabber,' fols. 138a-d.

75. A hermeneutic interest in the symbolism of 'man as altar' can be traced to Philo: "The true altar of God is the thankful soul of the sage, compacted of perfect virtues unsevered and undivided . . . . On this soul-altar the sacred light is ever burning and carefully kept unextinguished, and the light of the mind is wisdom." Philo, *On the*

Special Laws (*De specialibus legibus*) I, 287, vii, 267. See also Philo, *On Dreams* (I, 243, v. 425): "The whole world is an offering dedicated to God, and He it is who has created the offering." See also Buber, "Philon und Cohen: Ein Fragment," in *Jüdische Rundschau* 33, nos. 64–65 (17 Aug. 1928): 463.

76. See in this context M. Fishbane, *The Kiss of God: Spiritual and Mystical Death in Judaism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

77. Buber, "Erneuerung des Judentums," in *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1911), 60; cf. Buber, "Feste des Lebens: Ein Bekenntnis," *Die Welt* 5, no. 9 (1 March 1901): 10; *First Buber*, 19.

78. A. B. Saposnik, "Exorcising the 'Angel of National Death': National and Individual Death (and Rebirth) in Zionist Palestine," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 95, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 558.

79. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," *Ost und West* 2, no. 10 (Oct. 1902): col. 672, *First Buber*, 127; "Jüdische Renaissance," *Ost und West* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1901): 10; *First Buber*, 33.

80. See Buber, "Ein Heldenbuch," *Der Jude* 1, no. 10 (Jan. 1917): 641–42. Buber defines the modern Jewish hero as a human being of the spirit who, "by virtue of the holy power of resolve to make the divine manifest," opposes violence. In their metaphysical idealism, the heroes of the *Yishuv* represent critics of modernity; they turn their back on materialism and despise the "violence [*Gewaltsache*] of the illusory culture [*Scheinkultur*]."

81. Aaron D. Gordon considered land ownership in Eretz Yisrael contingent upon redemption of the ancestral land through labor. Gordon's Zionist vision has been characterized as a "religion of labor." His views on the religious function of physical labor and its relation to the redemption of the Jew are most forcefully articulated in his essays "People and Labor" (1911) and "Some Observations" (1911), *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*, ed. A. Hertzberg (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 372–79. For a more detailed discussion of Aaron Gordon, see Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State,* trans. D. Maisel (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 47–73.

82. The Shema is the credo of Judaism (Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21, Num. 15:37–41).

83. See also Fishbane, *Kiss of God*, 117–18.

84. The Besht experienced mystical ecstasy in particular during the recitation of the 'Amidah with great concentration. Reciting the Shema' was central for the 'coming to the world of emanation' until the soul cleaves to the divinity. See *Midrash Pinhas ha-Shalem*, 8, siman 8.

85. See E. E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs,* trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), 498, and 909, n. 60; cf. B.T. Hag 12a; Cant.R I,14.

86. Buber, "A God Who Hides His Face," in *The Dimensions of Job*, ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 63.

87. As he elaborates in his *Good and Evil: Two Interpretations* (1952), evil becomes an actuality when one cannot overcome a state of confusion and indecision and—by resorting to "pseudo-decisions"—detaches oneself from the divine reality. In such situations one's failure to respond with a unified, "whole soul" plunges one into chaos. M. Buber, *Good and Evil: Two Interpretations*, pt. 1: *Right and Wrong,* trans. R. G. Smith, pt. 2: *Images of Good and Evil,* trans. M. Bullock (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1997), 121–32.

88. See A. Katz, *Der Chassidismus* (Berlin, 1904); J. Günzig, *Rabbi Israel Baal-Schem, der Stifter des Chassidismus* (Brünn, 1908).

89. Mauthner wrote a biting critique in the *Berliner Tageblatt* (9 June 1900) of the Hart brothers search for a "new religion," and their consecration cult ("*Weihe-Firlefanz*").

90. Until the thirteenth century the term "consecration" meant the act of sanctification (see *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 4th ed., vol. 3, Tübingen, 2000). Consecration denotes in general "a liturgical act by which the object (person or thing) is placed in a special relation to the sacred realm, albeit different forms and degrees have to be distinguished." *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon,* 2d ed. (Göttingen, 1962), s.v. 'Weihe,' col. 1741.

91. Simmel, *Essays on Religion*, 149.

92**.** In the Friedman translation *Weihe* is rendered as "inspiration."

93. *Keter shem tov*, I, 10a. See also Idel, *Hasidism*, 59, who quotes R. Aharon Kohen of Apta in his '*Or ha-ganuz* relating the self-sanctification and purification to the preparatory state to prophecy.

