

**OF POETIC THINKING:
A 'PATAPHYSICAL INVESTIGATION OF CIXOUS,
DERRIDA AND THE KABBALAH**

Adeena Karasick

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ABSTRACT

Of Poetic Thinking: A 'Pataphysical Investigation of Cixous, Derrida and the Kabbalah

Adeena Karasick, Ph.D.
Concordia University, 1997

Situated between contemporary feminist theory / deconstructionist poetics, and Kabbalistic discourse, "Of Poetic Thinking: A 'Pataphysical Investigation of Cixous, Derrida and the Kabbalah" theorizes the aesthetics of, and contextualizes, two writing praxes concerned with interrogating a Eurocentric myth of Meaning, a regime of Truth, Authenticity and Representation; deconstructing an apparatus of Power and the gendered-political fallacy of genre purity. Focusing on the writing of Hélène Cixous, Jacques Derrida and the major texts of Kabbalistic discourse, through a re-evaluation of ethnicity, gender, power and language, this thesis challenges ways meaning is produced.

Though Kabbalistic discourse posits itself as a mystico-religious doctrine, and contemporary feminist deconstruction and post-structuralist philosophy aim to *question* Western metaphysics, notions of property and Being, through a re-politicization of socio-historic linguistic structures, this research reassesses the "mystical" or "metaphysical", not as an onto-theologically insulated discourse validated by transcendency, but as that without *specific* meaning and

heterogenous to all hermeneutic totalization. Rather than engaging in a Derridean reading of Kabbalah, but through the linking of modalized presents, this thesis tracks ways in which seemingly "oppositional" exegetical praxes restage cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition: how they question inheritance as that which is not natural, transparent or universal, but an intervening space, a place of syncretism, juxtaposition and integration; an irreducible legacy inscribed through cultural memory, iterability and palimpsestic processes of prosthetic supplementarity, and foreground how difference is performed at the liminal edge of identity.

This analysis is significant in that, through re-staging two interpretive strategies, it problematizes the metaphysics of the "propre" of logocentrism, linguisticism, phonologism, the demystification or the de-sedimentation of the autonomic hegemony of language, and *becomes* a network of echoes, traces; displaced in a palimpsestic abscess, and, thus, argues how language becomes an agency of cultural construction.

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INTRODUCTION: An Oeuvreture

Situated between contemporary feminist theory / deconstructionist poetics, and Kabbalistic¹ discourse, "Of Poetic Thinking: A 'Pataphysical Investigation of Cixous, Derrida and the Kabbalah" theorizes the aesthetics of, and contextualizes, two writing praxes concerned with interrogating a Eurocentric myth of Meaning, a regime of Truth, Authenticity and Representation; deconstructing an apparatus of Power and the gendered-political fallacy of genre purity. Focusing on the writing of Hélène Cixous, Jacques Derrida and the Kabbalah, this text acknowledges the striking affinities between ancient modes of Kabbalistic exegesis and recent trends in feminist-deconstruction; and positioning itself through identity and dis-identity, questions notions of ethnicity, gender, power and language.

Though Kabbalistic discourse posits itself as a mystico-religious doctrine, and contemporary feminist deconstruction and post-structuralist philosophy aim to *question* Western metaphysics, notions of property and Being, through both form and content, each discourse problematizes the metaphysics of the "propre" of logocentrism, linguisticism, phonologism, the demystification or the de-sedimentation of the autonomic hegemony of language.

Kabbalah announces itself as a "metaphysical" discourse. However, through a deconstructionist or post-colonial reading praxis, the "meta" (beyond) becomes an intervening space, a place of syncretism, juxtaposition and integration. Further, Kabbalah is primarily concerned with text as "a continuum of letters", a network of echoes, traces; displaced in a palimpsestic process of rupture, supplementation and dis-ease. With a re-politicization of socio-historic linguistic structures, this research reassesses the "mystical" or "metaphysical", not as an onto-theologically insulated discourse validated by transcendency, but as that without *specific* meaning and heterogenous to all hermeneutic totalization.

This text then reviews, re-claims, rehabilitates Kabbalistic discourse not as an *esoteric* philosophy, but, perhaps, in Derridean terms, as an *exoteric aporia*, "a single duty that recurrently duplicates itself interminably, fissures itself and contradicts itself without remaining the same".² And if '*pataphysics*'³ is defined as "the science of the elision" and operates through an unanswerable process of "imaginary solutions" which are always-already "both beyond and beside the topography of its telos", and if Kabbalah (as both transcendent and immanent), embodies the impossible paradox of legitimacy and delegitimacy in a multi-hierarchized arena, then Kabbalah must be re-viewed as not **metaphysical** but **'pataphysical**, a linguistically based ideology which problematizes notions of Origin, Authenticity, Presence, Truth and Closure.

So, through feminist-deconstruction (which questions the possible impossibility of Law, of language), and Kabbalah (which embodies that which is simultaneously transcendent and immanent; where what's same, other, pure,

proper, encrypted, private and public, are folded through each other in an intertextatic contaminative process), this thesis *'pataphysically* performs itself as "the question of the question" or poses "answers to questions never been asked". As such, this "antimetaphysical metaphilosophical" research presents itself as a self-reflexive reading grounded in a specific socio-historic context; emerging from a twentieth century feminist deconstructionist reading praxis and, thus, does not serve to answer, define or close down. It does not aim to provide *a final analysis* but, inscribed through slippage, elision, differentiation and undecidability, it carves out a supplemental space that *opens* possibilities for alternate reading strategies.

Without essentializing biographic data this research references Derrida and Cixous as Sefardic Jews from Algeria, simultaneously cut *off* and *into* a cultural site of collaboration and contestation. Thus, to name Cixous and Derrida as "Jews" I am not inserting them into a contaminated logic of biologism, racism and naturalism, or a fixed tablet of tradition, but rather examine ethnicity as a re-inscription, a re-delimitation of "the ghost of the ghost of the simulacrum without end",⁴ a series of illocatable traces, thresholds, detours displaced in the erotics of becoming.

Acknowledging that,

to argue that culture is socially and historically constructed; that narrative is a primary, in humans perhaps the primary, motive knowing; that we assemble the selves we live in out of materials lying about in the society around us and develop "a theory of mind" to comprehend the selves of others; that we

act not directly on the world but on beliefs we hold about the world; that from birth on we are all active, impassioned "meaning makers" in search of plausible stories; and that "mind cannot in any sense be regarded as `natural' or naked, with culture thought of as an add-on"⁵,

Cixous and Derrida produce a (dis)continuity of lineage, of culture that re-produces, re-translates any notion of that which is "natural" or "naked". Culture then, as an economy of surplus, or spectrality of excess becomes inextricably linked to the way meaning is produced. And emerging from a North African (*Maghreb*) history, Cixouvian and Derridean hermeneutic practices *bear witness* to this past.

According to Harvey Goldberg, historians who have surveyed North African Judaism have stressed the importance of mysticism (kabbala). And just as Scholem insists upon the centrality of Kabbalah to Judaism (and in Kabbalah not only found a resurgence and transformation of mythical ideas, but at the very heart of Jewish monotheism, recognized a plurality, a diversity, an uncontainability which infiltrates the entire tradition⁶), Goldberg also acknowledges that "Kabbala affected the entire Jewish world", and its customs, beliefs and practices particularly appeared among Maghreb Jewry with special intensity and elaboration".⁷

So though Cixous and Derrida are *secular* Jews, were educated in French schools, traces of Kabbalistic thought were ever-present:

Maghrebi Judaism absorbed influences from the environment [thus] mystical notions made sense in terms of the `Jews' own social experience.⁸

And as they cannot be dis-associated from an historic loci, a simulacric symbology, they consequently engender a sense of exile which arises out of their lived experience *as Jews* and *as immigrants*. And if indeed, "mysticism" is that which does not fit into the system; is that which cannot be absorbed, their writing necessarily becomes a "mystical" act, performed through exile and exclusion, alienation and difference.

Just as Susan Handelman writes that in the aftermath of the Enlightenment and emancipation of the Jews,

Jewishness could no longer be expressed as it once had been -- within the parameters Jewish tradition had set forth -- through performance of the ritual commandments, or devotion to the Jewish sacred texts, Jews were indeed now writing for non-Jews, in German or French, or other languages, and their subjects may have not been typically "Jewish," but that does not mean that the question of their Jewishness was not critical for them or their work.⁹

Cixous and Derrida then inscribe a "Jewishness" through a "marranic" writing; a writing that is simultaneously revealed and concealed, "tentative", "indirect", "oblique" and "tortured"; embrace the esoteric, the neglected and the obscure, and subvert any notion of a Jewish heteronomy.

Haunted by Kabbalistic textual processes and *Midrashic*¹⁰ methods of interpretation, Cixous and Derrida re-invent a mysticism that explodes the parameters of what Kristeva calls "the most rigorous application of Unicity of the Law and the Symbolic order".¹¹ Writing outside of hierarchical oppositions, organized binary couplets, relations of authority and privilege, powers of horror and force are destabilized. As such, Cixous and Derrida not only reinscribe a sense of Jewish culture that embodies the impossible possibility of that articulation, but re-invent a mysticism that does not function through a metaphysical framework, but through tropological linguistic processes, and through their writing culture becomes a system of signs or a hyper-referential productivity of effects which speaks to an ever changing historical moment.

If, according to Derrida, all questions on the subject of what *is* or *is not* are reducible to a question of inheritance, Cixouvian, Derridean and Kabbalistic discourses *inherit* each other and are re-produced performatively through an exchange of values, meanings and priorities. Through the linking of modalized presents, they restage cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition and thereby question inheritance as that which is not natural, transparent or universal, but an irreducible legacy inscribed through cultural memory, iterability and palimpsestic processes of prosthetic supplementarity. And though the issue of their ethnicity is ever-pervasive, I do not discuss it overtly until the final chapter: *Bi/ographé Effects: Cixous and Derrida and the Impact of Culturalingual Construction*.

Although much research has been done in the *separate* realms of Kabbalistic research and deconstructionist theory and praxis (ie. the investigation of the cultural implications and political repercussions of post-structuralist thinking, or re-reading Kabbalistic texts from a socio-ethnic or gendered perspective), no work has been undertaken to track these "fields" as intertextual processes, examining them together to see how they impact on each other. Amongst others, Gershom Scholem, Isaiah Tishby, Aryeh Kaplan, Daniel Matt, Moshe Idel, Ira Robinson, Yehuda Liebes and Elliot Wolfson have greatly contributed to research in contemporary Kabbalah studies, and are (to varying degrees) familiar with post-structural discourse, none has tracked its effect on contemporary literature or reread the Kabbalistic corpus through a deconstructionist/ feminist or post-colonial framework.

While Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Idel's *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, Geoffrey Hartman's *Midrash and Literature* and Michael Fishbane's *The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought and History*, make reference to possible Kabbalistic/deconstructionist intertextual connections, no detailing of the socio-political or linguistic implications that these linkages would engender has been undertaken. Similarly such poet-thinkers such as Walter Benjamin (particularly in light of his "concentration on fragments of social experience and its focus on cultural objects ripped from their historical context and rearranged via montage in a new 'constellation'"¹², and his extensive correspondence and life-long friendship with Gershom Scholem), Theodore Adorno, Jorge Luis Borges, Paul Celan and particularly Edmond Jabés (in his questioning of the notion of "the Book" and therefore "the Law"), have contributed enormously to the borders of both of these fields, Kabbalistic

and / or deconstructive strategies echo throughout their writing. However, as they do not overtly track through the intersections, I chose not to focus on them for this project, but acknowledge, and are indebted to, their crucial influence.

Susan Handelman's 1982 text, *The Slayers of Moses: the Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory*, traces the relation between contemporary literary theory and theological interpretation. However, though the book examines the historical foundations of interpretation theory in traditions of biblical exegesis, and traces the re-emergence of that interpretive conflict in modern literary criticism, it frames itself within a "modernist" idealism which tends to cut across all socio-ethnic or gendered codes. Further, with its focus on Rabbinic (Midrashic) vs Kabbalistic approaches to Literature, it fails to acknowledge culture *also* as a linguistically-based political ideology or semiotic function.

Though in *Kabbalah and Criticism* Harold Bloom tracks through some critical Kabbalistic issues such as "originary catastrophe" and "the necessity of misreading", his writing is locked within a phenomenological hermeneutics (which posits a universalized perception of meaning production, written from an unproblematized subject position), and makes no reference to identity politics or cultural construction. Further, in his text, Kabbalah is read through the frame of his literary theories of revisionism and poetic influence as a Nietzschean struggle to overcome the past and become one's own origin. Although this notion is interesting, he is bound within the reductivism of a "romantic" ideology which does not allow for a politics of difference. This is particularly evident in how he separates "literary" language from "ordinary" language.

Refusing to acknowledge language as (*langue*), as a (dis)unified system of iterable alterity, he disregards how meaning is produced (and displaced) through an ever-expansive cultural context.

Further, while Elliot Wolfson's *Circle in the Square* claims to be a study "in the use of gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism" and the introduction promises an exploration of "female imaging" and "crossing gender boundaries", the text elides any possibility of a feminist subjectivity within a phallogentric regime of Authority and Control. Centering his argument within an anthropomorphic framework which fetishizes *sexual vs gender* difference any possibility of re-imaging female subjectivity as a shifting and multiperspectival condition gets masked within a discourse of male biology, power and domination. And, similarly, in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz's text, *God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism*, in an attempt to present a gender sensitive approach to Kabbalistic (and Rabbinic) thought, female attributes appear as socio-political constructs to mask the latent homoeroticism within Judaism. Though politically and socio-culturally important, in that the text reveals the carefully veiled homoeroticism within traditional "Jewish" texts, unfortunately, Eilberg-Schwartz's phallogentric fixation reinforces a misogynist mythology, saturated with patriarchal assumptions, and systematically excludes, *eradicates* women and female identity in exchange for the legitimization of Male-male bonds.

This study does not exhaustively examine all of the most important Kabbalistic schools -- (Geronese, Zoharic, the Ecstatic and Safedean)¹³, but rather is predominantly concerned with the *Zohar*¹⁴ (1291) and *The Bahir*¹⁵

(1176). The *Zohar*, because it is the most voluminous Kabbalistic work of the 13th C., and *The Bahir*, as it is often regarded as the oldest extant Kabbalistic text. The *Zohar* is considered the premier text of medieval Jewish mysticism. Arranged in the form of commentary on the Torah, it is a mosaic of *Midrash*, Medieval Homily, theology, theosophy, cosmogony, as well as presenting gnostic theories concerning astrology, physiognomy, necromancy, magic and metempsychosis. Thus, as a literature of folds or "a congeries of treatises, texts, extracts or fragments of texts, belonging to different periods"¹⁶, it questions notions of genre, authenticity, legitimacy and subjectivity. Further, its language is a peculiar brand of Aramaic that breaks the rules of grammar and invents new words, and thus it focuses on the creative potentiality of language. Also focused on language, *The Bahir*, not only "makes the letters and the vowels of the Hebrew language, and even certain accents of the Hebrew script, the object of its speculation",¹⁷ but inscribed in lacunae, rupture and fragmentation, it metonymically stands in for a site of hybridity and syncreticity, a decolonializing strategy of shifting powers and perspectives. Additional focus is placed on *The Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Creation, c.2nd-6th C.),¹⁸ as it is the first place where the *sefirot* are mentioned and explores how the twenty two consonants of the Hebrew alphabet are described as elements/building blocks of the cosmos; and the *Sefer ha-Temunah* (Book of the Image, c.1300),¹⁹ which is a treatise devoted to a detailed explanation of the theosophical significance of the forms of each and every letter.

Thus, this thesis is not meant to be a detailed analysis of historical sources or an investigation of their specific interactions, but rather surveys various syntheses, points of intersection and intertextual processes. It is

concerned with detailing different systems of logic, meaning production, and exploring the interstices, the overlap and displacement and domains of difference between Kabbalistic and contemporary feminist/deconstructionist theory and the nexus established between them.

Much of the research has been done based on *translated* texts. Although Kabbalistic discourse acknowledges the primacy of the Hebrew letter and its (ongoing) creative potential, both Kabbalistic and deconstructionist discourses recognize that translation, as in the French *traduit*, is also betrayal and transgression, and that language inevitably overflows its context and produces a semi(r)otic space of multiplicity and difference. Further, according to Kabbalistic and deconstructionist discourses, an "origin" is necessarily a palimpsest, and any notion of what is "originary" must be called into question. Given that the published texts are a translation of an "oral" tradition, which has itself been translated into a "written form", and subsequently has been translated and re-translated from Aramaic, to ancient Hebrew to modern Hebrew, its very form exposes that what is "original" is always already contaminated, is never locatable, traceable. Thus, this research embraces the paradox of interlingual study and foregrounds how language/cultures/codes are never singular or distinct but continually *feed off* each other and are read, re-read, mis-read depending on geo/historic and ethnographic context. While this text problematizes issues of *origin* and the "purity of language", it generously refers to and draws from "original" texts: Aramaic and Hebrew [Kabbalah] and French [Cixous and Derrida].

Thus, "in translation" (in homage and parricide), this thesis foregrounds how language is never transparent but both *outside* and *inside* of what it represents; how the *same* is always *different*; and how origin (from *ergh*, to wander) is always-already between the *aleatory* and the *calculable*, between what is *arbitrary* and *motivated*; disseminated through a hypercontextual semi[o]tics of desire.

Through discourse analysis of socio-religious and theoretical texts that inform the production of semiotic processes and an exploration of certain Kabbalistic texts, Western metaphysics, 'pataphysics, cultural studies, semiotics, feminist literary theory and post-structuralist philosophy, this study examines identity politics through specific socio-cultural practices foregrounding the notion that meaning production arises out of the matrix of language and practice, tracking *how* language is used, *who* is using it, in what contexts, for what ends and *how* that impacts on gender and genre construction.

It focuses on how language and literary texts affect and are affected by political, geographical and socio-ideological cultural contexts; the way questions of language and questions of history and power are inextricably linked. Reading Kabbalah, Derrida and Cixous in light of each other; **through** each other, traces ways they might inform one another today and thus this research not only questions the relation of Kabbalistic theology and literary criticism in contemporary culture, but examines how a "contaminative" reading strategy problematizes notions of purity, propriety and genre. Drawing from a Kristevan notion of intertextuality, where utterances coalesce in an irreducible differentiated intertextual (n)excess, text as a dialect of repetitions and

convergences, misprisions and intrusions, *becomes* a textatic matastacy; a series of syncretic intersects which ask what is *sacred* and what is *secular*, what is revealed, concealed, encrypted, who that serves and why?

These questions are integral to, and influence the way we think about language, interpretation, history and sacred texts; philosophy of language, philosophy of history, mysticism, feminist theories and deconstruction. And so not only does this thesis question how identity and culture are socially and ideologically constructed, but explores *how* secular post-structuralist and feminist theories of language and history relate to and re-define a culture, a history, an ideology and a politics, which is always in the process of becoming.

*

Drawing upon Derrida's "Law of Genre", relations of form and content, issues of Cixouvian "borderblur" and Bernsteinian "frame lock", Chapter one is an exploration of the construction of "genre". It charts Derridean notions of "law" ("there is no law in general except of a repetition and there is no repetition that is not subjected to a law")²⁰ read against a Kabbalistic notion of the letter of the law as the *letter as law*, [a KABBALAW] and investigates where law synnexes, annexes in the nexus, collapses into méconnaises, kinesis, kenosis, askance and cannot be contained or represented.

Replete with contradictions, inexactitudes, fictional locations, t(r)opological inventions, fabrications, justifications, rationales, fictitious quotations, illocatable texts, the *Zohar* and the *Bahir* present a conflictual self-

reflexive *voKABBALAr*y scaffolded in mistranslation, arbitrariness and disrespect, and thus question what is true, what is fact/fiction, real, lived, historic or constructed. This chapter then explores the necessity of infusions of otherness, defamiliarity, *verfremdungseffekt*, and foregrounds how language and meaning act as a contagion agency of multiple subjectivities inscribed along shifting axes of influence; ever-circulating systems of difference.²¹

Through disruption, invasion, intrusion and dispossession, what is originary, authoritative, accessory, synnexes in excess, collects into a surplus space of resonant sense. And as a sapirous reciprocity of quotation, restoryation, appendices and resemblances, what is *Cabbalistic*, is reviewed as *Ca(ni)bbalistic*, where text feeds off text in a paras/critical economy. Thus, this chapter focuses on how language is never pure, *propre* or transparent, but is always a transferential nexus or contextatic excess, and operates **in context**, an economy of violent signification, supplementarity and exchange.

This chapter explores ways in which the Kabbalah, as an absurd conglomeration of words and images, serves to foreground a ruptured, fragmentary, incomplete exposition that language "can not hold". Composite localities and fabricated personalities and a jumbling of temporality and history fetishize a notion that there is no Truth, Authenticity, Legitimacy in a "unified" discourse; that there is always already a superfluity of perspectives, positions which are always shifting. With Rabbis (icons of legitimacy and authority) *in dialogue*, a never ending always circulating dialectics of discovery is put into praxis. Kabbalah then becomes a voyage into meaning and context, into language and otherness, fetishizing instability, nomadicism, or, in Benjaminian

terms, "monadicism", vagrancy -- where meaning [like a *guest* (and *guest* from ~~host~~, which is both host and hostile)], moves from place to place {*re-plaised*} dwelling *among*, in t(r)opocentric extra(vagrance).

Thus, foregrounding how text is inscribed in nomadicism, exile, rupture, fragmentation, is always already estranged, anguished en *abandonnement*, this chapter explores not only how the Kabbalah puts into praxis Derrida's "Law of Genre" (where genres meet in a generous economy, overlap, entwine and feed off each other in a turbulent circulation, a semiotic arena of genre, genus, genos, generation, genre narration n'erration), but explores how "exile" is seen as a necessary semio-political procedure.

* *

Chapter two explores the Kabbalistic notion of *Tzimtzum* (contraction and expansion) through Derridean notions of supplementarity. Just as Derrida describes the supplement as both "a part of" and "apart from", both as essential and excessive, the concept of *Tzimtzum* discussed in Kabbalistic texts (*Zohar*, *The Bahir*) describe a similar process. According to the *Zohar*, in order for space to exist there had to be a contraction or withdrawal, a concentration, where *haShem* receded into Himself, or in Derridean terms, "invaginated" or folded into "the concealed of the Concealed",²² into an ever spiralling expanse. "Origin" is discussed as something brought *into* existence for the purpose of creation and G-d²³ is acknowledged as both inside *and* outside of this process (coming from the outside as accident or catastrophe, yet already at work on the inside); simultaneously operating along synchronic and diachronic axes, working

linearly and laterally, to produce meaning along shifting axes of influence. Thus, through the exploration of "Originary Technization", "Re-production", "Authorial Signature", "the Name" and "the Supplement", this chapter reviews socio-semiotic constructs of phonocentrism and grammatology, and particularly focuses on *Tzimtzum* as a continual process of framing: of constructing and re-constructing borders, laws, mirrors, screens, laws, and tracks ways in which this gets played out through Derridean and Cixouvian discourse.

* * *

Chapter three explores the Kabbalistic notion of the *sefirot* as a ten-fold hermeneutic reading strategy, and, in so doing, examines the relation of the body to text. Within the Kabbalistic system, the ten *sefirot* are often anthropomorphized as a "body".²⁴ But if, according to the *Sefer Sitre Torah*, the construction of the body, the various limbs and organs, are likened to the combinations of the letters: "all of the limbs of [the] body are combined one with the other",²⁵ this chapter investigates how every body is connected with every other body, every letter, every *word*, contains and creates (in)finite *wor(l)ds*. Thus, this section reviews Kabbalistic anthropomorphism through a simulacric ideology; as that which is always already reproduced, and as such, establishes the *sefirot* as a site of knowledge, inscription and production, that plays between the body (*corps*) body (*text*), and functions as an ever-performative narration of identities, (an active agency in the world).

Further, re-read through a deconstructive framework; through Derridean notions of the *trace*, *signature*, *stricturation* and *differance* and *dissemination*

and through Cixouvian notions of *excess*, *mediation* and *reproduction*, this chapter foregrounds how the *sefirot* signify both *one* and an infinitely divisible process. As a standard of measure, yet inscribed in slippage and erasure, the *sefirot* foreground themselves as a fluid economy, of differential tensions, serialized interruptions, irruptions that disallow any purity or propriety.

Kabbalah comes from the verb "to receive". As such, this chapter re-considers Derridean notions of "the gift" (given with no giver), as a process of receiving or an economy of exchange. The ten *sefirot* then, are re-viewed not only as vessels of light (through which the world was created), but metonymically stand in for all that is simultaneously receptive *and* generative), an economy of production *and* consumption, of supplementarity and exchange.

* * * *

Chapter four focuses specifically on language and foregrounds issues of the materiality of the signifier, multiperspectivalism, heteroglossia, dehierarchization and the relation of language to social reality. According to Abulafia, language contains a structure that conveys the "true form of identity".²⁶ And if, according to Edmond Jabès, "identity is, but an assemblage of letters", language is imbricated as a means of identity construction which endlessly propagates itself through socio-political-gendered codes and varying systems of logic.

Through an exploration of the intricate combinatory methods such as "Hokhmah ha-Tseruf" (the science of the combination of letters), Abulafian

notions of linguistic "jumping" and Derridean strategies of incorporating nonlinguistic inscriptions or reading through sublexical, graphic and phonic units, this chapter foregrounds how linguistic combination becomes a 'pataphysical exercise which generates alternative systems of logic and meaning production.

Given that according to *Sefer ha-Bahir*, the proper way to study [Kabbalah] is to take it as a whole, using every part to explain every other one, and if every letter implies every other letter, there is no beginning, end or containment (but definition is always already illocatable in a locus of interlocution), throughout Kabbalistic texts, language is foregrounded as an ever-expansive realm of multiplicity, divergence and inconclusivity. Thus, this chapter necessarily problematizes any notion of language as "natural" and foregrounds how the *secret* is always "invented". So, just as Abulafia points out, "...by contradicting the revealed structure of the Torah by means of letter combination, we are enabled to construct the hidden Torah"²⁷, this chapter examines how through re-construction, re-arranging the letters, new divisions, dimensions are formed, and the secret *secretes* 'bleeds' and re-produces itself in an ongoing hermeneutical process.

Through both form and content, the second part of this chapter, "Alefbet", not only posits itself as critical exegesis but puts into praxis a Kabbalistic poetics that looks at not only the meanings of terms and words, but also the sound and shape of letters, the vocalization points, the decorative additions, and numerical value. Drawing from *midrashic* methodology (conflictual discourse, marginal notes, analogical wanderings and homiletical

exegesis, as well as a nonunified type style), the chapter *becomes* "a rebellion of images", "a raiment of chequerwork" where "from the edge of every letter there are (in)finite interpretations...many secrets, many meanings, many roots, many branches".²⁸ Replete with disagreement, contradiction, conflict, it plays out an ongoing hermeneutic dialectic, and *becomes* the negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle.

Further, exploring how,

all the letters of the Torah by their shapes, combined and separated, swaddled letters, curved ones and crooked ones, superfluous and elliptic ones, minute and large ones, and inverted, the calligraphy of the letters, the open and the closed pericopes and the ordered ones - all of these are the shape of G-d",²⁹

this chapter shows how Kabbalah presents language as *not only* a "metaphysical" construct, but a network of echoes, traces, displaced in a palimpsestic process. "G-d" as trope, as a system of signs, as a hyperreferential productivity of effects is both inside, outside and beside $H^c_r_m$ self, ever-arriving and re-created in the name in the referent, in the praxis of becoming.

Further, through this alphabetic investigation, the chapter foregrounds that no letter is a thing in itself, but (as the letter *Tsadi*³⁰ is composed of a *Nun*³¹ and a *Yud*,³² the *Shin*³³ is composed of three letters: a *Vav*,³⁴ a *Yud* and a *Zayin*³⁵), even the letters themselves are comprised of other letters. Thus, this exploration illustrates how throughout the Kabbalah not only is each letter

foregrounded as an intertextual accumulation, but a system of relational differences and interdependent signs that contest singularities of difference.

* * * * *

Chapter five explores Feminist Subjectivity. The Kabbalistic notion of the *Shekhinah* is read through Cixouvian "Ecriture Feminine" and Derridean "invagination" and focuses on the relation of body to text in socio-political-ethno-gendered terms.

According to the *Zohar*, *Shekhinah* is the tenth attribute in the sefirotic system and acts as a receptacle for the supernal flow. Anthropomorphically, *she* stands in for the "lips" or "the mouth" [as she is the vessel through which prophecy is revealed (the mouth of G-d) and thereby also "Dibur" (the word)]. Thus, *she* is often referred to as the revealed aspect of G-d. However, though *Shekhinah* has traditionally been constructed as the *female, revealed* aspect of G-d, according to the *Zohar*, "there is a male and there is a female and even though there is both male and female it is all one".³⁶ Thus, through a close reading of primary sources, this chapter exposes ways in which, though *she* is often fetishized as "female", *she* need not be locked into an essentialized construct of gendered identity. Through a multigenred or gen(d)erous economy, this chapter then exposes how *Shekhinah* foregrounds sexual difference as not stable or coherent, but located in an *external* and non-essential place *between* female and male, variable, provisional and contingent, and recognizes the potentiality for masculinity and femininity in both sexes.

This chapter then focuses on how *Shekhinah* is inscribed in multiplicity, divergence, abundance, excess and overflow, defies definition and thereby, questions or problematizes any notion of a static, locatable or containable identity. It investigates ways in which *Shekhinah*, as both male *and* female, simultaneously immanent *and* transcendent, both revealed *and* concealed, interrogates phallogocentric notions of Truth, Authenticity, Singularity and Hierarchy (binaric constructs that inhibit, constrain, confine and close down) and foregrounds identity as a socio-linguistic construction, a semiological function inscribed in a differential chain on nonsynonymous substitutions, that defies definition and infinitely enfolds into H^e_r self.

The chapter explores how *Shekhinah* then metonymically stands in for Kabbalah in general. For, if as Derrida points out, **the revealed is always hidden**, "the revealed is the disclosure of the hidden and its dissemination",³⁷ Kabbalah (which does not embody a particular truth, identity, topos, tropos or secret), re-views the secret as that which can not be possessed, contained or understood, and presents itself as a doctrine which is both revealed *and* concealed, esoteric *and* exoteric, and writ(h)es between what's manifest, divided, what's common or contaminated, impropere, propere, appropriated, private *and* public.

* * * * *

Chapter six focuses on the elision between language and culture. Particularly, it investigates ways in which Cixous and Derrida write histories of cultural *differance* that envisages the production of difference as the political

and social definition of the historical present. Playing out the agonism between the lexical and the grammatical dramatized in the liberty of the signifier, this section explores *how* they produce an on-going cultural performance. Through an unspeaking, a *not* naming, through ambivalence, division and disidentification, Cixous and Derrida shift the s/cite of "the jew" from epistemological object to an enactive enunciatory site which opens up possibilities for other narrative gestures of cultural signification. Thus, this chapter foregrounds how through their writing praxes, they mimic a Kabbalistic hermeneutic and produce a contingent and liminal space, a multiaccentual politics of desire which confounds the ordering of a cultural hegemony.

* * * * *

A concluding chapter foregrounds the differences between French deconstruction and Kabbalah and concentrates on how *positioning* informs a reading praxis. It focuses on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of difference, fostering complex figures of identity and alterity, disorientation and disturbance.

As Kabbalah means *tradition*, or "Receiving by way of the mouth", and *tradition* is that which is infinitely inscribed, embedded or palimpsested; or (as in the Derridean *traditio*), is that which "hands over, delivers the sense, but...loses the institution in the repetition",³⁸ this research investigates Derridean, Cixouvian and Kabbalistic texts as infolded/foiled/fouilled/foiled/flawed through each other, as ghosts of each other and how they perform a cultural economy, an exegetical praxis that reinscribes a mysticism that is not

based on a metaphysical construct, but (as socio-ethnic identity, as language, as text) becomes an intervening space, a place of syncretism, juxtaposition and integration.

Just as in a cultural economy, where individual referents do not get elided, lost within one another (as each signifier is tied to an infinitely generating system which signifies a superimposition of distinct and autonomous logics), participating in a hypercontextual process of coding and encoding, Cixouvian, Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse do not get glossed over within each other, but maintain an ever-productive (dis)identity of effects.

For example, though the title of this thesis reads, "a 'Pataphysical Investigation of Cixous, Derrida and the Kabbalah", throughout the text Cixous though less "named" is encrypted throughout. Through her readings of Clarice Lispector, Heinrich Kleist, Ingeborg Bachman, Franz Kafka, Jean Genet and Marina Tsetetaeva, this research tracks how she re-marks a feminine space that names the unnameable, speaks that which has been silenced, absented, excluded. Re-claiming that which is secret, other, alien and con-fused, she embraces notions of separation, dissemination, death and difference, and writes a feminized space of vagrancy, exile, middles, madness and monstrosity.

Similarly celebrating that which is less visible; that which is encrypted, obscured, and bleeds through a series of folds and invaginated surfaces, this thesis puts into praxis a post-structuralist-Feminist methodology, a "libidinal feminist economy", which does not operate through phallogocentric totalizing gestures of Truth, Authenticity and Unicity; Objectivity, Power, Logic and

Reason; but rather through processes of ambiguity and displacement, rupture, and multiplicity, it simultaneously projects, disseminates, questions, and opens up the space where, in Gayatri Spivak's terms, "the subaltern *can* speak"³⁹. And as Kabbalah is itself inscribed in "excess, abundance and overflow" (*between* presence and absence or where absence abscesses between the not-there-yet" and the "always-already"), and questions "received" notions of reading, through both its form and its content, this research foregrounds how Kabbalah is uniquely available to feminism.⁴⁰

Through an intricate process of veiling and unveiling, assimilation and disjunction, translation (trans'elation, *traduit*, betrayal, transgression), Cixous, Derrida and Kabbalah re-invent a hermeneutics where what is "received" is never transparent, clear or defined, but calls into question what is esoteric, hidden and manifest; and acknowledges a transnational dimension of cultural transformation, migration, diaspora, displacement, re-location; discursively re-articulated in contestation and negotiation performed at the liminal edge of identity.

This thesis then examines ways in which a Derridean understanding of Kabbalah alters or affects the normative reception of it and how Cixouvian and Derridean texts differ through the lens of Kabbalah. Reading each other through differing exegetical strategies, they in themselves become a palimpsestic process of traces and erasures, scars of difference, appliance, appearance, and open up a space for a political construction of social identities. And if foregrounded throughout this research is that the process of naming amounts to the very act of constitution, then through continuous destabilization and projection, *read*

together, Cixous, Derrida, Kabbalah produce an on-going process of hegemonic re-articulation, which performs history, politics and culture as a linguistically-based simulacric economimesis of desire.

ENDNOTES

1. Translated literally as "tradition", and refers specifically to the tradition of Jewish mysticism. The term itself did not come into prominence until the twelfth century, although there were earlier mystical currents already in existence within Judaism. According to Gershom Scholem, it consists of "a vast printed literature which (in 1941) he estimated at 3,000 titles. See Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken, 1961), p.81.
2. Jacques Derrida, Aporias, trans. Thomas Dutoit, eds. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery (California: Stanford University Press, 1993).
3. 'Pataphysics was coined by Dadaist, Alfred Jarry in the early 1900's. It first appears in his play, Ubu Roi and then in 1911 is further expanded on in the Exploits of Dr. Faustroll, where he defines it as an "antimetaphysical metaphilosophy". Was picked up in the early 1970's by poet-philosophers, bp Nichol and Steve McCaffery. Acknowledging that if "meta" referred to that which was "above" or "beyond" and "pata" referenced that which was "beside", 'pataphysics becomes "the science of the elision" and operates through an unanswerable process of "imaginary solutions" which are always-already "both beyond and beside the topography of its telos.
4. Jacques Derrida, Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).
5. Clifford Geertz, "Learning with Bruner" in New York Review of Books (XLIV:6, April 10, 1997), p.24.
6. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, New York: Schocken, 1961.
7. Harvey E. Goldberg, "The Maskil and the Mequbbal: Mordecai Ha-Cohen and the Grave of Rabbi Shimon Lavi in Tripoli" in Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era, ed. Harvey E. Goldberg (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p.168.
8. Harvey E. Goldberg, "The Maskil and the Mequbbal: Mordecai Ha-Cohen and the Grave of Rabbi Shimon Lavi in Tripoli" in Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries: History and Culture in the Modern Era, ed. Harvey E. Goldberg, p.169.
9. Susan Handelman, Fragments of Redemption: Jewish Thought and Literary Theory in Benjamin, Scholem, and Levinas (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p.13.
10. From the root meaning 'to seek out' or 'to inquire'. Referring both to the interpretive activity and to the compilations (either homiletic or exegetical) of Biblical commentary.

Including much of the oral tradition. Conflicting opinions cited verse by verse, phrase by phrase. Midrash flourished during the Tannaitic and Amoraic ages (3 - 7th centuries) and again in the 10th and 11th centuries.

11. Julia Kristeva, Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).
12. Susan Handelman, Fragments of Redemption: Jewish Thought and Literary Theory in Benjamin, Scholem, and Levinas, p.13.
13. According to Idel, the history of *Kabbalah* has been regarded as including two main stages: the Spanish one, from the beginning of the 13th C. until 1492 and the Sefadean one, which flourished during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the 16th Century. Additionally however, other centers have contributed to the body of Kabbalistic lore, such as the Ashkenazic Hasidism of the Franco-German provinces during the 12th and 13th C. and the Hasidism that flourished in the East (Egypt and Israel), from the beginning of the 13th Century. (See Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives (London: Yale University Press, 1988, p.14). Kept by a small secret society, the *Kabbalistic* corpus was transmitted among a select group from one mouth to the next. According to Aryeh Kaplan, from Israel, the center of activity moved to Germany and Italy to Spain and then France particularly Provence, which became an important center of *Kabbalah*. Since both the *Zohar* and *The Bahir* were restricted to a small group for several hundred years, there has been considerable confusion among historians regarding its transmission and publication. See The Bahir Illumination, trans. Aryeh Kaplan (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990). Thus, based in myth, constructs and silence, even the history of *Kabbalah* positions itself as a discourse that defers verifiable truth, authenticity and reliable accuracy, a politics of purity and legitimization.

Further, Idel points out that there are two major trends in *Kabbalah*: the *Theosophical-theurgical* (a theory of the elaborate structure of the divine world, and the ritualistic and experiential way of relating to the divinity in order to induce a state of harmony), and the *Ecstatic*: a highly anthropocentric view which envisions the mystical experience of the individual itself regardless of the possible impact of this mystical status on the inner harmony of the Divine. See Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives or Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995). As this thesis is predominantly concerned with language and semiotic processes, I will be concentrating primarily on the "ecstatic" *Kabbalah* but will draw from elements of the theosophical-theurgical tradition where applicable.

14. Translated as splendour, radiance, enlightenment. Attributed to Moses de Leon (13th Century). According to Gershom Scholem, "it is based entirely upon rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature composed before 1275" [The Origins of Kabbalah, trans. Allan Arkusch, ed. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p.6],

and is considered the major text of the *Kabbalah*.

15. The Book of Light. Attributed to Rabbi Nehunia ben haKana. Comprised of 12,000 words. Gets its name from Job 37:21: "And now they do not see light, it is brilliant (bahir) in the skies". The Bahir was kept by a small school of Kabbalists in Israel. From there, the center of activity moved to Germany and Italy, then to Spain, and then France, particularly Provence, which became an important center of Kabbalah. However, according to Scholem, The Bahir was edited in Provence during the twelfth century and consists of compilations and editions of much older texts, which, together with other writings of the Merkabah School, made their way to Europe from the East. Not only does Scholem acknowledge the possible influence of the Catharists (the chief religious force in Provence until 1220 and who clung to the doctrine of metempsychosis), but leaves open the possibility that the Bahir, may have, to a large extent been directly based on a tenth century Eastern book of esoteric writing called the *Razza Rabba*, "The Great Mystery". (Though the book itself has been lost, several lengthy quotations from it were present in the writings of thirteenth century Jewish mystics in southern Germany). See Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp.75, 242-3.
16. Zohar I, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (New York: Soncino Press, 1984), p.xi.
17. Gershom Scholem, The Origins of Kabbalah, p.50.
18. According to Gershom Scholem, in The Origins of Kabbalah, the text's origins date between c.2nd -6th C.. And as Erich Bischoff points out in The Kabbala, some regard Gaon Saadia, the founder of Hebrew linguistics and writer of influential commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah, as its author. (Dr. Erich Bischoff, The Kabbala: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism and Its Secret Doctrines (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1995), pp.7-9.
19. The title also means "Book of the Figure" and explores the figure or shape of the Hebrew letters. Attributed to Ishmael ben Elisha. See Gershom Scholem, The Origins of Kabbalah, pp.460-75.
20. Jacques Derrida, "Difference" in Critical Theory Since 1965, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), p.123.
21. It will also reference how, with the infusion of new words, verbal acrobatics, schizomatics, intentional modulations of grammar, syntax, orthography, boundaries are blurred and thus, the grammatological process mirrors a blurring of borders of the subject matter (a blurring of worlds, levels of existence).
22. Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment, trans. Daniel Chanan Matt, ed. Richard S. Payne (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p.49.