94. Buber was aware of the formula *leqadesh 'et 'atsmo*, for he marked it on page 52 of his copy of *Ma'aseh tsaddikim* (Lemberg, 1897). Hasidic literature frequently points out the difference between the Zaddik and the ordinary man in the degree of holiness attained in bodily things. The Zaddik sanctifies himself more during eating than during prayer (it is more difficult to maintain *devequt* while partaking in the pleasure of eating), whereas it is the opposite with the rest of the people (who cannot practice *devequt* at all times and could not achieve this level of spiritualization). *No'am Elimelekh*, 'korah,' fol. 60b (119).

95. See *Peri ha-arets u-peri ha-ets*, 'shoftim.'

96. See Buber, *Drei Reden*, 87; *Maggid,* xxxvii; *Deutung des Chassidismus*, 92.

97. In Jena Romanticism the meaning was widened and secularized, bestowing worldly things through the act of consecration with a distinct dignity. See *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* (Leipzig, 1955), vol. 14, s.v. 'Weihe,' cols. 655–64. Of Gothic origin, *Weihe* denotes originally a sacred-magical act, the transformation of a profane object into a holy one by means of transferring sacred power into that object. In the usage of Catholicism it denotes the sacramental act performed by an ordained (i.e., consecrated) clergyman of endowing an object or person with the condition of holiness.

98. *Torah Nevi'im Ketuvim: Die 24 Bücher der Heiligen Schrift nach dem masoretischen Texte*, ed. L. Zunz, trans. H. Arnheim, J. Fürst, and M. Sachs, 1st ed., 1884, 17th ed. (Berlin, 1935).

99. Cf. Exod. 28:3: לקדשו לכהנותי —Zunz: ihn zu heiligen, mir ihn zum Priester zu weihen; S. R. Hirsch: ihn zu heiligen, daß er mir als Priester diene.

Exod. 28:41: מלאת את ידם וקדשת אתם —Zunz: und fülle ihre Hand und heilige sie; Hirsch: und bevollmächtige sie und heilige sie.

Exod. 29:9: מלאת יד אהרון ובניו — Zunz: so füllest du die Hand Aharon wie seine Söhne; Hirsch: und du bevollmächtigst damit Aharon und seine Söhne.

Exod. 29:33: למלא את ידם לקדש אתם— Zunz: um ihnen die Hand zu füllen, sie zu heiligen; Hirsch: ihnen Vollmacht zu erteilen, sie zu heiligen.

100. To connote the attainment of the state of ritual purity and holiness, the Hebrew root would be *n-z-r*. With the exception of the priest's נזר קודש (Exod. 29:6), this Hebrew term is absent in the biblical account of the initiation for priesthood. With respect to the

laws of the Nazirites (Num. 6:1–21), consecration describes the act of dedicating oneself to God through observance of stringent requirements of abstinence, thereby achieving a (temporary) status of holiness resembling that of the priest. The vow of the Nazirites, נדר נזיר להזיר לה' (Num. 6:2), was an act of consecration, a precondition to attain the status of sanctity, even if only temporarily. See W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 17th ed. (Berlin, 1962), 494–95.

101. See S. R. Hirsch's commentary to Exodus 29. *Der Pentateuch,* trans. and comm. S.R. Hirsch (Frankfurt a.M., 1869), 2:489.

102. More recent German Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible, undertaken in a different cultural context than Buber's, are less concerned with the semantic and etymological implications of the term. N. H. Tur-Sinai in his translation of 1954 often translates the Hebrew root *q-d-sh* as *geweiht*, *weihen* (Exod. 28:4; 28:38; 28:41 passim).

103. *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, siman 72.

104. Ibid., siman 40.

105. See Scholem, "Devekut," 222.

106. *Maggid,* vii-viii. See G. Nigal, *Magic, Mysticism, and Hasidism*, trans. E. Levin (Northvale, N.J.: Aronson, 1994), x. Storytelling, in particular about the Zaddik, was an integral and sanctified aspect of Hasidic life. Nigal points to the blend of truth and fiction that characterized the retelling, in which earlier motifs of the Hebrew tale were absorbed.

107. See Idel, *Hasidism*, 186–88, quoting from *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef* (fol. 25a). The legends were often told against the background of concrete events, especially as related from an autobiographical perspective, and were also aimed at either enabling something to happen or preventing it from happening.

108. Elior, *Herut*, 57.

109. Idel, *Hasidism*, 237.

110. See Degel *Mahaneh 'Efrayim*, 'miqets,' s.v., ''o ya'amor,' fol. 55a., and also *No'am Elimelekh*, 'wa-yera',' fol. 7a (13). The "drawing down" of the divine energy requires the observance of the commandments and the achievement of perfection in the study of Torah. See *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, ''emor,' fol. 102c.

111. A. Brill, "The Spiritual World of a Master of Awe: Divine Vitality, Theosis, and Healing in the Degel Mahaneh Ephraim," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (2001): 37–40. Cf. Idel, *Hasidism*, 189–207.

112. *Keter shem tov*, I, 7a.

113. Idel, *Hasidism*, 193–94. Idel argues that there are "alternating fluctuations of the relative roles of the magical, mystical, and theosophical-theurgical" in Jewish mysticism in general and Hasidism in particular (214). Scholem noted with respect to *kawwanah* that even though magic and mysticism "represent two fundamentally different categories," they might meet and interact in the same mind. This comes to the fore in the Kabbalah, where "every prayer . . . involves the eternal paradox of man's hope to influence the inscrutable ways and eternal decisions of Providence." Scholem, *Major Trends*, 277.

114. As Idel (*Hasidism*, 213) notes, Buber seeks to differentiate Hasidism as a "devotional type" of mysticism from "linguistic magic."

115. Elior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 63.

116. *Maggid,* xxxviii. See also Buber, "Sinnbildliche und sakramentale Existenz im Judentum," in idem, *Deutung des Chassidismus*, 91.

117. Buber distinguishes the act of *yihud* from a magical act. "Jihud does not mean the effect of a subject on an object, but the impact of an object on a subject and through it: on being in the becoming" (*Maggid,* xxxv). Hence, *yihud* is tied to the world process of creation: it is the "return of the received [emanated] divine power [to its Source]" (*Cherut*, 2).

118. Buber refers only once explicitly to the unification of God with the Shekhinah (L 14/F 27).

119. Buber, "Sinnbildliche und sakramentale Existenz im Judentum," in *Deutung des Chassidismus: Drei Versuche* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), 83.

120. *Maggid,* xxiv.

121. "Der Chassidismus bejaht das Gesetz schlechthin, aber nicht als Satzung, sondern als die gnadenreiche Führung, die dem höchsten Vermögen des Menschen, seiner ewigen erlösenden Intentionskraft zuteil wird." Buber, "Ein Wort über den Chassidismus" (response to Karl L. Schmidt), *Theologische Blätter* 3, no. 7 (Juli 1924): 160.

122. M. Buber, "Zur Darstellung des Chassidismus," *Werke,* vol. 3: *Schriften zum Chassidismus* (Munich and Heidelberg: Kösel Verlag and Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1963), 986. "Only through the redemption of the everyday grows the Every-Day of redemption." Buber, "Spinoza, Sabbatai Zwi und der Baalschem," in *Deutung des Chassidismus*, 58.

123. The Besht remained indebted to kabbalistic theosophy, in particular to ideas which link speech and eros in the Zohar. He identified three kinds of speech which correspond to three kinds of mystical coupling (between the male and female aspects in the divinity and between the divine Presence and the mystical Congregation of Israel): the *ziwwug* of the "king and the princess (*matronita'*)," that of the "king's son and his spouse," and that of the "servant and the maid." *Keter shem tov*, I, 24b, cf. 8b.

124. Buber, "Erneuerung des Judentums," in *Drei Reden*, 87.

125. This "living" and "lived interaction" were constitutive of the utopian 'New Community' of the Hart brothers, where social cohesion would be achieved by individuals striving for self-realization and not by heeding norms or dated social forms and conventions. Buber delivered in 1900 a lecture before the Neue Gemeinschaft. See Buber, "'Alte und Neue Gemeinschaft'—An Unknown Buber Manuscript," ed. and trans. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Bernard Susser, *American Association of Jewish Studies Review* 1 (1976): 41–56, at 50. See G. Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal,* 1897–1909 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 13.

126. S. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, ed. C. S. Evans and S. Walsh, trans. S. Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.

127. Ibid., 35.

128. Buber, "Jüdische Religiosität," *Vom Geist des Judentums: Reden und Geleitworte* (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1916), 63. The later English translation (*On Judaism*, 87) inaccurately translates "sanctity."

129. Nietzsche first acknowledged this nexus in his posthumously published *Ecce Homo* (written in 1888, published in 1908).

130. Recent reevaluations of Nietzsche support such a reading of this doctrine. See M. Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), esp. chap. 8.