23. Throughout this text, *G-d* is inscribed with a hyphen between the letters *G* and *d*, to foreground *His/Her* ever presence-non presence; that *S(he)* cannot be contained inside language, that this is always already only a trope, a word, a re-imaging, in which *S(he)* cannot be fully or properly (*propre*) expressed or represented. Similarly inscribed as *S(he)* not only foregrounds *G-d* as a multigendered or genderous economy, (not locked into any notion of anthropomorphic staticity), but with the "S" both inside and outside of the syntagm, mimics the *Shekhinah* both inside and outside of the *Sefirotic* system, both *a part of* and *apart from*. Intra-gendered diffusion is further foregrounded through the doubled pronoun of *His/Her*; simultaneously referencing both male and female attributes. According to the *Zohar*, the second *Hei* of the Tetragrammaton metonymically stands in for *Shekhinah* (which I have transliterated as the letter *H*, and like the "S" in *S(he)*, remains both inside and outside of the remainder of the syntagm. In the case of (*Him/Her*), the remaining letters, anagrammatically comprise the word "mire", and thus stand in for the encrypted abyss through which gender gets merged, muddled, transmuted. In the case of *His/Her*, the remaining letters form the word "*reis*" (which in German is: to travel, voyage). Thus, again foregrounds how gender is never static but travels, *travailles* between codes, idioms, constructs.
24. Although Idel and others have attempted to show that anthropomorphic perceptions of the angelic world and of the Torah preserved in an explicit and elaborated way can *illuminate* our understanding of earlier Midrashic, Talmudic and Gnostic texts and Heikhalot literature, to anthropomorphize *G-d* (as the supernal or cosmic anthropos), to render *Him* as a physical being, a composite of human body parts not only calls into question the injunction of image-making but has severe socio-gendered-historico-political ramifications. Further, to anthropomorphize *G-d* is to engage in a "literal" reading: a reading of the "Peshat" vs "Sod", and reduces language to a *transparent* medium of representation, and fails to acknowledge grammatological processes as an ever-signifying body in itself.
25. Moshe Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia*, trans. Menahem Kallus (New York, State University of New York Press, 1989), p.56.
26. Moshe Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia*, p.6.
27. Moshe Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia*, p.56.
28. *Zohar*, II:55b.
29. *Sefer ha-Yihud*, cited in Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p.189.
30. 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to righteousness and humility. According to the *Book of Letters*, it "is composed of a *Nun* whose head leans forward and whose neck, as a consequence, is stretched out and whose foot is extended so as to provide balance. A *Yud* is then attached by its tail to the middle of the back of the *Nun*'s neck". [See Lawrence Kushner, *Book of Letters* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p.52].

According to The Bahir, the letter *Tsadi* is doubled, indicating that it is male and female", (p.83). Having the sexual organs of both sexes [See further p.127], it operates then as "originary positivity". So, as in Derrida's discussion of *Dasein* which exists between the two sexes, as a letter, a sign of linguistic science, *Tsadi* cannot fall into anatomical, biological or anthropological determinations and has no literal, chronological, historical or logical meaning. Further, even though *Dasein* has neither male nor female organs, in housing both, *Tsadi* must not be explored as the neither-nor of ontic abstraction, but as simultaneously originary and ontological. See Derrida, "Choreographies", The Ear of the Other, trans. Peggy Kamuf, eds. Claude Levesque and Christie McDonald (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), pp.179-80.

31. 14th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to faithfulness and emergence.
32. 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. *Kabbalistically*, it refers to creation, and occupies the place of displacement, the space of the "excluded middle." Graphematically resembling a comma or apostrophe, it signifies an absent present. Further, the *Yud* exists as the first letter of the Tetragrammaton. Therefore, as the orthographic mark of metaphoric elision ("patareferentially absencing presence and presenting absence) the *Yud* questions the possessed through an unanswerable process of "imaginary solutions," a de/efferential process of supplement and desire. This is further explored in Chapter Six.
33. 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to power and scription. According to The Bahir, "as a prefix *Shin* indicates the word `that' and thus is a letter that connects and specifies", p.103.
34. 6th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to conjunction and continuity. As a prefix, the letter *Vav* means `and', and therefore acts as a connective. In Hebrew, the word *Vav* also means hook, and thus functions as a sign of accumulation.
35. 7th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to struggle.
36. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts Vol.I, trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman, arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby, intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.394.
37. See Elliot Wolfson, "Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes: Peshat and Sod in Zoharic Hermeneutics" in The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought and History, ed. Michael Fishbane (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), p.186.
38. Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.8.

39. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics (London: Methuen, 1987).
40. Unlike much of the Rabbinic tradition, this thesis foregrounds how Kabbalah not only is "open" to feminist reading strategies but so overtly deals with feminized concepts: Such as through and exploration of the *Shekhinah* (see *Chapter 5*) the *sefirot* (see *Chapter 3*), and through a gendered construction of the letters themselves (see *Chapter 4*) and particularly the vowels (see *Chapters 1 and 4*).

GENRECIDÉ

It is by *treating differently* every language, by *grafting* languages onto each other, by *playing* on the multiplicities of languages...that one can fight...against the colonizing principle.

(*Jacques Derrida*)

Within the limits of traditional religious/philosophic/literary discourse, as determined by the socio-political condition of absolutism, determinism, continuity, transparency and re-covery and based on a canon of normative obedience, writing has functioned within an economy of confinement, a logoma(nia)chic asylum inscribed by violence, hierarchy and exploitation. A system of selection, exclusion, where the irrational, illogical is rooted out, vilified and institutionalized. Operating through a process of tyrannical subjectification, segregation and repression, language is under continual surveillance; locked within a geometrically perfectible site of observation for the treatment and control of the anomalous. Subjected to public humiliation, this executionary process becomes a disciplinary regime where the syntagm is restrained, retained, formalized, re-harvested and tortured into utility. Made **useful**. In the name of increased social productivity and enhanced political stability, language often is recomposed into an efficient machine; resulting in textual hygiene, play deprivation, a rationing of ideas and restriction of movement.

A juridical space for the accused, judged and condemned.

Both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse problematize metaphysical notions of writing, thus the construction of "genre". Resisting text as a propaganda apparatus to package, advertise and sell consumable meaning, they do not strive to pin down and *fix* realities and identities for the greater good of communication, or assert a megalomaniacal discriminatory power over context -- a totalitarian urge towards an absolutist project, but rather employ strategies of irregularity, irruption, obfuscation and disease. As in Derrida's *Law of Genre* (I will not mix genres, I will not mix them¹), both Kabbalistic and Derridean texts interrogate the notion of fixed borders, boundaries, walls, screens, laws. In Kabbalistic terms, *Tzurah* (form) and *Komah* (structure) collapse, and form becomes content in a *patagogs* of discovery. Through an elision of boundaries trajected on the impress of socialization of history, the play of signification does not become thematics,² but a theatrics, a cicatrix; scars of difference, appliance, appearance. And in so doing, both Derridean and Kabbalistic interpretive processes abandon notions of chronology, causality, conformity; question the authenticity of historical contextualism and barbaric (w)rites of legitimacy, authority and closure.

Presenting itself as a non-unified, non-containable text, Kabbalah is composed of mystical *Midrash*, *Targumim*, *Halakhah*, Torah and prayer.³ Short commentaries, extensive disquisitions, *Aggadic*⁴ legends, homilies, take the form of arguments or dialogues between Rabbis set in the framework of travel stories, anecdotes, anonymous expositions, conjectural confabulations. Exposing an exegetical, homiletical character, Kabbalah moves from legal topics,

liturgical matters through interpretation, interpolation, poetry, philosophy, biblical commentary, lexicons and codes. Conflictual topoi entwined (like Rabbinical literature which it purports to be) with "[little] internal connection between them."⁵ As in Derridean text, different topics are palimpsested, layered one upon the other with no transparent connection between them, and with little logical transition or *rational* continuity.

Exceeding itself of itself -- as in the incalculability of the gift and singularity, Kabbalah and Derridean discourse inscribe themselves as an irreducible excess of disjuncture; which is not anarchic but is dislocated in a detotalizing ex-position or proposition deferred in multiplicity, divergence. In(excess)able they never assume completion, wholeness, unity, but as a prosthetic synthesis of supplementarity they become a paras/critical process where discourse feeds off discourse and forms a new body (anti-body) where meaning is contaminated and reference slides. Resisting a heteronomy of Being, Presence, or Law, they question any notion of a universalist or transcendental project and engender a *genereous economy* of iterable alterity, difference and dissemination.

For example, in the Kabbalistic corpus, the *Zohar*, although regarded as the premier text-book of medieval Jewish mysticism, is not a single unified work but rather an anthology of texts from the Amoraic period up to the 2nd half of the 13th century drawn from Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds as well as Jewish Apocalyptic literature. Comprised of three books⁶ and divided into five parts, it is more appropriately seen as a series of folds, a congeries of treatises, texts, extracts or fragments of texts, drawn from many strata of

mystical.⁷ Not only are there numerous authors, but the *Zohar* is written in multiple fonts in several languages: sometimes Aramaic, sometimes Hebrew; sometimes both in the same sentence. Through this infusion of otherness, defamiliarity, *verfremdungseffekt*, the text foregrounds language and meaning as a contagion agency of multiple subjectivities inscribed along shifting axes of influence; ever-circulating systems of difference.

This is similar to a Derridean exegetical praxis where Hegelian discourse is palimpsested against Genet, against Saussurean semiology, botany, biblical narrative, against "the orgasm of the glottis or the uvula, the cliteral glue, the cloaca of the abortion, the gasp of sperm"⁸ and spasms in the rhythmized hiatus of a grammatological occlusion. Multiple languages, non-vocalizable letters, infusions of seemingly disconnected writing, erupt in a heteroglossic arena where conflicting texts collide, intersect and proliferate. Through rupture, fragmentation, displacement, disjunctiveness and opacity, any notion of Totality, Authority, Truth or Closure is called into question.

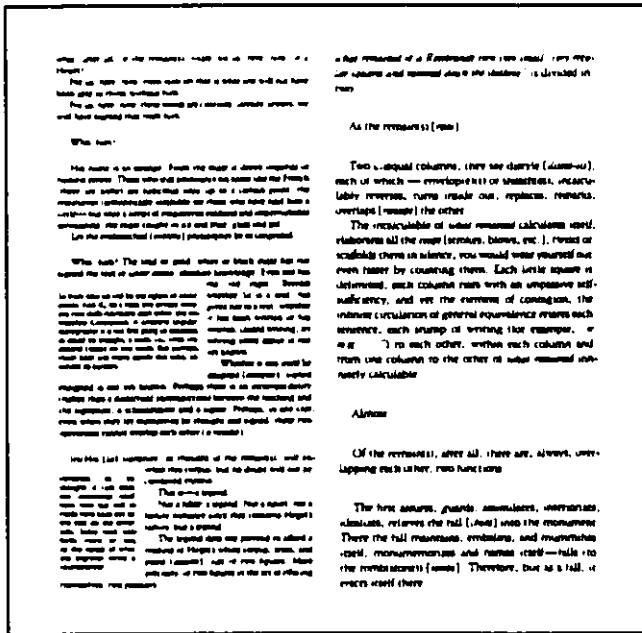
Though the *Zohar* was originally known as "the Midrash of R. Simeon bar Yohai"⁹ and purports to be a record of discourses carried on between bar Yohai and contemporary Jewish mystical exegetes, the text does not become a confession or an (auto)graphic signature but grafts itself onto other literatures, idioms, codes; and functions as drama, screenplay, dialogue. And if according to Derrida, any signature is no more than a promise of a countersignature, a promise of memory and or repetition",¹⁰ the *signature* of bar Yohai overflows, flows over itself, signs, enseigns and resigns, designs (*daseins*).

Because the signature can never present itself as a unified agency of emission, but as a multiplicity of positions, acts, voices, s(tr)u(c)tures, both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse gather into a countersignative contract which tracks and retracks, contracts into itself, in an ever-expansive realm of possibility and enunciation. In intertextual layering, subjectivity is dispersed, diaspersed, spurred through recontextualization, migration, translation.

As *non-organic* discourses shrouded in anonymity, anachronisms and incongruities, Kabbalistic and Derridean exegesis problematize the notion of "an ordered legalism, an apotheosis of the 'letter which killeth', a formal and petrified system of external commands...a shackled creed...in formulae".¹¹ Not locked or bound within the idiom of existential analysis or the limits of order as determined by a socio-political condition of absolutism, determinism, continuity, transparency and re-covery, for both, *genre* then becomes a continuous process of paracitation, quotation, resemblance. What is authoritative, what is accessory, synnexes in the nexus, collapses into a surplus space of resonant sense, a consensus of since, or *sensucht* (desire) and the text becomes a simultaneous legitimizing and delegitimizing gesture.

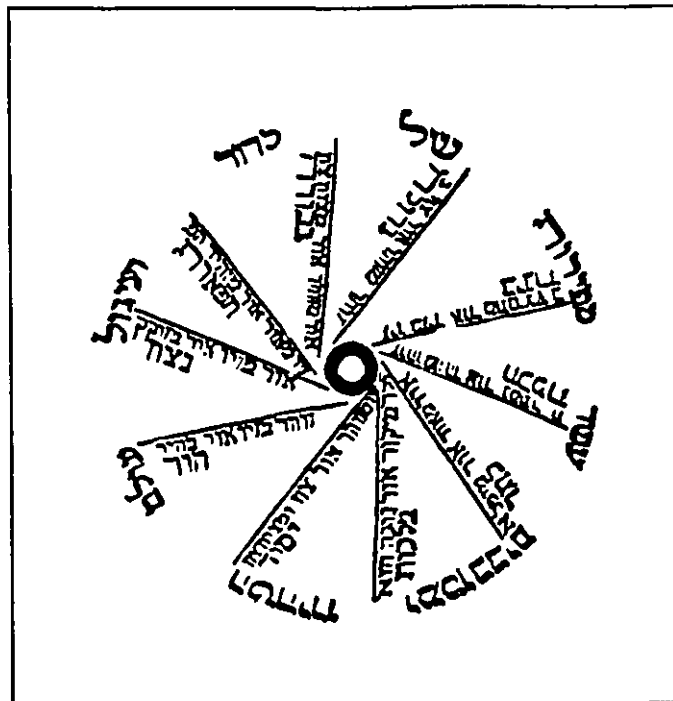
Reviewing textuality as a reproductive process, a sapirous reciprocity of quotation, restoryation, appendices and resemblance, what is [*C*]abbalistic, must be seen as *Ca(ni)bbalistic* where text feeds off text. Derridean and Kabbalistic hermeneutics foreground how language is never pure, *propre* or transparent, but is always a transferential nexus or contextatic excess. Through hysterical monomania, the signifier of reference slips and the text performs itself through a paracidical sucking, a synecdoche deictic where dis(sic)ecrit dis-eased in

metalepsis (metashlepsis) dehicens, abscesses; *becomes* a hyperabsorptive



orbit which infuses subjectivity into it; into an indeterminate extraintentional differential production ejected between forces and intensities. Between desire and distance: between the object and the object (*l'objet*). The passage of play (*appelez*), becomes a field of interplays (and pulls / places / *plais* or *placates*).

This is evident even in the physicality of the page. Texts intersect, circulate, converge, recede. Destabilizing any notion of a fixed regularity, univocity, writing, the page as *decoupage*, *parages*, becomes simulacric of an economimetic network of radical indeterminacy. Thus, through networks of proliferating power, savagery, both discourses act out a process of intertextual



contamination, which dis-eases any notion of origin. And if origin is nothing but "the vertigo of a hypothetical beginning",¹² subjectivity is seen as a generative process of production and consumption.

And though this destabilization gets played out overtly in the form of the page, it is further performed in the inimitable structure of the writing. For example, through rhythmic insistence, the *Bahir*¹³ functions through a rhetoric of continuous repetition: "it is written that", "as it is written" and "further written". Thus, in Derridean terms, everything is always already written, is "revenant". The *Bahir* does not foreground itself as an *originary text*, an originary commentary, but rather its concepts, its language are drawn from an intertextual surplus. Passed from mouth to mouth, it bastardizes, contaminates the notion of singularity as the experience of singularity itself.¹⁴ Through a palimpsestic process of images, mirrors re-presentations, re-production it recussitates, re-views and therefore re-inscribes and "makes new". Similarly, with the *Zohar*'s insistent repetition of "as it is said", "for as it is said" and resaid, it's saying *essais (per se)* in the unsayable, resayable, and foregrounds that there is no static beginning¹⁵ and there is no "*Final Solution*", no final *universal vocabulary* outside all other vocabularies. Thus, through both form and content, Kabbalistic discourse foregrounds origin as not that which is pristine, perfected, pure, but that which is *INSANI* (unclean, defiled, not clear).

Questioning then, the metaphysical erection of *property* (inscribed in empirical notions of being, purity, autonomy), each discourse acknowledges the *propre*, as a differential process of appropriation, *sens propre* (the clean or proper sense) is *sans propre*, improper, inappropriate (impropriotous, riotous).

depropriated, exappropriated and thus repels re-appelles or propels itself into a place of contamination.

In the writing of Abulafia, a *deconstructionist* 13th C. Spanish Kabbalist, language is broken apart into its constitutive letters, resulting in a monadization of Torah. Convinced that what was considered "linear", "clear" or "plain" was perverted, demonic, and vile (patrimony of the vulgas), his hermeneutics culminated in a text destroying exegesis that focused upon separate letters understood as divine names, and proceeded to engender an erotic relationship between letters. Similarly, recognizing that *debher* translates to both *word* and *plague*, Derrida acknowledges writing as dis-ease, *plagued*, plagiarized; which spreads, contaminates, infects any notion of a pure, clean or "readable" text. The *sensus historicus* or *sensu litterali sacrae* is stained, soiled, sullied in semiological processes of *pharmakopoetic* inf(l)ection.

According to the *Wisdom of the Zohar*, the *Zohar* drew upon a vocabulary of no more than 1000 words, which necessitated a continuously shifting format and unstable syntax. Through verbal acrobatics, schismatics, grammar, syntax, orthography was manipulated, modulated. Meaning was exiled (liberated out of *ordinary* perceptions), and resulted in an excess of dialectical linguistic expression that challenged the parameters of traditional grammatological structures.

Similarly, within the Derridean neologism "differance", is *erance*, which is "to wander". The very syntagm foregrounds a disseminative dialogic, marked in nomadicism, vagrancy. Through a blurring of grammatologic borders, origins

are displaced through an ever-shifting re-generative process: "Spread out, sublimely extended -- sucked up, thrown out to the periphery of a sentence, to the pariphrasis of [a] signature".¹⁶ Signifier and signified elide in a simulacric economimesis effecting a *language event*, where it is impossible to separate the experience from the expression.

Thus, both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse produce a liminal signifying space that is marked by exile, migrancy, agonism and differance and carve out a performative space. Foregrounding a discursive liminality; subversion, suturing, dissemination and slippage, transgression, invasion, displacement and uncertainty, both discourses produce a graphematic synchrony which simultaneously inhabit multiple and conflicting positions and act out a hybridity of meaning, forbidden transparency and impossible univocity.

With the use of travel narrative the *Zohar* foregrounds textual exile, where language becomes a voyage into meaning and context. Fetishizing instability, nomadicism or in Benjaminian terms, "monadicism", vagrancy, meaning travels (*travaillés*) from place to place [*re-plaisés*], or splayed out in hyperspatial interplays. Letters themselves become characters, become *dramatis personae* in an ever-performative narratological mo(ve)ment:

Bet [ב]...entered and said, "O Lord of the world may it please Thee to put me first in the creation of the world since I represent the benedictions (*Berakhoth*) offered to Thee on high and below. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her: Assuredly, with thee I will create the world, and thou shalt form the beginning in the creation of the world...*Bet* [ב]

connected with the Reish [ר] to create *BaRa* [create] which transforms into *AiBeR* (organ), which is the sacred foundation on which the world rests; which then transforms into *AiBeR* (as in *AiBraHaM*) so it is with the splendour of the name of the Most High and most Concealed One unfolded from *BeHiBaReaM* (when they were created)...¹⁷

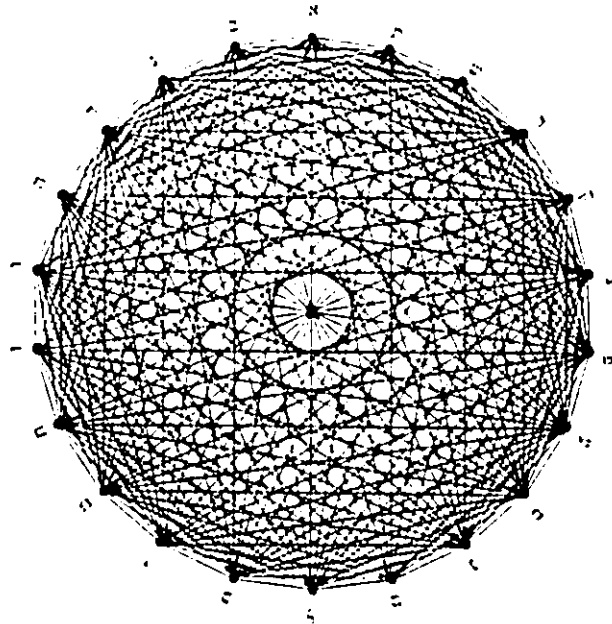
Thus, without static place, meaning or tropos, Kabbalistic discourse foregrounds itself as linguistically diasporic; inscribed in fragmentation, rupture and abandonnement.

Further, as homiletic rather than rhetoric, in both Derridean and Kabbalistic exegesis, *meaning* wanders through a complex of codes, texts, borders; through an exilic reason crept into by detour. As a paracritical passage, ellipsis eclipse in the lapsus, and re-posit a repast of a past which postulates as a resonant present sends, irrepresentible, and the wander of appearance expresses. Thus,

[in t(r)opocentric extra(vagrance)]

text then performs itself as *Gerushin*.¹⁸ And if the practice of *Gerushin* is to deliberately exile oneself (which is seen as a symbolic act of humility), Kabbalah foregrounds how *exile* is not ejective, but introjective, not exclusionary, but engenders a palimpsestic historicity, embracing an ever-expansive realm of suggestion and possibility.

However, though both Kabbalistic and Derridean exegetical praxes are inscribed in exile, migration, nomadicism, they *do not become* a "liberating free play", a loss of limits -- an amorphous circulation of signification or get dissolved into an indeterminate miscellany of inscription, the writing is always being articulated from somewhere; from a historical-socio-institutional, ethico-political position (*in discourse*). As Derrida points out, "there is no pleasure (or meaning) without stricture";¹⁹ *meaning* production can only happen through limitation, bands, *contraband*. Thus, through a process of contraction (and therefore expansion), through a negotiation of processes, privileges, drives and thresholds, neither discourse can be identified as irresponsible discharge.²⁰



This is particularly evident in that neither writing praxis is inscribed from a "free flowing vacuum", but in both cases, language is grounded within a socio-historical discourse. For example, Kabbalistic exegesis is ensconced in Maimonidean theology and psychology, Averroesian and Neoplatonic and sufic languages. Similarly, Derrida's writings are inscribed *within* the discourse of Western metaphysics, within the discourse of specific authors, specific writings. For example, *the Trace* (in *Of Grammatology*) is read through Saussure and Levi-Strauss, or (in "The Closure of the Gramé and the Trace of Difference"), through Heidegger. *The Supplement* (in "...that Dangerous Supplement..."), is read through Rousseau. *Differance* (in "Differance"), is read through Saussure, Koyré, Nietzsche, with reference to Heidegger, Hegel and Freud, and (in "...the Dangerous Supplement...", is read through Saussure and Nietzsche. *Dissemination* (in *Dissemination*), is read through Plato, Mallarmé and Sollers with reference to Lautremont and Novalis. In *Signsponge*, through the manipulation of the signature, the works of Ponge become a thematics of the sponge. read as a means to appropriate part of language; *genets* are read through Genet.

In Glas, the glas fleshes a grammatological reading of Saussure, and as "there is -- always -- already -- more than one -- Glas",²¹ glas glides *glissades* through Hegel, Genet, as *gladiatrice*, *gladie*, glands, glances as "the idiom or the signature...a singular plural...[which] has its breaking in itself...and resounds with this literal damage".²² Thus glas, as panaglossia, a *glassary* of s(words, garlands, collars, tinctures, the glas signifies how language grafts function onto, and agglomerate s meaning. As *gelina*: sheaf, *gelm*, *gilm* handful, *granum*, grains, glas gleans, through a gallery of *gliss*. *gloss*. *glotis* in a gladiolated garden of inscriptions, networks, a genealogy of crossings, couplings, switches detours and branchings.²³ Glas then as *glagiot*, *glaujol*, *glaugel*, *glongol*, *glageux*, language (*langue*) becomes a semiological process; a *gladiolage*²⁴ of agglutination, of cannon shots, bombs, firings which "sound the glas at length".²⁵

<p>Genre. <i>Gen.re</i> (<i>zhan/re</i>); genus: kind; sort; style a class or category of content. technique. <i>genre</i> <i>genro</i>; <i>geno</i>, <i>gens</i>. <i>genus</i>; genius, gender.</p>

By grounding itself in the *Torah*, Kabbalah likewise cannot be separated from the text on which it comments. Through a process of expansion/contraction both texts become always already framed **within** an ever-spiralling discourse. Thus, as both Derridean and Kabbalistic critical commentary are **based on** the language of the "source text", they question any notion of a metalanguage or transcendentalism of traditional criticism. Though Derridean terminology (*trace, supplement, signature, differance*) and *Zoharic sefirot*,²⁶ *neshamot*²⁷ or *kelipot*,²⁸ may be seen as "quasi-transcendental", they cannot be seen as metaphysical tropes that stand above and comment on, but rather are 'pataphysical markers that function both inside and outside, beyond and beside.

Just as the *transcendental* cannot be separate from the *empirical* {as the transcendental is produced on the basis of an *outside*, but this *outside* is immediately folding back into the inside: the empirical is always already the transcendental of the transcendental (of the empirical)}, what is *commentary* cannot be separated from what is *commented on*. And just as in the signifier/signified opposition, though the criticism lives off the text, it nonetheless erases the opposition in the process. So, though both Derridean and Kabbalistic hermeneutic praxis engage in a process of "writing through" or in Cixouvian terms *writing with*,²⁹ they foreground that there is no distinction and separation and, thus, what is critical/source, primary/secondary; what is a priori/fortiori must be re-viewed as a graphematic matrix of echoes, cinders, traces.

As text folds back on itself, employs the discourse of what it is commenting on, it renounces any mastery or appropriation. Recognizing that every reading is inscribed through an irreducible iterability, both Kabbalistic and Derridean exegetical praxes resist any notion of a metaphysics of linguistic purity, of literality; acknowledge that logos is only a mythos (or in Derridean terminology, a *White Mythology*) which arbitrarily and violently attempts to impose as *Reason* itself.

Between impermeability and absorption, incorporation and introjection, the *other* is interiorized in alterity, *belongs without belonging* {{belanguing}} and remains as a foreign body inscribed in contaminated specificity. However, though Derrida's reading strategy involves complex intervention and radical (mis)reading, through a process of homage and parricide, fidelity and betrayal, (*doubly bound*), it remains *in debt, in mourning*, to those texts (an intertextual network), which are always already "under erasure".

Thus, these discourses do not appear as an indeterminate miscellany of inscription, endlessly approaching signification, but a rhetoric of ends, (f)laws, frames. A place of construction, reformation, of tracing and negotiating limits. Because borders are always already only an illusion of a determined identifiable, defined position (and therefore do not possess, contain or immobilize), inscribed in the immanence of disappearance, they become marks of indecipherability; porous, permeable and indeterminate.

And as "any unit owes its unity to a force that allows it to bind itself to itself, to maintain itself erect, which implies a relation of itself to itself that divides the same in constituting it",³⁰ through simultaneous bondage and division, elision, both deconstruction and Kabbalistic hermeneutical processes do not fetishize the border or the blurring of borders, but the crossing, the voyage. How the border is crossed. Who is crossing. In what ways. The border is not a separation but a step, a departure, a trespassing, an inclusive non-conclusive inclusion and is always already over-determined, contaminated by the events of language. Never identical to itself, inauthorizable and in(di)visable, the border then stands in for the "impracticable, the impossible passage, the refused, denied or prohibited passage, the non-passage".³¹ Because what cannot pass comes to pass is not even the *non-pas* but *a-pas*, a passion, a *pas-de-pas* as parameters endlessly shift, the border *debords*, *abords*, become spiralling centers in an endless process of promise, parasitism, grafting and divisibility. And if, according to Cixous, "when I cross a border it's my border I'm crossing, though I don't know which one I'm crossing or which side I end up on",³² it simultaneously prohibits and gives passage. As a heterodidactics of the between, the border then functions as di/efferentially embedded figural traces which endlessly contextualize the (dis)articulation, organization and anxiety of power relations. So, a questioning of borders is a questioning of ends, modes of ending and therefore does not embrace a transcendental concept of space but a topography of edges, a configuration of contours, sequences that wrench security out of a violent reciprocity marked by expansion, contraction, a labyrinth of vertiginous exigencies, a vortex of possibilities and substitutions.

Yet, as an ensemble of specific discursive practices, as the outgrowth of a determinant mode of production, neither Kabbalistic nor Derridean discourses position themselves as a non-hierarchic celebration of opacity as incoherence, but recognize the intensity of ever-firing fibres, fluids as a series of "limit experiences", an intersequential circulation of semiological slippage and semantic subterfuge. And if, according to Jabès, the time of death is the time of borders crossed, orders deborder in deborder (excesses) align and move on. So, what is outside of a border is not absented and therefore cannot be an experience of lack, effacement, erasure, closure and silence, but a series of traces and echoes inscribed in exile, rupture, movement and uncertainty. A play of differences, proximity, duration. D'rifts and distances; realizable or residable. Divisible. Performing in an aporitic play where disparity, aperity; a parody appears as aperture or portraiture where border / lines are / border / plays, played out in an interstitial s/cite.

This is evident in a Kabbalistic exploration of the Hebrew vowels. As the vowel-points (*neqqudot*) are often below, inside or above the letters, (as supplements, both *a part of* and *a part from*) or *hinged to*, they become a means of bordering, strategic framing, containing. Or as the Derridean *parergon*, (which unsettles the boundary, the frame), where the frame as both contingent *and* necessary comes up against, rubs against, plays *between* itself (whether graphematically visible or not), the Hebrew *vowels* are inextricably linked to the *consonants*. Thus, what is *essential* and what is *accessory* is called into question as the letters are re-articulated as a multiplicity of frames, which at once systematize and open enunciative possibilities.

As frames reframed in inferent aims, language is not seen as an arbitrary "free flowing", nihilistic, unstable and a-political hermeneutic strategy. Not **FREE** but **OPEN**. An openness that cannot be reflected, mimed or reproduced. An irrepresentable position or proposition dislocated in multiplicity. Though both discourses seem to preach a pantextualism and thus assault traditional concepts of subjectivity (erase the possibility of a potent agency of political action and perhaps privileges textuality at the expense of the "real world"), through a strategic "destabilizing", both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse acknowledge that the *world* and *language* are not two separate realms, but are inseparable from discursive structures and systems of signification. Both work **AGAINST** a politics that sets itself up as an empirical or pre-political *real* (where domination is invisible), and challenge a hierarchic binary system of exclusions that eradicates difference and leads to totalitarian regimes which ground its prescriptive judgments *outside* signifying practices.

Exploring then, the relation between law and inscription, both discourses take a position *in the work of analysis* (and thus are never separate from a political institution), and seek new investigations of responsibility, investigations which question the codes inherited from *ethics* and *politics*. So, the hermeneutic strategies of both deconstruction and Kabbalah do not establish themselves as a limitless discursivization of the political which suspends reference (because not only is there reference for a text, but the effects of reference (or referents) remain *and the referent is textual*). The political is not given up to indeterminate play, to a vacuous relativism but, between justice and injustice, they acknowledge that choices *are not* made from a position of transcendent subjectivity that precedes or stands outside the judgements it makes. But, in a

continual process of slippage and deferral, the subject is not erased, absented, but displaced in indeterminacy, ambiguity, plurality. The subject is reinscribed as a political agency with an ethical subject, *a subject of ethics*, which practice a justice that cannot be "justified" and thus, necessitates "full" responsibility.

Thus, re-viewing language in terms of *differance* and inscribed in language traces (which are not simply traces of traces but refer to an origin escaping the text in the act of grounding it), secures the text against the madness of permanent dissemination. Neither Kabbalistic exegesis nor Derridean deconstructive strategies can then be seen as an a-political, non-committal or irresponsible escapist strategy, but rather they escape Phallogocentric totalitarian notions of Truth, Authenticity, Legitimacy, Reason, Meaning or Closure.

So, to say "*ne pas de hors text*" (there is nothing outside of text), is not enclosing text in a prison-house of language, but opens language to the *Other* in general -- returns as the singularities which, by remarking their singularity, shake up the received limits of a law which never presents itself. Thus, Kabbalistic (as in Derridean) hermeneutic praxis acknowledges that "what happened" cannot be grounded in irrefutable certainty, but in radical translation, which is NOT CHAOTIC, but as "there is no law in general except of a repetition and there is no repetition that is not subjected to a law".³³ A law that cannot be contained.

And if Kabbalah reads Torah, and Torah is "Law", through a series of trials and re-trials, details, Kabbalah questions *what is law?* How can "the Law"

be defined when "the law is incomprehensible; when it plays itself out between an undesirable, unverifiable, indecisive absence, and a presence which is not a presence but promise, appeal...(emitting) its radiations from the point of its imperceptibility"³⁴? And if according to Saussure, "language is always received, like the law", and according to Derrida, "every law finally communicates with an absolute out-law, which would be in a 'transcendental position' with respect to any given legality, and which we have called the gift of the law of the promise"³⁵, Kabbalah (as out-law or bi-law) acts *as law (in the being-law of the law)* and exceeds the law, or in Cixouvian terms, blow[s] up the Law...tears the law apart",³⁶ and *becomes* the letter of the law, the letter which *is law*, where every letter a law, a flaw.

According to Cixous, the law [*la loi*] is in every look [*l'oeil*]. Thus, in a spectrographic process of looking and not looking, Law looks, overlooks or locks in an interlocutive locus. And if, according to Jabès, "the law [is] opening the dialogue",³⁷ inscribed in a dialogic space of spectral dissymmetry, discursive liminality, dissemination, displacement, rupture, fragmentation and exile, each law must then be seen as a series of borders, orders, mirrors, screens, walls. Thus, shifting from a Baudrillardian (à la Marx) "Law of Capital to the Law of Value",³⁸ both Kabbalah and Derridean discourse explore

how the interminable elaboration of a law always in retreat, mysterious, jealous of its truth that one will never know but whose traces one will follow, traces that will never give rise to a present perception or to an experience³⁹

and maintains the trace of a passage through an irreducible iterability, an undecidability, where meaning and truth are constituted contingently, indeterminably, in substitution and exchange.

In the *Zohar*, this is particularly foregrounded in that Rabbis (icons of legitimacy and authoritative discourse) are **in dialogue**, conflict, engaged in a non historical, non time-bound, never ending always circulating dialectics of discovery; fetishizing a notion that there is **no** single Truth, Authenticity, Legitimacy in a *unified* discourse. There is always already a superfluity of perspectives, positions, laws, which are always shifting. Thus, what is "true" is re-viewed as a network of possibility, re-told in a telling, a detailing, a taling of how the tell tolls, trials.⁴⁰

So, through the form of questions, conflictual dialogue, answers are deferred through continual exegesis. As the critical commentary is contained within the body of the text, what is inside/outside, original/authoritative or secondary cannot be determined. As observed in the *Bahir*, there is a continuous posing of explanations. For example, in section #118, in an attempt to reconcile a paradox, more than six different answers are offered with reference to a multiplicity of unrelated texts. The *Bahir* then operates through a 'pataphysical framework of **answers** to questions never been asked, or if a question *is* asked, the answers answer different unvoiced questions and therefore indeed, posits itself as the "elision of the elision without quotation".

Through self-reflexive insertions, any singular, contained genre is called into question. Section 10 of the *Bahir* states, "Do not read *Ha-Olam* (the world) but *He-elam* (concealment). In section 67, *Debher* (plague) is understood as *Dabhar* [(holy) word or logos]. Similarly, in section 62 the text reads, "Come my beloved, let us go out to the field", and then offers, "Do not read *Sadeh* (the field) but *Sidah* (carriage) -- Let us go out to the carriage to stroll, it will not constantly sit in one place".⁴¹ So, just as in huntsman's language, "the field" refers to all the riders in horse-racing, and all the horses in any one race; in military parlance, "the field" is the *place* of the battle, the battle itself or the place of campaign; and in heraldry "the field" refers to the entire surface of the field, the *Bahir* recognizes that "today [i] shall not find [you] in the field" -- so far afield, or "by field", because that field is always already a "savage field", a "field of conflict", a "Field [of] Notes. And, "to back the field" or "keep [it] back", is to "take the field" as "a field of blood", "of fire", "of force", "of footsteps"; a "field of vision", "allowance"; which *becomes* a field of discourse, which carries on, into and out from a "field of struggle".⁴² Thus, not only do the Kabbalistic directives serve to foreground a multiplicity of possible interpretive strategies, but they then fetishize *the act of reading* as an ongoing process. Demanding an increasingly "active" reader to provide surplus meaning in what has been classified as "empty space", the act of reading no longer operates within an economy of consumption, but production.

Further, self-reflexive destabilization of the narrative, de-authorizes the text and foregrounds its constructedness, its otherness as a productivity of difference. Thus, infinitely trajectorial, both Kabbalistic and Derridean texts question all sense of conventional linear narrative structures. And, though "a

trajectory is necessarily without heading and without assurance, [it is] a precipitation toward which trembles, vibrates at once orients and disorients".⁴³ So, through strategies of irritation and annoyance, hybridity, deformation, masking and inversion, they produce a discourse that is not rational or irrational but relational, elational. A form of reason that does not exclude. Not an unreasonable reason, a higher reason, a privileged reason or a reason outside of reason, but in a hyperbolic surplus of spectrality, sacrality, alterity, they inscribe

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and enter at the limits of vertiginous dyssemtery, an in[vag(ue)ination which opens in displacement, rupture, and disorientation.

So, just as "when every syllable a reason" (Jabès) or "every logic a semiotic" (Peirce), Kabbalah and Derridean discourse posit an **anagogic logic** (a "flux logic"), and foreground how one cannot cling to an insurrectionary knowledge which assumes syntactic unity, topological reductionism; a finitist ambition of a nonreciprocal totalitarianism, evaluative centrality and a topoi of isolationalism. So, working through economies toward libidinal and socio-linguistic reorientation, these discourses operate through a (l)ibid.inal economy, always within (l)imitation.

Each hermeneutic praxis must then be seen as a series of laws which do not provide a model of regularity and order (but like the becoming-common of the proper name), they are not essential but a performative constative. Both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse, then re-mark a law that is before the law and exceeds the law; a law which allows itself to bind itself, maintain itself while dividing itself in the process. Posits itself as **the letter of the law** that is never given, but is always already analytically entailed by the force of repetition, contamination, difference. So, not *inside* or *outside* of any genre, position or law, but (if according to Derrida, *ousia* is "spectral presence"), both deconstruction and Kabbalistic writing must be seen as always already **OUSIDE** of itself. Ousted *out of* and *into*. And through an ongoing process of bordering, re-bording marking and tracing, both discourses write themselves through a political economy of parasitism, grafting and divisibility, and produce a paratactic sacrifice apostrophized in a liminal toponymy of accumulation. Dispersed in an impress or promise of a palimpsestic abscess; as an insouciant insistence assembles, disassembles in a moving ensemble that resembles, they explode into themselves, and *become* as deixis in excess annexes, where the syntax enacts in parataxis. Genres elide in a generous economy, overlap, entwine and feed off each other in a turbulent circulation and become a semerotic arena of genre, genus, genos, generation, genre narration, n'erration.

ENDNOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre" in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992).
2. Can never can be reduced to a thematics -- as, according to Derrida, "the address [] opens to the other, makes itself responsible for the other in making the other responsible for it". Thus, it presupposes any thematization. See Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 305-6.
3. The Talmud itself, also has a form commensurate with Kabbalistic discourse in that it is also inscribed through a polyvocality, ambiguity, indeterminacy.
4. The noun of the verb "le-haggid" which means "to say" or "to tell". Transmitted chiefly by word of mouth, it is a "creative exegesis", which expands and elaborates biblical narrative. Including wise sayings, expressions of faith, expositions and elaborations of Scripture, stories, anecdotes or folktales, it allows the Torah to remain dynamic and open to varying interpretation. See Joseph Heinemann, "The Nature of Aggadah" in *Midrash and Literature*, eds. Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p.41-55.
5. Isaiah Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.I*, trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman, arranged by Fischel Lochow and Isaiah Tishby, intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.7.
6. According to Tishby's introduction to *Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, the account of publication is divided as such:
 - i. *Zohar on Torah* (Genesis and Exodus in one part, the rest of the Pentateuch separately). Arranged according to Parashiot.
 - ii. *Tikkunei ha-Zohar* (Arrangements). Contains 70 pieces called tikkunim. Each one begins as an interpretation of the word "Breishit".
 - iii. *Zohar Hadash* (the New Zohar).
7. While it was originally thought that Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai authored the *Zohar*, it is widely believed to have been written by Moses de Leon, with the exception of books *Raya Mehemna* and *Tikkunei ha-Zohar*. (J. Abelson in his Introduction to the *Zohar* Vols. 1-5, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (New York: Soncino Press, 1984), p.x.

8. Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.121.
9. *Zohar I*: p.xi.
10. Jacques Derrida, *Signesponge*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
11. *Zohar I*, p.xiv.
12. Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book*, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop, intro. Richard Samelman (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991).
13. *The Bahir*, attributed to Rabbi Nehunia ben haKana, trans, intro. and commentary, Aryeh Kaplan (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990).
14. This is not to say that it prioritizes the written over the oral in any way, but that the oral and the written are equally necessary (as one plays off the other), equally misrepresentable, non replicatable. And, though women were supposedly *permitted* to study text in its written format, they were often never given the Hebrew skills so they were never able to study. Though an oral tradition emerged from the womens' circles [in the *Ashkenazik* world, through stories and prayer; and as Norma Baumel Joseph points out, in some *Sefardic* cultures, was transferred through song (Personal communication, February 27, 1997)], the women were only privy to *half* the discourse.
15. According to Dr. J. Abelson's introduction to the *Zohar*, the first printed edition of the *Zohar* appeared almost simultaneously in two places: Mantua and Cremona in 1588-90. Though the oral tradition dates back to the 3th Century in Galilee, it was received in the 12th and 13th Century by Nahmanides and Solomon ben Adrath (though known in Safed long before). By the middle of the 16th Century, it reached Isaac Luria (who learned Kabbalah in Egypt). His disciples, Elijah de Vidas, Joseph Hagiz and Hayyim Vital Calabreze transcribed Luria, and called the texts *Etz Hayyim*.
16. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, *Jacques Derrida*, p.225.
17. *Zohar I*:3b-4a. (Loosely translated).
18. Exiles wanderings; practiced by Moses Cordovero (1522-1570) and Solomon Alkabetz (1505-1584) who would wander amongst the numerous gravesites in the environs of Safed in self conscious imitation of the exiled *Shekhinah*:

"A person would exile himself from place to place for the sake of heaven and in this way he would become a vessel for the exiled Shekhinah...He would humble his heart in exile and bind himself

to the Torah and then the Shekhinah would accompany him. And he would carry out Gerushin by exiling himself from his house of rest constantly" (Moses Cordovero, Tomer Devorah, Chapter 9).

The legal term in Rabbinic Judaism is *gittin* (of *get*, lit. `divorce') As such, the Laws for divorce are found under a section called "Gerushin". In Judaism, the Law limits women from getting a divorce which leaves her co-dependent, *in exile*.

19. Jacques Derrida, The Truth in Painting, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.43.
20. This figure indicates the 231 lines connecting the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. According to the Sefer Yetzirah, it represents the number of ways in which two different letters of the Hebrew alphabet can be connected. 231 also is the number of two letter words that can be formed with the letters, provided the same letter is not repeated, and provided that order is not considered. See Aryeh Kaplan, Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation: In Theory and Practice (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990), pp.111-13.
21. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.50.
22. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.150.
23. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.108.
24. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.498.
25. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.90.
26. Translated as the ten emanations, (utterances) from which the world was created: *Keter, Hokhmah, Binah, Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzah, Hod, Yesod, Shekhinah*. See Chapter 3: "Sefirotica".
27. "Souls".
28. Plural of *kelipah*. "Bark" or "shell", the symbol frequently used in Kabbalah to denote "evil" and the source of sensual desires (*Zohar* I, 19b; II, 69b, 198b, 184a; III, 185a, etc). Often mentioned together with *Sitra Achra* (the *other* side).
29. For example, Hélène Cixous, Reading with Clarice Lispector, trans. and ed. Verena Andermatt Conley. *Theory and History of Literature 73* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).
30. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.236.

31. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit, ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery (California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p.73.
32. Hélène Cixous, *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*, trans. Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p.130.
33. Jacques Derrida, "Difference" in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), p.123.
34. Hélène Cixous, *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*, trans. Sarah Cornell, Deborah Jenson, Ann Liddle, Susan Sellers, ed. Deborah Jenson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.151.
35. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, pp.282-3.
36. Hélène Cixous, "Laugh of Medusa" in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, p.316.
37. Edmond Jabès, *From the Book to the Book*.
38. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), p.101.
39. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, p.296.
40. This is not to say that history does not exist or events did not happen, but rather explores *how* they are remembered, who is remembering them and in what context. The trace of the event is carried like a heavy clinging stench, carried into and re-translated.
41. This is also evident in the Zohar "Do not read `ami' (my people), but `imi' (with me) (Vol.III, pp.1128-9).
42. "The field" (as a designation for Kabbalists) appears frequently in the *Zohar* i.e. II:240b and *Zohar Hadash, Midrash ha-Ne'e'lam to Ruth*, 85d, where the field symbolizes the *Shekhinah*. The idea of the `field' as a designation for this *sefirah* is derived from the expression "a field of holy apples", or as *Ta'anit* 29b comments, "as the smell of a field of apples", taken from the rabbinic exegesis of the verse, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed" (*Genesis xxvii:27*). See Yehuda Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, trans. Arnold Schwartz, Stephanie Nakache, Penina Peli (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), n.99, p.175.
43. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.23. This type of trajectorial writing is evident throughout the *Bahir*. Not only does it often break off in the middle of one sentence and continue with the middle of another, but the answers to questions are sometimes missing (section 30); important enumerations are not brought to

a conclusion (sections 88, 115). Section 107-115 present a lengthy anonymous exposition, while 116 begins: "His pupils said to him" without any previous reference having been made to the teacher and his words". (See Gershom Scholem, *The Origins of Kabbalah*, trans. Allan Arkusch, ed. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p.54.

TZIMTZUM

A Hermeneutics of the Supplement

All binding and union and wholeness are secreted in the secrecy / that cannot be grasped and cannot be known, / that includes the desire of all desires. // Infinity does not abide being known, / does not produce end or beginning. / Primordial Nothingness brought forth Beginning and End? Who is Beginning?...It produces End...But there, no end.¹

The totality of the Tzimtzum is [formed of] the letters.²

Just as Derrida describes the supplement, as both *a part of* and *apart from*; both as essential and excessive, the concept of *tzimtzum* discussed in Kabbalistic texts (*Etz Chaim*, *The Bahir* and the *Zohar*)³ mirrors a similar process. The word *tzimtzum* has two meanings: contraction (condensation), and concealment (occultation), and refers to the most crucial doctrine in Lurianic Kabbalah explaining an iterable process of creation, through radiating emanations, refraction and concealment.

According to the *Likutei Amarim-Tanya*⁴, in order to create the world; in order for space to exist, there had to be a contraction or withdrawal, a concentration of *divinity* into itself. Thus, from "within the concealed of the concealed", G-d brought out a single flame from the spark of blackness, and "blowing spark upon spark",⁵ the Light was folded, "invaginated", producing

a series of mounds, crevices, pockets, secretions. Thus, what is seen as "empty", "void" or "absent" is actually a process of occultation and concealment.

Further, just as it is said that "[G-d] brought out from the recesses of the deep a single drop, and [S]he joined them together, and with them [S]he created the world...", the *Tanya* foregrounds how the world was taken from that which *always already* existed. Between the "not-there-yet" and the "always-already", the world was not created *ex-nihilo* (out of nothing), but *Ain Sof* "a nothingness" that contains everything. Thus, if the wor(l)d is inscribed "out of nothing" it is not "nothing" *because it's not there*, but because it's unrecognizable, illocateable, untraceable, unformed (or without a frame). Similarly, the Hebrew word *ain* (nothing), and the Hebrew word *ani* (I or Being), are composed of the same consonants. According to Charles Poncé, "*Ani* is what G-d calls H[er]self at the precise moment that the *Shekhinah* enters and completes the created world".⁶ However, *Ani* (if transliterated; written with an *Ayin* [ʔ] instead of an *Alef* [ʔ]), also means 'poor'. Therefore, I (subjectivity) is always already impoverished, inscribed *not in fullness*, completeness, but in desire. Thus, through an investigation of language, Kabbalah foregrounds a *tzimtzumic* process of how the world is created not "out of nothing", but *between* something and nothing, between *Being* and *Nothingness*; through an endless state of becoming.

So, out of a nothingness, which is everything, the world was engraved and established with forty-two letters"⁸ or according to *Sefer Yetzirah*, "[S]he created H^{er}, Universe by the forms of expression: numbers, letters and words"⁹

whose "end is in their beginning and...their beginning in their end".¹⁰ Thus, the world was created through language [*langue*]. A language that (as G-d), is both inside and outside, (coming from the *outside* as accident or catastrophe, yet already at work on the *inside*, as monstrosity).¹¹ Simultaneously operating along synchronic and diachronic axes, working linearly *and* laterally to produce meaning along shifting co-ordinates of influence.

As a continual process of contraction and expansion, space was created out of itself, and according to Kabbalistic thought, G-d as a part *of* and apart *from*, "remains" simultaneously imminent *and* transcendent. And, as the Derridean *supplement*, which intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of, and "adds only to replace", G-d "fills all worlds and surrounds all worlds"¹² and there is no place empty of H_{im}^e . Similarly in a Derridean economy, what seems to be transcendent, Other, oriental or abjected is both creator and a part of the creation, re-created in the praxis of becoming.

According to the *Zohar*, there must be self-withdrawal of the divine essence before any creative process can happen. In Derridean terms this would mime a process of strategic containment, a constructive de-construction which brings into focus that which appears as a free-flowing amorphous flux of subjectivity.¹³ Through a continual process of framing, of constructing and re-constructing borders, laws, mirrors, screens, walls, there is a *cutting off* to enable visibility, recognition, identity. But, if a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as that from which something begins its presencing", or as Heidegger would say, "the bridge *gathers* as a passage that crosses",¹⁴ G-d's

contraction of H_{im}^{er} self into H_{im}^{er} self, is an ongoing process of consumption and production, supplementarity and exchange.

Thus, throughout Kabbalistic (as in Derridean) texts, embracing originary iterability and irreducible virtuality, time is then renegotiated as "contemporaneous time"; disjunctive, coexistent and synchronic. Just as in *Cosmos and History*, Eliade explores how the creation of the world...took place in *illo tempore*, and is re-actualized in every ceremonious act, throughout the Kabbalah, time is regenerated in every trope, letter, graphematic axiom, and thus in mimetic mutation, functions as a simulacra of "the creation of the world". Further, according to the *Bahir*, just as the six days of creation are not six *days*, but rather metonymically stand in for the *sefirot* (from *Hesed* to *Yesod*)¹⁵, and as each *sefirah* is not a unique, autonomous realm, but is contained in every other *sefirah*, the Kabbalah foregrounds time as a contemporaneous tradition of filiation operating both synchronically and diachronically.

[contemporaneous: cum tempus: with time]

And thus, its very simultaneity makes *a priori* impossible.

So, the Kabbalah doesn't posit an Eliadean "abolition of history",¹⁶ where "the past is destroyed",¹⁷ "the plenitude of a present that contains no trace of history",¹⁸ because in a form of transumption, it carries its history with it, recreated, reproduced in every instant. Just as "the First Cause" is continually recreated through repetitious enunciation of Torah, in a palimpsestic process of

accumulation, the past is re-passed, surpassed in an irrepresentable present non present or resonant present that continually escapes itself.

This is not, however, a revolt *against* concrete, historical time in favour of a "mythical time" or a "Great time" or a "Pure time", but through repetitious (reproduction) time is regenerated as an irreplaceable time. A historical moment that comes and keeps coming, becoming -- pulsing instantaneously *into* and *out of* existence. For, according to Derrida (in *Given Time*), time is that which undoes the distinction between giving and taking and perhaps between receptivity and activity.¹⁹ Similarly, for the *Zohar*, there *is no* continuity between one moment and the next, but in radical discontiguity, time is not stable, but a process of temporal disjoining. Spectrographematically, run down, on the run, out of order, off its hinges, off its course, Kabbalistic time is "a sign of the times" which takes its time. 'Cause when it's all in the timing, it's **about** time, tempered "down time" in a tropological time. Not timeless but a temporal drift, for *this* time, 'cause it's high time. When time is on its side, two timin' it tempts in no time, 'cause there's no time when you know time - as the text tears on time. And bides time. Beating this time as contaminated time, beyond and beside time.

Abandoning notions of chronology, causality, and historical contextualism, through the Kabbalah, time operates as, perhaps, an Einsteinian "function of energy" in perpetual recurrence, where the end is contained in an ever-receding beginning, that occurs and recurs in *anakuklosic*²⁰ collusion. So, just as with *tzimtzum*, Cixous and Derrida inscribe a hermeneutic exegesis, a discourse that mirrors a *tzimtzumic* process through their writing. Foregrounding

how "meaning" can only occur in a system of borders, frames, mirrors, screens, laws, they inscribe a space where inside cannot be differentiated from outside, where insides are res/cited in a site of desire, and in a rhythm of pulsional incidents, vertiginous exigencies spiral into an ever-receding remainder.

* * * * *

"In the beginning are our differences". `In the beginning' was postponement. `In the beginning' was the `trace'; residue, excess. "In the beginning was the secret, then the secret was made word and the word, the secret's guardian".²¹ "In the beginning was distance, death and repetition. "In the beginning was the deed".²² "In the beginning, I adored".²³ "In the beginning, I desired".²⁴ "In the beginning is the apple;²⁵ appeal, *l'appel*, the call, (or *rappel*, memory and mourning). "In the beginning was the telephone".²⁶ In the beginning was the "Yes", the archi-signature, the pre-originary gift. (And as in the Joycean "yes i will yes, say yes", *ya. ja, yasoo, oui oui, aye, si gnosis*, it's never a simple punctual affirmation, but already a promise of its own repetition in anticipated memory of itself, divided in its act²⁷). But for Derrida, Cixous and Kabbalah, in the beginning was the sign.

But, if in the beginning was the *sign*, and the sign always stands in for something else, it's never primary, first but second.²⁸ But a *second* is a moment (*en passe*) and is also what comes to the aid of, thus a *seconded origin* can neither be originary or secondary, but an origin that comes to the aid of, that *passes into and out from* an origin that is not an origin. An origin that *never was* and can *never be* an origin,²⁹ but perhaps a beginning countersigned in its

opening itself to the reception whose trace is already inscribed in its enunciation.

Similarly, according to the *Zohar*, although *Keter* is the first in the enumeration of the *sefirot* (vessels of light), *Hokhmah* "is called "beginning",³⁰ as *Keter* is not included in the number of those that are emanated. Thus, again the second becomes the beginning. What is "first" must be reviewed as a construct of perpetual recurrence.

Further explored in the *Bahir*,

Rabbi Berachiah said:/What is the meaning of verse (Genesis 1:3), And G-d said, "Let there be light", and there was light"? Why does the verse not say, And it was so"?// What is this like? A king had a beautiful object. He put it away until he had a place for it, and then he put it there.// It is therefore written, "Let there be light, and there was light." This indicates that it already existed."³¹

Thus, in both Kabbalistic and deconstructionist practices, origin is constituted as a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and forces meet. Nowhere present, origin is always-already a reproduction, transcribed, re-marked as repositories of a meaning which was never present whose signified presence is always reconstituted by deferral, *nachtraglich*, belatedness, supplementarity.³² *An Original Copy*.

According to the Kabbalah, even the *Alef*³³ [א], the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, (the originary sign, "the beginning that comprises and unites all"),³⁴ contains all the other letters. Thus, as both inside and outside of itself, it is at once singular and an intertextual, intralingual process. Further the Torah begins not with *Alef*, the first, but *Bet* [ב], the second letter, whose numerical value is two. Thus foregrounding that at the outset, there is a doubling. A seconding. A standing-in-for. At the beginning there is multiplicity and otherness and therefore *origin* is always already a copy. *Alef*, though re-marking the beginning, is not *the First* (singular and unique), is not the Original for "the Origin cannot be mentioned by name".³⁵ According to the *Zohar*,

...this is what is meant by *Reshith* (beginning). The letter *Bet* (=2) indicates two things joined together, namely two points, one shrouded in mystery and one capable of being revealed; and as they are inseparable, they therefore are both joined in the single term *reishit* (beginning), i.e. they are one and not two, and he who takes away the one takes away the other as well.³⁶

Thus, concealed and revealed in aporetic processes, origin is inscribed as a metonymic chain of signification which divides and differentiates all identities, and presents itself as a mark of indeterminacy, a trace of repeated difference.³⁷

***In the beginning was originary repetition, finite infinite,
a supplement which produces what it supplements.***³⁸

According to the *Zohar*, there is no logical consistency in the way in which the sequence of emanation is fixed. However, though there is no causative sequence, this is not to say that there is *no origin*, but rather that origin gets re-inscribed as a perpetual economy, which gathers itself into an ever-accumulative beginning. This is particularly foregrounded in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, which, instead of using the Hebrew word for *create*, employs the architectural terms, *'haqqaq'* and *'hasab'* which mean *'engrave'* or *'hew'*.³⁹ Thus, with no absolute, justifiable starting point, *in the beginning*, *at the beginning*, *with the beginning* or "through a beginning"⁴⁰ in both Kabbalistic and post-structural discourse everything has always already begun.

Just as in the Heideggerian *call*, "whose source remains interminable comes *from* me while falling *upon* me, it comes *out of* me as it comes *across* me",⁴¹ the source is re-sourced in a sourcery, carried into transference, transformance, *traduit*, translated in a transgressive arena. It is gathered in the process of production, accumulates in the valley of the text.

Similarly, for Cixous,

the text always comes to me in connection with the Source....which I can't stop searching for: I seek it furiously with all my forces and with all my senses. Source that gives the meaning and the impulse to all the other sources...the being that gives itself -- to be sought out -- that prompts and relaunches the movement that makes my heart throb that makes me take up the ink and go off again to seek farther, questioning eternity, untiring, insatiable answer that poses a question without end".⁴²

And thus, as in the *Zohar*, Cixous foregrounds the simultaneous internal / external cite of the source: "what happens outside happens inside"⁴³ (as incites res/cited as apsite sites, excites), or in Derridean terms "it's G-d weeping in me, turning around me, reappropriating my languages, dispersing their meaning in all directions", or "as though the other me, the other *in* me, [] G-d infinitely smaller and bigger than I..."⁴⁴

What has historically been marked as *the origin, the originary voice* is always betrayed through a series of crimes, perjuries, blasphemies. Indeterminately articulated, discourse is in dialogue, conflict, altering the parameters of textual signs. In this context, the "voice" is seen as what's leftover, the supplement.⁴⁵ So, in both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse, writing is posited as both `outside of' and `interior to' speech. It is external because it is not an image of a symbol standing in for a transcendental signified, and is internal because it `always already' exists inside itself. Thus, as with the `Oral Torah', which is defined as the interpretation of the Written Torah, which "protects, preserves and expands it,"⁴⁶ the referent is not related to an exteriority of writing. Writing is not secondary, derivative, but haunted by repetition, reproduction, represented in an iterable alterity, a network of replacements and substitutions.

...the content of the written Torah, which is hidden and sealed, is made manifest in the oral Torah....The relationship between the written Torah and the oral Torah is similar to that between voice and speech. Just as voice is a prerequisite of speech and there can be no speech without voice. So, the oral Torah can

exist only on the basis of the written Torah; and just as the content of Thought, which is comprised within the voice, remains incomprehensible without the enunciation of speech, so the words of the written Torah need clarification by the oral Torah.⁴⁷

Further, Abulafia points out that "the hidden Torah is the Oral Torah. By contradicting the revealed structure of the Torah by means of letter combination, we are enabled to construct the hidden Torah."⁴⁸ Thus, the Oral Torah is arrived at by re-construction, re-arranging the letters, which form new divisions, dimensions, and signal the excessive presence non presence of diversity and consistency, dispersion and gathering.

Although according to Rabbi Isaac Luria (the *Ari HaKodesh*), when G-d withdrew H^e_r , presence, S/he drew down a thread of light, which then spread out in all directions, out of which were formed ten *utterances*. However, it is said that although these utterances were *perceived*, they were *not articulated* and thus cannot be fetishized as oral transmissions. Further, elsewhere it is stated that "G-d created the world by means of three books".⁴⁹ Thus, again, priority is given to the written / graphic dimension of language (the basic constituents being the consonants of the Hebrew alphabet). However, *even if* the world was created through ten *utterances* or vessels of light (*Sefirot*), the root of *Sefirot* is *SFR*, which is the same root as *sipur* (story) and *sefer* (book), then again linguistically investigated, the beginning of the world references a grammatological praxis. And as "[G-d] is in them...And in $H^e_r_m$ are his sayings,"⁵⁰ the expression is never separate from the expressor, or in

Jacobsonian terms, S/he is both subject of the enunciator and subject of the announced. Inscribed inside, S/he is the language S/he expresses.

So, just as for Derrida, there is nothing outside of text, according to *Shivhei ha Besht*, "when I open the *Zohar* I can see the entire world".⁵¹ Thus, G-d as author is not outside of, but nests inside. Res/cited in a site of desire, dwells *among*.

He encompasses all worlds, and none but He surrounds them on every side, above and below and in the four corners of the globe ... He fills all worlds and no other fills them...He binds and joins the species with one another, above and below [with] the four elements...existing among them".⁵²

Further, for both Derrida and Cixous, not only *the voice* remains as supplement, but the signature emerges as compensatory and vicarious, "as an adjunct, a subaltern instance".⁵³ Just as G-d inserts $H'_{i,m}$ self into the word as a thread of Light, the Signature inserts itself into the text, contracts itself so that the Torah simultaneously becomes $H'_{i,m}$ and is not $H'_{i,m}$. According to the *Zohar*, "the Divine Torah in its entirety, is one sacred name, of which it is said, "it is [$H'_{i,j}$] name and [$H'_{i,j}$] name is it".⁵⁴ So, just as the single all-inclusive name separates out into its individual elements and the different combinations all designating different forces of emanation, similarly, Derrida contracts himself into multiple subjectivities with multiple histories, positions, quarantines, codes. Thus, the signature can never present itself as a unified agency of emission but as a multiplicity of positions, actions, voices,

s(tr)u(c)tures; gathers itself into a countersignative contract, which tracks and retracks, contracts into itself in an ever expansive realm of possibility and enunciation.

Similarly, both inside and outside of himself, Jacques Derrida inscribes himself into language, but takes on **another** name, an alter name, a pseudonym, an eponym. Thus, by signing himself into another name, a double name, a forename (which was not inscribed on his birth certificate / as though they wanted to hide it, efface it, and thus took himself toward the hidden name without its ever being written on the official records),⁵⁵ he thus references subjectivity as a heteroglossic enunciative process.

So, just as G-d is referenced through seventy two names, hidden, concealed, unpronounceable, which contract into each other, Jacques Derrida references *his* hidden name, "the name of he who on [his] death you will call *Elie*".⁵⁶ Just as according to Kabbalistic hermeneutic praxis, the Torah is viewed as a series of *names* which expand and contract into a countersignative contract of regeneration and dis(emanation "sublimely extends" itself onto **other** discourses, idioms, codes, Derrida as *Elie* re-invents the *name* as anomian nom, homonymy, eponymy, anonymity, and *becomes* the name of the name; the name that exceeds the name in an ever-mnemonic process of re-naming.

Thus, Jacques is born(e), without bearing, without its ever being written, the name of the prophet *Elie*, *Elijah* or *Eliahou*, who is invisible, not seen and *spoken for*. *Eliahou*, who never died, who is not yet alive, but occupies the space between the not-there-yet and always-already. *Elijah* (who with *Elisha*),

"came and raised the dead to life... [who] came and kept back the rain and made it descend again".⁵⁷ *Elie*, who appears at every circumcision, at every Passover seder -- He, of prophecy and transmission:

*celui qu'on elit (I am he who is elected)*⁵⁸

"(eh! lis, et lie, elit, et lit, et l'I, elle y, L.I., l'Y)".⁵⁹ "*Elie*, I call you, break down the wall, intercede for the intercessor that I am, you..."⁶⁰ *Il y a* or (il lia) where "presence-non presence...folds back pure donation into exchange and reappropriation".⁶¹ *Elie* or "*Moelie*",⁶² self-reflexively cutting off and into a ritualistic *circumfession* of alliance and disjunction.

Elie or *LE*, the indefinite article. As *le petit objet à* (which *à la* Lacan) differentiates the other from the other) *eli* or *elya*, *aely*.

I am not called *Aely*...I can only be so in so far as it is the deciphered silence of a name...*Aely*...the elsewhere of an unimaginable elsewhere, seed of silence... *Aely* unfolds in time with silence, spreading its wings. He branches out beyond existence...elusive down to his name which we never know how to pronounce. He is what does not go out from or come to me. He is the apocalyptic void which fascinates me from afar, which I can neither approach nor appreciate which presents itself as the very last moment of death, moment when a name passes into its absence...⁶³

Eli, where *AiLeH* folds into *AeLoHim* (as the wor(l)d folds into itself⁶⁴), *ELeH* (from the name *Elohim*)⁶⁵ (one of the 72 names of *HaShem*, the Name; "the name which guarantees the continued existence of creation. The name which references the disjunction of subject and object",⁶⁶ the name which inscribes *Divine Understanding, Rigour and Exile*⁶⁷ [And "With Beginning...created Elohim]⁶⁸

Thus, Derrida takes on the name of the Name [*an [A]lien name*] then abandonnes it, disseminates, *discheminates* (((*eJACQUESulates*))) it in the letters. And if according to Jabès, "identity is but an assemblage of letters",⁶⁹ Derrida's *name* becomes only the reflection of an absence of the name that that absence itself would have composed. A presence non presence to the absent being whose name he has inherited. So, between the proper, improper, appropriate, expropriated, he names itself into the unnameable, where the forename renamed as eponym, cryptonym, cognomen, paleonym, homonym or anonym, a "pure vocative, non-iterable prayer".⁷⁰

Derrida foregrounds how the name is never *natural* or *essential* but necessarily overflows its context and produces a semerotic space of multiplicity and difference:

Because the name of the word of the thing, the word thing *that is* my name, that is in me, beside me...I will not identify myself with it because though it is me, it is not me and must remain absolutely strange within the greatest possible proximity.⁷¹

So, just as the name both belongs and does not belong to the word or the thing both belongs and does not belong to the body of the text, remaining both inside and outside (*outside*), simultaneously supplemental and necessary; the name defines and stands outside of definition. Thus, respected between violence and neutrality; through a passion of impossible secrecy, *elie* lies delies, belies elides into *Jacques* (of substitution and ex-change: **of all trades**), Derrida signs himself into the text foregrounding that the trace of the signer (*signeur*) [signor] is always already there in a palimpsestic collosas. So, as both secret and revealed, as singular and multiple he *becomes*, not only

a word open...[like] perhaps some prophet *Elijah*, of his phantom or double,⁷² but as "Elijah is you: you are Elijah..."⁷³ He is also...the guest of the other who stands before the door, at the poems first step on the threshold of the text, stands before the door as before the law.⁷⁴

So, as *guest* from *ghost* (from **hosti**, is both host and hostile), Derrida (as the word) is dubbed in a redoubling of an ever opening passage, where the trace of his name becomes a door, a passage **into the other**, into desire, hesitation, possibility.

Thus, as *tzimtzum* can be read as a supplemental process of exchange and redistribution, *the signature*⁷⁵ which is both inside and outside of itself, foregrounds how what is proper to itself is always already appropriated, expropriated, and articulates different modalities, forces and dependencies. At once singular (*signular*) and singularly untranslatable, it functions between the

aleatory and the calculable, between chance and necessity and sacrifices itself in the fold of translation.

And if according to Derrida, any signature is no more than a promise of a countersignature, a promise of memory of repetition, a unit of cultural knowledge virally replicating itself *in language*, it is never pure, never locatable, but is always only a trace, residue, excess, excised in the unpredictable supplement that opens itself to possibility, transgression, betrayal, duplicity. Thus,

when God imposes and opposes his name he ruptures the rational transparency but interrupts also... linguistic imperialism. [Destined to the law] of translation, both necessary and impossible, forbidden transparency, impossible univocity. Translation becomes law, duty and debt, but the debt one can no longer discharge.⁷⁶

But though the Derridean Law of Repetition says, what repeats must be the same and there is sameness only if it repeats and the only repetition is of the same, but the same is always different.⁷⁷ Delimitable, inimitable, contaminated by alterity, differance, *the same* signs and resigns (*daseins*) in a countersignative calling, and *ALWAYS ALREADY* repeats the hidden signature:

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And if, according to Cixous, the author is not only the one who signs but also a completely unknown person blended with "legendary" mythical, complex, variable, consanguinity. "I go in and out, in and out, I am in my body and my body is in me, I envelop myself and contain myself".⁷⁸ And if, according to Abulafia, the combinations of the letters reference the construction of the body, its limbs and its organs ("all of the limbs of [the] body are combined one with the other"⁷⁹), the body and the body of writing, which is re-created "in the image of", is always a semiological function, which is blurry, several, simultaneous, contaminated by un-nameables, migrations, monsters, hybrids.

Thus, between socio-linguistic subjectivities, Derrida puts into praxis a "life-writing",⁸⁰ a "biomythography" or an "auto-bio-thanato-hetero-graphical opus"-- a "circumfessional" that *makes truth*, and *lives inside* a hermeneutic p(a)lace of re-inscription, translation and meaning production. This is particularly evident in that his home in Algeria (13 rue d'Auelle-de-Paladines) is called "the orchard" PaRDeS which, in Hebrew, not only stands in for the *impossible* (unreachable or inaccessable) place, but the mnemonic is synchronous with the four-fold Kabbalistic hermeneutic methodology, or exegetical process: *Peshat* (Plain or literal meaning), *Remez* (Allegorical), *Derashah* (homiletical) and *Sod* (Esoteric, mystical, ineffable or hidden).⁸¹ Thus, his home is inscribed in homeosis, homily, hemorrhages into a sanguine text. *A living text* that replenishes and re-creates itself, both inside and outside of language.

Writing then, through a *tzimtzumic* hermeneutic, Derrida then posits an origin which is always already an origin which is not an origin, (and if origin

comes from "ergh" which is *to flow* and "errare" which is both *to wander* and *to err, to mistranslate*), origin wanders in exilic trajectory (a trajectory with neither heading nor assurance). Through the praxis of writing it then becomes, "the ghost of the ghost of the specter-spirit, simulacrum of simulacra without end",⁸² a phantomatic projection, introjection, which never dies. An origin which remains always to come and come back.

So, Origin as a secret, "the secret of all secrets" or that secret which is not perceived", the sublime secret that secretes in *s'écrit*. A root of roots that gets re-routed in a writing. Marked by "no end, no wills, no lights, no luminaries", it cannot be categorized, measured or contained, for according to the *Zohar*, there is no letter no name, no writing, and no world that can comprise it. Untranslatable, illegible, absolutely indecipherable, origin then, as a ragin' nerrative, a "non history of absolute beginnings", exceeds all narrativity and engages itself in the possibility of receiving.

And as Kabbalah is "to receive" (*a receiving* which is always already *a giving*), exceeding itself of itself, origin then comes *as a gift*. An unrepresentable present or "a present [that] must be invented that will not stop presenting itself".⁸³ Thus, the gift is the secret itself. But as it "withdraw[s], hides[s], sacrifice[s] itself in order to give,"⁸⁴ it is the secret that cannot be told. Irreplaceable, unsubstitutable, it can never be taken, borrowed, transferred, delivered, promised or transmitted. Because the origin never arrives, but is only a promise, a premise of irreducibly (in)different singularity.

Through a politics of memory, of inheritance, of generations (as the future is always a-coming, *en arrivant*, arriving, *la-venir*, is always coming and arriving *from* itself), "*the wor(l)d to come*" comes and becomes. Therefore, exceeding any presence *as presence*, in an excess of excess, "in a nonhistory of absolute beginnings",⁸⁵ both Derridean and Kabbalistic discourse reference not an ontology but a "hauntology", a discourse of traces ellipses markings and echoes in a spectrographics of *revenant*. Because there is no presence (and no absence), only chains of supplements with endless signifying potential; because presence is relational and there *is* no fixed, locatable Truth, through Kabbalistic, Cixouvian and Derridean hermeneutic praxes, origin then, is not understood as an historical moment, but a process of production inscribed between promise and promiscuity; is a miscue, an errant wandering; a t'error in exile, (a wandering error) which doubles and proliferates into an excessive erraticism; a textatic (n)e(u)roticism. *Tzimtzum* is then re-inscribed as not only an onto-theological or teleo-eschato-logical program or design, but as the law of the supplement, (a process of continuous metonymic substitution and exchange). So, just as in *Shevirat Hakelim*, when the vessels could not contain the Divine Light and they "shattered by the intensity of the radiation",⁸⁶ the syntagm can not contain its references, (the Signified can not hold its Signifier). Thus, through a countersignative, re-combinatory process of diffusion, liquification, reconstruction and dissemination of shattered lights, shards, fragments, contemporary post-structural theory and language-centered feminist discourse install a "*Tzimtzumic* hermeneutics" and rename the name of the name which becomes an act of "Tikkun".⁸⁷

ENDNOTES

1. Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment, trans. Daniel Chanan Matt, ed. Richard J. Payne (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p.147.
2. Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, Peri ha-Arez, (Jerusalem, 1969), fol. 9a. Cited in Moshe Idel "Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism", in Mysticism and Language, ed. Steven Katz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.62.
3. For Luria, *tzimtzum* means the retreat from a certain space, namely evacuation, in other texts this term refers to concentration of the divine into a certain space.

According to the *Likutei Amarim-Tanya*, Rabbi Schneur Zalman, trans. Rabbi Nissan Mindel (Brooklyn: Kehot Publishing Society, 1958), "the light itself is neither reduced nor removed but merely concealed".(p.828) Further, there is not an absolute and total withdrawal, as some residue or vestige of the Light remains in the *chahal* (in the empty space, void). ((However, this is an empty space in relation to that which is "beyond" or "outside". Thus, it must be acknowledged that what is presented as "empty", is contingent on its context, is always a matter of perspective, a spectrogenic process))). Thus, the *chahal* can't be seen as a gap, an empty space, an absence but an abscess. Not a silence but a salience. Like the disappearing of an apparition (or Derrida's, "apparition of the inapparent"), simultaneously present and absent.

The origin of the world is depicted as the breaking forth of light rays, which then spread out in all directions from their center in the realm of the G-dhead. A center which is decentered in an a superfluity of systems, frames, constructs, diffusions. Or, according to the *Tanya*, "a theory of emanationism...a progressive chain of successive emanations [disseminations] interlocked, connected, interrelated. (*Tanya*, p.834) It doesn't move from cause to effect...for even myriads of occultations and evolutions from grade to grade in a causal process will not avail the development and coming into being of Physical matter...rather it is by a "leap" or "jump" which breaks the gradualism and establishes a radical distinction between cause and effect: a radical act of creation...(pp.826-27).

4. *Likutei Amarim* literally translates as "collected discourses" and was originally published in Slavita, 1796. *Tanya* originally appeared in Zolkiev, 1798, with *Likutei Amarim* as its subtitle. Written for the "seekers" and the "perplexed", it deals with the "mystic descent of the soul and its destiny, it provides the author with a starting point, based in the Talmud, from which to unfold [H''] whole system." At least 65 editions of the *Likutei Amarim* or *Tanya*, complete or in part, have appeared to date and function as a fundamental text of Chabad Chasidism. Attributed to Rabbi Schneur Zalman, *Likutei Amarim - Tanya*, trans. Rabbi Nissan Mindel (Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, 1958).

5. Isaiah Tishby, The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts Vol.I, trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman, arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby, intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.550.
6. Charles Poncé, Kabbalah: An Introduction and Illumination for the World Today (Illinois: Quest Books, 1995), p.133.
7. Though this liaison works in English (as both the *Alef* and the *Ayin* sound the same), in Hebrew phonemically and phonetically they are different as the *Alef* is enunciated as an outflow of breath, whereas the *Ayin* has a guttural sound. However, this slippage speaks to the debate between the disciples of the *Maggid* pointed out by Moshe Idel, in Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995). According to his text, in the Torah, the garment of Adam is described as made of *skin*, "*Or*" which was inscribed with an *Ayin*. However, according to a Midrashic tradition the original spelling was "*Or*" spelled with an *Alef*, and thus translates as *light*. The slippage between the *Alef* and the *Ayin*, references the interplay between skin and light. pp.240-24. Further, as *Alef* stands in for *One* and *Ayin* references 70, their elision foregrounds how text is simultaneously 'singular' and multiple; at once "proper to itself" and a heteroglossic enunciative process, exceeding itself in its proposed singularity.
8. Zohar II:151b, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (New York: Soncino Press, 1984).
9. Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Formation, attributed to Rabbi Akiba Ben Joseph, trans. Knut Stenring, intro. Arthur Edward Waite (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), p.17.
10. Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Formation, p.18.
11. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.41.
12. Zohar 3:225a. Cited in the Bahir, trans. Aryeh Kaplan, attributed to Rabbi Nehunia ben haKana (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990), p.182.
13. But knowing that all positions are overdetermined by historical, political, philosophical and phantasmatic structures that in principle can never be fully controlled or made explicit.
14. See Hommi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994), Chapter 1.
15. Elaborated in the Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment, p.269. Also this connection appears numerous times in the Zohar I:247a, II:89b, III:94b, 298b.
16. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p.52.

17. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History, p.81.
18. Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History, p.76.
19. Jacques Derrida, Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
20. Anakuklosis: Eternal return.
21. Edmond Jabès, The Book of Dialogue, Trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p.51.
22. (Am Anfang war die Tat (Faust) Cited in Avital Ronell's, Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1989), p.188.
23. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing and Other Essays, trans. Sarah Cornell, Deborah Jenson, Ann Liddle, Susan Sellers, ed. Deborah Jenson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.1.
24. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing and Other Essays, p.8.
25. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing and Other Essays, p.150.
26. Jacques Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone" in Acts of Literature, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.270.
27. See Jacques Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone" in Acts of Literature, pp.253-309.
28. Particularly noteworthy is that the Torah itself begins not with *Alef*, but with *Bet*, [*Bet*, the beginning or according to Derrida, "the bottomless *bet*" {Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.128}], the second letter of the alphabet which in Hebrew, signifies "with". According to the *Zohar*, the correct translation of the opening verse, is not "in the beginning" (which foregrounds a fixed, identifiable locus of origin) but "with the beginning". Displaced, it constitutes an ever-receding point of origin: "with the word `with', then begins this text" [Francis Ponge in Jacques Derrida, Signsponge, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p.102].
29. There cannot be priority of the sign over the referent. As the referent is inextricably tied to the sign – is always already only networks of referrals. And there cannot be priority of the signifier over the signified because the signified is always unstable, shifting, multiple. See Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, pp.48-50.
30. Zohar I:31b.

31. Bahir section 25, p.10.
32. Jacques Derrida in "Freud and the Scene of Writing" in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.211.
33. According to the *Zohar* I:2b-3b, "The Holy One, blessed be He said...Alef, alef, although I shall create the world through the letter bet, you will be the first of all the letters. I have no unification except through you. All calculations and every deed in the world will begin with you. No unification will be effected except through the letter alef" (Isaiah Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar* Vol.II p.567).

Alef has no sound of its own but signifies the preparation of all audible language. As the "unpronounceable Name", it then acts as "the soundless `a' of difference"] or is as Lola Tostevin re-marks, "the fictional character of the first A...I write the letter A as my ancestral cry...I do not encircle the absences I contain" (Lola Tostevin, *Cartouches*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1995).

34. Isaiah Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar* Vol.II, p.567.
35. Isaiah Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar* Vol.I, p.279.
36. *Zohar* I:7b-8a.
37. See *note 27*. Also, according to the *Tanakh*, other translations of "in the beginning" or "with the beginning" read: "when in the Beginning" and "when God began to create" (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).
38. Similar intersecting notions of origin are echoed through much poststructuralist-feminist discourse. For Barthes, "the beginning refers to a sort of pure state of pleasure where everything that goes into making us happy is mingled together". Point of origin comes from the reading subject; a shifting point of departure. For Kristeva, the origin in narration is where the writer enters; and the writer (the transformed subject of narration) is structured as a signifier. So, origin; the possibility of permutation. For, Bakhtin, the text is a network of citations; each word (as an intersection of infinite textual and historical surfaces), reinscribes a history. Thus, in a textual (n'extusy) each word creates its own beginnings. Thus, origin erupts, is scattered; is displaced in a moving middle (a muddle). Foucault, however, transfers `origin' as primal beginning; a plethoric totality of meaning, to origin as act; the dispersion of an exteriority. Thus, archaeology is to rediscover not the moment or the trace of an origin but to trace specific forms of an accumulation. Origin doesn't refer to the interiority of an intention, does not uncover an interpretation, discover a foundation, but `acts' as an incomplete fragmented figure, accumulating, translating, erring.

39. See Gershom Scholem, The Origins of Kabbalah, trans. Allan Arkusch, ed. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p.27.
40. Zohar I:11b.
41. Jacques Derrida, The Gift of Death, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p.33.
42. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing, pp.43-44.
43. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing, p.47.
44. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.226.
45. Or in Lacanian terms, the voice is the leftover after the "capitonnage, or positioning of the signifier for the subject. See Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Alan Sheridan, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: Norton and Co., 1981).
46. Zohar p.255. Cited in Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.II p.553. Further, according to Tishby, "one did not proceed without the other...they were comprised together and from then there emerged hosts upon hosts, camps upon camps...all at the same time" (Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.II p.553). Nothing preceding nothing else, and thus *Origin* is re-inscribed as a synchronous productivity, a palimpsestic process, (which is never stable or contained. Is never locatable or traceable), but processual, multiplicitous and divergent.
47. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.I, p.293.
48. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, trans. Menahem Kallus (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p.56.
49. MSS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 283, fol. 51a, and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 56, fol. 193b. Cf. *Sha'are Orah*, 1:114-17. Cited in Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.55.
50. Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic, p.92. G-d then is organized into letters. "But it's not that the letters emerged within the evacuated space that the divine essence left behind Itself but pre-existed the moment of contraction and served as receptacles for the divine vi[r]t[u]ality" [emphasis mine]. Thus, again He is both inside and outside of that space, espaced s'passed, en passe or surpassed, splayed out / in hyperspatial interplays, *is* the language He expresses.
51. Shivhei ha-Besht, ed. Horodetzky (Berlin: 1992), p.78.

52. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.II, p.250.
53. See "...That Dangerous Supplement..." in Acts of Literature. p.83.
54. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.I, p.293.
55. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, pp. 88-96. Also referenced in "Ulysses Gramophone": "I too am called Elijah: this name is not inscribed, no, on my official documents, but it was given to me on my seventh day....[and] is always associated with an apocalyptic discourse". Acts of Literature, pp. 284-85.
56. Jacques Derrida, "Circumfession" in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, pp. 182-83. For, according to Derrida, "...I am trying to disinterest myself from myself, to withdraw from my death, by making the 'I' to whom death is supposed to happen, gradually go away, no, be destroyed before death come to meet it." (Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.190). Also, "When I sign, I am already dead. I hardly have the time to sign, that I am already dead. I have to abridge the writing, hence the siglum, because the structure of the "signature" event carries my death in that event. For which it is not an "event" and perhaps signifies nothing, writes out of a past that has never been present and out, of a death that has never been alive. To write for the dead, out of them, who have never been alive: this is the desire" (Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.19.
57. Zohar I:10a.
58. Jacques Derrida, "Circumfession" in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.84.
59. This appears at the end of the "Double Session" cited in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.182.
60. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.116.
61. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.236.
62. Jacques Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone" in Acts of Literature, p.288.
63. Edmond Jabès, From the Book to the Book, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop, intro. Richard Samelman. (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991), pp.137-140.
64. Zohar I, p.15.
65. Zohar I, p.7.

66. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken, 1961), p.221. However, if the Hebrew *Mi* (which translates as *Who*) signifies the hidden subject, and *Eleh* (which translates as *What*) signifies the hidden object. Together their consonants comprise the word *Elohim*, then (re-translated in deconstructionist terms), *Eleh separated from Mi*, refers then to the Object separated from the Subject; signifies an ever-elusive subject, a subject with no identifiable referent or perhaps a intersubjective productivity of effects, always in excess of itself.
67. *Binah* (the third sefirah), *Gevurah* (the fifth sefirah), *Malkhut* (the tenth sefirah). See Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.I, p.293.
68. Zohar: Book of Enlightenment, trans. Daniel Chanan Matt, ed. Richard J. Payne (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p.50.
69. Edmond Jabès, The Book of Dialogue, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p.126.
70. Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials", trans. Ken Frieden, in Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity on Literature and Literary Theory, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp.xxx-xxxii.
71. Composite citation from Jacques Derrida, "Circumfession" in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Derrida, "Shibboleth" in Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick, eds. Midrash and Literature (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp.307-347.
72. Also, this overtly reflects a self-reflexive moment, as Derrida states: "He can be mistaken, but one must know how to recognize him, for *Elijah* is always the one to whom hospitality is owed. He may come, as we know, at any moment. He may happen at each instant...." See Jacques Derrida, "Shibboleth" in Midrash and Literature, eds. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick, p.336.
73. Jacques Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone" in Acts of Literature, p.285.
74. Jacques Derrida, "Shibboleth" in Midrash and Literature, eds. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick, p.336.
75. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.150.
76. Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel" in Difference, trans. and ed. J. F. Graham (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p.174.
77. Jacques Derrida, "Difference" in Critical Theory Since 1965, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), pp.123, 127. Also discussed in Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, pp.294-300.

78. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing, p.47.
79. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, p.6.
80. "[M]y life...is neither a content to be hidden nor an inside of the solitary self but hangs on the partition between two absolute subjectivities, two whole worlds in which everything can be said and put into play without reserve. In the internal circumcision of *my life*". (Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.229).
81. This acronym does not appear in the *Zohar* (except in *Ra'aya Meheimna* and *Tikunei Zohar*), though according to Yehuda Liebes, Moses de Leon was the first to introduce it. (See Yehuda Liebes, Studies in the Zohar, trans. Arnold Schwartz, Stephanie Nakache, Penina Peli (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), n.101, p.176. Elliot P. Wolfson in his essay, "Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes: Peshat and Sod in Zoharic Hermeneutics" published in The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought and History, ed. Michael Fishbane (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) pp.155-203, explores the hierarchy of meaning that this four-fold exegetical method implies (whereby the literal sense occupies the bottom rung and the mystical, the highest). However, the secret is not separate from the literal. The hidden and revealed are not distinct spheres of meaning, rival universes but interact, play off, feed off and overlap. Further, according to Nahmanides, the verses of scripture are both literal and figural, (it makes explicit and alludes). Or according to Isaiah Tishby in the Wisdom of the Zohar, "every verse in the Torah and every section in the Torah is both hidden and revealed...and every word in the Torah holds many secrets, many meanings, many roots, many branches" (Vol.III p.1083). All levels are contained with the language of the text.
- Also, according to Isaiah Tishby, "the Shekhinah is called the *Pardes* of the Torah". Thus as well as being inscribed as the indwelling feminine aspect of G-d, she is re-translated as a hermeneutic process -- as meaning in exile. According to the *Song of Songs*, the term *Pardes* is also used to describe the limbs of the female lover, which are said to be like an orchard of pomegranates. To enter into *Pardes*, then, implies to be in the position of, or embodying the female lover. Thus, the acronym, *Pardes* not only metonymically stands in for but links a polymorphic interpretive process with the female body. Further, according to the *Zohar*, the well-defined four-fold methodology of interpretation of Torah can be interpreted relates to the four rivers that branched out from Eden. [*river. rive. derive (slippage)*].
82. Jacques Derrida, Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.126.
83. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing, p.160.
84. Jacques Derrida, The Gift of Death, p.31.

85. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, p.80.
86. *Likutei Amarim-Tanya*, p.874. The concept of *Shevirat Hakelim* appears throughout the various worlds of the Lurianic system, though according to the *Tanya*, it's source is from *Sifra Detzeniyuta*, *Idra Rabba* and *Idra Zutta*, and specifically refers to how when G-d emanated His Divine Light, all the vessels broke, (shattered) and fell through the four worlds (of Emanation, Creation, Formation, Action) and exist as 288 sparks which need to be elevated.
87. Translates from the Hebrew as: the process of restoration. *Restoryation*.

SEFEROTICA

*"Every word, every letter in the Torah becomes
in Kabbalah, symbolic of the Sefirot"*

"Identity is but an assemblage of letters" (Jabès)

According to Kabbalistic hermeneutics, the *sefirot* are ten divine potencies, referenced by a plethora of names, symbols, attributes, powers, forces and intensities, through which G-d reveals H_{im}^e self. As such, the world of the *sefirot* is the hidden world of language, the world of divine names, "the creative names which G-d called into the world; the names which [S/he] gave to $[H_{im}^e]$ self."¹ This is particularly evident in that the word *sefirah*, itself, is variably interpreted, and thus further foregrounds language as an iterable act of apophatic² production: A nameless name that multiplies itself and divides within itself. Derived from or related to *mispar* (number); or *sapar* (to number); *sefer* (book); *siper* (to tell, relate); *sapir* (sapphire, brilliance, luminary or sapphirine splendor);³ *separ* (boundary); *safra* (scribe); *seruf* (combination); and *sphaira*⁴ (spheres), the *sefirot* often understood as the unfolding of linguistic elements and thus not only foregrounds the semiotic processes involved in containing that which is always already in excess of itself, but introduces an absolute heterogeneity in the modality of the possible.

The *sefirot* are first mentioned in *Sefer Yetzirah* (6th C.), briefly referred to in the *Midrash* (Numbers Rabba 14:12), in the *Bahir*, and further elaborated in the *Zohar*. However, though they are one of the central themes in the *Zohar*, they are not directly mentioned except in the later sections. Rather, the *sefirot* are referred to as "levels", "powers", "potencies", "sides", "areas", "worlds", "firmaments", "pillars", "lights", "colours", "days", "gates", "streams", "garments", "crowns" and as the "ten logoi" or "utterances" (*ma'amarot*). Though the *sefirot* are identified as *Keter*, *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Nezah*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, *Malkhut*, these names shift depending on context. *Keter* is sometimes called *Rum ma'alah* (the highest point above), or in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, referred to as *Hefsed* (Annihilation -- which is the stripping of form); *Hesed* is often called *Gedulah* (Greatness); *Gevurah* is often referred to as *Din* (Judgment) or *Pahad* (Fear); *Tiferet* is called *Rahamim* (Mercy); and the tenth *sefirah* is sometimes called *Malkhut*, sometimes *Shekhinah*. Thus, inscribed in slippage, erasure, the *sefirotic* chain is foregrounded as a fluid economy, and posits itself as a string of differential tensions, serialized interruptions, irruptions that disallow any purity or propriety.

According to Kabbalistic hermeneutics, each *sefirah* (as a tropological moment) is understood as not a *thing-in-itself*, but rather as a compounded unity, comprised of all the other *sefirot*, and, as such, foregrounds a continuous process of intimacy and separation, cleaving *and* disjunction. Similarly, the individual names of the *sefirot*, as both essential *and* contingent, denote a simultaneous process of binding *and* separation. According to Derrida, "naming does violence to the supposed unicity it is supposed to respect, it gives existence and withdraws it at the same time".⁵ And as each name not only refers to the

particular *sefirah* it is supposed to represent, but carries with it the trace of all the other *sefirot*, (and if each *sefirah* not only refers to *itself* and *its other*, but refers to an astrological system, various worlds, directions, elements, emotional dispositions, days of the week, parts of the body, historico-textual moments, numbers, letters, figures, colours, letters and sounds), each *individual* force cannot be acknowledged as *pure* or *essential*, but rather a network of names. Further, if according to the *Zohar*, "the origin of these names was exegetical and not intrinsic",⁶ but rather are terms of praise and glorification, then (as in the Saussurean notion) their names can not be acknowledged as "essential" but "constructed", and have no integral connection with the objects that they represent. And if for Derrida, "representation in the abyss of presence is not an accident of presence; the desire for presence, is on the contrary born from the abyss of representation from the representation of representation",⁷ then each *sefirah*, as a resonant present, re-sends, suspends, and subverts any notion of static naming. Thus, in radical translation, they are fraught in a hyperactive syntactivity where their names un-name (in what might be called the abyss of *the proper* or *of the unique*), and are drawn into a continuity of differences and caesuraes, excess, immanence and impossibility.

Thus, referring to multiple signifieds, the *sefirot* resist any notion of becoming Transcendental Symbols, and (as in a Lacanian notion of the symbol) are played out between *meaning* and *being*, performed in the *play* of desire, where each signified (always already in flux, in process, shifting), structure an absence and *become* further signifiers⁸. For example, the term *Keter Elyon* simultaneously refers to the eminence of the first *sefirah* in its relationship both

to *En-Sof* as the most supreme crown of the King and to the other *sefirot* in its character as the crown of crowns.⁹

There is no fixed set of symbols disclosing the divine structure...Every word in the Bible concomitantly reflects entirely different ontological structures, hence the assumption that there is an immanent relationship between the symbol and the symbolized becomes difficult.¹⁰

Acknowledging that the symbol is always already in excess (in excess of itself), indescribable or inexpressible because of its polysemy, Abulafia espoused that the *sefirot* were not to be read as "symbolic", but rather as a "path of names", a necessity of continual effacement. Foregrounding how they are not symbolic but a *symbolacric* arena or *symbolic effects* that resemble, re-assemble, disassemble in a moving ensemble. Further, writing out of the Slovenian Lacanian-psychoanalytic framework (marked by a theorization of the fundamental mechanisms of ideology), Slavoj Žižek, acknowledges that the unity of the object is determined through a retroactive effect of naming, thus naming is not just the purely idealistic game of attributing an empty name to a preconstituted subject, but is the discursive construction of the object itself. Understood in this way, it is more appropriate to re-view the *sefirot* in light of a Žižekian framework where they are not "symbols" but "symptoms" ("a stain which cannot be included in the circuit of discourses...but is at the same time a...condition of it"¹¹), and therefore stands in for a process of gaps and transitions, effaced through innumerable combinations, shadows, reflections, which resist any notion of a consumable signatum.

Similarly, although the *sefirot* are often viewed as metaphoric, according to Derrida, the metaphysical concept of metaphor destroys itself by sublating into the proper and the concept.¹² Thus, just as G-d is not separate from the *sefirot*, the metaphorical concept of the *sefirot* cannot be separate from the *sefirot* themselves. More useful, then, may be to read the *sefirot* as metonymic:

The word *metonymy* signifies transposition or changing of name, one name for another. In this sense, this figure includes all the other Tropes; for in all Tropes, a word not being taken in the meaning proper to it, it awakens an idea that might be expressed by another word.¹³

Metonymically, the *sefirot* accumulate meaning, gather capacity, through a paradigmatic process of tropological substitution and exchange.

Between the concept and the metaphor, between logic, rhetoric and poetics, between the symbol, the symptom, sense and language, the *sefirot* simultaneously install and interrogate notions of fixity, containment, enclosure. Foregrounding this conflictual space, Kabbalistic texts often mockingly attempt to definitively catalogue or classify the *sefirot* into a recognizable, *embraceable* system; yet paradoxically assemble and categorize them in a manner in which they remain ironically uncontainable. For example, according to the *Tanya*, the total order of the *sefirot* is generally divided into two clusters referred to as the "three mothers and seven multiples".¹⁴ However, in other Kabbalistic sources, the first three are called *Rishonot* [Firsts, Beginnings (which problematizes any notion of a primordial point of origin)], and the other seven are called *Tachtanot*

(the Lower ones). These are further subdivided into two triads, called the six *Ketzavot* (Extremities), with *Shekhinah*, the supplement. Further, the *Zohar*, divides the *sefirot* into three triads and the last *sefirah*, *Shekhinah* includes them all:

Three emerge from one; one stands in three;
enters between two; two suckle one;
one suckles many sides.
Thus all is one.¹⁵

Further, through perhaps a 'pataphysical desire of containing the uncontainable, the *Zohar* posits a particular force called *Bozina di-Kordinuta* (spark of blackness) or *kav ha-midah* (the standard of measure) which fixes size and measurement in the *sefirot*. This *force* presents itself as a process of strategic framing which serves to prevent the amorphous free flowing of signification. Emanating from *En-Sof*, "*kav ha-midah*" acts within the limits of the first *sefirah*. Frames or strategies are hidden within *Keter* (*Will*). As the *Will* extends itself, it unleashes itself into itself and thereby initiates the process of dis/emanation.

So, though the *Sefer Yetzirah* points out that...

the beginnings of the Sefiroth have no ending and a boundless origin; they are vast distances and pits of good and evil of immeasurable depths and heights; they are composed of infinite distances to the East and the West, North and South...¹⁶

the *sefirot* are marked by containment, enclosures, described through a legitimizing, authoritative discourse of scientific rigor. For, as Kaplan points out,

there are 32 hyperquadrants that can be defined in a five-dimensional hyperspace. These correspond to the 32 apexes on a five dimensional hypercube...¹⁷

However, in employing such notions as length, breadth, height, depth, Kabbalistic discourse on the *sefirot* presents itself as an act of sublime irony, as this notion of fixity participates in a possible-impossible gesture of pinning down, containing, encapsulating that which is irrepresentable. This is particularly foregrounded in that according to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, though the *sefirot* have measure and are ten in number, the measure that they have is without end.¹⁸ They are *living numerical beings*.¹⁹ So, though the *sefirot* may be seen as finite and measurable they are not static objects, fixed and solid but are dynamic forces that ascend, descend, extend, interweave, interlink, mingle in a countersignative contiguity of desire. Replete with gaps and passages, infinite combinations, intermediary stages, they pass into each other, differ from, contradict and play off, and thus must be seen as simultaneously complete and incomplete.

As a chain of intermediate occurrences, with no firmly established systematic framework, the *sefirot* produce an outpouring of difference, passage, expansion. For example, the second sefirah, *Hokhmah* (wisdom) signifies divine **masculine** energy, yet is inscribed through a **feminine** noun. Similarly, according to the *Zohar*, "the same *sefirah* that is described as "female" in relation to the source above it...is also thought of as male in relation to that which is below it".²⁰ Thus, their gendered identity is intersubjective, multiplicitous and constructed *in relation*, and becomes an ever-flowing torrent of identity that passes, (s)wells up and descends into, influences and bursts forth, as channels, rivulets, gates, doors -- through emanation, dis(emanation, re-formation, action, which expands, flows, radiates, illuminates.

Further, according to the *Zohar*, "the *sefirot* have always existed and the only change that has occurred is their emergence into an active state".²¹ Or in the language of the Gerona Kabbalists, "the beings existed but the emanation was new".²² And, if not only "their end is fastened to their beginning", but "the measuring line encompasses all",²³ Kabbalistic thought posits that it is not that there is *no measure*, no possibility of fixity, but **what is measured** and **the measurer** and **the way it is measured** collapse into an *immeasurable measure*, and becomes a *'pataphysical* initiative that is both beyond and beside a measure of measurability.

*Their appearance is like that of a flash of
lightening and their goal is without end.*²⁴

Thus, through constant shifting, borders are blurred and the distinction between what is *perceived* and the *perceiver* is called into question. Each *sefirah* thus becomes a perceptual economy, where origin wanders in a sequence of correspondences, divergences, and gathers into an ever-accumulative beginning.

Further, the *sefirot* are often acknowledged as *standing in for* the "Divine master-copy" of divine existence: {a modular model (*en mode*) [mod] *a la mode* or modelled on and serve as patterns for creation}. Thus, the *sefirot* are at once the origin and not the origin. As the origin of an origin, they are simultaneously Original and Copy, a copy of a copy, the "Supplement of Copula." However, to say that there is no fixed Origin, is not to say there is no source, but that the *sefirot* are divorced from their source; carry that source as *a sourcery* re-sourcing with(in) them.

For, according to the *Zohar*, "[S/he] created the world with the attribute of *Reshit*" (Beginning). Thus, there is no fixed, locatable origin, no moment of static beginning, but rather origin is carried into transference, transformance, *traduit*, translated in a transgressive arena. The word *Bereshit* is taken as referring to the way in which the *sefirot* emerged from *Binah*. *Bara Shit*, "[S/he] created six": Six, being the six extremities that extend from the supernal mystery. So, if at the *beginning* was six, **not one**, the *sefirot* stand in for an (in)finately divisible process of veiling and unveiling; simultaneously concealed and revealed through aporetic praxes.

Just as G-d is not separate from language, the *sefirot* are not separate from the body. Thus, through the *sefirot*, the Kabbalah foregrounds the connection between the body and language. At its simplest level, the *sefirotic* system is often depicted as ten separate spheres which take the form of a human being, a macro anthropos (*Adam Kadmon*). Though this reading signifies the connection between the physical/metaphysical, transcendental/empirical (varying realms, degrees or systems of logic), palimpsesting the *sefirot* onto the shape, *the form* of a "man", is a highly reductionist strategy operating within a consumerist economy, that blindly embraces a phallogocentric literality, *purity* of expression, an illusion of autonomous subjectivity, and *transparency* of language; and therefore seems antithetical to the grammatological focus of the Kabbalistic corpus.

Though the *Zohar* states that G-d created *man* in H_i^e_r's own image. However, that *image* is the Torah, an assemblage of letters.²⁵ Further, if **letters are H_i^e_r's form**, (and according to Abulafian hermeneutics *form is ineffable*, shifting), it is surprising that G-d continues to be presented as an anthropomorphic referent, an image, an icon, a Transcendental Signified rather than foregrounded as a conglomerate of letters, as language (*langue*), a system of indeterminate signs, signifying in endless semiosis. This is especially disturbing given that the *Sefer Yetzirah* clearly states:

There are ten Sacred Sefirot. Ten & not nine; ten, & not eleven, and are comprised of the twenty-two letters. Of these, three are mothers; seven double and twelve simple letters are the remainder.²⁶

However, what *seems* to be a reductive anthropomorphic fetishization (a metaphysical vulgarity) is destabilized in that not only were the Kabbalists hyper-cognizant of the *Shechemite Dodecalogue* ["cursed be the man who makes a sculpted or molten image... and sets it up in secret" (*Deut.* 27:15-16)], but they recognized that each *sefirah* not only relates to parts of the body, states of being, but is connected with the days of the week, particular letters, numbers or astrological signs. Thus, understood as a process of intricate connexion, the *sefirot* not only foregrounds how body/world/language are inextricably linked, but (just as the days of the week continually appear), in constant repetition, enunciation, individuation, they signify an intralingual network always-already in the praxis of re-formation, re-creation, r(elation, re-action, and function as a heteroglossic enunciative process of productivity.

Further, "according to some Kabbalists, the ten *sefirot* also parallel the ten Hebrew vowels. Together with the twenty two letters, they then comprise the totality of the Hebrew language."²⁷ Thus, acknowledging that the *sefirot* metonymically stand in for all the letters, and if the combination of letters stand in for the construction of the body, ("each and every body is a letter"²⁸), language *seferotically* performs itself through the body (*corps*) body (*text*), dis/emanating a multicontextual process of meaning production. Thus, it is imperative to understand the body not as a totality, a cohesive unit but rather as a fragmented body, disembodied parts. *A part of* and *apart from* a body, a textual body: *encore, de la corps*, inscribed in rupture and displacement.

Further, if according to Abulafian hermeneutics, not only is "the Torah is inscribed on G-d's limbs", but "all of the limbs of [the] body are combined like that of the forms of the letters combined one with the other"²⁹ then, as every body is connected with every *other* body, each body embodies an economy of discourse, domination and power, and bodies forth as emanations, utterances which contains and creates (in)finite worlds.

With the image then of a de-totalized body, the Kabbalistic notion of the *sefirot* foregrounds how there can be no "natural" link of resemblance between the signifier and referent, and that "the property of a sign is not to be an image".³⁰ Perhaps then, it would be useful to re-view the *sefirot* not as anthropomorphically representable, metaphoric or symbolic, but as Derridean *cinders*, as

the quarks of language, [which are] neither proper names nor metaphors, the traces of neither ontotheology nor of the generalization of metaphor, naming neither truth nor its impossibility, but all the while [reference a] space...into which the truth, or its impossibility, might come...a space...for the invention, the *in-venire*, the in-coming of the other.³¹

* * * * *

Thus, re-read as cinders, *cendres*, as traces, echoes, of not only each other but references a multiplicity of discourses, idioms and codes, the *sefirot* position themselves not between origin and copy, but perhaps in Deleuzian terms, "between the copies and the simulacra", and re-produce mirrors upon

mirrors, a myriad, a mire that merges at the margins of meaning, and become markers of the in-coming, be-coming, of otherness, alterity, difference.

Thus, even with a seeming fetishization of language, language never becomes a fetish object.

Reviewed in this way, the *sefirot* then present themselves as "...a structure or an operation whose effect -- whose linguistic effect...is to open language onto its exterior, to articulate the linguistic with the nonlinguistic".³² Similarly, according to the theosophical Kabbalah, the *sefirot* signal ways in which meaning is produced. For example, Moses Cordovero traces the passage from *Hokhmah* (the locus of undifferentiated letters), to *Binah* (the place of transition of thought into the beginning of speech), where letters emerge as "full fledged *distinct entities*"; moves through *Tiferet* (the inarticulated, the written), and reconnects with *Shekhinah* ("*the word*", articulated speech), and thus completes the emanational process. Read in this way, the *sefirot* foreground what takes place between *thought* and *speech*, and thus must be acknowledged not only as polyvalent morphemes, but a surplus of spectrality which track the intricate processes of meaning production.

Each sefirah, then can not be regarded as a representable object but a hyperstatic process which exceeds itself of itself:

Keter then, must be re-viewed as doubly situated as both the first *sefirah* and simultaneously connected with *En Sof* (Primal Nothingness). Thus, as both *a part of*, and *a part from*, the *sefirotic* chain, it stands in for an absent present. Further, according to the *Wisdom of the Zohar*, not only does *Keter* signify *Will*

or "a will to will", but it embodies the plan of the entire universe, and thus questions notions of Origin. [As the "origin of origin" (an origin which is never originary), *Keter* is inscribed in irreducible iterability, repetition in alterity]. Further, as *Keter* is the *head* of the *sefirotic* system, it is often referred to as "the crown", also as "The Old or Ancient One", "The Primordial Point or Monad", "The Ancient of Ancients", "The Smooth Point", "The White Head", "The Inscrutable Height", "The Vast Countenance or *Arik Anpin* (The Long Face). Thus, with multiple referents it resists any notion of a Transcendental Signified.

Hokhmah, the second *sefirah*, is said to contain within it, in potentia, "the whole of creation, set within the catalyst of a will to create. Thus, not only does it embody, the *Will*, but the impetus, the current, the **DESIRE**. In Saussurean terms, *Hokhmah* could be seen as *Lingue*, an *episteme*; a system of signs with infinitely combinatory possibilities.

Binah, the third *sefirah* translates as *intelligence* or *understanding*, and is seen as the Supernal Mother within whose womb, all that was contained in *Hokhmah* becomes differentiated. From her, the remaining *sefirot* proceed and become seven differentiated agencies, often likened to the seven days of creation. According to Scholem, *Binah* stands in for "that which divided between things...the pure totality of all individuation".³³ In Saussurean terms, if *Hokhmah* is *Lingue*, then *Binah* is *Parole* (the language event; signifying differentiated singularities), where what is said is said once, here and now, in a particular time, place, context. Like Searle's, "speech act" or the Foucauldian *enoncé*, *Binah* stands in for separation, disjunction; a process of unfolding, of

ever-circulating *differance*. Embracing the differentiability or being-different of those differences, this *sefirah* then references the ever-productive force that maintains the system gathered in its dispersion.

With *Keter*, *Hokhmah* and *Binah* form a threefold pattern and thus deconstruct any notion of opposition or hierarchical binaric constructs. As "parallel connotations", they acknowledge an Irigaryian notion of the "excluded middle", and operate in the space between the *institution* and the *event*, in the gaps, absences; embracing notions of connectivity and synchronicity.

Further, through interrogating a binaric systemetization, *Binah* foregrounds how the Saussurean notion of "langue" and "parole" is not possible. For, the distinction only *holds* if "parole" is re-viewed as a singularity which is always-already a supplement of a supplement or that which redoubles itself in the process of differentiation. Each identifiable unit, must then be seen as a *strategic* framing which never *arrives* at any stable place or context. According to Derrida, a statement exists *only* through the possibility of repetition in alterity. A singular event which can not be repeated, which takes place at a point in space-time, whose coordinates (context) guarantee singularity, makes a distinction between the empirical and the transcendental. Thus, comprised of the other two *sefirot*, (and they, an iterable assemblage of all the other *sefirot*), *Binah* not only destabilizes the notion of an oppositionary framework, but by doing so, posits how language operates through **both *langue* and *parole***. Between Benvenistean notions of *synchrony* **and** *diachrony*, and bleed into each other, contaminate each other.

Hesed, the fourth *sefirah*, which translates as *Mercy, Love* or *Compassion*, is produced by the union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah* and represents the expansion of the *Will* of the first triad.¹⁴ According to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, *Hesed* signifies the **productive** and **life-giving** power, (yet ironically is considered a **masculine** force). In Cixouviaian terms, *Hesed* can be re-viewed as "excess", abundance and overflow, all that is fluid, in flux, as luminous torrents inscribed in an ephemeral wildness that sweeps through borders, boundaries, codes, laws.

Gevurah, the fifth *sefirah*, translates as *Power*, and signifies *Justice* and *Control*; contraction, withdrawal, concealment and limitation, and metonymically stands in for the second day of *Genesis* when G-d separated the waters by causing a firmament to appear in the midst of them, thus bringing about "Above" or "Limitation". Inscribed in notions of striction, binding, borders, frames, enclosure, *Gevurah* (as the *Law of the Father*) aims to control or contain the excess of *Hesed*. Interestingly, though in contemporary deconstructive feminist theory, "male-centered" discourse has been marked by such restrictive notions, in this instance the Kabbalah inscribes these attributes as "female".

Tiferet, the sixth *sefirah*, translates as *Beauty, Harmony, Balance*.¹⁵ Though *Tiferet* is anthropomorphically depicted as two breasts, *s/he* is said to embody androgyny. Represented by the *trunk* of the body, *Tiferet* signifies the middle, mediation or the *between* space. *Between* the not-there yet, and always already, between the subject and the object, *Tiferet* embodies the *differential tension* of the *etween*. This is particularly so as this *sefirah* also stands in for the absent-present partner of *Shekhinah* (the tenth *sefirah*). As *Shekhinah* is always

in exile, *Tiferet* signifies not only the *absent father*, but *fort/da*: proximity and nearness; and the "tension of liaison and deliaison, of stricturation and destricturation".¹⁶

Netzach, the seventh *sefirah*, translates as *Endurance*, architectomically supports *Hesed* and is often represented as a masculine, active principle.¹⁷ In deconstructionist terminology, *Netzach* can be translated as the Derridean *trace*: a spectral presence, inscribed in an echoic écrit, scars, *escarres*, remnants, residue. Always already "under erasure", *Netzach*, refers to what endures, the never present yet ever-signifying spectrographics of mourning.

Hod, the eighth *sefirah*, translates as *Majesty* or *Glory*.¹⁸ Structurally, it supports *Gevurah*, signifies the *left leg* and is said to embody a "feminine, passive principle". As *Majesty* or *Splendor*, *Hod* can be re-viewed as the Derridean "signature" (a singular plural which, as both arbitrary and *natural*, absorbs everything). Thus, between text and context ("voluminous, grandiose and impassioned"),¹⁹ *Hod* signs and re-signs, through a countersignative contract, proclaims its presence, only through absence (is always-already under erasure), and carries with it the trace of inheritance and tradition.

Yesod, the ninth *sefirah* translates as *Foundation*. And as, according to Derrida, foundation is always already based on absolute contingency, *Yesod* is symbolic of both male **and** female genitals, and signifies the sixth day of *Genesis* when G-d created Adam and Eve. Anthropomorphically, representing the reproductive organs, it foregrounds an endless process of productivity, multiplicity; a *genderous* economy that insinuates itself *between* male and

female, *between* transcendentality and finitude.

The tenth *sefirah*, *Shekhinah* is simultaneously viewed as the last or final *sefirah*, and as the "crown" or head of the "created world" *Shekhinah* operates in simultaneous systems of meaning production and questions any notion of a hierarchic system. H'_1 , identity is contextual, shifting, fluid, variable, provisional and constructed, and is anthropomorphically generated as the *lips* or *mouth*. Thus, as a disseminatory principle, she embodies notions of gathering **and** dispersion, exile, nomadicism, production and consumption. Inscribed in multiplicity, divergence, abundance, excess and overflow, *s/he* defies definition and thereby questions or problematizes any notion of static, locatable or containable identity.

Thus, read through post-structural concepts such as *Presence non presence*, *Excess*, *Differance*, *Signature*, *Trace*, *Langue*, *Parole*, *Stricturation*, *Dissemination*, *Mediation* and *Reproduction*, the *sefirot* signify both *one* and an infinitely divisible process. And if *sefirah* comes from *sapir* (and, as each *sefirah* feeds of each other,⁴¹ and "in each of them, as resemblance of *essences*, fine and subtle, hidden and comprehending everything that will originate from them"⁴¹), the *sefirotic* chain signifies a sapirous reciprocity. Through metonymic contamination, the *sefirot* subvert any notion of systematization, but are re-inscribed as a "double chiasmatic invagination of the edges",⁴² which disallows a discourse of purity and propriety, but engenders a *dialectophagy* (a dialectic of the language of language), and thus foregrounds a hermeneutic strategy that engenders a multiplicity of interpretive possibilities, positions, perspectives, that fold back upon themselves in intra-lingual substitution and exchange.

ENDNOTES

1. Or, according to *The Bahir* (Attributed to Rabbi Nehumia ben haKana, trans., intro. and Commentary, Aryeh Kaplan. Samuel Weiser: Maine, 1990), "the ten sefirot constitute the mystical Tree of God or tree of divine power each representing a branch whose common root is unknown and unknowable". Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, Schocken, 1961), pp.214-16.
2. I am using this word here in the Derridean sense of the "voiceless voice". See "Sauf le nom" in Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, trans. David Wood, ed. Thomas Dutoit, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian Mcleod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p.35.
3. See *Exodus* 24:10 and *Ezekial* 1:26.
4. Though this is interesting for its phonetic and *metaphorical* relation, in Hebrew, however, *Sefirah* begins with the letter *Samech*, whereas *Sphaira* begins with a *Tzaddik*. Similar linguistic connections can be found in the Latin word *Sapere*, which means both *to taste* and *to know*.
5. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.70.
6. *Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, Vol.I, trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman. Arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby. Intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.269.
7. Jacques Derrida, "That Dangerous Supplement" in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.108.
8. See Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud" in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989).
9. According to Moshe Idel, the *Kabbalists* were interested in more than tracing a specific word to its corresponding *Sefirah* or *Sefirot* but tried to realize the process taking place *BETWEEN* these entities. Acknowledging that there was no *ultimate meaning*, the *sefirot* then served as catalysts to fathom surfaces using their hermeneutic acumen. See Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (London: Yale University Press, 1988).
10. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p.231.
11. See Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1992), p.75. According to Žižek, "We can even say that 'symptom' is Lacan's final answer to the

- eternal philosophical question 'Why is there something instead of nothing?' -- this 'something' which 'is' instead of nothing is indeed the symptom." pp.71-2.
12. See "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" in Jacques Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
 13. Jacques Derrida, "The Ellipsis of the Sun" in Margins of Philosophy, p.235.
 14. Likutei Amarim-Tanya I: ch.3. par. Sefer Yetzilah I:10. Sometimes the triad of the first *sefirot* are called "intellect" while the others are called "attributes" or emotive "faculties".
 15. Zohar I:32b.
 16. Sefer Yetzilah: The Book of Formation (Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph), trans. Knut Stenring, intro. Arthur Edward Waite (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), v.5.
 17. Aryeh Kaplan, Sefer Yetzilah: The Book of Creation: In Theory and Practice, (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990), p.46. This is similar to how G-d's body is described: "the height of His shoes alone is 30 million parasangs. But 'the measure of a parasang of God is 3 miles and a mile has 10,000 yards, and a yard three spans of His span, and a span fills the whole world...". Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p.64.
 18. "Their measure is ten/ which have no end/ A depth of beginning/ A depth of end/ A depth of good/ A depth of evil/ A depth of above/ A depth of below/ A depth of east/ A depth of west/ A depth of north/ A depth of south...". (Sefer Yetzilah 1:5).
 19. Sefer Yetzilah, cited in Gershom Scholem's, The Origins of Kabbalah, trans. Allan Arkusch, ed. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p.28.
 20. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts. Vol.1, p.288.
 21. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.275.
 22. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.272.
 23. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.272.
 24. Gershom Scholem, The Origins of Kabbalah, p.28.
 25. According to Zoharic thought, the Torah is seen as "the shadow of G-d". (Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, p.24). This then foregrounds the whole notion of perceptual representation, of simulacric identity.
 26. Sefer Yetzilah Nos. 2-4

27. Aryeh Kaplan, Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation, In Theory and Practice, p.25.
28. Abraham Abulafia, cited in Moshe Idel's, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, p.107.
29. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, trans. Menahem Kallus (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p.6. Also, it should be noted that according to *gematria*, the Tetragrammaton is 45, which is the same numerical equivalent as *Man* (Adam). Thus, G-d and man are linguistically combined; simulacric reflections of each other.
30. Jacques Derrida, "Of Grammatology" in Critical Theory Since 1965, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle, p.105.
31. Jacques Derrida, Cinders trans., ed., and intro. Ned Lukacher (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p.1.
32. Jacques Derrida, "The Transcendental and Language" in Margins of Philosophy, p.196.
33. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p.217.
34. Anthropomorphically, it refers to the *right arm*, and stands in for the first day of creation when G-d created light and separated the darkness of the original chaos from that light to make day and night.
35. Represents the third day of creation of *Genesis* when the waters under heaven gathered in one place and the dry land appeared.
36. Jacques Derrida, The Truth in Painting, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.340
37. It signifies the fourth day of creation, when G-d created the sun and the moon.
38. Represents the fifth day of *Genesis* during which G-d created creatures of sea and air.
39. Jacques Derrida, Signsponge, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p.130.
40. Because each *sefirah* is said to contain within it ten lights, each light in turn containing another ten and so on *ad infinitum*.
41. R. Isaac the Blind, Commentary on Sefer Yezirah. Cited in "Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism" in Steven Katz, Mysticism and Language (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.59.

42. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, *Jacques Derrida*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.74.

BEING IN LANGUAGE

According to Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, "In the beginning was [אבג], that is, the letters from Alef to Tav." Thus, in the beginning was the alphabet.

Throughout both Kabbalistic and Derridean discourse, language is presented as not just a construct for communication, a channel for transmitting meaning, but a sequence of physical/material signifiers; a system of iterable signs that operate through an invaginated chiasmas of edges, folds, laws. According to Abulafia, language contains a structure that conveys the "true form of identity".¹ And if, according to Edmond Jabès, "identity is, but an assemblage of letters" and, according to *Sheva' Netivot ha-Torah*, "the letters...are the proximate vessels by means of [their] combination aid the soul to actualize its potential",² throughout both hermeneutic praxes, language then is conceived as not only a *creative force* that engenders a multiplicity of communicative possibilities, but as the means to activate the world.

This is particularly evident in that through various Kabbalistic texts, Torah is read as "a rebellion of images", "a raiment of chequerwork" which "from the edge of every letter there are (in)finite interpretations; every word in the Torah holds many secrets, many meanings, many roots, many branches."³ And, replete with disagreement, contradiction, conflict, Kabbalah generates an ongoing hermeneutic dialectic, where language is acknowledged as the

negotiation of contradictory and antagonistic instances that open up hybrid sites and objectives of struggle.