131. Buber, "Autobiographical Fragments," in *The Philosophy of Martin Buber,* ed. P. A. Schilpp and M. Friedman (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1967), 12.

132. Ibid., 13.

133. Ibid.

134. Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience,* vol. 5 of *Selected Works,* ed. R. A. Makkreel and F. Rodie (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 225.

135. Ibid., 226.

136. Asher Biemann has noted that "purification and liberation" became recurring motifs in Buber's 'Jewish Renaissance.' Biemann, "Problem of Tradition and Reform in Jewish Renaissance and Renaissancism," *Jewish Social Studies* 8, no. 1 (2001): 63.

137. G. Simmel, *The Problem of the Philosophy of History: An Epistemological Essay*, ed. and trans. G. Oakes (New York: The Free Press, 1977), 63–64.

138. Cited by D. Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1986), 11. I was unable to identify and verify the source of the citation.

139. Buber, "Jüdische Religiosität," 50; *On Judaism*, 79.

140. *Midrash Pinhas ha-Shalem*, 25, siman 33.

141. The Zaddikim revered Moses as the perfect embodiment of the virtue of humility (Num. 12:3), while pride (in the sense of dignity) is an attribute of Aaron and necessary for the self-esteem required by the high priest (Exod. 28:2). For R. Dov Baer of Mezhirech, Moses was an example of a Zaddik, who did not "return to himself" but achieved constant adhesion to God. See Idel, *Hasidism*, 119.

142. R. Elior, "The Paradigms of 'Yesh' and 'Ayin' in Hasidic Thought," in *Hasidism Reappraised: The Social Functions of Mystical Ideals in Judaism,* ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert (London and Portland, Ore.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), 179.

143. See J. Weiss, "Via passiva in early Hasidism," in idem, *Studies in Eastern European Mysticism,* ed. D. Goldstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 86. Hermann Cohen also addresses the question of *Einzigkeit*. Used once in *Die Ethik des reinen Willens* (1904), the term gains significance in the posthumously published *Religion der Vernunft* (1919), where *Einzigkeit* denotes the pure being of God, that is, God's unique oneness as the source of all being. See H. Cohen, *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism*, trans. and intro. S. Kaplan, introductory essay L. Strauss (1919; New York, 1972), chap. 1, chap. 3, 64, 66–67.

144. See Schmidt, *Formative Years*, 34.

145. H. Cohen, *Ethik des reinen Willens* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1904), 534, 539.

146. Ibid., 546.

147. *Sihot haRaN*, 54, fol. 40.

148. See *Liqqutey MohaRaN*, 56,1: כל אחד לפי בחינת המלכות שיש לו בבחינות.

149. Buber, "Das jüdische Kulturproblem und der Zionismus," in *Die Stimme der Wahrheit*, ed. L. Schön (Würzburg: N. Philippi, 1905), 207; *First Buber,* 179. See also Buber, *Grundsätze,* Worte an die Zeit: Eine Schriftenreihe, 1. Heft. (Munich: Dreiländerverlag, 1919), 7. Criticizing political Zionism's sole focus on anti-Semitism and on an "improvement of the situation" through settlement in Palestine as the necessary response to the "Jewish question," Buber insists that what is at stake is a "redemption of the nation." In light of Herzlian Zionism's use of religious terminology, Buber gradually replaced the notion of (self-) redemption with the more neutral cultural concept of 'realization.'

150. For Buber, aesthetic individuation also appertains to the nation. In 1904 he calls

upon his fellow Jews to assume the task of cultural Zionism to acknowledge and develop their "national distinctiveness." Buber, "Was ist zu tun?," *Die jüdische Bewegung*, 1:125.

151. Simmel, *Essays on Religion,* 200.

152. See M. Buber, *Der Weg des Menschen nach der chassidischen Lehre* (The Hague, 1948), 38–41.

153. Simmel, *Essays on Religion,* 199.

154. *Keter shem tov*, I, 23b-24a. Cf. Tishby and Dan, "Hasidut," col. 814.

155. L. Batnitzky, "Renewing the Jewish Past: Buber on History and Truth," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (2003): 339.

156. Cf. *Tsawa'at ha-Rivash*, simanim 9, 44, 46 passim.

157. W. Dilthey, "Das Verstehen anderer Personen und ihrer Lebensäußerungen" (1910), in Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 8th ed. (Göttingen, 1992), 7:214. Although the writing of this essay is dated with some uncertainty to 1910, Buber may have been introduced to the hermeneutical meaning of this term in one of Dilthey's seminars, which he attended at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-University Berlin in the summer of 1898 and fall of 1899.