According to the *Zohar*, and in the writings of some Kabbalists closely related to the ideas expressed in the *Zohar*, (like those of R. Joseph Gikatilla and R. Joseph of Hamadan), Torah, as a whole is conceived as the embodiment of G-d. "The divine *Torah* in its entirety, [is] one sacred name of which it is said "it is [H^e₁^r_s] name and [H^r₁^s] name is it",⁴ (or according to *Sefer Ta'amei ha Mitzvot Basle*, "[H^e₁^r_s] name is the Torah".⁵ The single all-inclusive name separates out into its individual elements and so the *Torah* can be seen as a great storehouse of the names of G-d in different combinations and designating different forces of emanation. For, just as all the sciences are implicit in the Torah, since there is nothing outside of it and the Torah and the commandments are one, "God is nothing outside of the Torah, neither is the Torah something outside God...⁶

Similarly, according to the *Sefer ha-Yihud*,

all the letters of the Torah by their shapes, combined and separated, swaddled letters, curved ones and crooked ones, superfluous and elliptic ones, minute and large ones and inverted, the calligraphy of the letters, and the open and the closed pericopes and the ordered ones, all of them are the shape of God, blessed be He".⁷

So, for the Kabbalists, language then is not only a "metaphysical" construct but a network of echoes, traces, displaced in a palimpsestic process.

"G-d"⁸ as trope, as a system of signs, as a hyperreferential productivity of effects is both inside, outside and beside $H_{i_m}^f$ self, ever-arriving and re-created in the name, in the referent, in the praxis of becoming. Similarly, according to Derrida, "the idea of G-d is, precisely, inseparable from the traditional idea of the sign,⁹...produced *by* and *in* difference".¹⁰ Thus, G-d, is never *outside* of language, but as a (dis)continuity made up of difference and caesuras, an irreducible iterability. And though inscribed in *ideality* it is an ideality generated only *through* and *by* repetition; a repetition which brings with it an alterity that forbids the unity of the foundation it was supposed to insure, and thus G-d is represented as nothing other than, in Derridean terms, a **production of difference**.

For Catherine Belsey, "meaning depends on difference, and the fixity of meaning is the fixity of difference as opposition. It is this identification of difference as polarity which Derrida defines as **metaphysical**".¹¹ So then, what is *metaphysical* refers to what is different, what does not fit into the system, what is excluded.¹² But "difference" is an operation within the economy of the same, so what's *metaphysical* as what's *other*, is inevitably a point of intersection, a range of discourses distinguished between disadjustments. And as there is "no difference without alterity, no alterity without singularity, no singularity without here-now",¹³ language by its very definition is metaphysical, but a metaphysicality defined as **differance** (in deferral, delay, and thus becomes the metaphysical of the metaphysical or a *'pataphysical* enunciative process.

Acknowledging that language is a system of difference, like Derridean discourse, Kabbalistic exegesis posit a poetics, a hermeneutics that looks at not only the meanings of terms and words, but also the sound and shape of letters, the vocalization points, the decorative additions, the frequency with which words and letters appear, their changes or absence or numerical value.¹⁴ Further, recognizing in Hebrew, numbers are written as letters, thus with equal legitimacy, the Torah is read (*between the numbered number and the numbering number*¹⁵), as a series of equations, arithmetic or mathematical axioms. Further, through intricate combinatory methods, language is foregrounded as an ever-expansive realm of multiplicity, divergence and inconclusivity.

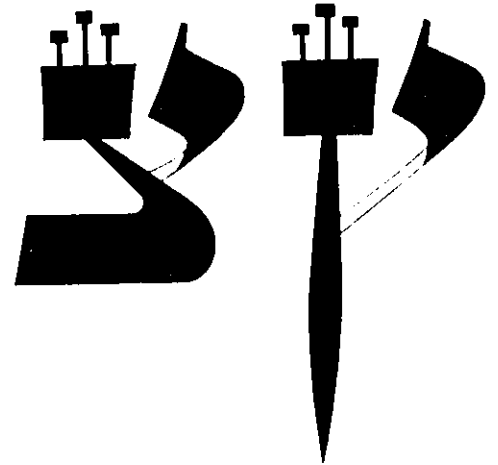
Language as a production of difference is particularly foregrounded in the word [תו] which is comprised of the Hebrew letters, *Alef, Tav*, and translates to the feminine word, "You". And though commonly [תו] is an untranslated designator of a direct object, according to the *Likutei Amarim - Tanya*, the syntagm indicates the entire range of letters, and thus linguistically signifies otherness, deferral, difference. However, in the masculine form, the letter *Hei* [ה] (with a numerical value, *gematria* of 5), is added. According to Kabbalistic thought, this *quintessential* supplement denotes the five organs of verbal articulation: (larynx, palate, tongue, teeth, lips). Simultaneously referring to what is *oral* and what is *written*, what is physical effemeral, fleeting yet temporal, the syntagm foregrounds a grammatologic process of meaning production, and further signals language (*langue*) as a differential productivity. Thus, in both the masculine and feminine declensions, the very inscription of the word for *otherness*, references a continuous process of non iterable alterity.

In Kabbalistic thought, the issue of *language and difference* is further foregrounded in that not only is the Torah scroll written without vowels (*neqqudot*), and therefore pregnant with (in)finite vocalizable potential, but according to the Catalan Kabbalist, R. Jacob Ben Sheshet, the scroll of the Torah *should not be vocalized* so that each and every word would never be limited, but is potentially activated according to every possible significance.¹⁶ However, in Nahmanidean terms, the vowels are *the form and soul* to the consonants, and are seen as causing the movement of the combinations the letters. Regularly not committed to writing they remain as a spectral presence, a series of illocatable traces haunting the consonants, like "the ghost of the simulacrum without end".¹⁷

Similarly, throughout the *Zohar*, there is a complicated exploration of its physical / material properties of language, which is continually foregrounded as a continuous process of abjection, otherness and non-containable difference. For example, Verse 14 of *Sefer ha-Bahir*¹⁸ explores how the structure of the letter *Bait*¹⁹ [ב] (which is closed on all sides and open in the front) metonymically stands in for the House (*Bayit*) of the world. According to the *Book of Letters*, "You can walk into a *Bait*, and you are at home".²⁰ "Because there is no longer a home [*chez-soi*] and a not-home [*chez autre*]",²¹ but housed in homily, *unheimliche*, unhomely, homeosis, a homeopathological lacuna, everything is [IN THE HOUSE]. An "Open House". So, as "G-d is in place of the world, and the world is not his place",²² "he puts in place, while depriving himself of any

place.²³ In its place and in place of; re-placed in hyperspatial interplays, language displaced *en plaisir*.

Even the letters themselves are comprised of other letters. No letter is a thing in itself. For example, the letter *Tsadi*²⁴ [צ] composed of a *Nun*²⁵ [נ] and a *Yud*²⁶ [י]. The *Shin*²⁷ [ש] is composed of three letters: a *Vav*²⁸ [ו], a *Yud* [י] and a *Zayin*²⁹ [ז]. Not only is each letter foregrounded as an intertextual accumulation, but a system of relational differences and interdependent signs that contest singularities of difference.



Further, the letter *Peh*³⁰ [פ] is always drawn a little larger than the other letters so that it can curl into itself, and thus foregrounds the (in)finite spiralling nature of language. Inside it, there is what is called a "dagesh-dot". According to the Kabbalah, this stands in for someone who has already entered a labyrinth.³¹ And if according to Heidegger, every inscription is a calling, as this letter calls into and recalls, caressing, the caller and the calling elide in the very structure of the letter -- as it simultaneously inscribes itself as "self" and "other". Always already implicating a reader, who is always-already both "outside" and "inside" of language", both *cut off* and *into* a multiperspectival praxis, where the other "is a contingent operation of the same". In Hebrew, *Peh* translates to "mouth" and thus not only foregrounds the elision between the spoken and the written, but the tongue, teeth, lips part, slips; as solypse sips ellipse in prolixis licks. The *kiss* of the other, the *eating* of the other, and

language as a paras/critical economy of grafting and ventriloquism, production **and** consumption.

And if, *Sefer ha-Bahir* implies the proper way to study Kabbalah is to take it as a whole, using every part to explain every other one; and if every letter implies every other letter³² (and according to Isaac the Blind of Provence, "each and every letter contains the whole divine universe and all the future creations"³³), there is no beginning, end or containment but definition is always already illocatable in a locus of interlocution. And further, if according to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, "[a]ll of them oscillate cyclically, and emerge through 231 Gates [and] as a result, everything spoken and everything formed emerges as one Name"³⁴, text then becomes a vortex of numbers, nouns, appellations, inscription and silences.

Through positioning and repositioning, frames are reframed in inferent aims, and with contextual responsibility, "the real" is re-produced. Thus, as in Derridean discourse, where reality is created *in* and *through* language, through ecstatic Kabbalah, the course of nature can be changed through the context of manipulating language.³⁵ According to Idel, "changing the order of the letters...expresses a deleterious state in such a way that the form of a noun will have the effect of transforming reality".³⁶ Thus, like post-structuralist discourse, Kabbalah foregrounds that what is "real" is only "reality producing". Producing *effects* of the real. And as "the real" "is not inseparable from the idea of the idea (of the idealization of ideality) as effect of iterability"³⁷ what is "Real" is "irreal", serial and [reels] in a complex flex of conflictual facts, 'cause facts in flux are always in-fact fiction. So, if Kabbalah "attempts to return text to its

hyleic form",⁴⁰ and that form is "a conglomerate of letters",⁴¹ it acknowledges the fiction of its idiom, and inevitably foregrounds itself as an untrustworthy, multiplicitous mythistory -- that *the world* and *language* are not two separate realms, but are inseparable from discursive structures and systems of signification that expand and contract, disseminate in *sefirotic* textasis.

This is particularly evident in that the *Bahir* asks, "Where is the Holy p[a]lace?" (And answers), that it is inscribed in and through the *Alef*⁴² [א]. In **language, in writing.**⁴³ Reality cannot be separated from the language that it is constructed by; and to alter the language through radical re-visioning, a new world is inevitably created. Thus, Kabbalistic discourse foregrounds that what is *real* is always already only versions, (in)versions (sub)versions which *lie* between what happened, what could happen, what will happen (in reconstruction, *in language*), and becomes a palimpsestic historicity which is heresay, herstory, a heresy. Retiled in a telling, a taling, entailing, a toiling. Seeing and essaying suspecting and scandalously violating any notion of a fixed, and locatable Truth. For, in Hebrew the word *truth* is "EMeT", spelled: *Alef, Mem, Tav* [אמת], which are the first, middle and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus, "truth" is not viewed as a metaphysical reality or immutable present but is always already foregrounded as a transgressive and transitional construct inscribed in and through language.

Attempting to *locate* the *truth*, though some Kabbalists such as R. Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir transform the stories in the Torah into nouns, adjectives and appellations, others *read* the Torah by atomizing the canonical text into separate letters. For, as Isaac Bashevis Singer points out, "the letters of the alphabet are

not just letters but symbols of [] history, of [] philosophy, and of the life of the Jewish people".⁴³

Every letter is a wonder and a sign...the effluence of a Name which causes speech to overflow through its means; and thus the entire world and all years and all souls are full of letters.⁴³

Not locked within a Historic framework, yet not separate from it, language presents itself as both the systematicity of a network of concepts **and** the historical imprint which marks these concepts. Thus, language is re-viewed as *having* nothing of its own. But to say language has *nothing of its own* is not to say that it has "no essence", but rather (how for Jacob ben Sheshet), "the essence of the letters is that they are forms of all the creatures and there is no form which has not a likeness in the letters or in the combination of two or three of them or more".⁴⁴ Thus, as a doubly divided presence, language has *no* concrete particular, identifiable referent, and acquires meaning through interconnexion, recombination, and is invented in relation, in the praxis of becoming.

This is foregrounded through the work of Abraham Abulafia, a 13th C. mystic who believed that "all things exist only by virtue of their participation in the Great Name of G-d which manifests itself throughout the whole of creation".⁴⁵ Thus, through a series of hermeneutic processes, *Gematria* (geometry, numerology)⁴⁶, *Notarikon* (abbreviations), *Themurah* (letter replacements),⁴⁷ *Tseruf* (letter transpositions)⁴⁸ and *Hokhmah ha-Tseruf* (the science of the combination of letters), he aimed "to unseal the soul, to untie the knots which bind it".

Combine small letters with great ones...reverse them and...permute them rapidly until your heart shall be warmed through their combinations and rejoice in their movements and in what you bring about through their permutations.⁵⁰

Further, recognizing that language was both not merely abstract and non-determinable as object, he was convinced that through contemplation of the Hebrew alphabet, in the letters that make up the written language, one could be free from *ordinary* perception. Crucial to Abulafia's scheme is 'Play'; consisting of *Dillug* (jumping), *Kefitsah* (skipping) from one conception to another.

In the performance of this "skipping", one abstracts word from thought so that you pass beyond the control of your natural mind. Consonants are combined into a swift motion. You then guide your thinking step by step, first by means of script and language and then by means of imagination.⁵¹

Through a form of analogical wandering, his hermeneutic strategy positions itself not as "free play of association", but rather operates through certain identifiable structures, codes, logics, idioms. Every 'jump' opens a new sphere, determined by 'formal' not 'materialist' characteristics. Thus, through *free* and *guided* associations of linguistic *jumping*, for Abulafia, reading became a praxis of palimpsest and dissemination, generating a contiguous infolding of punctuality.

However, even though the *Zohar* is inscribed through a language of play, replete with mistranslations, 'wrong' metaphrases, intricate puns, ellipses and elusion,

...stretches the meaning of ancient words in an entirely arbitrary fashion...(plays) on double meanings by using ambiguous expressions in which the original and secondary meaning give an opaque character to the word,⁵²

and subverts a 'first order' or *literal* reading, Abulafia sought to *further* manipulate, bifurcate language; combine letters. Thus, through letter combination, not only did he foreground that "the property of a sign is not to be an image,"⁵³ but resisted a binaric system of thinking which privileges logos, subjective certainty and a purity of expression.

Similarly, Derrida's texts inscribe the possibilities of folding a text back on itself of discontinuous *jumps* establishing quasi-instantaneous links between sentences words or marks separated by hundreds of pages".⁵⁴ Through incorporation of nonlinguistic inscription in drawing and painting; or *reading* through sublexical, graphic and phonic units, like the *gl* of Glas or the *tr* of "+r" or *P/S* of Post Card or *SA* of Circumfession:

So, SA as sublexical unit, signs and re-signs as Saint Augustine or "Savoir Absolu",⁵⁵ the trace of SA sacrificed, circumcised remains in avowal, as a sublime vocable, as trope or ellipsis that accumulates swells into "ciseaux, scie, si (if) si s'il [...] is put to work, ça, ci"⁵⁶ as SA salient, signifies, soars on the threshold of la sememe, the sublime circumscription of SA stretches, separates. Folds into a memory confessed like rue St Augustin in Paris or Algiers, SA, who "returns at the moment of the burial",⁵⁷ resurrected "on the skin of [t]his language... [these] syllables"⁵⁸ SA salvaged as insignia cinders sign as cenere solace cinders in insignia seigneurie swill salus in sanguine sluice. SA stretched in the cinder of a sentence, in the idiom of liaison and striction. SA or A.S.A. (acetylsalicylic acid), which as the Pharmakon, heals by making sick, [sic] as both the poison and the antidote, SA, sal, sullies SA (far (the prefix of the Derridean maternal name). Or SA, as Sender/ Addresser questions *reading* as an intra-productive economy. SA as the sign of metaphorical reversal, where "a little SA sinning"⁵⁹ escarres, scars, écarts, succours, SA which in Hebrew stands in for the Shulchan Aruch (the code of Jewish Law), SA supplements or stands in for what's said in a SAid which cannot SAY its SAYing (essaying). As Savoir Absolu, between what's seeing and essaying, betrayed in the unsayable. So, SA as "immense and finite sponge pregnant like a memory"⁶⁰ in the naked spectacle of wounds and witnesses, caresses swells into its lexicon savoured inSani.

c'est ça.

However, just as Abulafia employed complex hermeneutic strategies to generate a disseminatory praxis, Derrida's writing is also grounded in intricate methodological procedures. Reading *through* certain identifiable historical-philosophical frameworks, or through several contexts at the same time, while simultaneously interrogating the coherence of the concept deployed, he questions any notion of contextual purity. Further, employing no rigorous metalinguistic hold of a reading over a text (acknowledging no dividing line between object-language and metalanguage), his *readings* become a negotiation of passages, links, bonds, where text/content elide and multiply difference.

So, as both Kabbalistic and Derridean discourse remain attached to the text from which they were extracted, they never achieve the status of metalinguistic or metaconceptual operators. For them, language then becomes 'pataphysical markers and remain both beyond and beside the text that they comment on. Through a schizop(oetic)hrenic strategy, writing becomes as the Bhabaian fetish (predicated on mastery and pleasure **and** anxiety and defense). Designating and distorting (as site and challenge), language becomes a macrosyntactic signifying praxis that both respects and transgresses the interdict.

For the Kabbalists, language manipulation is looked upon as the highest domain of study, which transcends even the study of the *Zohar*, as it "is the knowledge of the force of the letters and their existence and their combination with each other, which enables the Kabbalist 'to create worlds'".⁶¹ According to the *Wisdom of the Zohar*, "...once [a wo/man] has produced a word from [H^er_i] mouth, that word becomes a sound and it cleaves atmospheres and firmaments and it goes up and another matter is aroused".⁶² Elsewhere, it is stated that "every single word of prayer that a [wo/man] utters through [H^er_i] mouth ascends aloft, splits firmaments, and enters the place that it enters".⁶³

According to Abulafia, "every letter is a world in itself",⁶⁴ and thus all the [new] interpretations of wisdom become firmaments. And, as the *Zohar* does not say "i have made" but "i make" [am making],⁶⁵ wor(l)ds are continually being formed/re-formed, out of new interpretations and the mysteries of the Torah. Thus, through continual misreading re-reading the Kabbalah engenders

further exploration, possibility, expansion, and produces a new universe, a language and an understanding.⁶⁶

When a new idea is formulated in the field of the esoteric wisdom, it ascends and rests in the life of the universe, and then it flies off and traverses seventy thousand worlds until it ascends to the 'Ancient of Days'. And inasmuch, as all the worlds of the 'Ancient of Days' are words of wisdom comprising sublime and hidden mysteries that hidden word of wisdom that was discovered here when it ascends is joined to the words of the 'Ancient of Days', and becomes an integral part of them, and enters into the 18 mystical worlds...From there they issue and fly to and fro, until finally arriving, perfected and completed, before the 'Ancient of Days'...He takes that word and crowns it with three hundred and seventy thousand crowns, and it flies up and down until it is made into a sky. And so each word of wisdom is made into a sky, which presents itself fully formed before the 'Ancient of Days', who calls them 'new heavens, that is heavens created out of the mystic ideas of the sublime wisdom... [or]... for other new expositions of the Torah, they present themselves before the Holy One, blessed be He, and ascend and become "earths of the living; then they descend and become absorbed into one earth whereby a new earth emerges through that new discovery in the Torah⁶⁷.

A similar homily is given in Vol. II of the *Zohar*: "The world was engraved and established with 42 letters, all of them a crown of the holy name. When they had become joined, they ascended to its letters to the realm above and then descended to the realm below. They were adorned with crowns in the four corners of the world and [the world] was then able to survive. After this

the letters went out and created the world above and below; the world of unification and the world of separation.⁶⁸ And if, according to Abulafia, "...by contradicting the revealed structure of the Torah by means of letter combination, we [are able] to construct the hidden Torah, and by this construction, *the human intellect is also constructed*",⁶⁹ then each letter, each processual hermeneutical moment, every exegetical entry is a simulacric re-enactment of a continual creative process.

Thus, both Derridean and Kabbalistic hermeneutic practices, though foregrounding the mutual contingency of language and *empirical reality*, do not engender a Platonic schema (where "writing is the parricidal son of the logos"⁷⁰), but acknowledge that writing has no direct signified or referent; is always already a network of referrals inscribed in diversity **and** consistency, dispersion **and** gathering; repetition, absence, risk, loss, death, and produces a system of differance which is irreducibly iterative.

Further, just as it is customary to tear ones' clothes in mourning, a "de(con)structive" or "combinatory" strategy which explodes words/concepts/contexts into constitutive/monadic elements; tears them apart, or rips them from their locus (into shards, remnants, intertextilic fragments), **may also be seen as a sign of mourning.** And as *The Gift of Death* examines "it is through death or the possibility of death (of the writer) which makes every *sender* an *addressee* (and vice versa), and thereby blurs the distinction between writer/reader, active/passive, productive/consumptive economies, through graphematic circumcision, both Derridean and Abulafian language carry the trace of death in their very inscription. And as death marks being, signifies an ever-generative

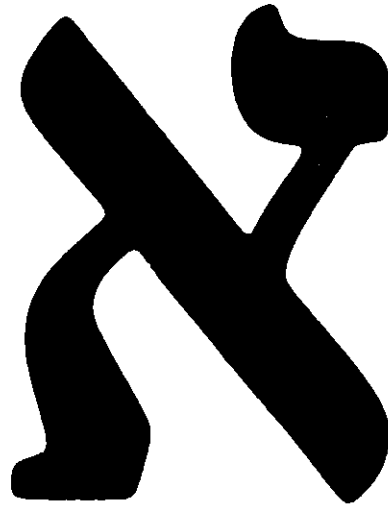
process, through re-combination and de-construction, both discourses foreground language as a hierogrammatic graphematrix of reproduction, diss(*emanation, re-creation, re-formation, re-action*).

ALEFBET

Each and every letter is a name in and of itself. 72 names from 22 letters, which are 22 names of each and every letter of the Torah.⁷¹

According to The Babir, the Alef (as the first letter of all letters and from which all letters emanate and endure) looks like an ear.⁷¹ And if, according to Ecclesiastes, the ear also has no end and "is not satiated from hearing",⁷² and if according to Derrida, "the ear is uncanny...the most tendered and most open organ"⁷³ eerily here, a Nietzschean ear, "An ear! As big as a man...a hunchback".⁷⁴ So, nearly an ear an irreponsible 'ere (in arrears), oneiric, the Alef, as "an inverted cripple", a labyrinth of hearsay, a m'irror or myriad ear, is always a borrowed ear, an unanswerable ear, a good ear, 'cause "By ear, he sd." a keen ear is, as the Alef, "not only an auditory organ; [but] is also a visible organ of the body".⁷⁵ So, in the shape of an Alef, the ear which \ metonymically stands in for hearing, posits that the phone and the gramme are not separate and distinguishable but are always already ori(ell)entalized, an a-linear "Ear of an Other".

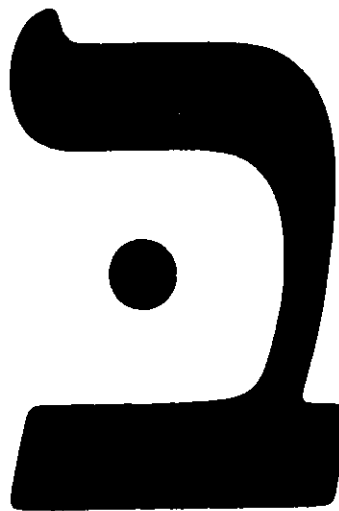
Further, unlike the mouth, the ear needs a silent partner. A double and phantom of itself. Needs its other whose identity is manifold. And though as Avital Ronnell points out, "when one ear alone goes down into the abyss while the other exfoliates to the open, it is not clear what the other, latent ear is doing, this somewhat disjunctive pair is not as such dialectizable".⁷⁶ But, as one ear folds into the other, Alef, as both graphic and phonic, (as signifier, signified and becoming sign of the symbol) is always already an "ear within [the] ear"⁷⁷ an aureal ear, "an ear of desire".⁷⁸



And if, according to Derrida, "with a certain ear, with a certain hearing [ouïe], i can hear a reactive, even negative, yes-laughter resonating",⁷⁹ Alef, then as, the ear also then stands in for the oui, the "Yes", the archi-signature countersigned in its opening itself to the reception whose trace is always inscribed in its enunciation.

Though, Bet is the second letter of the alphabet, according to the Kabbalah, the first 'heard' word, the word that begins the Written Torah is: BREISHIT, which begins with the letter 'Bait'; Thus, the first is a second. An origin which is not an origin, but a spectrographic surplus of self replicating metastability. And translated from the Hebrew, Bet signifies "with". Kabbalistically read, Genesis does not start "in the beginning" (which would foreground a fixed, identifiable locus of origin) but "with the beginning".

Origin as a ragin' n'errative, regenerative; reachin' for/ recharged / between the signans, signatum, signs and resins, designs (daseins) through a thanatographics of resurrection, recussitation and must be seen as a palimpsestic abscess; the dispersion of an ever-accumulating exteriority.⁸⁰



Similarly, according to Kabbalistic hermeneutics, Hokhmah is second in the enunciation of the sefirot but is called "beginning" because although the hidden, supernal Keter is the first, it is not included in the number of those that are emanated. Again, the second (Hokhmah) becomes the beginning.

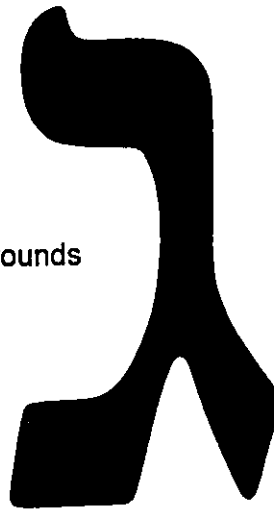
An "Open House". Bet then references how, in Derridean terminology, "God is in place of the world, and the world is not his place",⁸⁵ "he puts in place, while depriving himself of any place."⁸⁶ In its place and in place of;

The structure of the Bet has three lines and thus foregrounds diversity, heterogeneity, multiplicity, incompatibility".⁸¹ Verse 14 of The Bahir explores how the structure of the letter Bait⁸² (which is closed on all sides and open in the front) metonymically stands in for the House (Bayit) of the world. According to the Book of Letters, "You can walk into a Bait, and you are at home".⁸³ "Because there is no longer home [chez-soi] and a not-home [chez autre]",⁸⁴ but housed in homily, unheimliche, unhomely, homeosis, a homeopathological lacuna, everything is

IN THE HOUSE

According to the Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, Gimmel is the symbol of kindness and culmination. As a cognate of gamel, which means to nourish, develop, and whose shape resembles a gamal, a camel (which endures), or according to the Zohar, it's structure represents the head, neck and right arm. Sefirotically, Gimmel refers to Hesed (overflowing kindness), and thus is marked by excess, abundance, overflow, a never ending, yet ever-circulating process of desire

Similarly, the name *Gimmel* is related to the word *gamla*, used in the Talmud⁸⁷ for a bridge. Thus, the *Gimmel*, as bridge, a passage, a crossing foregrounds processual identity. Between the "not-there-yet" and the "always-already", it "spans the gap between two opposing forces".⁸⁸ *Gimmel* then foregrounds not a binaric (hierarchical) structure; is not inscribed in opposition, but represents the excluded middle.



This is also evident in that the Hebrew alphabet is inscribed in sets of three letters (Tanhuma Yisro). According to Kabbalistic thought, when the primary twenty two letters are set in triplets, the gematria of the middle letter of each triplet is the average of the other two.

With a gematria of three, and comprised of three basic lines, the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet not only represents a triadic exegetical praxis: (The Written Law, comprised of the Pentateuch, Prophets, Writings; the Oral Law, comprised of the Talmud, Halakhah, Aggadah and references a text born out of a three-part nation: Kohanim, Levites, Israelites).

Referencing this tripartite structure, Gimmel metonymically stands in for an ever-generative numerological process, which signifies a heterogenous reading praxis.

According to Kabbalistic thought, the Dalet also alludes to dal, a pauper who knocks on doors begging. As the third and fourth letters of the alefbet, Gimmel and Dalet stand back to back and reference an economy of exchange. "The top of the Dalet has an ear-like protrusion pointing backwards indicating that the dal follows him secretly hoping for help. According to the Talmud, the Dalet of the Torah script has a leg that slants backwards toward Gimmel. This implies that just as the stem of Dalet slants towards Gimmel, so is the dal to make himself available to the Gimmel. Further, the Talmud notes the face of Dalet is turned to the left -- away from Gimmel to show how the dal should not have to face his gomel.

According to Kabbalistic discourse, *Dalet* refers to the torso of the body and the left arm and represents *Shekhinah*. As *Shekhinah*, the letter *Dalet* then metonymically stands in for *devar* (speech), and therefore language itself. This is further foregrounded in that the pronunciation of this letter is often prolonged (which therefore calls attention to itself, foregrounding its own materiality).

Therefore, Dalet stands in for the trace of a pre-archaic event of donation which can never have taken place as such. For the gift has always already compromised itself with exchange, which, however, never manages to measure up to the gift which 'precedes' it.⁹² Thus Dalet references how one submits to, inclines oneself before the thing, and becomes the gift which does not present itself, and thus precedes any exchange and therefore any dialectic.



Further, according to the Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, the Dalet "has the shape of an open doorway, and whose name is cognate with delet, door."⁸⁹ Thus, standing in for the door, doorpost, threshold, Dalet references the passage between possibilities,⁹⁰ inside/outside binaries and becomes a series of entrances and exits.

Assistance should be given discreetly and with the greatest tact to preserve the self respect of the recipient. In the highest form of charity neither gomel nor dal should be aware of the others identity".⁹¹

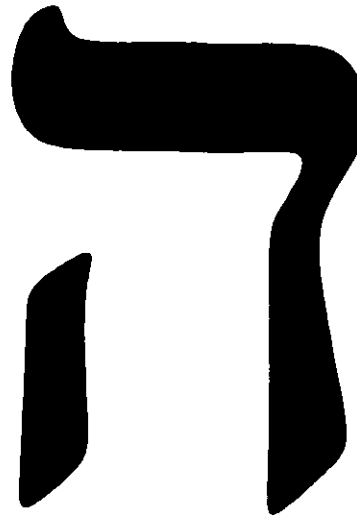
In Derridean terminology, the Dalet then foregrounds how gift should be given with no giver. For the essence of the gift is not to be an object of exchange, as it then annuls itself in the giving. The gift only exists when it gives no longer.

H surrounds the entire world from above and below.⁹³

According to the Zohar, Hei is described as "a half moon with a point".⁹⁴ The point is acknowledged as Zion, the mystical symbol of the world, and situated in the center because it is the point that receives all light to illuminate the body and provide everything. "The central point of a circle on which the whole circle depends".⁹⁵

Also according to the Wisdom of the Zohar, not only does Hei stands in for HaShem (the name of the Name⁹⁶), but doubly inscribed in YHVH (simultaneously signifies this world and the World to Come), and thus reference how the present and future are palimpsested in an unpronounceable syntagm.

The letter Hei has a gematria of five, and is comprised of a Dalet and a Yud. According to Kabbalistic thought, the vertical and horizontal lines of the Dalet represents the physical world that is measured in its expanding width and height, whereas Yud denotes the World to Come. Thus, inscribed in



When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, He threw down a precious stone from beneath the throne of His glory, and it sank into the deep. One edge (lit. head) of the stone became lodged in the deep, and another in the realms above. And there was another edge, a supernal one, a single point which is in the middle of the world and the world expanded from there, to the right and to the left and upon all sides. And it is sustained by this central point.⁹⁷

fluctuation and endless becoming, Hei references an ever-expansive process of possibility. Further, as a three sided structure with an open border, Hei references a process of stiction and destriction, opening, gaps, absence.

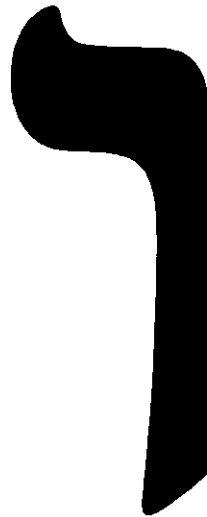
In Hebrew [ה] is the definite article, and thus stands in for particularity, identity, being. Further, according to the Zohar, not only does Hei metonymically stand in for Shekhinah (who is often engendered female),⁹⁸ but throughout both Zoharic tradition, (and Hebrew grammar), the addition of a Hei renders the word feminine. Thus, Hei indicates the female engendered in a semi-linguistic context.

Further, according to Rabbi Akiba, by the sound of the Hei, Hashem created the world. "He created Eil with the letter Heh".⁹⁹ Thus, the world was created through language as an over-accumulative present inscribed in Herable alterity.

As the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Vav denotes the physical world completed in six days and signals the six dimensions (above and below; right and left; before and behind), the six orders of the Mishna (the Oral Law), 600,000 letters in the Torah, given to 600,000 Jews. Further, in the Tetragrammaton, Vav not only represents the sixth sefirah, Tiferet (balance), but serves to both balance and divide one Hei from the other, one wor(l)d from another.

Most commonly in Hebrew, the Vav means "and", yet it also is used to mean "or", "however", "it", "yet", "so that", "then", "that", "but only", "when", "particularly", "different", "every", "namely" and "and again", and therefore acts as a connective, a letter "of conjunction and continuity" ¹⁰⁰ Functioning as a sign of accumulation, translates to "hook" And with a physical / material resemblance to a hook, a link, a connector, the letter foregrounds how form is an extension of content, that it's name, its material representation, and its referent elide in an ever-generative countersignative process

The columns in the Torah scroll are called Amudim (pillars), and each pillar in the Torah often starts with a Vav. Thus, if each passage starts with "And", a conjunction, or a hook, Vav serves to foreground how text is always already a



heterogeneous enunciative process, and intertextual arena of eroticism with no identifiable origin, but comes and keeps coming, in an ongoing process, and thus questions any notion of a static originary moment.

So, as Vav links words and phrases to form sentences, joins sentences into paragraphs and chapters; it connects one chapter to another, and...unites books, it thus, signifies close relationship between events and continuity between generations. The absence of a Vav at the beginning of a new chapter in the Torah indicates the beginning of a new era or subject

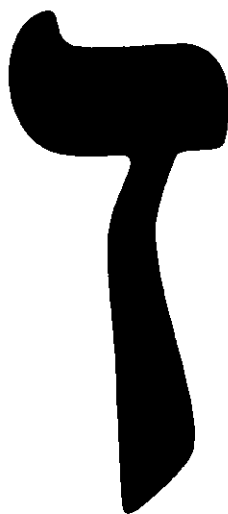
(implies a break with the past to signify that everything is connected. Vav then questions the notion of what is pure, propre, or considered "of the unique" but rather foregrounds itself as an intertextual accumulation, a palimpsestic contaminative process which gathers in the space of becoming.

This is further foregrounded in that Vav is sometimes broken off or separated from the word. So, as both a part of and a part from the syntagm, Vav then foregrounds how letters are both separate and part of an ongoing system of signs, signifying in endless semiosis, and thus references language as an ongoing process of conjunction and disjunction, unity and diversity, harmony and distinctiveness.

When Vav is prefixed to a verb in scripture, it changes the tense from past to future or vice versa. For example, Vav means "he will speak", but Vav means, "he spoke". Vav, not only does it imply an ever-accumulative present, but by interchanging and opening past and future, Vav implies a thickness, or a contemporaneous time where past re-grounds, produces in a relevant present is re-created in the grain of accumulation.

As the seventh letter, and with a gematria value of seven, Zayin foregrounds how creation was not finished until the seventh day and remains (as Shabbat), "the eternal reminder" of the uncreated created; that which is always already en proces -- inscribed in an ever arriving provenance. Thus, turned towards the future, going towards it, yet also proceeding from it, Zayin foregrounds how language exceeds any presence as presence to itself.

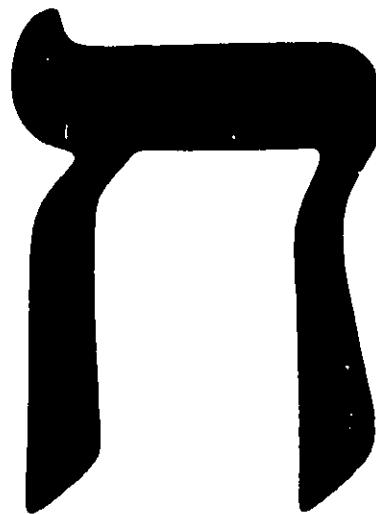
Zayin translates as "sustain", also as weapon. Shaped like a spear, it indicates wo/man's sustenance obtained by **מ'**, struggle. With a curved top, whose head extends to both sides so that it faces backward and forward indicating its radiating effect; what precedes it, lies beside.



Figuratively, Zayin is compared to a lighthouse. And with a gematria of seven, (according to the Sefer Yetzira), it comprises the seven physical directions: North, South, East, West, Up, Down, plus one, representing its own individual focal point. However, as one's focal point is always recontextualized in a process of becoming; is never fixed or stable, but a passage, an (in)initely shifting moment, Zayin foregrounds how creation is an ongoing process performed in an ever-shifting and multiperspectival context.

With a gematria of eight, **Chet** marks going beyond seven, which in Kabbalistic thought, is often seen as a transgression of what is symbolically seen as "divine". But if what is divine (as the transcendental, is that which is always already excluded, excised or ejected from a system) **Chet** stands in for a trespassing, a transcending of limits or shifting of parameters, borders, boundaries, laws. But just how translation (is always moving through and across), is never transparent or pure, but inevitably a betrayal, a misreading, *méconnaissance*, always already beyond and beside itself, **Chet** then references the necessity to push parameters beyond and beside itself, to transgress limits, borders, boundaries, codes and thus references language as an ever-evolving productive economy of contamination and disease.

Chet (as in the Hebrew word, *Chai*) stands in for "life" or "living". According to Kabbalistic thought, it represents the Other Side, *Sitra Achra*, and marked by a raging devouring fire, signifies all that which is impure, unclean, contaminated. Further, according to *Otiot de Rabbi Akiba*, *Chet*, signifies sin. And states, "do not read the letter as "Chet" but as "Cheit" (sin).¹⁰¹ For, the top of the *Chet* is not straight but has a wavering line that rises and falls, alluding to the inconsistent spirit of a sinner. According to Beit Yosef and Arizal, *Chet* consists of two spear-headed *Zayins*, side by side with a roof over them. However, according to Arizel the *Chet* consists of *Zayin* and a *Vav*, connected at the top. It is called *Chet* from *Chat*, meaning "distorted", since the shape of the two spear-shaped *Zayins* have been distorted at the top to form a combinatory bridge".¹⁰²

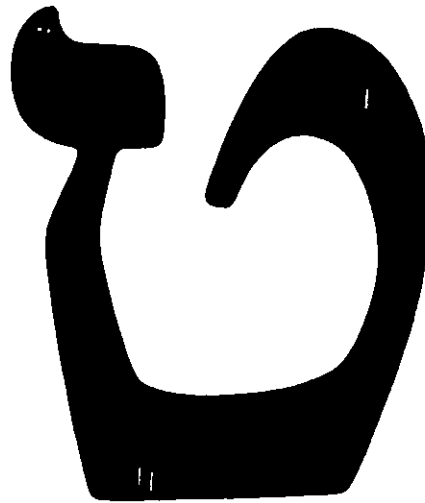


Sometimes *Chet* is interchangeable with *Hei* (as they are both guttural, and the only difference is marked by the minute space in the left leg). As such, *Chet* embodies a master/slave relation with *Shekhinah* *Ch / H*, and thus, not only combines both aspects of *Zayin* (violence and sustainability), but further foregrounds that what is evil, impure, clean or holy is always already a hypercontextual process marked by an ever-shifting multiperspectival arena.

Tet, as a cognate for the Hebrew word Tov, stands in for goodness and repentance. According to the Zohar, in the first tablets of the Law (Exodus 20:2-14), all the letters of the alphabet were inscribed except the letter Tet. However, in the second set (Deuteronomy 5:10-18), Tet

appears in the fifth commandment. According to The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet "It was known that the First Tablets would be smashed by Moses. Thus, if they contained the word Tov, then it would be that all goodness had come to an end".¹⁰³ Further, the second tablets contain seventeen words more than the first. The gematria of Tov, is seventeen indicating that the second tablets good had not disappeared.

According to the Otiot de Rabbi Akiba, Tet also stands in for humility, modesty and its head is bent downward; towards that which is said to be a straight, unyielding or upright leftside of Authority. Thus, encompassing that which is both bent and straight, Tet metonymically stands in for how all that which is authoritative, dominating and erect, must be mediated with that which is curved, malleable, distorted.



As in Proverbs 21:14, the form of the Tet signifies virtue and (like the Dalet) giving charity discreetly. Curving inwards on its right side, the Tet symbolizes a person concealing the charity he is about to give in order to avoid any embarrassment to the recipient. Or bent in

this way, the Tet can also be seen as caressing itself. Thus in an auto-erotic gesture this letter foregrounds the alefbet not only as a system of reproduction and multiplicity, but an

erotic economy of substitution and exchange.

Barely larger than a dot, the *Yud* is the smallest letter of the *Alef Bet*, yet according to the *Zohar*,¹⁰⁴ consists of three parts: a prong pointing upwards to the One above, a prong directed downward to earth and the middle part uniting both. According to *Likutei Maharon*, *Yud* is the first dot with which scribes start writing a letter, or the last dot that gives a letter its final form. According to Kabbalistic thought, "with this letter was created the World to Come".¹⁰⁵ Thus, *Yud*

references an endless becoming, *en arrivant*; a wor(l)d to come that keeps coming, a wor(l)d embedded in a present

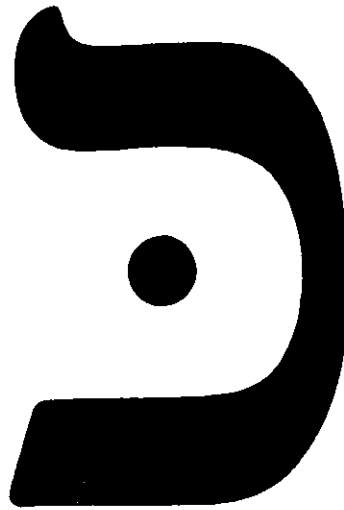
that never arrives. This is particularly foregrounded in that an extra *Yud* indicates the future tense and implies resuscitation of the dead. Thus, it questions notions of static origin, or how origin always is palimpsested, contaminated in a past which is borne out of a future that never presents itself.

Transliterated, the *Yud* (as *Jude*, *Juden*, *Yuden*, *Yidden*, *Yid*), as the orthographic mark of metaphoric elision, (which **patareferentially* absents presence and presenting absence), questions the possessed through an unanswerable process of "imaginary solutions".



Further, according to Kabbalistic hermeneutics, not only is the *Yud* (the tenth letter of the alef bet) homiletically read as a *Yad* (hand) which denotes power and possession, but can be also read as a *Yid* (Jew) and thus occupies the place of displacement, the space of the "excluded middle". R. Nathan-Neta of Siniewa asserts that "the letter *Y[u]d*, the first letter of the Tetragrammaton, is found in all the other letters"¹⁰⁶, thus it signifies a contaminative process which echoes in all wor(l)ds. This is further foregrounded in that according to the *Zohar*, *Alef* (the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is silent yet "comprises and unites all") is often transliterated as [*ʔ*].¹⁰⁷ Graphematically resembling a comma or apostrophe, or (as in an *Abulafia* and *Maimonidean* reading), half of a never-ending circle. Thus, as a suture, a fissure, a gap, the *Yud* signifies a present non presence signalling heterogenous possibility.¹⁰⁸ So, as in the mark of the "pataphysical (the superinducement of the superinducement), the *Yud* references the elision of the elision which becomes quotation. And as an open quotation, the *Yud*, the *Yid*, inscribes *Hʔ*, self in a countersignative process of grammatological rupture and displacement, and self-reflexively legitimizes and delegitimizes a culturalingual economy, constructed in and through language.

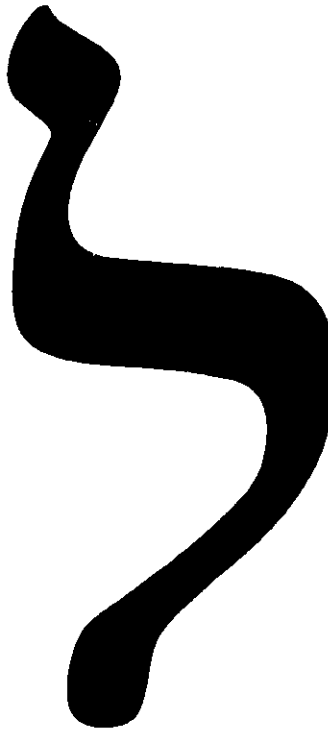
According to Ibn Ezra, Caf denotes productivity and accomplishment.¹⁰⁹ It has a gematria of twenty and refers to the first sefirah (emanation), Keter. As such it also embodies the gematria of 620, which according to Kabbalistic thought, is the potion of life or death, and stands in for the 613 commandments and days of creation.



***Caf* from *Caphoof*, means "bent", as physically the *Caf* is bent like a spoon, a palm, the sole of the foot, the hip socket.¹¹⁰ In Hebrew, *Caf* translates to "like". Thus as a modifier, it bends itself to express approximate quality in number, size or appearance. As a simile, it references a comparative economy; that everything is always already *in relation*. Thus, inscribed in an economimesis of repetition, difference, otherness, *Caf* foregrounds how there is nothing *in itself*, but the *same* is always already simulacric, an image, an homage, a translation with no origin.**

In Hebrew, Lamed translates as "to". Thus, as a directional modality, it links issues. As a prepositional prefix, it signifies direction, goal, purpose, toward, transition, becoming, being in process, in praxis, always already in relation.

Similarly, just as this letter is at the center of the Alefbet, and according to Kabbalistic thought, sustains it, Lamed often stands in for the heart, (which, at the center of the body, sustains it.



Lamed's shape consists of a Caf and a Vav on its roof. So, although the Lamed has a gematria of thirty, the combined numerical value of Caf and Vav is 26, which is the same as the numerical value of YHVH. Thus, often Lamed metonymically stands in for YHVH, stands in for the Name without naming. So as a name misnamed,

renamed in a pseudonymous mneme, Lamed is often misread as Lamad (teaching/learning) and thus foregrounds language as a hermeneutical praxis, an ever-accumulative investigative operation.

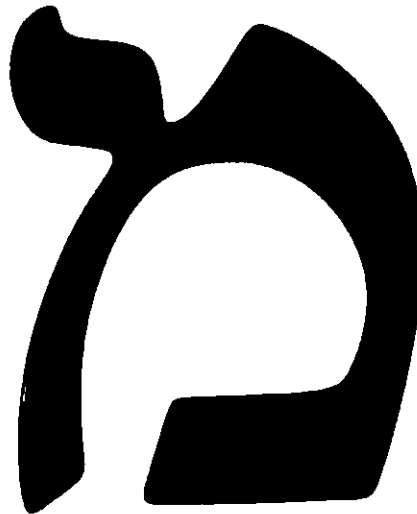
As not only the tallest letter of the Alefbet, but situated in the center, Lamed foregrounds how the Hebrew alefbet does not fetishize beginnings or ends, but rather a middle; and that middle inscribed in abundance, excess and overflow.

According to the Bahir, "the open mem is a symbol of the feminine",¹¹¹ and (like Lamed), is composed of a Caf and a Vav which equals 26, which is the same as the ineffable name.

**T h r o u g h a n
interlingual process of
redoubling the simple,
the syntagm engages
in a complex praxis of
linking reference to
structure (where form
performs itself
through content and
content is reformed as
a forum of frames),
enacting the process
of revealing and
concealing,
discovering and
recovering as an
ongoing semi(o)tic
activity.**

Beginning and ending with a Mem, orally the
syntagm exists as a virtual palindrome and
therefore deconstructs notions of
origin with closure. By
embodying difference

w i t h i n
sameness if
foregrounds
repetition as a
reproductive
process.



**Read backwards or forwards, it re-interprets itself in an (in)finite process of self-replicating metastability through a virally multiplicitous linguistic praxis - or misread as mayim (*water* and *Torah*), *Mem* amasses, links a grammatological tropocentrism to a fluid process of heterogenous excess, yet cross linguistically and self-reflexively signifies
a
hermeneutic process
through its
name.**

Comprised of two Mem's in its name, it produces a sameness, which masks itself as differance. Thus, instead of positing itself as the definable object, Mem (la même chose), through doubly naming itself in its name, Mem produces a chain of differential relations foregrounding language as a system of hyperreferential signs.

Most overtly, however, the Nun resembles an open parenthesis, or bracket, and thus serves to set off certain passages off from the body text.¹¹² However, although it is set off from the preceding, succeeding narratives, according to R. Bachya, the Nun (standing tall) looks longingly back at the other letters it is set apart from. Thus, in a circumscriptive practice, the Nun is cut off and into. In this way, the Nun signifies the supplement; that which is both a part of and a part from.

Similarly, the Nun may be read as the Derridean parergon (which as bracket itself) questions the identity of the bracket, what is bracketed or framed can not be distinguished from the frame itself. Reframed in inferent aims, what is essential or what is accessory, annex in an intersequential nexus. Thus, through a simultaneously legitimizing and deligitimizing gesture, it segregates, excludes, divides text; separates words into component parts and instigates a differential and multilinear reading praxis.



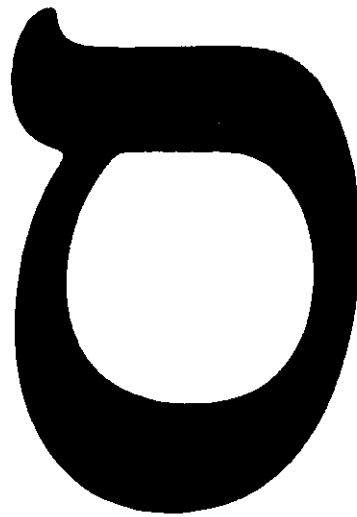
According to Rabbi Akiba, "the shape of the . . . nun alludes to one who has fallen, raises himself on his hip and turns his head backwards in the direction of the M e m " .¹¹³ Further, according to the Zohar, (Oznaim LaTorah), the reversed Nun is a symbol of the S h e k h i n a h hovering over the Holy Ark, H^e_i, face turned towards Israel.

The final Nun operates as an adjective, modifies. Expresses the difference between an occasion and a habitual quality. For example, zecher, a memorial but zikaron, an eternal memorial. Thus, Nun implies perpetuation, fruitfulness, productivity, propagation, to multiply.

The letter Nun, has a gematria of fifty and appears in two forms: the bent Nun used at the beginning or middle of a word and the elongated Nun, banded erect, used at the end of a word. According to Kabbalistic thought, the bent form symbolizes sitting, whereas the long form denotes continuity.

With a gematria of sixty, Samech references the Oral Law, sixty Talmudic tractates. However, according to the Otiot of Rabbi Ahiva, Samech represents the entire Torah: the Written Law is the base (the inner circle) which is outlined and supported by the surrounding teachings of the Oral Torah. Therefore, with this interpretation, the shape of the Samech then foregrounds how the oral and the written

Torah are only translations of each other. Just as the voice cannot be separated from the utterance, the oral cannot be separated from the written, rather, they are inextricable, play off each other expand and recussitate one another. Neither is primary, essential or dominant or secondary, accessory or derivative, but the oral and the written as the inside and the outside are conceived together in an intercontextual arena.



Like the final Mem, the Samech is completely closed, yet ironically signifies support; between people,¹¹⁴ worlds or letters. Comprised of a rounded blank interior area, as well as an all-encompassing exterior framing outline with no distinguishable beginning or end, Samech questions notions of inside/outside boundaries, frames, borders, walls.

With a gematria of 70, Ayin¹¹⁵ represents the 70 names of G-d, the 70 names of the Torah transmitted to 70 elders, safeguarded by the Sanhedrin of 70 sages, who celebrate 70 holy days in the year (52 Sabbaths, 18 festivals). According

to the Zohar, there are 70 facets of the Torah, translated into 70 languages to make it understandable to the 70 nations,

engraved on 70 stones¹¹⁶ in the Holy City of Jerusalem which had 70 names, with a Temple which had 70 pillars to offer 70 sacrifices for the sake of 70 nations.¹¹⁷

This is also foregrounded in that figuratively, the Ayin is said to be marked by two eyes on its top, and thus foregrounds a multiplicity of perspectives, visions, re-visions, a multiplicity of discoveries. Further, according to Numbers 14:14 (also in Isaiah 52:8), Moses says that G-d revealed Himself Ayin Bayin (eye to eye), or translated from "I to I", from subjectivity to subjectivity, Ayin, through both form and content (through both its name and its 'meaning') foregrounds a subject position that is always already inscribed in multiplicity, diversity; is always already shifting, in process, but, inscribed in substitution, supplementarity, exchange, can never be captured or contained.



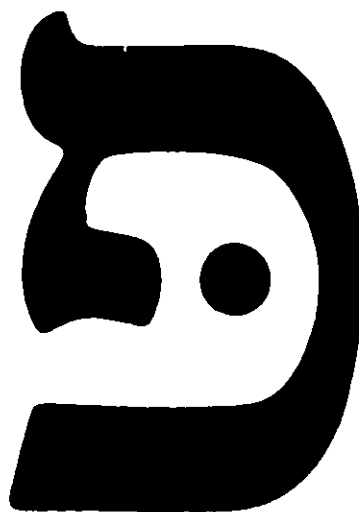
Similarly, according to Zohar Chadash, Ayin stands in for primeval light (which was supposedly 60,075 times as bright as the sun). However, according to Midrash He-Neelam, Ruth, "Light" equates to the letters of the Torah.¹¹⁸ Thus, if Ayin relates to "light", and light relates to all the letters of the Torah, Ayin metonymically stands in for the entire range of letters, and thus stands in for an (in)finite range of hermeneutic possibilities and substitutions.

Though Ayin (which means 'nothing') is usually spelled with an Alef, according to the Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, Alef and Ayin are interchangeable, thus Ayin homonymically also refers to 'nothing'. According to Sefer Shekel ha-Kalish, "And it is therefore called Nothing, that is to say, there is no one who can understand it...Nothing is something concealed, that no one can grasp".¹¹⁹ or (as in Ayin Sof) also means without end (beyond the limit of perception. This is particularly foregrounded in that Ayin also translates to "eyes", and thus stands in for perception and insight. Thus encompassing both presence and absence, Ayin stands between something and nothing, between being and nothingness and questions, problematizes or interrogates the notion of presence non presence and foregrounds that which appears absent is not absent but a spectrum of traces, echoes, resonances inscribed in an ever-accumulative process of becoming.

Further 70 stands in for Sod, (secret) which also has the gematria of 70. Sod, the fourth level of hermeneutic exegesis.

The letter Peh,¹²⁰ is always drawn a little larger than the other letters so that it can curl into itself, and thus foregrounds the (in)finite spiralling nature of language. Inside it, there is what is called a "dagesh-dot". According to the Kabbalah, this stands in for someone who has already entered a labyrinth.¹²¹

Peh has a gematria of 80, which in Kabbalistic terms, is the image of strength, and refers to speech and silence.



In Hebrew, Peh translates to "mouth". According to Maharal, Ayin (insight) is seen as the catalyst of what Peh (mouth) brings to fruition. In Halakhic tradition, thought alone is often not sufficient but requires verbalization (often public), recitation, articulation. Further, Peh is inscribed in two forms: the bent and the open or elongated Peh; which respectively allude to the closed and open mouth; the revealed and concealed; silence and salience; spread and withheld.¹²²

AND IF, ACCORDING TO HEIDEGGER, EVERY INSCRIPTION IS A CALLING, AS THIS LETTER CALLS INTO AND RECALLS, CARESSING, THE CALLER AND THE CALLING ELIDE IN THE VERY STRUCTURE OF THE LETTER – AS IT SIMULTANEOUSLY INSCRIBES ITSELF AS "SELF" AND "OTHER". ALWAYS ALREADY IMPLICATING A READER, WHO IS ALWAYS-ALREADY BOTH "OUTSIDE" AND "INSIDE" OF LANGUAGE", BOTH CUT OFF AND INTO A MULTIPERSPECTIVAL PRAXIS, WHERE THE OTHER "IS A CONTINGENT OPERATION OF THE SAME".

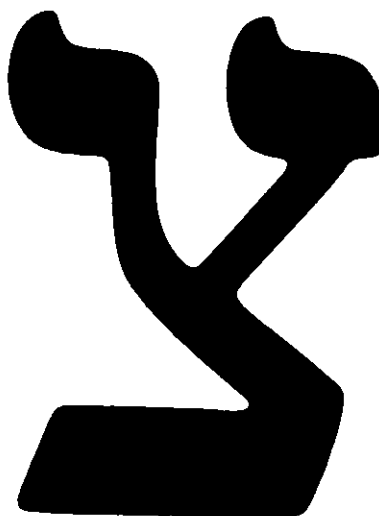
This is particularly evident in that materially, the Peh consists of a Caf, which represents a kalce, a container containing a Yud. So, as the mouth both contains and spreads

(mouth to mouth),

Peh not only foregrounds the ellision between the spoken and the written, but the tongue, teeth, lips part, slips; as solypse slips ellipse in prolxis licks. The kiss of the other, the eating of the other, and language as a paras/critical economy of grafting and ventriloquism, production and consumption.

Tsadi has a gematria of 90, though it is the eighteenth letter of the alefbet and according to Kabbalistic thought, stands in for righteousness, sustenance and protection. There are two forms of Tsadi – one that is bent, which is used at the beginning and in the middle of the word, and one that stands erect, employed at the end of a word.

According to The Bahir, the letter Tsadi is doubled, indicating that it is male and female".¹²⁴ Having the sexual organs of both sexes,¹²⁵ it operates then as "originary positivity". So, as in Derrida's discussion of Dasein (which exists between the two sexes, as a letter, as a sign of linguistic science), Tsadi cannot fall into anatomical, biological or anthropological determinations and has no literal, chronological, historical or logical meaning.



ACCORDING TO KUSHNER'S BOOK OF LETTERS, THE TSADI "IS COMPOSED OF A NUN WHOSE HEAD LEANS FORWARD AND WHOSE NECK, AS A CONSEQUENCE, IS STRETCHED OUT AND WHOSE FOOT IS EXTENDED SO AS TO PROVIDE BALANCE. A YUD IS THEN ATTACHED BY ITS TAIL TO THE MIDDLE OF THE BACK OF THE NUN'S NECK." ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM IN THE HEBREW ALPHABET, THE NUN IS BENT EVEN FURTHER TO MAKE ITSELF A RESTING PLACE FOR THE YUD, WHICH IS ALLEGORICALLY COMPARED TO A RIDER ON THE BACK OF A HORSE.

Further, even though, according to this discussion, Dasein has neither male nor female organs, in housing both, Tsadi must not be explored as the neither-nor of ontic abstraction, but as simultaneously originary and ontological.¹²⁶

Kuf can be translated as Hakuf, (to go around) and Hakafah (cycle). Thus its very name refers to spiralling cycles, or vertiginous exigencies that do not imply a beginning or an end, but mark a circuitous passage, a ritualistic procession of ceremony of repetition and translation, homage and parricide, promise and remainder.

KUF HAS A GEMATRIA OF ONE HUNDRED, WHICH IN KABBALISTIC THOUGHT SYMBOLIZES HOLINESS, WHICH IS FOREGROUNDED IN ITS VERY NAME. NOT ONLY DOES KUF HAVE A GEMATRIA OF 186, THE SAME AS MAKOM (OMNIPRESENT), BUT WHEN THE WORD KUF IS SEPARATED INTO ITS

Revealed and Concealed

COMPONENTS, EACH OF THEM ALLUDES TO A DIVINE NAME.

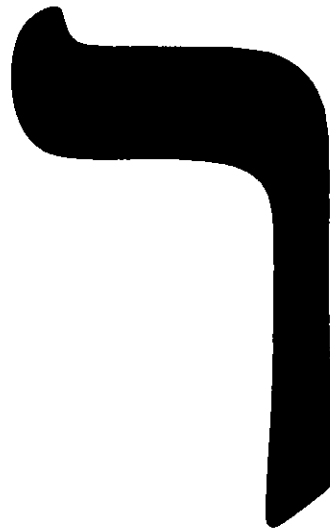


Physically, Kuf consists of a Kaf and a Vav, two letters that have a combined gematria of twenty six, (which is the same as that of the ineffable Name YHVH). The concealed aspect Vav Mem equals 86, the gematria of the Holy Name Elohim.

The left leg of the Kuf is suspended to urge the Reish; calling the Reish towards it. Thus, outstretched, or extended out from itself, Kuf foregrounds the alefabet as an interconnected process where each letter, each graphematic syntagm, is not only a palimpsestic unit but is always inscribed in an intersequential economy of metonymic linkages.

Reish has a gematria of 200 and homiletically is compared to a pipe that turns on its axis, like a door on its hinges.¹²⁷ The turning of the Reish is evident in that its name refers to *rashu* (wickedness), and the face of the Kaf (which references holiness) is turned away from the Reish, or rather stands behind the Reish. However, in Aramaic Reish translates to "head", which is like the Hebrew word for "head", *rosh* or *reishit* (the beginning). Thus, Reish then stands in for both wickedness and a leader; and thus foregrounds good or evil as an interlingual palimpsest that is simultaneously holy, pure, evil and contaminated.

Further, *Reish* also means inheritance. Thus, *Reish* stands in for heredity, genealogy, lineage. But, as Derrida points out, it is impossible to classify, to claim lineage as "the lineage of a progenitor [] no longer resembles it",¹²⁸ with continuous proliferation, mutation and contamination, "one can no longer count its offspring or interests, its supplements or surplus values".¹²⁹



Thus, *Reish* foregrounds how heredity is not as an autonomous locatable *topoi* but as a spectrogenic process, a "ligneous-non ligneous" space of "invisible visibility". Like the dis-appearing of an apparition (the apparition of the inapparent), *inappropriate*, *propre* *impropre* *proprietous* *riotous*, and becomes a re-inscription, a re-delimitation of "the ghost of the ghost of the simulacrum without end".¹³⁰ Caressing its percursor without naming, it remains *in(excess)able*, *fallible*, *open*, *indistinguishable*.

According to Kushner's, *Book of Letters*, "on the right there is a Vav, whose head is bent back a little. In the middle there is a Yud, also leaning back a little. And on the left is a Zayin with three crownlets."¹³³

According to Kabbalistic thought, Shin¹³¹ represents two Names of G-d: Shaddai (The Unlimited) and Shalom (Peace). However, though it seems to reference an indefinable totality, that may seem to gloss over all difference, as a prefix Shin indicates the word 'that' and thus is a letter that "connects and specifies".¹³²

Shin is related to Shein, tooth. The shape of Shin resembles a molar which crushes words with three sharply (shanam) edge cusps. Also, Shin relates to meshanen (to revise), and thus this letter foregrounds the necessity of re-vision, that language itself is an iterable system of signs which interrogates any notion of irreducible singularity.



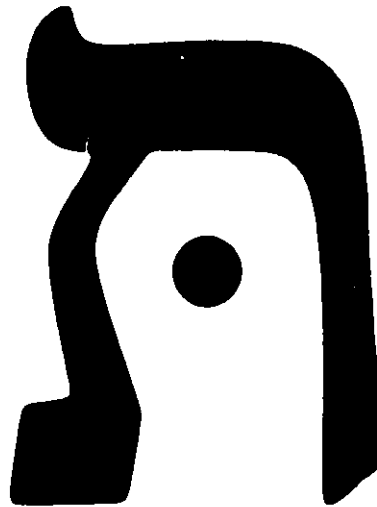
According to the Bahir, with three trajectories, the Shin is often likened to a crown or a tree with branches, or according to *The Bahir*, the "root of the tree",¹³⁴ and denotes the first sefirotic triad: Keter, Hokhmah, Binah. And as Glazerson's, *Hebrew: Source of Languages* points out, as "the letter Shin resembles flames of light as well as a root of a plant it suggests that the world is rooted in light".¹³⁵

HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM OF THE HEBREW ALPHABET, THE LETTER SHIN IS SEEN NOT AS FLAMES SHOOTING UP TO THE SKY, BUT AS TWO HANDS SPREAD AND A HEAD IN THE MIDDLE, OR THREE HEADS - THREE SEPARATE UNITS, BRANCHES, ALLUDING TO THE TRIPARTITE SYSTEM." THUS, INSCRIBED IN TRIADIC FORM, THE SHIN QUESTIONS ANY NOTION OF A DIALECTICAL FRAMEWORK; A HIERARCHIC BINARIC SYSTEM OF THINKING AND FOREGROUNDS NOT ONLY BEGINNINGS AND ENDS, BUT THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE, THE IRREDUCIBLE SPACE BETWEEN THE "NOT-THERE-YET" AND THE "ALWAYS ALREADY".

Tav is the final letter of the *alef*bet and often stands in for *emet* (truth); a truth comprised of *alef*, *mem*, *tav*, the beginning, middle and end of the alphabet, and thus references a truth inscribed *in* and *through* language.¹¹⁷

REACHING TOWARDS,
CALLING OR CARESSING
THE OTHER, (THE OTHER
WHO IS RE-MARKED IN THE
SAME), TAV REFERENCES
HOW THE ALEFBET IS A
COMPLEX OF LINKAGES
WHERE THE END IS
ANCHORED IN ITS
BEGINNING AND ITS
BEGINNING IN ITS END.

So, even though *Tav* is the last letter of the *alef*bet, its left leg (or protruding foot) is reaching back towards an ever circulating beginning. Thus its form foregrounds how the end is never the end but any notion of finality, or closure must be reviewed as a series of never ending traces, echoes, inscribed in spectral dissymmetry.



Further, reaching out towards the rest of the letters, *Tav* foregrounds how ever letter is inscribed in every other letter; that each letter is not proper and unique but an intercombinatory sequence of ever-shifting associations with a range of gematriarcal possibilities. Thus, circulating back in on itself *Tav* functions like...

...how when upon concluding an order of *Mishna* or a tractate of *Gemara*, it is said, "*Sadran alach*" (*We will return to you*) giving expression to the praise to return to the same portion again and again".¹¹⁸

ENDNOTES

1. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, trans. Menahem Kallus (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p.3.
2. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, p.19.
3. Zohar, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (New York: Soncino Press, 1984), p.1083.
4. Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts. Vol. 1, trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman, arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby Intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.293. Or for Abulafia, the "Torah scroll is identical with the Divine Name" see Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, p.32.
5. Rabbi Menahem Recanti, Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot Basle, 1581, 3a.
6. Recanti Merguliot, par. 172. p.74. cited in Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives (London: Yale University Press, 1988), p.190.
7. Sefer ha-Yihud, cited in Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, p.189.
8. The classical explanation of the traditional vocalization of the sacred name, YHVH, as a combination of the past, present and future of the Hebrew verb 'to be' (h-y-h). Standing in for 72 names, it presents itself as the supplement of copula. Dislocated between presence and absence, between representations, it is "an adjunct, a subaltern instance which takes-(the)-place" [Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.145]. Out of place and in place of.
9. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, p.13.
10. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.79.
11. Catherine Belsey, The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama (London: Methuen, 1985), p.177.
12. This concept of the "metaphysical" is particularly explored in Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr., and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), as well as in Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics" in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
13. Jacques Derrida, Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.31.

14. In Hebrew, numbers are written as letter, thus it should be noted that when opening a page in the Bible, one can, with equal legitimacy, read it as a series of words or a series of numbers. Thus, *Gematria* (Kabbalistic numerology) is "neither mystical nor bizarre, but a simple use of the inherent double meaning, as a word or a number of every group of Hebrew letters. See Joseph Dan, "Midrash and the Dawn of Kabbalah" in *Midrash and Literature*, eds. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p.139.
15. For Aristotle, "the numbered number of movement, is not intrinsically of an arithmetic nature". Further, according to Derrida, "the numbering number...is different from the numbers that count them (and different from each other)". See "Gramme and Number" in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp.57-62.
16. See Moshe Idel, "Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah" in *Midrash and Literature*, p.154, no.18.
17. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*.

However in Hasidic thought, because the vowels (seen as the spiritual element) are often *excluded* from the graphic score, Hasidism failed to acknowledge *the vowels as spectral traces* always already emanating through the consonants, and came to regard the articulated expression as *more spiritual / superior* to the written one.

18. *The Bahir*, (c.1176) is comprised of 12,000 words. Gets its name from Job 37:21: "And now they do not see light, it is brilliant (bahir) in the skies". Though it has been attributed to Rabbi Nehunia ben haKana, according to Gershom Scholem, it may be based on the *Razza Rabba* (a 10th century Eastern text). See *Introduction: An Oeuvreture*, n.8.
19. The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to creation and plurality. As a prefix, the letter *Bet* also means "in". But according to *The Bahir*, trans, intro. and commentary Aryeh Kaplan (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990), this indicates a continuous process of filling. Thus, even if the opening lines in Genesis are translated as "in the beginning", that beginning is filled and keeps filling and therefore resists any notion of a fixed point of origin.
20. Lawrence Kushner, *Book of Letters* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p.14.
21. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit. eds. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery (California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p.20.
22. *The Bahir*, p.14. This point is further elucidated in Section 132 of *The Bahir*, "And what is the meaning of the verse, *from His Place?* This is because nobody knows its place. This is similar to a princess who came from afar, and nobody knew where she came

from....They asked her: Where are you from? She answered: From my place [*mimkomi*]" (*mimkomo*: 'wherever that may be').

23. Jacques Derrida, Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International!, p.135.
24. 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to righteousness and humility. According to Kushner's Book of Letters, it "is composed of a *Nun* whose head leans forward and whose neck, as a consequence, is stretched out and whose foot is extended so as to provide balance. A *Yud* is then attached by its tail to the middle of the back of the *Nun*'s neck", p.52. According to The Bahir, the letter *Tsadi* is doubled, indicating that it is male and female", p.83.
25. 14th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to faithfulness and emergence.
26. 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to creation. Occupies the place of displacement, 'he space of the "excluded middle." Graphematically resembling a comma or apostrophe, it signifies an absent present. As in the mark of the 'pataphysical (the superinducement of the superinducement), the *Yud* references the elision of the elision which becomes quotation. So, as the doubled mark of an open quotation, it self-reflexively legitimizes and delegitimizes, frames and opens.
27. 21st letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to power and scription. According to The Bahir, "as a prefix *Shin* indicates the word 'that' and thus is a letter that connects and specifies", p.103. In form, it can be seen as having three heads on top, thus questioning any notion of irreducible singularity. Further, according to Kushner, Book of Letters, "on the right there is a *Vav*, whose head is bent back a little. In the middle there is a *Yud*, also leaning back a little. And on the left is a *Zayin* with three crownlets", p.60.
28. 6th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to conjunction and continuity. As a prefix, the letter *Vav* means 'and', and therefore acts as a connective. In Hebrew, the word *Vav* also means hook, and thus functions as a sign of accumulation.
29. 7th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to struggle.
30. 17th letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to speech and silence.
31. Lawrence Kushner, Book of Letters, p.50.
32. According to the Sefer Yetzirah, "the twenty-two letters: He engraved them, carved them, permuted them, weighed them, transformed them, and from them He formed all that was ever formed and all that would ever be formed. How did He permute them? Alef with them all and all of them with Alef; Bet with them all, and all of them with Bet; Gimel with them all, and all of them with Gimel". Aryeh Kaplan, Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation: In Theory and Practice (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990), appendix I, pp.288-89.

33. Isaac the Blind, Commentary on Sefer Yezirah, appendix to Gershom Scholem's lectures, Ha-Kabbalah be-Provence, ed. R. Schatz (Jerusalem: 1963), p.12. For more on R. Isaac's theory of language, see Scholem, "Name of God," pp. 166-69. For parallels to this text, see R. Azriel of Gerona, Commentary on the Talmudic Aggadot, ed. I. Tishby (Jerusalem: 1945), pp.14-15. According to Moshe Idel, the view that everything is included in the Hebrew letters has an interesting parallel, and perhaps even its source, in Islam. See Louis Massignon, "La Philosophie orientale d'Ibn Sina et son alphabet philosophique," in Opera Minora (Beirut: 1963), 2, pp. 591-605. See also the view of R. Yehudah ben Solomon ha-Cohen, a Toledan thinker with some mystical leanings, who indicated, in the first half of the thirteenth century, that "from our letters everything existing is explained, from its beginning to its end" (Literaturblatt des Orients 10 [1849]: 730, n.24), and note 76. See Moshe Idel, "Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism" in Stephen Katz, Mysticism and Language (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
34. See Aryeh Kaplan, Sefer Yetzirah: The Book of Creation: In Theory and Practice, appendix I, p.289. Also, according to the Sefer Yetzirah, before creation, the letters existed in a sequence opposite to that of *Alef-Bet*, but began with *Tav* and proceeded in the order of *Tav, Shin, Reish, Kuf* etc. concluding with *Alef*. Thus, any notion of "order" is called into question as they are simultaneously seen as appearing in both directions. See Rabbi Michael L. Munk, The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet (New York: Mesorah, 1983), p.228.
35. Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.58.
36. Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic, p.57.
37. Jacques Derrida, Aporias, p.8.
38. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, p.x.
39. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, p.x.
40. The Bahir, p.79.
41. According to Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef "...just as there are twenty-two letters of the Torah and prayer, so there are twenty-two letters in all the existent things of matter and body, because the world was created by their means...but the letters are clothed in the matter of the things of the world, by several covers and garments and shells. And within the letters, there the spiritual force of the Holy One blessed be He, is dwelling. Therefore, His Glory, Blessed be He, is filling the entire earth and whatever is within it, and there is no place void of it" (Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic, p.94.)
42. Isaac Bashevis Singer, in Lawrence Kushner, Book of Letters, title page.

43. Moshe Idel, Abulafia, cited from J.T. Pe'ah. ch.2 Mishna 2, 17a.
44. R. Jacob ben Sheshet, cited in Meshiv Devarim Nekhohim, ed. Georges Vajda. (Jerusalem: 1969), p.154.
45. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p.135. See also Moshe Idel, The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia, trans. Jonathon Chipman (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988).
46. The replacement of a word in *Torah* either by another whose letters have the same numerological value or by a conception to which the corresponding letter is related. The first 10 letters of the Hebrew alphabet correspond to the numbers 1-10; the 11th through 19th letters correspond to the numbers 20-100; the 20th through 22nd letters, to the numbers 200-400.
47. An anagrammatic reading where the treatment of the letters of a word as the first letters of a sentence or group of sentences. For example, in *Gan Eden* or Garden of Eden, (*Genesis* ch.2, v.8), the basic letters (*GNEDN*) are considered to be the first letters of the words *Guph, Nefesh, Ezem, Daat, Netzach*: (Body, Soul, Bones, Knowledge, Eternity). In this way, the "Garden of Eden" in which man was placed takes the meaning from the nature of the earth consisting of body and immortal soul". See Dr. Erich Bischoff, Kabbala: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism and Its Secret Doctrine (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1995), p.12.
48. The replacement of the letters to retranspose a word that needs explanation in such a way that a new word originates. For example, *Psalms* 21, v.11 states, "The King shall rejoice in the strength of the Lord: which King is meant becomes clear through the replacement of the letters of *jismach* to *meshiach* (Messiah).
49. The interchange of all or some letters of a word by certain others. This way new words or number words originate that can, in addition be treated according to *Gematria*.
50. Abraham Abulafia, Hayye ha-'Olam ha-Ba, Ms. Oxford, 1582, fol.52a. Cited in Moshe Idel, The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia, p.39. According to Abulafia, "whoever does not know the combinations of letters and is a very 'examined' and experienced person in this lore and in the counting of letters and their division and in the changing of their order and permutations according to what is written in the *Book of Creation*, does not know the Lord, according to our way". (Sefer Sitrei Torah, Ms. Paris, BN. 774 fol.163A).
51. Excerpted from an anonymous 1295 text, entitled *Shaare Tsedek*, "Gates Of Justice". The author purported to be a disciple of Abulafia. See Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp.146-55.

52. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p.165. I am re-introducing "arbitrary" here, in the sense of Derrida (à la Saussure) where it does not imply that the free choice of the signifier is left entirely to the speaking subject but that it is unmotivated – arbitrary *in relation* to the signified [with which it has no natural connection], (Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.91).
53. Jacques Derrida, "Of Grammatology" in Critical Theory Since 1965, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), p.105.
54. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.314.
55. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.54.
56. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.212.
57. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.151.
58. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.24.
59. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.101.
60. Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, Jacques Derrida, p.106.
61. Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic, p.70.
62. Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.III. p.952.
63. Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.III, p.956.
64. Abraham Abulafia quoted in Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, p.81.
65. Zohar I:5a.
66. See Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic, p.58.
67. Zohar I:4b-5a.
68. Zohar I:54b-55a.
69. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, p.56.
70. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.45.
71. Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives (London: Yale University Press, 1988), p.102.

72. Jacques Derrida, The Ear of the Other, trans. Peggy Kamuf, eds. Claude Levesque and Christie McDonald (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), p.70.
73. Ecclesiastes 1:8.
74. Jacques Derrida, The Ear of the Other, p.33.
75. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra (Munich: W. Goldmann, 1976).
76. Jacques Derrida, The Ear of the Other, p.50.
77. Avital Ronnell, The Telephone Book: Technology, Schizophrenia, Electric Speech (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p.193.
78. Edmond Jabès, The Book of Dialogue, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987).
79. Hélène Cixous, Coming to Writing and Other Essays, trans. Sarah Cornell, Deborah Jenson, Ann Liddle, Susan Sellers, ed. Deborah Jenson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p.174.
80. Jacques Derrida, "Ulysses Gramophone" in Acts of Literature, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.292.
81. Further, through a rhetoric of repetition, "it is written that -- as it is written and further more written"..."and furthermore written" (The Bahir, p.54), foregrounds that everything is always already written, is "revenant". It thus presents itself, not as an originary text, but rather draws from an intertextual surplus of images, mirrors, and re-produces itself in a countersignative signifiacance of "making new". A newness that is both not originary and not a process of uncovering, but points towards the unverifiable.
82. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.75.
83. The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Kabbalistically refers to creation and plurality. As a prefix, the letter *Bet* also means "in". But according to The Bahir this indicates a continuous process of filling. Thus even if the opening lines in Genesis are translated as "in the beginning", that beginning is filled and keeps filling and therefore resists any notion of a fixed point of origin.
84. Lawrence Kushner, Book of Letters, p.14.
85. Jacques Derrida, Aporias, p.20.
86. The Bahir, p.14. This point is further elucidated in Section 132 of The Bahir: "And what is the meaning of the verse, *from His Place*? This is because nobody knows its place. This is similar to a princess who came from afar, and nobody knew where she came

from....They asked her: Where are you from? She answered: From my place [*mimkomi*]" (*mimkomo*: 'wherever that may be').

87. Jacques Derrida, Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International, p.135.
88. *Moed Kattan*, 6b.
89. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.75.
90. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.78.
91. This is particularly evident in that *Dalet* has a *gematria* of four, and thus metonymically stands in for the physical world that extends in four directions: *Atzilut* (Emanation), *Briyah* (Creation), *Yetzirah* (Formation), *Asayiah* (Action).
92. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.80.
93. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.190.
94. MS New York, JTS 2430, fol.81. Cited in Moshe Idel, Kabbalah: New Perspectives, p.108.
95. The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts Vol.I, p.404.
96. Zohar I:229a.
97. *Hei*, represents *Binah* and *Shekhinah* (the first and last *Hei* of the Tetragrammaton).
98. "The Account of Creation 7", cited in the Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.379.
99. Also, according to Zoharic thought, the adding of a *Hei* is both the adding or foregrounding of G-d's presence (non presence).
100. *Otiot deRabbi Akiba*, cited in R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.86.
101. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.95.
102. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.115.
103. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.115.
104. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.121.
105. *Vayikrah*, 147, cited in R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.127.

106. *Menachos* 29b.
107. Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, p.94.
108. *Wisdom of the Zohar*, Vol.II, p.567.
109. Zohar I. See appendix II, p.386. Further, according to the Zohar, "The letter *Yud* represents how male and female are combined: "the mystery of the creation of the first [being]. Who was created with two faces." (Zohar I:2b-3a), and thus *Yud* foregrounds gender as an accumulative and shifting economy.
110. *Psalms* 73:13.
111. However, when *Caf* appears at the end of a word, it has a different form. Instead of bent it becomes a long straight letter.
112. *The Bahir*, Section 58.
113. *Numbers* 10:35, 36.
114. *Otiot deRabbi Akiba*, cited in R. Michael Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*, p.157.
115. Zohar I:34b-35a. The first *Samech* in the Torah appears in the narrative of the creation of Eve.
116. Physically, the right arm of the *Ayin* resembles a slanted *Yud* while the left side is formed by a *Zayin*. The two letters are attached at the base.
117. Zohar I, Breishit, 36.
118. *Midrash Alpha Beis*, *Otiot deRabbi Akiba*.
119. R. Michael Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*, p.174.
120. *Sefer Shekel ha-Kodesh*, p.7.
121. 17th letter of the Hebrew *alefbet*. Kabbalistically refers to speech and silence.
122. Lawrence Kushner, *Book of Letters*, p.50.
123. Further, Maharasha sees the curl in the mouth as an allusion to the curved fetus with a closed mouth. In the erect form, the newborn child straightens and mouth opens. The *Peh* at the end of a word symbolizes death when the mouth remains inflexibly open". (R. Michael Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet*, p.183).
124. Lawrence Kushner, *Book of Letters*, p.52.

125. The Bahir, p.83.
126. See further The Bahir, p.127.
127. See Jacques Derrida, "Choreographies", The Ear of the Other, pp.179-80.
128. Physically, *Dalet* and *Reish* are similar. The difference between them is in the upper right-hand corner where the *Dalet* is sharply and uncompromisingly angular, the *Reish* curves to accommodate itself to a perpendicular direction.
129. Jacques Derrida, Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International, p.152.
130. Jacques Derrida, Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International, p.138.
131. Jacques Derrida, Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International, p.126.
132. The *Shin* with a dagesh dot on its right side is pronounced *Shin*. With a dot on the left side, *Sin*. Since *Shin* and *Samech* have the same sound, they are often interchangeable in alphabetically arranged compositions (such as *Psalms* III, *Lamentations* ch.3, and the *Hoshana Stanzas*).
133. The Bahir, p.103.
134. Lawrence Kushner, Book of Letters, p.60.
135. The Bahir, section 84.
136. Metityahu Glazerson, Hebrew: Source of Languages, trans. Judith Weil (Jerusalem: Raz Ot, 5748), p.27.
137. R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet, p.208.
138. This is particularly evident in that the ten commandments start with an *Alef*, the *Mishna* begins with a *Mem*, and the *Gemara* begins with a *Tet*. (Together the initial spell *Emet*).
139. *Berachos*, 166. Cited in R. Michael Munk, The Wisdom of the Hebrew Alphabet, p.227.