158. Martin Heidegger later placed similar terms at the center of his concept of *Verstehen* through the concept of *Dasein*. He interprets *Dasein* as an ontological condition rather than an epistemological problem. One's being as a "being-in-the-world" is an ontological-existential structure indivisible from that of the other person. This ontological connectedness of "being-together-with-others" (*Mitsein*) implies an a priori understanding of the fellow human being.

159. Buber, "Ein Wort über Nietzsche und die Lebenswerte," *Die Kunst im Leben,* Organ der Kunstwissenschaftlichen Abteilung der Berliner Finkenschaft 1, no. 2 (Dec. 1900), 13; also in *MBW,* 1:149–51.

160. Cf. Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, chap. 8, 141.

161. Cf. A. Shapira, *The Hope for Our Time: Key Trends in the Thought of Martin Buber,* trans. J. M. Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 113.

CONCLUSION

1. A. Funkenstein, "The Dialectics of Assimilation," *Jewish Social Studies* 1, no. 2 (1995): 6.

2. See in this context the preface of B. Greiner and P. Theissohn to the volume *Arche Noah*, ed. by B. Greiner and C. Schmidt, Rombach Wissenschaften, Reihe Cultura, vol. 26 (Freiburg Im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag, 2002), 9–23.

3. "Jüdische Religiosität," *Vom Geist des Judentums: Reden und Geleitworte* (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1916) 49–50; On Judaism, 79.

4. A. Seyhan, *Representation and Its Discontents: The Critical Legacy of German Romanticism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 161.

5. Buber, *Cherut*, 13–14; *On Judaism*, 158.

6. Buber, "Die Schaffenden, das Volk und die Bewegung," Jüdischer Almanach 5663 (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1902), 21; *First Buber*, 143.

7. Buber, "Ein geistiges Centrum," *Ost und West* 2, no. 10 (Oct. 1902): col. 664; First Buber, 123.

8. Simmel opposed any such attempts to found a concept of culture by separating subjective culture and objective form: "Clearly there can be no subjective culture without an objective culture." Simmel, "The Essence of Culture," in idem, *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, ed. D. Frisby and M. Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 45.

9. Buber, "Das Judentum und die Juden," in *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Rütten & Loening, 1911), 30–31.

APPENDIX

1. The Hasidic collections listed in 'Or ha-ganuz may not necessarily be identical with those from which he extracted the material presented in Legende. We can gather from his correspondence that Buber occasionally compared different versions of the sayings. B. to Horodezky, 9 Sept. 1908, MB-A, Arc. Ms. Var. 305:13.

2. Legende, 18; 'Or ha-ganuz, 87; *Die Erzählungen der Chassidism*, 155–56.

3. Buberheft, in *Neue Blätter* 3, nos. 1 and 2 (1913): 47–59.

4. Buber omits this sentence in the revised edition of 1955, which no longer follows the original composition based on the three circles.

5. He reaffirmed his earlier view that the legend "conveys more truth than the chronicle." Buber, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," 152.

6. Nigal points out that the Besht continued a tradition he adopted from previous generations of ba'aley shem (lit., "masters of the name"), namely to relate tales of autobiographical relevance. See G. Nigal, "New Light on the Hasidic Tale and its Sources," in *Hasidism Reappraised*, ed. A. Rapoport-Albert (London and Portland, Ore.: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), 345–53.

7. In the notes to his edition of Menahem Mendel Bodek's *Sippurim hasidim* (Tel Aviv: Yaron Golan, 1990), G. Nigal (22, n. 72, 73) traces nine legendary anecdotes which appear in Buber's 'Or ha-Ganuz back to Bodek's collections. Only one ("be-madregah ha-gavohah be-yoter") is presented in Buber's *Legende*, in the section "The Life of the Hasidim."

8. Ibid., 9.

9. M. Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922), 555. This essay was originally delivered as a speech in 1918.

10. For an analysis of Buber's retelling and its hermeneutical implications, see M. Urban, "Retelling Biblical Mythos through the Hasidic Tale: Buber's 'Saul and David' and the Question of Leadership," *Modern Judaism* 24, no. 1 (February 2004): 59–78.

11. For "Die Predigt des neuen Jahres," cf. *Gedolim ma'aseh tsaddiqim*, ed. M. (rpt. 1991, ed. G. Nigal), siman 6, and *Qahal hasidim ha-hudosh* (Lemberg, 1904), n.p.). This tale is omitted in Friedman.

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ISBN-13: 978-0-226-84270-7
ISBN-10: 0-226-84270-3