SHEKHINAH

That Speculum that Signs on “the Flaming S/word that Turns Every Way”

According to *Likutei Amarim-Tanya*, *Shekhinah* is the Divine Presence, the immanent category of the Divine influence. The word *Shekhinah* itself derives from *SHKN*, “to dwell”, used by Rabbis in the 1st century CE to indicate G-d’s presence among Israel.¹ The term itself is never actually employed in the *Torah* but is alluded to in a variety of other related forms: such as *Mishkan* (tabernacle: altar of sacrifice)², *Mashkon* (surety, indebtedness), *Shkhena* or *Shachane* (neighbour), *Shekhivah* or *Shakhantie* (to lie, rest, dwell amongst), and *Mashka* (the Arabic word for skin (as in “spread your wings over me and cover me with skin”). Thus, as metonymic substitutions of difference, the names all signify the visible expression or residence of G-d within creation. *Shekhinah* is identified with

‘My Sabbaths’... denotes the circle and the square within and corresponds to Genesis II 1-3 (commencing ‘Va’ikhulu’ and to ‘Kiddush’). Each contains 35 words together making 70 and corresponds to the 70 names of the Holy One, blessed be He.¹

The Circle, Square and Point were used by the Kabbalists to symbolize the three highest ‘sefirot’.²

Similar to Elliot Wolfson’s male-centered reading of Kabbalistic texts, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz’s homoerotic God’s Phallus tracks through a matrix of male desire, passion for a Transcendental Phallus. Moving beyond Wolfson’s (mis)translations of Kabbalistic material, Eilberg-Schwartz frames a misogynistic writing within a homosocial/erotic arena. Though politically

the tenth sefirah, *Malkhut* (Kingship) and the "source of the souls", "corresponds to the second "he" of the Tetragrammaton; it refers to the "mouth" and "the word" and is alluded to in various sources as a "feminine" principle.

However, according to the *Zohar*, the *Shekhinah* is described as "...sometimes male and sometimes female"¹ [when it prepares blessings for the world it is male, but when it stands in judgment on the world then it is female].² Further, the *Zohar* states that "there is a male and there is a female and even though there is both male and female it is all one".³ "He created *them* androgynous as it is said: male and Female he created them".⁴ So, though characterized predominantly as "female", *Shekhinah* need not be locked into an essentialized construct of gendered identity. Through a multigendered [*or genderous*] economy, s/he foregrounds sexual difference as not stable or coherent, but located in an *external* and non-essential place **between** Female and Male, variable, provisional and contingent.

If according to the *Zohar*, the "circle" and the "square", stand in for the first two 'sefirot' and the 70 names of G-d, using *Circle in the Square*, as the title for his book, on "Studies in the Use of Genre in Kabbalistic Symbolism", Wolfson appears to foreground sexual difference as **differance**, a differential productivity. Differance that is inscribed **not in unity** and sameness; is not propagating a mythology of heterogenous totality, but promises to acknowledge gender as a multiplicity of differential effects.

interesting and socio-culturally important, in that the text reveals the carefully veiled homoeroticism within Jewish texts, unfortunately, Ellberg-Schwartz's phallogocentric fixation is played out at the expense of women and female identity.

And, thus, "between genders", *Shekhinah* questions the very notion of biologic essentialism, and recognizes the potential for masculinity and femininity in both sexes. If *She* refers to all that is full, pregnant with life, engendering and *He* refers to the provision of 'order' and the imposition of necessary limits, "to the letter, He is She. She is He. He or she is the morrow and the blood of the beauty..." (And transliterated, *He* [*h*] stands in for *Shekhinah* (as embodiment of the second *he* of the Tetragrammaton)⁸.

Further, because *Shekhinah* is "identical" with *Malkhut*, who relates to the masculine potency of G-d, ("informs, animates and sustains"), again is seen to embody both male and female attributes. Further, not only is s/he said to be characterized by the mouth (which can also be seen as the vaginal lips), but according to the *Zohar*, s/he is the *ateret berit*, the corona of the phallus.⁹ And thus, as the "crown", s/he not only references (as Wolfson notes, "the erectile organ of the vulva"¹⁰) but the scission, the cut, the wound. Operating as an

However, endowed with 'masculine' privilege(s), Wolfson does not exercise that privilege to displace, question, disrupt or trouble that dominant discourse, but is profoundly in league with a homogeneity that confirms traditional distributions of sexual difference and reinforces a misogynist and heteronormative discourse saturated with phallogocentric idealization.

"A phallic cult is fervently celebrated in private"¹

God's Phallus is based on the assumption that there is One G-d, and G-d has a body, and that body is indisputably male. And while that body is marked by a

Irigarayian, "excluded middle," s/he then foregrounds how in Cixouvian terms, the body-instrument opposition no longer holds.

Transgendered, *Shekhinah* then not only does not engender an *essential* male body, but does not embody an *essential* female body; a forbidden body, but the foreboding body, the body unbidden, between the body (corps) body (text) and bodies, embodies, bides into an ever expanding body, which is variable, provisional and constructed. Yet, though still anthropomorphized through metaphorical constructs, because s/he is inscribed in conflict, contra-diction, s/he problematizes any notion of a static, contained or recognizable physicality, and thereby a locateable gendered identity.¹¹

According to the Kabbalah, the *Shekhinah* is no where but is fleeting. H^e, essence ecstatic, ephemeral, resurgent. S/he, as vessel *has* nothing, is nothing but diffusion, liquification. "[S/he] is a mirror reflecting all the other vessels of light,

In the opening of chapter four, "Crossing Gender Boundaries", Wolfson proudly asserts that "the majority of previous studies on gender in the relevant Kabbalistic literature have been marred by a conspicuous lack of sophistication",³ and play on a "naive biologism". Importing his discourse from the cutting edge of cultural anthropology and feminist psychology, Wolfson asserts that he, too, acknowledges the difference between "sexual" and "gender" difference, and insists that he will speak of gender as a sociocultural construction that is a matter of semiology (reading cultural signs) rather than physiology (marking bodily organs).⁴

male anatomy, that body is veiled, and must remain veiled because of the implied homoeroticism between a Male G-d (G-d the Father) and Israel the son. Eilberg-Schwartz thus posits that men must therefore "feminize" themselves, become wives (ie "submissive receivers"), to connect / become "One" with G-d in a mystical union. This hypothesis is working on the presumed ideology that:

the medium through which the prophet sees his vision...a speculum; but one that is not clear...has no light of her own".¹² Thus, though s/he is like a mirror, s/he is not represented in terms of a "Lacanian mirror", which reflects "a simulacral image" but perhaps a "lacunian mirror", a mere reflection, a myriad, a mire. A mirror which contains the engraving of the letters of the holy name with the mystery of the 42 letters with which the worlds were created and which were embedded in it. Thus the mirror does not reflect some "external reality", but contains it. And if in Hebrew, *amira* is "to say", is "language", then transliterated, language (simulacric of *reality*) is contained *in the mirror*, embedded in the image which is always already reproduced in a hyperreality of simulation. And if, according to Ezra of Gerona, *Shekhinah* is called "*temunah ha-kolelet kol ha-temunot*", (the image that comprises all the images)¹³, s/he is an image of that which can not be contained, embodied or possessed; an image that engenders further creation and meaning production.

Ironically, Wolfson's "seminal" exploration of gender revolves around his firm conviction that "there is only one gender in Kabbalistic theosophy"⁵, and that **gender is male**.⁶ Further, "the locus of masculinity and femininity [is] in the phallus". However, while in his introduction, Wolfson insists that in the Kabbalah, "the [bodily] images are meant figuratively and are thus almost always expressed within a parabolic context as literary metaphors"⁷ (or "metaphorical characterizations...rather than any hypostatic elements"⁸), he proceeds to fetishize an anthropomorphic reading which gravitates

a) there is a fixed gendered identity; b) G-d is male; c) Male is normative; and, d) Women are Other.

Though throughout the Kabbalah and the Torah, G-d is sometimes imagined as anatomically female [i.e. a pregnant woman (Isa. 42:14); a mother (Isa. 66:13);

According to the *Zohar*, *Shekhinah* is called *Kalah-ha-kelulah min ha kol*, (the bride incorporated from everything). "She has nothing at all of Her own",¹⁴ no specific and positive potency of $H^e_{i,r}$, own, but wanders almost faceless, as everything flows into $H^e_{i,m}$, and manifests through $H^e_{i,m}$. "She is called Who. Who is that? An intuitive flash illuminating and disappearing, as sunbeams play on the surface of water".¹⁵ Similarly, according to Cixous, the libidinal feminine has no presence, has nothing. But, it's not "nothing" as non-being, non-effectivity, non-life, but "Today I know that I am without having. I have only my hunger to give".¹⁶

Like the *Shekhinah*, Cixous writes that Feminine light doesn't only come from above, doesn't fall, doesn't strike, doesn't go through, but radiates. It is "...a slow, sweet, difficult, absolutely unstoppable painful rising that reaches and impregnates lands, that filters, that wells up that finally tears open, wets and spreads apart what is dull and thick, the stolid...This light doesn't plant, it

around the anatomical dictatorship of the penis, and uses it to further exclude women or any notion of femaleness under the rubric of deletion, sublation, erasure.

Wolfson asserts that a Kabbalistic reading of Genesis posits that female is **part** of the male, or the "Yahwist" versions of creation that depict woman came **from** man, and thus is viewed as secondary and derivative. Unfortunately, Wolfson ignores the verse from the *Zohar* which says, "Adam and Eve were created side by side".⁹ Not 'of the side', or 'from the side' or 'by the way side', but synchronistic: As it is said, "male and female, He

a midwife (Ps. 22:9); a mistress (Ps. 123:2); a woman who conceives, gives birth, and nurses; and mothers children²). God's Phallus insists that the employment of such feminine constructs, including the "Shekhinah" as the "feminine" aspect of G-d, was a creation, a socio/religious ideology **invented** out of fear that men would be excluded in a scenario which imagined a Male G-d involved

spawns".¹⁷ Spawns in "an excess of excess"¹⁸, as synnexes annexes in cathexis or a nexus of desire.

Similarly, for Derrida, "the tabernacle...remains a signifier without signified...the structure encloses its void within itself, shelters only its own proper interiorized desert, opens onto nothing, confines nothing, contains as its treasure only nothingness: a hole, an empty spacing...No center, no heart, an empty space, nothing."¹⁹ *Shekhinah*, as the Torah, contains nothing, but is inscribed in an excessive receptivity which attracts and lets come; which grows, spawns and makes happen. According to the *Tanya*, "it is through [*Shekhinah*] that the latent and potential creation emerges into manifest reality and substantiality. Everything passes through her".²⁰ Similarly, according to the *Wisdom of the Zohar*, *Shekhinah* is the "Will" that puts into practice ideas that occur within Thought. So, though s/he is nothing, has nothing, (but as a door or a passageway), s/he both receives all light to illuminate the body, and provides everything.

created them, and blessed them (Genesis 5:2)".¹⁰ Further, the *Zohar* states, "the secret of the matter is that blessings reside only in the place where male and female are together". Women then, as 'Kol ha Torah' comments, "is neither man's shadow nor his servant but his other self -- so that the two together form a complete human unit".¹¹ Creation is thus inscribed, in multiplicity, diversity, heteroglossia. Further, according to the *Zohar*, when it is said, "And the Lord God formed Man, "Man" here refers to Israel, whom God shaped at that time both for this world and for the future world."¹² "Man", then, does not refer to 'He' who is proper, singular, unique but a differential productivity

in a heterosexual erotic relationship with a Female Israel.³ The feminization of G-d not only prevented what might seem like a female-female (lesbian) relationship, but more importantly assured men that they could comfortably engage in a heterosexual erotic relationship with their beloved Male G-d. Further, Ellberg-Schwartz's text announces that any slippage (confusion) of

Further, *Shekhinah* is inscribed in the *Zohar* as "the maiden without eyes". Though according to Wolfson this signifies that s/he is "blind" or without sense,²¹ this reading is perverse as "without eyes" does not necessitate no sense, but heightened sense. For example, the female figure representing Justice in the American Justice System is portrayed "blindfolded", not to suggest that she is *senseless* but rather to emphasize her heightened role as unbiased arbitrator.²² [Of **Blindness and Insight**]. Further, retranslated through an economy of spectrality, sacrality, alterity, in Hebrew, "eyes" as in *ayin* transliterated as *Ein* (as in *Ein Sof*) is both "nothing" and "everything", (the letter *ayin*, signifies the 70 names of G-d)²³. So, as that which both sees and is scene, both present and absent, *Shekhinah* inscribes $H^c_{i_m}$ self as a hypersubjective surplus of supplementarity and exchange. Thus, not based on masculine thrift, a hedonistic accumulation, but on spending, excess. And as excess, *Shekhinah* must be then reviewed as not the passive female principle, but an active, creative force who bursts forth in all [$H^c_{i_m}$] strength and fury...Like a raging fire,²⁴ s/he is marked by a creative/active energy, emitting

of effects. Thus, according to much of the Kabbalah, women are NOT secondary and derivative, supplemental and ontically inferior, but (as the post Rousseauean conception of writing as a grammatological discourse), are simultaneous, and mark a spectrum of differences and caesuras.

So, though the Kabbalah clearly asserts **both male and female are present** in a polysemous simultaneity or a palimpsestic compound, (and "emphasizes time and again

anatomical images is purely a masquerading technique to conceal any possible homoerotic sensuality, and serves to ensure that, within this context, the human male was, a) not rendered superfluous, and b) able to resist contamination with that which is subordinate, polluted ("women-sexed and weak"⁴).

from $H_{i,m}^e$ self strength and simultaneous independence.²⁵ And though s/he receives all things, they enter $H_{i,m}^e$ shapeless, but emerge from $H_{i,m}^e$; *receive* form. Thus, s/he problematizes a traditional notion of *receiving* and reinscribes it (as *Kabbalah*²⁶) as an **active** gesture, as an economy of production and exchange.

* * *

According to the *Zohar*, *Shekhinah* is situated at the lower extremity of the world of emanation **and** at the top of the nondivine worlds. Also, in aggadic literature, s/he is represented as the divine presence, yet is simultaneously existing and active *in* the world, among the people of Israel. Thus, as both head of the created world and **within** it, (as both part of the system and ruler of the system), "s/he" is both inside **and** outside. Thus, *between* transcendence and immanence, s/he breaks down any notion of separation — what's inside is recited/resited in a site of desire. S/he's inside out and untoward.

that the complete anthropos comprises masculine **and** feminine"¹³), Wolfson freely translates this to mean "a Kabbalistic representation of androgyny is that of **one male force**,¹⁴ where "the female is enfolded back into the male whence she derived."¹⁵ His book thus uses Kabbalah to further his own phallogocentric conviction that women must be eclipsed by male genitalia, masked within "the reductive stinginess of the masculine-conjugal subjective economy",¹⁶ a regime of masculine power and domination.

Thus, Eilberg-Schwartz indicates that though G-d is represented (imagined) in female terms, this is not necessarily a positive construction. Not only because what was "female" was considered subordinate and impure, but that the feminization of G-d (for example "the use of a feminine noun to describe G-d's presence"⁵), was not an empowering device, but merely a ruse employed to

Undecided or *beside* $H_{i,m}^e$ self.

Similarly, according to the *Zohar*, the *Shekhinah* is the last link in the chain of emanation. Acting as a receptacle for the supernal flow of influence, s/he represents the *extreme limit* of divine being.²⁷ Yet, in relation to the lower world, it is the *very beginning* and highest point. Thus, $H_{i,r}^e$ presence is contextual. Meaning is constructed in terms of position, perspective. Similarly, "there is *Shekhinah* below and the *Shekhinah* above. The *Shekhinah* is above in the twelve chariots and amongst the twelve supernal creatures, the *Shekhinah* is below among the twelve holy tribes."²⁸ Thus, she questions any notion of static hierarchical constructs. $H_{i,r}^e$ place, displaced in a field of hyperspatial interplays.

For Derrida, the Text is not cut off from the Voice, but the Voice resides there, in the language; ever-translating, mut(ill)ating. "The absent interlocutor is not outside; (but) sleeps in the valley of text, a bed or surface of letters..."²⁹.

Even though the *Zohar* posits how certain 'sefirot' are likened to female breasts, how 'Shekhinah' (often engendered female), is likened to the vaginal lips, through violent misreading, Wolfson asserts, "the feminine aspect of G-d in its ontological root is portrayed as the corona of the penis".¹⁷ He then repeats this manipulation of Kabbalistic text with, "the aspect of the divine that corresponds to the feminine, the tenth gradation, is linked anatomically either to the corona of the penis or to the tongue of **the singular masculine form**".¹⁸ Further, Wolfson proclaims

confuse the inherent homoerotic implications between a Male G-d and men. A construct which "softens" the homoerotic nature of the gaze.

However, with Rabbis ascribing feminine attributes to themselves so they can "receive" God's Phallus, women are further excluded, excised from any part of

Similarly, though *Shekhinah* is in exile, (living with Israel), s/he is not *divorced* from the *sefirotic* system, but remains "connected" to it because of H_i^e , inseparable connection with *Tiferet*. For according to the *Zohar*, "with speech (*Shekhinah*) and with breath (*Tiferet*) together [is] the world made"³⁰. Thus, through language and breath, (like the *Oral* and the *Written Torot*), not only does "one not proceed without the other [but are] comprised together".³¹ Thus, through an ever-evolving synchronous productivity, or a palimpsestic process, *Shekhinah* foregrounds how s/he is never singular, proper or unique but carries the trace of *Tiferet* with H_i^e . Thus, marked by traces, specters, echoes of an absent presence, s/he remains simultaneously independent and connected.

the task of 'homo religiosus' is to overcome the apparent sexual duality so that the female is re-integrated into the male....to restore the feminine to the masculine, to unite the two in a bond that **overcomes gender differentiation by establishing the complete male.**¹⁹ It is the task of the female to become male²⁰ because femaleness is **IN FACT** only an aspect of masculinity.²¹

the covenant and denigrated within a religious system.

**Annul me in my manhood, Lord and make /
Me women-sexed and weak./ If by that
total transformation, I might know Thee more.⁶**

However, though *Shekhinah* is still connected to *Tiferet*, to her *male* counterpart, s/he does not get (as Wolfson insists throughout Circle in the Square³²) elided into *him*. S/he does not get colonized, eclipsed or erased, but as her identity in exile is both disparate **and** connected, s/he is always-already *a part of, apart from, and party to*. Cut off and into, s/he re-inscribes a spectrographic etiology where *He is not active, dominant and primary, and She is not passive, dominated and secondary*.

So, though *Shekhinah* is seen as the "Nether mother" (*Imma Tataah*)³³, s/he does not belong to the nether worlds but the **neither** worlds) neither upper nor lower, neither here nor there) but inscribed through diffusion, liquification, nomadicism, vagrancy, s/he is simultaneously connected to both.

Further, simultaneous transcendence and immanence is particularly foregrounded in the inscription of H^e_r , name. (As in *Leviticus* 26:11, "I will place my [*Mishkan*] tabernacle among you" may be read as *Mashkon*, surety or

Wolfson thus, presents what is "female" as "abjected other", as difference; but not a difference inscribed in differentially, a production or system of differences. Not as a system of relations but a homeostatic enclosure where woman is grafted onto man and remains his property, propriety and **IN THE NAME OF THE NAME** is forced to name herself as unnameable, sur-named in the name of the other.

For Eilberg-Schwartz, therefore, though Israel is often conceived or collectively imagined as a woman it is actually constituted **BY MEN, FOR MEN** and men's pleasure. For, "it is males not females, who are imagined to have the primary intimate relations with the deity".⁷ It is men writing as the dominant elite attempting to legitimate, authorize (**dictate**) a socio-cultural order where the

indebtedness). Thus, between *Mishkan* and *Mashkon*, as both tabernacle and indebtedness, s/he becomes both the word and the debt. S/he spends and is spent in an economy of production, on the margins of capital. In a non-negotiable currency, an expenditure without accountability or in the resources of loss, s/he becomes G-d's supplement: "a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude".³⁴ In an economy of trust, *Shekhinah* then, as collateral, becomes the present non present of a collaborate, elaborate labour of the literal, iterable substitution and exchange. Both inside and outside, above and below.

* * *

Further *Shekhinah* foregrounds H^e_r , heterogeneity in that s/he embodies both light and darkness, [containing the attribute of the day in the night and the attribute of the night in the day].³⁵ However, though s/he transmits infinite radiance, it is said that "darkness envelops her". S/he is simultaneously seen as a dark cloud during the bright day and a bright fire during the dark night.³⁶ But,

Similarly, Wolfson recites an anonymous Kabbalistic text, which points out that the Genesis verses, "in our image" and "in our likeness" refer to the 'Written' and 'Oral' Torah respectively. And, as for Wolfson, "the secret of unity ultimately involves the merging of the female into the male and not the preservation of their ontic distinctiveness"²²), he decides that "the union of the Written Torah and the Oral Torah is, in effect, the reintegration of the feminine in the masculine".²³ However, the word "union" does not imply dominance of one over the other, does not imply one as secondary, derivative or supplemental. But between absorption and nonabsorption,

masculine is deified. A masculine deity who is loved erotically, sensually, passionately. Thus, upholding male mastery, male strength, male beauty and power, it again denigrates women as superfluous and peripheral. Read this way, feminine gendered symbology DOES NOT empower women but, rather, by using such terminology further imbricates them into a place of subjugation,

if *day* is marked by clarity, reason, illumination, s/he reigns at *night*. But though s/he "has no light of her own" and is marked by darkness, s/he is not the black hole, the empty space, a silence, but (as "The Dark Continent is neither dark nor unexplorable"³⁷), s/he *radiates* in ammassive mystery, incoherence. For, according to the *Zohar*, the black light and the white light are only two manifestations of one indivisible light. Or similarly, according to the Kabbalistic axiom, the world was created "white fire on black fire". Each one complementary, an inseparable part of. So, although *Shekhinah* is said to be "revealed at night",³⁸ s/he remains [S'écriture of the nite]. Not an absence but that which abscesses, obsesses, infuses into. Not a *silence*, but a *salience* and is marked by that which is simultaneously lucid *and* ludic, rational, irrational and relational.

In the *Kabbalah*, *Shekhinah* is represented by the Tree of Knowledge, which contains the death Force. Thus, as a thanatopraxis en proxy, s/he simultaneously represents life *and* death. Further, according to the *Wisdom of the*

differences bleed through each other. Neither are present or absent but are always already traces spectres, echoes of each other. Kabbalistic exegeses does not posit a hierarchic binaric structure, where one totalized, identifiable or contained force obliterates an other, annihilates, diminishes, stifles or dislocates the other, but rather posits how what is 'male' or 'female' appear as indeterminate extraintentional differential production ejected between forces and intensities. Further, acknowledging that "every other is [every bit] other"²⁴, unity (as in the 'sefirotic' compounds, as in G-d), does not imply a oneness, a wholeness, but a disintegrated unity inscribed in iterable alterity.

subversion, submission.

What Eilberg-Schwartz does not acknowledge is that gender (like culture) is not a harmonious unified system but streams of circulating symbols often in collision with one another. And thus God's Phallus presents us with a

Zohar, not only does s/he contain the attribute of *Gevurah* (Judgement), but also the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side). Thus, s/he contains both holiness *and* impurity, cleanliness *and* contamination. However, according to the *Tanya*, the evil inclination in (wo)man is an instrument for the love of G-d. For, it is written, "And you shall love the Eternal, your G-d with all your heart". (Deuteronomy 6:5) With all your heart means with *both* inclinations, evil and good. Similarly, it is stated that "the perfection of all things is attained when good and evil are intermingled...for there is no good except if it issues out of evil..."³⁹

This issue is particularly foregrounded in that the *Zohar* states,

the brain, symbolic of light is enveloped in a membrane of death, symbolic of evil (*Sitra Achra*). This is evident in the word *meoroth* [made up of *Or* (light) and *Moth* (death). If the light (*Or*) [is] removed, the letters on either side would coalesce and form death (*Moth*).⁴⁰

So, just like how 'diachrony' becomes a succession of 'synchronic' states or how 'parole' moves into 'langue', throughout Kabbalistic hermeneutic praxis, man and woman do not eclipse each other, but in a palimpsestic process, can not be separated one from the other. Unfortunately Wolfson is not offering this view. Wolfson's text **priorizes one term over the other**. Fetishizing the Transcendental Phallus object, Wolfson refuses to acknowledge that every signifier refers to other signifiers, and that it is impossible to ever reach a signified referring only to itself. Hence, his argument is rendered completely invalid. Further, any dream of Unity, of Sameness, that **overcomes difference** is locked

reductionist argument that systematically excludes / eradicates women. For the symbol of a male G-d, a static and containable male G-d, not only reduces G-d into a recognizable and finite being, but doubly reinforces women's Otherness and devalues women's bodies and experiences.

And, as Derrida points out in The Gift of Death,⁴¹ death is carried like the trace of a signature: mortality (finitude) is inscribed in all that is living. Thus, what is finite/infinite is always already reinscribed through a process of re-production.

Further, according to the *Zohar*, evil is constructed out of the waste and refuse of holiness. Thus, it is necessary to see that what is holy and pure and what is contaminated are never separate and distinct but feed off each other in a parasitical process. Further, if *Kelipot* means "shells" or "husks", the outer shell that contains the edible fruit, but are themselves inedible, what is "pure" cannot be separated from what is impure", and "same" cannot be separated from "other".

Historically, "the Other" is viewed as savage, unknowable, (just as "the *Kelipot*...consists of the unassimilable parts of the broken vessels...").⁴² Thus, the other is that which cannot be assimilated into a system; that which does not fit in, and remains always already outside. That which threatens the order, the harmony,

within some transcendental fantasy of universalized transparency that (not only ignores the heterogenous nature of Kabbalistic discourse) but glosses over all possibility of otherness as iterable alterity, and locates itself within a spectrum of writing that valorizes an Autocratic, Totalitarian regime of Truth, Authenticity and Representation; erecting an "apparatus of power" and propagates the monocentrism of the colonial enterprise.

It is disappointing that given Wolfson's opening remarks, about 'gender sensitivity', he would continue to enforce a patriarchal etiology that reeks of narcissistic Male power and

Though Schwartz does point out, that masculinity is not an undifferentiated category. Is (à la Irigaray) a "sex which is not one", he fails to acknowledge a transgendered nature of being, that there is slippage between genders, not just within gender. Not only can G-d not be reduced to a gender, but gender itself is never containable, traceable, fixed. So, just like how men and women

that which makes separation, boundaries. *Shekhinah*, then, who holds the Other *within* H^r_m not only implies the "disintegration of any notion of unity", but problematizes the relation of Self and Other. Of Same and Other. For when the "same" is always something "other" (in or o(u)(h)er) s/he Cannibalizes the Other [Ca(nni)ballizes], takes the Other *into* because s/he is always already Other to H^r_m self or a self of Others.⁴³ Thus, as in Cixouvian discourse, *Shekhinah* becomes

...the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me --the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be but I feel passing, that makes me live, that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me...⁴⁴

Similarly, if for Derrida, "Toute Autre Est Toute Autre" ("Every Other (one) is every (bit) other",⁴⁵ the Other is never solitary or singular but is inscribed as an irreducible heterology -- And if identity is constituted contingently, indeterminably, through a repetition that can always be re-located,

dominance, authority and privilege in the name of Kabbalistic hermeneutics. The critique becomes almost farcical when Wolfson finds that the Kabbalistic texts obviously cannot support his misogynist ideals. Erecting another compensatory fiction, he boldly professes:

Even when a given text overtly refers to God in feminine terms, it is implicitly speaking about the male deity, and most specifically the corona of the penis.²⁵

are other from each other, other from themselves and other from G-d: a differentiated mass of iterable alterity, how then is it possible to consider G-d (as concept) as Man or Woman. For G-d is not man: "I am G-d, not man" (Hosea 11:19), as man is not a "caricature of God". G-d rather, is an image. And according to Baudrillard, an image is always already reproduced, entirely in

inscribed in multiplicity, divergence, *Shekhinah*, problematizes an illusion of autonomy in terms of gender, identity and meaning production.

Thus, marked by multiplicity, diversity, excess, abundance and overflow, *Shekhinah* then cannot be contained even by a single name. According to the *Wisdom of the Zohar*, s/he is also called "Shoshana" (Lily) because s/he changes. S/he also is acknowledged as "Daughter", "Princess", "Queen", "Moon", "Lower Mother", "Bride", "Earth", "Sabbath". Similarly, s/he is represented as a window, a channel for transmission, a gate or a door", and thus as a series of entrances exits (ex-schize), "her radiance spreads".⁴⁶ And though the *Zohar* attempts to fix / measure compartmentalize *her* into a recuperable unit: "She herself is 26,000 myriads of parasangs long,"⁴⁷ through not only an unmeasurable *economimesis*, but a doubling of subjectivity, *Shekhinah* is foregrounded as a heteroglossic enunciative process that can not be encapsulated, positioned or contained. Fluid, en fluxus, s/he rises and arouses as a flowing measure (which overflows as it is

Chapter three, whose title, "Erasing the Erasure," seems to promise an investigation of how women have been absented in male readings of Kabbalistic hermeneutics, unfortunately does not erase the erasure, but erases any possibility of women to exist, outside of being a cipher, a nullity, a vacancy: to be marked, scarred, inscribed upon for man's "creative" purposes. Anchored in militant phallogocentric sublation, Wolfson not only enforces a misogynistic mythology, historically saturated with patriarchal assumptions, (pen as penis, letters as virile semen and the tablet as woman)²⁶, but confesses how the **penis** and the **brain** are connected. And, with his claim that "the writing of secrets is a

simulation and therefore can never be captured.⁸ So, inscribed in the **image** (selem), in the **likeness** (demut) of any "SelfSame", G-d, too, must always already be understood as

extended and extends as it overflows) flees, flies, fills fouilles follows, overflows and flows over $H_{i,s}^{e,r}$ name.

Further, according to Kabbalistic thought, *Shekhinah* is scattered in all worlds (as sparks or particles of light) and "there is no sphere of existence including organic and inorganic nature, that is not full of [$H_{i,s}^{e,r}$] holy sparks".⁴⁸ Thus, *Shekhinah*, always--already split, divided, disemminating $H_{i,m}^{e,r}$ self within $H_{i,m}^{e,r}$ self, s/he resists any notion of containability. So, as $H_{i,s}^{e,r}$ name mnemes, beyond the name of the name s/he is named by and names all that is impossible, plausible, plaisable, re-placable. With multiple signifiers, referents and networks of referrals s/he signs $H_{i,m}^{e,r}$ self between pseudonymy, metonymy, cryptonymy, anonymity, or monstrous autonomy, separating $H_{i,m}^{e,r}$ self from $H_{i,m}^{e,r}$ self.

According to Kabbalistic doctrine, *Shekhinah* stands in for the word. *Devar*. Exposing the fullness of speech, S/he spells out all the letters of the Hebrew

decidedly phallic activity"²⁷, Wolfson determines that women are not only sociologically but physiologically excluded from ontological reality.

Further, if according to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the world is created through language, through the interplay of letters, and if he is "inscribing letters upon her,"²⁸ he is engaging in a creative activity, of re-production and ex-change, and 'she' is once again, viewed as his possession, his property; a transferential **object**, a product of his making. Wolfson then goes on to point out that the Hebrew and Latin word, "peles", means both "scale" and

"a semblance", "like the appearance",
"the appearance of a radiance", "in the
likeness of a likeness of the
appearance" or "like the appearance of

alphabet: *alef* to *tav*, and becomes "the writ(h)ing the lips, the wound, the word" (As ellipse slips abscesses, s/he is "the channel through which prophecy [is] transmitted".⁴⁹ Further, as *lips*, s/he is always already inscribed in multiplicity, (as the [lips] that are not one)⁵⁰, s/he always already exceeds H^e_r self. Thus, inscribed through the embodiment of exile, *Shekhinah* then stands in for vagrant meaning — how language itself is always fluid, in effusion, diffused through migrancy, translation, re-production. Thus, as the Jew, whose homeland is continuously being fragmented, destabilized, ("dislodged from her throne...dismissed from her home")⁵¹ H^e_r homeland is an 'at(r)opic' no-place. S/he is necessarily inscribed through abandonment, nomadicism, vagrancy, as a decontextualized trope which wanders estranged, in anguish, *in language*.⁵² Mad and non localizable, H^e_r dwelling, then in language, in the word, in the shifting space of letters [a (langue) exile]. H^e_r home, in homily, homeosis, a homologue or a homeopathological lacuna, **in language**.

"phallus", respectively, and thus draws the fallacious conclusion that once again, **the penis is the measure of all things**.

Wolfson does not title his book the Circle AND the Square which may denote an equitable alliance, but insists yet again in the very title that the feminine is placed **within** male domination. According to Wolfson's reading of Kabbalah, what is "female" is not an independent being, but always already only a subsidiary to be placed inside; shielded, masked, erased. Further, to say "**the square**", locates maleness in particularized specificity,

**an appearance which is impossible to
look at; an appearance which the eye is
unable to see..."**

(Ezekiel I: 26-27 and Targum of Ezekiel I: 26-28)

Further, just as *Shekhinah* is said to be linked to the Hebrew word *davar*, in Latin *davar* as *debere*, translates as *debt*, or *to owe*). Thus, in the language of the *Bahir*: Do not read *davar*, but *debere*.⁵³ *Shekhinah*, then, not only stands in for *language*, but a reciprocal indebtedness: Expanding and contracting rings of alliance. Thus, as the *gift*, (which, according to Derrida, whose essence is not to be an object of exchange (can only exist when it is lost in indebtedness), *Shekhinah* thus becomes a trace of an event of donation which can never have taken place. So, before ap–propriation or de–propriation (*s/he* both takes and gives, gives to take, and therefore problematizes any established propriety or property or what is properly called.⁵⁴ Therefore, in the simulation of dissimulation, *Shekhinah* then must be seen as infinitely trajectorial and inconclusive. "She is not the being–of–the–end (the goal), but is how–far–being–reaches".⁵⁵ Inscribed in discontinuity, deferral, delay, H°_i , locus in language; a

identity. 'She', however, as 'circle', **has no referent** of her own, but is placed within a generalized framework, a universalized arena that speaks of non-identity, non-specificity, non-being. Thus, with no context of her own, she becomes only a trace, a spectral presence to be generously read within the rubric of his referent: in **THE square**.

This construction is particularly ironic given that, according to Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, since the sixth day of Creation, **there is no square shape** in creation as squares imply abrupt changes of direction. Rather life on earth is symbolized by the circulation of the

inscribed in virtual versions, in approximations of an origin of an origin which cannot ever be contained. So, Eilberg-Schwartz' text reminds us that it is necessary that not only must there be a rethinking of Masculinity (of gender) but of the notion of mimesis -- that the image is always an image of an image (an homage) inscribed in a simulacric arena of hypergendered eroticism.

language which re-assembles and disassembles; a moving ensemble which resembles but never is.

And though the most important symbolic categories of Lurianic myth are drawn from the imagery of human anatomy, biological development and human sexuality, *Shekhinah*, standing in for the "mouth", the "lips", the "tongue", stands in for a bodiless body which is always the becoming fetish of the commodity. S/he is not represented as an immediately visible commodity, but inscribed in a multiplicity of gendered constructs, s/he references the body that bodies forth. A body which is always *something else*, in relation, in transference, in flight.

Thus, as text, which can never be contained or represented, *Shekhinah*, is (as the tenth *sefirah*) always-already inscribed as "the appearance of the semblance of the Presence of the Lord" (*Ezekiel* 1:26-28). But as s/he has no bodily likeness of, s/he is re-assembled in the semblance of. S/he is inscribed in

heavenly bodies orbiting in elliptical paths.²⁹

Further, if as the *Zohar* posits, "The Circle, Square and Point were used by the Kabbalists to symbolize the three highest 'sefirot'",³⁰

**In using only the "Circle" and the "Square",
Wolfson misses the point.**

The solution is not as Eilberg-Schwartz has it "to symbolically displace [] male tensions and contradictions onto women"⁹ but rather foreground difference as a gendered *différance*, a hyperreferential matrix of displacements, diffusion. A dematerialization of G-d. Which is not to say that G-d has **NO BODY, but rather is embodied between a body corps / body text. A body which is fragmented,**

virtuality, possibility, potentiality. AS IF (in-formation or informed by). Reformed, a performative body. en mode, "made" *a la mode* [mod] or modelled on, s/he is always only an image, an homage. And, according to the *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, "even though we are made in the image and likeness [of G-d] do not think for a moment that "eye" is in the form of a real eye or that "hand" is in the form of a real hand".⁵⁶ A body double, dubbed in a redoubling. So, surpassing the senses, as the sensuous-nonsensuous resonant sense, a consensus of since, s/he enters the senses as *sensucht* (desire). S/he erupts as a madness, celebrating multiplicity, diversity. And if the *Bodiless Body* also yields the *Wordless Word* and the *Nameless Name*, S/he is not inscribed in lack, (in blindness), in absence, but slack, excess. Not loss but laws. Because what is lost in a loss of what can never be possessed, *s/he does not possess but processes*. And thus is not a differential product but a production of difference.

According to the *Zohar*, the point is acknowledged as the mystical symbol of the world. For it is the point that receives all light to illuminate the body and provide everything: "the central point of a circle on which the whole circle depends".³¹ The point is in the middle of the world, and the world expanded from there: to the right and to the left and upon all sides. The world is sustained by this central point.³²

disrupted and bodies forth. For, though Eilberg-Schwartz rightly points out that if G-d is dematerialized yet still engendered male, then that which is "male" is equated with that which is "spiritual" vs that which is "female" is linked with the "body", an incorporeal G-d is not necessarily denying the value of a body / of physicality but rather hyperbolically foregrounds that the body is (in)finite,

And if, in *Sefer Sitre Torah*, Abulafia likens the combinations of the letters to the construction of the body, of various limbs and organs: "all of the limbs of [the] body are combined one with the other"⁵⁷ and *Shekhinah* references the word, the language, the letters, s/he then references the body (text). Thus, s/he's not a body, but an anti-body which as the Derridean "Pharmakon" at once cleanses and defiles. Heals by making sick. Thus, between absorption and impermeability, in a sapirous reciprocity, the body proper poisoned is improper and inappropriately propelled into the body corps body [encore. encorps]. A body of traces, as catachresis retraces appearance, and departs as sediments cling in a 'patacidical sucking where H^e;_r, body corps body text is a synechdoche deictic where dis[sic]ecrit dis-eased in metalepsis, dehiscence, abscesses.

Thus, s/he is not the erotic body, but the rotting body, the wrought body written as a libidinal band — e(merging resurgent as multiple subjectivities inscribed along shifting axes of influence. A series of contact zones in a conflictual

In failing to acknowledge the point, Wolfson has not only put the third sefirah, Binah or **understanding**, under erasure, but has eradicated the point on which both the circle and the square depend.

Thus, in the alterity of that alterity which folds back on itself and becomes more other than the other Wolfson is posing, he seems to have enclosed himself in it, while positing that he has escaped.

is uncontainable, cannot be framed, restrained, enclosed. So the fact that G-d's genitals are not exposed is not just to veil or hide "His" anatomy, but to foreground that G-d always already exceeds gender. Exceeds definition. Thus, it is crucial that G-d be seen as both dematerialized and postgender or multipliciously gendered. Between male and female, inscribed in a genderous

arena. A transferential nexus or contextatic excess. *Shekhinah* then, as language as body *derives*, is driven in a brutal frenzy that has no end in mind; except the writing of the body of a body which has no structure, is 'synchrisis. Is battered, wounded, ruptured. Is a translanguistic excess, s/he's not a (w)holy body, but a putrefied body; collapsing, ellapsing, violently clambering. A body of mounds and crevices, pits and figures. A beaten body stalking forward: dirty, Other and unreformed. Naked and impossible, **H^er**, burning body burnished, burdened bursts forth as a body of desire, of difference. A f(r)ictional body inscribed in multiplicity, transgression. **A no-body** in the image of an image. *An homage* -- where bodily boundaries blur, bond, blend band, bound into a social body. A blemished body of emissions, secretions, discharges, pollutions. A body of orifices, folds and contaminations. A viral body, of stains strains [sic] filthy and transgressive, disfigured and impure. A procreating body in fluvial effusion that is fertile, fruitful (sweet to the taste) and reproduces itself -- A foreign body. A fluid body (of bodily fluids, bodily processes, a bodily Act which dis-embodies,

Through his politically inappropriate and unethical misreading and manipulation of Kabbalistic texts, Wolfson determines that gender equality means that womens' place is (as has always been) under the domain of male authority, dominance and control: She is nothing but a part of him, created by and through him. Thus, Wolfson has rewritten the female as a parasite, (which as in the Signified/Signifier opposition) lives, feeds off male power. However, even though it is evident that no "autos" is possible without an inscription of 'alterity'; no 'inside' without a relation to an 'outside' (which cannot be simply outside, but must remark itself on the inside), even attempting to render

economy.

Though Judaism tends to be intensely homophobic, through God's Phallus, Eilberg-Schwartz does point out how homoeroticism is an inescapable part of it. So, given that homosexual bonds were prohibited, and given the

embodies, bodes well, swells, increases in de creases, traces appearance. Multiplies and becomes numerous.

Thus, s/he is not *sublime* but *subliminal* always on the edge of in(finite) hesitation. On the threshold. Because $H^*_{i,r}$, body is parts. Always already a(part of and apart from. The body bursting, body burning is not "well defined" but $H^*_{i,r}$, definitions s(well. Surface between (the) body and [] erasure of the body erupting. $H^*_{i,r}$, frame surges as a surrender descends resounding in an insistent resistance. So, exiled into the exteriority of the body. Infinitely expansive, s/he opens $H^*_{i,m}$ self as a translation, a movement, a becoming; embedded in a m'urging of a resurgence of all that precedes, *lies* beside.

And in exile, $H^*_{i,r}$, body *has no place*, but bodies *between*, worlds, bodes well, swells in a supple place spliced per space splayed out in hyperspatial interplays: sensorious, sinuous, sensing. And, as Lawrence Fine points out, "to

'difference' as 'same', that 'same' will always be inhabited or haunted by the Other.

And though his text promises to "...examine the phenomenon of gender transformation in terms of the female becoming male and the male becoming female",³³ we soon realize that both types of transformation are predicated on the ontological assumption that the female is part of the male. So, even though the Kabbalist, Pinehas of Korets states, "**the two of them [male and female] are of equal stature**"³⁴, Wolfson puts **this** 'under erasure' and asserts,

overwhelming presumption that G-d was Male, through God's Phallus, Eilberg-Schwartz suggests that essentially there were two solutions: either to demasculinize G-d (i.e. insert feminine attributes) or to demasculinize "unman" men. Traditionally, the response has been to "soften" the idea of G-d as absolutely and universally male, thus creating an appropriate socio-political

deliberately exile oneself...is a symbolic act of humility".⁵⁸ "A person should exile [H^r_m]self from place to place for the sake of Heaven and in this way [s/he] will become a vessel for the exiled *Shekhinah*...[s/he] should humble [H^r_s] heart in exile and bind [H^r_m]self to the Torah and then the *Shekhinah* will accompany [H^r_s]. And [s/he] should carry out *Gerushin* by exiling [H^r_m]self from [H^r_s] house of rest constantly..."⁵⁹ Thus, in self exile, in ex-stasis, s/he has no **place** but is inscribed in **plaisir**. Plays of mounds and crevices where s/he opens H^r_mself from within H^r_mself. Inscribed in diffusion, liquification. An unterritorialized space marked by folds and pockets. But H^r_s pockets overflow. S/he pockets H^r_mself in a texture and folds into a virtual space. A (n)e(u)rotics of space. Duration.

And if, according to the *Zohar*, *Shekhinah* is the embodiment of *Binah* (the third sefirah who references the tongue) and *Yesod* (the ninth sefirah who references the phallus) and they are brought together through "the kiss", s/he is not

Despite the reference in the above passage to the attainment of an equal stature on the part of the male and female, **the fact of the matter is** that the gender hierarchy is not fully overcome...[until]...the female is transformed into an aspect of the male.³⁵

space for both male and female worship.

However, with a re-evaluation of history, Ellberg-Schwartz posits the demasculinization of man. Though this solution seems like a celebratory and sensitive approach to the issues of man/G-d/gender, it plays itself out through

represented by any body part but an act of devotion of unification of intimacy --

*As her tongue, teeth, lips part,
solypse sip in prolxis licks. A ventriloquist kiss
In the darkness of slick kissery articulate,
ex-schlze kiss caught in the covets risks
limits lip slips en ellipse
slick distance with desire.*

And though according to the *Tanya*, *Shekhinah* is called "Mouth of G-d", (the word of the Eternal and the Breath of his Mouth by which the world came into actual manifest being, the organ of speech by means of which the speaker's inner thought and emotive dispositions are expressed and revealed),⁶⁰ as s/he embodies the *revealed* aspect of G-d, according to Derrida, **the revealed is always hidden**. "The revealed is the disclosure of the hidden and its dissemination".⁶¹ Thus, it is necessary to review the revealed as always that which is secret, secreted. So, just as *Shekhinah* "assumes form", s/he does not

In Circle in the Square, sexual difference is not re-inscribed as a dialectical economy of the 'same', but gets "**transcended in the singular male form**".³⁶ Wolfson does not problematize, interrogate or question these traditional assumptions but re-affirms an onto-theological, historico-cultural mythology genealogized from father to son, that propagates a politically dangerous hierarchy that serves to enslave women to a discourse of phallogentric power, subjugation and violence.

the exclusion / eradication of women -- and the hyper-masculinization of G-d. If Ellberg-Schwartz had recognized the multi-gendered aspect of an (in)finite G-d, his recognition of male/male bonds within this framework would have been an exhilarating exploration of the multiplicitous and shifting r(ela)tions / liaisons with man to His G-d. Unfortunately, his fabrications are completely

embody a *particular* truth, identity, topos, tropos or secret, because that secret is always "invented". Rather, $H^*_{i,r}$ manifestation is a secreting; a secret that 'bleeds', is infected, swells and pusses in the gaps. And if $H^*_{i,r}$ *cause* is a secret within a secret that only another secret can explain; it is a secret about a secret that is veiled by a secret.⁶² So, between sacrality and alterity, the secret as the sacred, is not something cryptic and concealed, but something that can not be possessed, contained or understood because of a constant deferral, differal -- that which emerges at the moment of rupture.

But, in rupture, rapture, and, as s/he presents $H^*_{i,r}$ self cryptically, *Shekhinah* is always the name of a secret, since s/he signs the irreplaceable singularity. As G-d or death, s/he puts forth the common name of a secret, the common name of the proper name without name. So, beyond the name and beyond the name of name s/he names all that is possible "as" impossible. And if according to the *Bahir* "Your name is in You, and in You is Your name"⁶³, to name the

Caught in a metaphysical determination of Presence, Truth and Nostalgia, though Elliot Wolfson's book is a lovely "feminine" purple shade, as his sub-title suggests, Circle in the Square becomes "Studies in the **USE** of gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism". Privileging the Signifier in the determination of meaning, he **uses** gender, to propagate a self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallocentrism.

warped as not only do they assume that gender is both s able and fixed, and, that wo/man's relationship with G-d hinges on a heterosexual model of identity construction, but his phallus-focused text ostracizes women, and excludes the possibility of G-d as feminine or even having feminine attributes. This text then remains "a polymorphously perverse theology" which obliterates the need for

unnameable, *Shekhinah* names without naming, between what's manifest and secret, what's private *and* public.

So, in a process of veiling and unveiling of folds that faintly flailing fall and fold in on -- a sacred space that is *secret and readable, revealed, concealed and makes manifest*, *Shekhinah* thus becomes: a process of veiling and unveiling. "An unveiling that only happens by surprise, by accident and with a brutality that shatters".⁶⁴ So, in a struggle of silences on silence in disappearance when beyond the veil or under the veil is to look at the veil revile when the truth shall make you veiled "veil [as if] / the veil" of unknowing, valency veils, when everything is veil (veil smear) valour or an unveiling unavailable veiling [s/he avails/ not violating in evol volumes. Thus, reread, *Shekhinah* cannot be read as a passive, female principle, but interrogates phallogentric notions of Truth, Authenticity, Singularity and Hierarchy (binaric constructs that inhibit, constrain, confine and close down) and foregrounds identity as a socio-linguistic construction, a semiological function

Wolfson thus sets up a Transcendental Signifier (the Phallus) which communicates straightforwardly with the most traditional Phallogentrism that reeks of nonmobility, asphyxiation, compression and disease. So, as Wolfson accurately points out in his preface to his book, that the issues surrounding gender in Kabbalistic Ritual and Myth have "not been adequately addressed in scholarly literature",³⁷ massively masculine in its supposed neutrality, Elliot Wolfson "touches upon the problem of gender...**in essential ways**",³⁸

women¹⁰ and celebrates a socio/cultural/theosophic arena where women are exchanged for the legitimization of male-male bonds.

* * *

inscribed in a differential chain of nonsynonymous substitutions, that defies definition and, (as the sefirotic system) (in)finitely enfolds into itself.

does not contest that tradition, but reinforces it; and these issues still remain unanswered, and improperly acknowledged.

Through Eilberg-Schwartz' anatomically-based text, G-d is reduced to a Divine Phallus. ■ * God's Phallus: An Intentional Fallacy, an Affect[ed] Fallacy, a Fallacy of Imitative Form * ■ However as G-d does not engage in any sexual relation, has no sexual partners and does not procreate, even if G-d has a penis, it remains a sexless organ: an ornament, accessory, a sign, an image.

ENDNOTES FOR SHEKINAH (UPPER TEXT)

1. Brought down to earth by the study of the Torah and the practice of mitzvot.
2. Given this gendered context, it is interesting to note that women cannot be judges in Jewish Law.
3. Zohar II:232a-232b, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, intro. Dr. J. Abelson (New York: Soncino Press, 1984).
4. According to Isaiah Tishby, though she is said to embody the attribute of *Judgment*, it is not as in *Gevurah* (rigorous judgment), rather she is called "lenient judgment". Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts Vol.I. trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman. Arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby, intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.375. It is interesting to note that though both *Shekhinah* and *Gevurah* (as "*female*" attributes) are said to embody various forms of "judgment", *women* are not permitted to be judges in Jewish Law.
5. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.394.
6. The Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment, trans. and intro. Daniel Chanan Matt, ed. Richard S. Payne (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p.217. And though He created "them", He called their name Adam" (*Adamah*: "from the earth"). Further, according to the *Zohar*, "the Lord God created [*va-yyitser*] Man [*Adam*] with two "yods". He completed the adornments within adornments like a seal. This is *yyitser*. Why are there two "yods"? This is a secret of the Holy Ancient One and a secret of the *Small Countenance*. What is *va-yyitser* [shaped]? *Tsar* is a shape [*tsura*] within a shape. And what is a shape within a shape? The two names which are called the full name of the Lord God. And this is the secret of the two "yods" of "He created a shape within a shape. "He shaped the complete name -- The Lord God. And in what are they included? In this Supernal form which is called *Adam* which includes male and female, and thus it is written, *et ha-Adam...comprehends male and female.* (*Zohar* III:145a-b). [emphasis mine].
7. Hélène Cixous, Vivre le Orange (Paris: des femmes, 1969), p.33. Though this is traditionally seen as a view of G-d and not necessarily human gender, given the fact that *Shekhinah* is always already described in gendered terminology, then *for this context*, could be translatable.
8. According to the Wisdom of the Zohar, "in her role of judgment, *Shekhinah* is called *Adonai*, but once she is linked with *Hesed* and *Rahamim*, she becomes *He* of the Tetragrammaton" (Vol.I, p.404). [*the lower He of YHVH*]. Graphically inscribed as "a half moon with a point" (the point standing in for zion, the mystical symbol of the world) is in the center - and receives all light to illuminate the body, and provides everything. *He* is also the Hebrew definite article, and thus marks the "indefinite definite", d(infinity of illumination. Also, it metonymically stands in for *HaShem* (The Name). So, to name the unnameable, she names without naming (between pseudonymy, metonymy, homonymy, anonymity) naming all that is possible as impossible. A part of and apart from.
9. See Zohar 3:296b.

10. Elliot R. Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.225.
11. Or as Irigaray might put it, "For the sex of woman is not one. And, as jouissance bursts out in each of [her] *parts*, so all of them can mirror her in dazzling multifaceted difference". (Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), p.239.
12. Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment, p.243.
13. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, p.1375.
14. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I. p.36.
15. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.37.
16. Hélène Cixous, Newly Born Woman, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p.38.
17. Hélène Cixous, "Sorties" in New French Feminisms, eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivon (New York: Schocken, 1981), p.88.
18. Luce Irigaray, Speculum of the Other Woman, p.195.
19. Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.49.
20. Rabbi Schneur Zalman, Likutei Amarim-Tanya, ed., trans. Rabbi Nissan Mindel (Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, 1958), p.846.
21. Elliot R. Wolfson, "Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes: *Peshat* and *Sod* in Zoharic Hermeneutics" in The Midrashic Imagination: Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History, ed. Michael Fishbane (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), p.186.
22. Also it is significant to note that the Rabbinic tradition uses for "blind" as *Sagi Nahor*, which literally translates to "full of light". Further, in medieval Christian iconography, the synagogue is precisely a beautiful maiden who is blindfolded or blind.
23. In Hebrew *Ein* is written with an *Aleph* (the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet), and *Ayin* with the letter *Ayin* (the sixteenth letter). In addition to *Ayin* referring to the seventy names of G-d, it also means "being", "spring" or "foundation", and is the first word in the axiom of Divine Providence: *Ain Shel Atah / Ain Shel M'alah*; and thus refers to the *upper* and *lower* worlds simultaneously.
24. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.375.
25. Gershom Scholem, On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead, trans. J. Neugroschel, ed. J. Chipman (New York: Schocken, 1991), p.172.

26. In Hebrew, *Kabbalah* translates as: *to receive*. Particularly to receive *by way of the mouth*.
27. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.372.
28. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.374.
29. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p.94.
30. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.II, p.553.
31. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.II, p.553.
32. Wolfson, Elliot R., Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism.
33. Likutei Amarim-Tanya, p.846.
34. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, p.144.
35. Zohar I:120b.
36. Zohar I:12a-12b.
37. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of Medusa" in Critical Theory Since 1965, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), p.314.
38. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.395.
39. Likutei Amarim-Tanya, p.891.
40. Zohar I:12b. Further, in Botany and Entomology, the word "mourning" is used of being that in their colourings have a mixture of black and white (i.e. "half mourning satyr"). Thus, perhaps in Derridean terminology, carries the *trace of death* within them.
41. See Jacques Derrida, The Gift of Death, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). This issue also explored in Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, p.69.
42. Likutei Amarim-Tanya, p.886.
43. When the Tanya then says, "what then is the difference between one and the other? It is all one" (p.881), it does not necessarily mean *one* and the *same* (of harmony and unity) but *one* as a multiplicitous chain of supplementarity and exchange.
44. Hélène Cixous, "Sorties" in New French Feminisms, eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivon, p.85.
45. See Jacques Derrida. The Gift of Death.
46. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.374.

47. Gershom Scholem, The Origins of Kabbalah, trans. Allan Arkusch, ed. R. J. Zwi Weblowsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p.185.
48. Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken, 1961), p.280. According to the theory, the holy sparks are mixed up with the *Kelipoth* (husks) and need to be separated from them and lifted up.
49. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.406.
50. See Luce Irigaray, The Sex Which is Not One, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988).
51. Isaiah Tishby, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.387.
52. Similarly, *Shekhinah* is described through parables and aggadic stories, with an absence of logical consistency. Thus through both form *and* content she embodies exile (the way she is represented and what she represents).
53. As Gershom Scholem points out in The Origins of Kabbalah, n.197,p.178. *Debher* (Plague) is understood as *Dabhar* [Holy (Word or Logos)].
54. Jacques Derrida, On the Name, trans. David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., and Ian McLeod, ed. Thomas Dutoit (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp.134-35.
55. Hélène Cixous, Newly Born Woman, p.87.
56. Tishby, Isaiah, Wisdom of the Zohar, Vol.I, p.286. Further, according to an anonymous kabbalistic text, "in our image" refers to the written Torah, whereas "in our likeness" refers to the Oral Toral". MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 504, fol. 312b. Cited from Elliot R. Wolfson, Circle in the Square, p.83.
57. Moshe Idel, Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia, trans. Menahem Kallus (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p.6.
58. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), p.123. This grew out of Moses Cordovero (1522-1570) and Solomon Alkabetz (1505-1584) who were known as practitioners of *Gerushin*, exiles or wanderers. They would wander amongst the numerous gravesites in the environs of Safed in conscious imitation of the exiled *Shekhinah*.
59. Moses Cordovero, Tomer Devorah, chptr 9.
60. Likutei Amarim-Tanya, p.848.
61. Elliot R. Wolfson, "Beautiful Maiden Without Eyes: *Peshat* and *Sod* in Zoharic Hermeneutics" in The Midrashic Imagination, p.186.
62. Ja far as-Sadiq, Sixth Imam cited from Umberto Eco, Foucault's Pendulum, trans. William Weaver (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), p.480.

63. The Bahir, (attributed to Rabbi Nehunia ben haKana. trans, intro. and commentary Aryeh Kaplan (Maine: Samuel Weiser, 1990), p.71.
64. Hélène Cixous, Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing, trans. Sarah Cornell and Susan Sellers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p.63.

ENDNOTES FOR MIDDLE TEXT

1. Zohar I, trans. Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon (New York: Soncino Press, 1984), p.23.
2. Zohar I:5b-6a, Also, it should be noted that according to the Zohar, "those who penetrate into the space of the circle-square, treading on the spot where the central point is situated and damaging it — these shall surely be put to death". (Zohar I:5b-6a).
3. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.79.
4. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.79.
5. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.85.
6. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.77.
7. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.2.
8. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.3.
9. Zohar I:34b-35a.
10. Zohar I:182a.
11. R. Hirsch cited in Rabbi Michael L. Munk, The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet (New York: Mesorah, 1983), p.161.
12. Zohar I:25b-26a.
13. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.91.
14. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.80.
15. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.91.
16. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of Medusa" in Critical Theory Since 1965, eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1989), p.317.

17. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.xiii.
18. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.81. emphasis mine.
19. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.82. emphasis mine.
20. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.92.
21. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.80. emphasis mine.
22. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, xiii
23. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.83. The Zohar, however, also states that "*In our image*, corresponds to light, *after our likeness* to darkness, which is a vestement to light the same way that the body is a vestement to the soul". (I:22a–22b). Thus, the *black* light and the *white* light being only two manifestations of one indivisible light. They are not separate, distinguishable, but as the voice and writing, are echoes, traces, ghosts of each other, inscribed in and through an ever generative process.
24. See Jacques Derrida, The Gift of Death, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
25. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.107.
26. According to Wolfson, "Writing is in the foundation of the maker, which is the pen that writes, and the foundation of the female is the paper that receives the writing," Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.76. See also Wolfson note 200, p.194.
27. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.74. It would be interesting here to remember Sandra M. Gilbert's, "Literary Paternity" (in Critical Theory Since 1965 eds. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle), where she asserts that this compensatory fiction is borne out of man's anxiety that he cannot verify his fatherhood. "The unity or integrity of the text is maintained by a series of genealogical connections: author–text, beginning–middle–end, text–meaning, reader–interpretation and so on. Underneath all these is the imagery of succession, of paternity, or hierarchy." (p.487) Thus, Wolfson too, as "author, is father, progenitor, procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis", (p.488) to create posterity to which he lays claim.
28. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.77.
29. *Yerushalmi Nedarim* 3:2.

30. Zohar I:5b-6a.
31. Zohar I:229a.
32. "The Account of Creation 7", cited in The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts. Vol.I. Trans. David Goldstein, eds. Albert H. Friedlander, Louis Jacobs, Vivian D. Lipman. Arranged by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby. Intro. Isaiah Tishby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.379.
33. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.xiii.
34. *Devarim Nehmadim*, cited in Imre Pinehas ha-Shalem, ed. Y. Frankel (Jerusalem: 1988), p.41., cited in Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.120.
35. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, pp.120-121.
36. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.xiii.
37. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, p.xiii.
38. Elliot Wolfson, Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism, pp.xi-xii.

ENDNOTES FOR BOTTOM TEXT

1. Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr., and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.68.
2. Phyllis Trible, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), cited in Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism (Beacon Press: Boston, 1994), pp.114-15. Here, she also points out that "not only is God metaphorically a father, a husband, king and warrior but a woman who conceives, gives birth, and nurses, and mothers children". Also, she points out that this is particularly foregrounded in that the word *Shaddai* has the same consonantal structure as the word for *breasts*. Though etymologically the two terms may derive from different stems, the linguistic relation is fetishized in *Genesis 49:25*.
3. Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism, p.18. "The priestly inclusion of the feminine in G-d's image is part of an attempt to reconcile their definition of masculinity with the divine image". (Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus, p.207). Thus, as marriage and sexuality are frequent biblical metaphors for describing G-d's relationship with man, according to Eilberg-Schwartz, the imbalance can only be rectified if female aspects of G-d are posited. (A potential homoerotic relation was avoided by feminizing one of the parties: either males were feminized to assume the role of G-d's wife, or G-d was feminized).

4. Brother Antoninus (William O. Everson), The Crooked Lines of God, cited from Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism, p.137. Further, Schwartz repeats (with almost mantra-like fervour), how that from ancient Judaism the feminine and the subordinate are equated. (p.16,37).
5. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism.
6. Brother Antoninus (William O. Everson), The Crooked Lines of God, cited from Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus, p.137.
7. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism, p.3.
8. Jean Baudrillard, Simulations, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983).
9. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, God's Phallus: And Other Problems for Men and Monotheism, p.20.
10. Eilberg-Schwartz takes this notion to such an extreme, that he asserts that "to be fruitful and multiply" refers to a polymorphic hermeneutics (Torah is infinitely productive) and thus eliminates any need for women.

BI/OGRAPHIÉ EFFECTS

Cixous and Derrida and the Impact of Culturalingual Construction

Writing out of the geo-political syncretism of an Algerian past -- between the tensions of the Second World War, the Algerian War of Independence and the triangular relations between North African Muslims, Jews and Christians, living under French colonial rule, Cixous and Derrida create a textual space through difference and segregation, migration, integration, proximity, distance and intimacy. And though both Cixous and Derrida position themselves from (bear witness to) an Algerian Jewish heritage, they produce an ethnographic writing which never becomes an objectification of culture but an inter-ethnic multilingual complex of socio-historical cultures and codes. Thus, to locate Cixous and Derrida as "Jews" is not to insert them into a contaminated logic of biologism, racism and naturalism, but rather shows how ethnicity may function as a grammatological praxis.

For example, both Cixous and Derrida quote the tautological axiom, "All Poets are Yids".¹ According to Derrida, the "Poet" (unlike the "Sophist" who manipulates empty signs and draws h[er] effects from the contingencies of signifiers), is concerned with the interplay of signifieds.² And according to Kabbalistic hermeneutics, grammatologically translated, a "Yid" becomes a *Yud* [י] (the tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet), and occupies the place of displacement, the space of the "excluded middle". Thus, the *Yid* becomes a

tropological construct, a sign, a moment in an interlingual sequence. Further, R. Nathan-Neta of Siniewa asserts that "the letter Y[u]d, the first letter of the Tetragrammaton, is found in all the other letters"³, thus it signifies a contaminative process which echoes in all wor(l)ds. This is also foregrounded in that, according to the Zohar, *Alef* (the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which is silent yet "comprises and unites all") is often transliterated as [ʔ].⁴ Graphematically resembling a comma or apostrophe, or (as in an Abulafian and Maimonidean reading), it appears as half of a never-ending circle. Thus, as a suture, a fissure, a gap, the *Yud* signifies a present non presence signalling heterogenous possibility.⁵ So, as in the mark of the 'pataphysical (the superinducement of the superinducement), the *Yud* references the elision of the elision which becomes quotation. So, as *poet*, as *Yid*, as an *open* quotation, A *Yiddish* writing becomes a countersignative process of grammatological rupture and displacement, and self-reflexively legitimizes and delegitimizes a *culturalingual* economy, constructed in and through language.

Further, if *Yid* [as a cognate of *Yad* (hand), which homiletically refers to 'power and possession'], and if *Poet* refers to the constant interplay of signifieds, then to say "All Poets are Yids" is to foreground a writing praxis which problematizes any notion of possession or property. So, writing through the orthographic mark of metaphoric elision, (which 'patareferentially absents presence and presents absence), a *Yiddish* poetics questions the possessed possessed through an unanswerable process of "imaginary solutions". Thus, as *Yids*, Cixous and Derrida tropologically signify a di/efferential process of supplement and desire, and engage in a writing practice of materiality and productivity which thrives on rhetorical strategies of hybridity, deformation,

masquing and inversion, and produce an absent presence inscribed on an intra-cultural trajectory of differance.

According to Derrida, the Jew as the 'unpronounceable Name' "...is the other who has no essence, who has nothing of his own or whose own essence is not to have one".⁶ (In)finutely divisible, translatable, mutable, Derrida and Cixous each engage in a destabilizing practice of transgression, invasion, contradiction and ambiguity, where subjectivity slips between difference, appliance, appearance, and foreground how text does not possess some portable and universal context, but rather, inscribed in desire, functions as di/fferentially embedded figural traces concerning the (dis)articulation, organization and anxiety of power relations.

As it is impossible to classify, to claim lineage, as "the lineage of a progenitor [] no longer resembles it",⁷ with continuous proliferation, mutation and contamination, "one can no longer count its offspring or interests, its supplements or surplus values".⁸ Thus, it is necessary to review culture and, therefore, heredity not as an autonomous locatable topoi but as a spectrogenic process, a "ligneous-non ligneous" space of "invisible visibility". Like the disappearing of an apparition (the apparition of the inapparent), inappropriate, propre impropre propriotous riotous, ethnicity becomes a re-inscription, a re-delimitation of "the ghost of the ghost of the simulacrum without end".⁹ Caressing its percurser without naming, it remains in(excess)able, fallible, open, indistinguishable.

And though "we must entrust ourself to traces",¹⁰ this is not to say that there is *no heredity* and therefore no debt, but just as Derrida posits in *Specters of Marx*, a [wo/man's death is always more than a paradigm, is not just a figure, not just a symbol, an emblem, and just as context always remains open, fallible and insufficient, Derridean and Cixouvian text read through a cultural context must always already be more than a paradigm -- a patadigm, a patadigmaxis en praxis, a 'pataphysical economy that is both beyond and beside, inside and outside of the text that constructs it.

According to Jabès, "being Jewish means exiling yourself in the word".¹¹ We are people of the Book.¹² But the book is not "The Law" [*la loi*] because the law is in every look [*l'oeil*]. So, in a spectrogenic process of looking and not looking, Cixous and Derrida inscribe a hermeneutics where *Law* looks, overlooks or locks in an interlocutive locus. And if the law of the book is the law of the infinite (which for Cixous and Derrida is the time of borders crossed), the beyond of the book is still the book. So, when there is nothing outside of [*ne pas de hors text*], no core text, a vortext of contingency and incommensurabilities, the book veils itself in the book, is always in recognition of the book, in ambush for the book and belongs to be[*langues*] to a textual practice of passages, signatures, indices. And if

Judaism could be defined as the inevitable, predetermined gesture called to open the Book to other books so that in their ever-awakening words a millennial word may be read in clouded transparency.¹³

Cixous and Derrida write a spectral dissymmetry, where each law, a series of borders, orders, mirrors, screens, walls, *flaws*. Inscribing not a text of the pure and the sacred, but the puréed, the secreted, the s'écrit. And if, according to Derrida, "the only thing that begins by reflecting itself is history, and this fold, this furrow, is the Jew",¹⁴ the Jew, as a non-present present, a being there of an absent or simulacral act which has no effectivity or presence, *is* nothing in itself. Perhaps *is* as, according to Sartre, a reflection of the non-Jewish gaze,¹⁵ an image of a look. *A Law*.

In *Heidegger and "the jews"*,¹⁶ Lyotard abstracts a Jewish *essence* (typographically inscribes it in lower case letters, frames it within quotation marks), and labels the *Jew* "jew". According to the text, this culturalingual sign metonymically stands in for all dislocated marginalized or insurgent subjects, negotiated in the antagonisms of cultural difference. Linking "the Jews" with Afro-Asiatic hybrids, quadroons, half-negroes and Near-Eastern unbridled fornicators, Lyotard resists identifying *The Jew* as a Transcendental Subject. In doing this, however, he not only glosses over "the Jews" specific (political) histories and particular meaning within different political languages, but through iterative articulation, manic repetition, "the Jew" is further objectified which contributes to and reproduces a conspiratorial site of revolt and resistance. And though Lyotard's text insists that the label "does not depend on the authenticity of any primary roots but on that singular debt of an interminable anamnesis",¹⁷ it constructs a "pseudo-Judaism" which displays little concern for or knowledge of the intricacies of Jewish thought and history. It redefines Judaism along the lines of a nineteenth century universalist model without questioning the ideology behind such a definition, and thus acts as an ambivalent text of projection,

introjection and aggressivity and returns that image in the form of fixation and substitution.

Similarly, in *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva presents the Jew as "the most rigorous application of Unicity of the Law and the Symbolic order".¹⁸ Drawing on the psychoanalytic ideas of Jacques Lacan, Hegelian conception of religious history and Georges Bataille's theories concerning abjection, she structures an absence effaced through yet another metaphor of non-Jewish gaze. Although Bhabha has pointed out that Kristeva's "Women's Time" is a powerful critique and redefinition of the nation as a space for the emergence of various identities, where the nation acts as a symbolic denominator, a repository for cultural knowledge,¹⁹ in "Ours to Jew or Die", she refuses to acknowledge a transnational dimension of cultural transformation, migration, diaspora, displacement, re-location, discursively re-articulated in contestation and negotiation performed at the liminal edge of identity. Or in Michael Weingrad's terms, "focusing on a single psychological principle to explain all of religious history leads her to ignore basic and crucial details of that history, while her commitment to celebrating what has been repressed...comes dangerously close to condoning anti-Semitic impulses."²⁰

If according to Jabès, "the law [is] opening the dialogue", the Jew is not inscribed in the "Unicity of the Law and the Symbolic Order", or the "desire of the One-All" (Lyotard), but rather re-marks a dialogic space of textual desire, a discursive liminality marked by dissemination, displacement, rupture, fragmentation, and exile. Therefore, it is then necessary to relocate Jewish identity where the Jew is not reterritorialized (terrorized) by another, (and

becomes a regurgitated moment of sacrificial violence recycled negative or sentimental stereotypes which are not subject to critique or historical context). Does not become what Bhabha calls "a rememoration", a haunting memorial of what has been excluded, excised, evicted; the *unheimlich* space for the negotiation of identity and history, but circulates as a sign within specific contextual locations and social systems of value, and effects a hybrid cultural space that forms contingently, disjunctively in the inscription of signs of cultural memory, sites of politico-semi(o)tic agency.

And as culture has no teleological plot: is always already only an investigation, a divestigation, inscribed in replication or re-application, an impossible figure which can never be found, said or captured; is always an exegetical exercise, inscribed in the construction, the enunciation, in the articulation of both more (and less) than a history, it is crucial then to acknowledge "the jew" as multipliciously inscribed as pedagogical objects *and* performative subjects – articulated in the tension between signifying themselves as an a priori historical presence, while constructed in the performance of narrative. As a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference, ["the jew"] must become an enunciatory "present" marked in the repetition and pulsation of a surplus of surfaces.²¹ Foregrounded through the Derridean tautological axiom, "*Tout Autre Est Tout Autre* {Every Other (one) is every (bit) other}",²² the Other is never solitary or singular but is inscribed as an irreducible heterology. Similar, yet different, to the Kristevan "demassification of difference", identity is constituted contingently, indeterminably, through a repetition that can always be reinscribed, re-located. A repetition that re-instates a differential history that will not return to the power of the Same. Re-told in a telling, a taling of how

the tell tolls, trials,²³ Jewish textual practice (Kabbalistic reading strategies), thus makes untenable any supremacist or nationalistic claims to cultural mastery or application of Unicity of the Law.

So, the Jew emerges at the limits of representation, which sur-viv(r)es *lives on* borderlines, the interstices, the aporias in the hybridized between spaces, in a superfluity of folds, feint feign focuses and folds h^or_imself into contestation and flux caused by multiplicitous systems of social and cultural signification. It is then crucial to review the possibility of identity through strategic cultural linkages that are not chronot(r)opically specific -- yet are neither generalized nor eternalized, monocular, nor monologic, but as a hybridized trope, marked by gaps and absences (between meaning and being, in the play of desire) and explores ways in which cultural identity performs itself through a writing praxis.

In the beginning of "Sorties", Cixous states,

The routine "our ancestors, the Gauls" was pulled on me. But I was born in Algeria and my ancestors lived in Spain, Morocco, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Germany; my brothers by birth are Arab. So, where are we in history? I side with those who are injured, trespassed upon, civilized. I am (not) Arab. Who am I? I am "doing" French.history. I am a Jewish woman.²⁴

As a French Jew in Algiers, she reproduces a cultural identity estranged from a territorial basis. Reproduced within a framework of a shattered geography, mobility, departure, migration and social fragmentation, Cixous writes in exile, (an exile which is not merely an abstract, essentialized and ahistorical tendency), but writes the excluded middle, "a non-dialectical middle, a structure of jointed predication which cannot itself, be comprehended by the predicates it distributes."²⁵ And coming from a triangular Christian-Jewish-Muslim logic, with a shifting sense of who was colonizing who:

(ethnic distinction in colonial (Algeria) was a system of flexible strategies - the boundaries between ethnic groups were fluid and constantly adjusted to the contingencies of successive wars),²⁶

the text becomes a surplus of centers and margins. Cixous insinuates herself into terms of reference in the perplexity of fixity [sic] exits. And as her silences elicits between introjection and identification, she writes on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender.

Insisting on a deterritorialized genealogy of memory, in *Vivre L'Orange*, Cixous foregrounds a multiplicity of origin. Its title, as an anagram for origin, links her North African birthplace to a circular, sanguine fruit. With "D'Oranje", there is a returning; a textual traversing of `Je'; which is `I', echoes of an `O'. `O' [... "which is surely an element of I"]²⁷ is "not *the* origin: She doesn't go back there"²⁸, (but rises, swells, lifts up, carries forth and returns to a `shoreless nonorigin'). `O', the Ottoman Empire, `I'ran. `O', Oran, (where

she was born into). With continual intertextual and cross-linguistic play, the text incorporates `Laranj'a, which is a moment; a beginning. For, "starting out from the orange all voyages are possible".²⁹ Questioning her ethnic origin, she poses "Laranjudias'; Je(w)oman. "Am I enjewing myself? Or woe I woman? Win I woman, or wont I jew-ich? Joy I donna? Gioia jew? or gioi am femme?...I sense Jews passing in the depths of my writing, singing ancient psalms in silence behind my memory..."³⁰

Thus, with untraceable origins, Cixouvian subjectivity must be seen as a generative process. She produces a liminal signifying space that is *internally* marked by exile, migrancy, agonism and difference and carves out a performative space in which the arbitrariness of the sign of cultural signification emerges within the regulated boundaries of social discourse. So, as both presence and proxy, her place, a pulse, splayed in lapse sweat swells, in distance and distanciation.

And if, according to Derrida, "the Jew is but the suffering allegory"³¹ and an allegory is "...the interpretation of a text or corpus that has been resituated within an alien conceptual framework",³² then the Jew is always already subaltern, other, supplementary. S/he

...understands neither the finite nor the infinite, neither the measured nor the immeasurable, neither the part nor the whole. More precisely, what the Jew does not understand is neither this nor that but the commensurability or the passage between the two, the presence of the immeasurable in the determinate, the beauty and the immanence of the infinite in the finite.³³

Between the French colonizers and the Muslim colonized, between a North African past, Jewish/Catholic/Muslim traditions, and the Paris of literature, maturity, modernity and social advancement, both Cixous and Derrida write through various oral and written traditions, narratives, transmission systems, social memory and culture. Separating themselves from themselves, from a homogenous totalizing community, from any notion of *being*, they write where borders contingently and conflictually touch. They write themselves into a space *between* cultural formations and social processes without a centered causal logic. Inscribing themselves in the imminence of disappearance, they become marks of undecidability, porous, permeable and indeterminate; a rhetoric of ends (f)laws, frames; a place of construction, reformation, tracing and negotiating limits. And, thus they do not embrace a transcendental concept of space but a topography of edges, a configuration of contours sequences that wrenches security out of a violent reciprocity marked by expansion, contraction, a labyrinth of vertiginous exigencies, a vortex of possibilities and substitutions.

According to Joëlle Bahloul, in Algeria, though the Jews saw themselves as French and were often seen by the Muslims as supporters of the oppressive colonial power, yet according to the French they were not "full-fledged Frenchmen"; were not "real" Europeans and occupied a marginal position in the representation of France as a nation,³⁴ and thus their status remained a liminal community, marked by continual processes of Otherness, distance and estrangement. Similarly, marked by the modality and effects of re-inscription, never inside *or* outside, Cixous and Derrida write a present which is "neither

the mimetic sign of historical contemporaneity (the immediacy of experience) nor is it the visible terminus of historical past (the teleology of tradition)".³⁵ Writing in an excluded middle, in a supplemental space or ab-ject space, they write a blasphemous writing, a transgressive act of cultural transformation.

Further, as "Anti-Semitism was widespread and ferocious in the Christian population and made it very difficult for the Jews to become integrated into European society,"³⁶ inevitably their writing became a narrative of socio-semiotic antagonism, uncertainty and dis-integration, and embraced violent incongruities, irritant disturbances, and all that was vehemently unassimilable. So, not only writing from the position of the failure of Logocentrism, or from a "feminine ecriture," but a poetics of relocation and reinscription, Cixous and Derrida write themselves across genres, cultures, geographies, histories, codes, idioms, rhetorics. Desacrilizing the transparent assumptions of cultural supremacy, yet in the very act, their writing demands a contextual specificity, a historical differentiation, with a superfluity of ever-shifting positions.

And though, according to *Storm from Paradise*, "the Jewish elite in exile named themselves through their books",³⁷ for Jabès, "... the Jewish writer is not necessarily the one who charts the word "Jew" in his writings but the one for whom the word "Jew" is contained in all the words of the dictionary, a word all the more absent for being, by itself, every one of them."³⁸ Similarly, for Derrida "*jeu* originates between the colour and the flower, the adjective and the noun; floats like a woman's garment over the whole text".³⁹ Burns between one letter and the next.

So, as what Derrida calls a *universal Marrano*,

anyone who remains faithful to a secret that he has not chosen, in the very place where he lives in the home of the inhabitant or of the occupant in the home of the [] arrivant, in the very place where he stays without saying no, but without identifying himself as belonging to,⁴⁰

Derrida and Cixous remain faithful to a mode of writing which not only draws upon their North African post-colonial past, but mirrors a Kabbalistic hermeneutics, a heteroglossic / palimpsestic enunciative process where potential meanings are never fixed, never exhausted. Further, foregrounding language as a productive economy of intersequential subterfuge, supplementarity and exchange, they remain *faithful* to a secret which secretes, a s'ecrit; a diasporic discourse inscribed in iteration and renegotiation, becoming and effacement.

And if it is in the enunciatory act of splitting that the cultural signifier creates its strategies of differentiation, through a discursive liminality; subversion, suturing and slippage, Cixouvian and Derridean discourse do not set up a capacity, a frame, an agency, where language is compressed, imprisoned, "banded erect" or hardened into an epistemic, ethnocentric, nationalist intelligibility which coheres in the address of authority, but produces a conflictual economy. And though taking on the colonial language,⁴¹ the language of upward mobility, modernity, progression, a language seen as the linguistic legitimation of social status, they write a graphematic synchrony which simultaneously inhabits multiple and conflicting positions. Foregrounding the hybridity of culture; a forbidden transparency and impossible univocity, they

defy any notion of "belonging to" and subvert the generalization of Ethnocentric Law and genealogy.

Thus, Cixous and Derrida write a history of cultural difference that envisages the production of difference as the political and social definition of the historical present. Playing out the agonism between the lexical and the grammatical dramatized in the liberty of the signifier, they produce an on-going cultural performance (which cross-references and therefore *does not* cut across sites of social significance) -- that erases the dialectical disciplinary sense of cultural reference and relevance. Between Arab and Jew, France and Algeria, their home [logis] in logos, in language. In a *langue*, a tongue [that swallows itself and eats itself, is silent, tongue tied, dies or vomits]⁴² but cannot assimilate.

So, just like how Algeria in the 1930's was marked by pogroms, rebellions, uprisings, massacres, slaughterings, where houses were attacked, ransacked, crushed under the colonial yoke,⁴³ Cixous and Derrida produce a writing of invasion, transgression, grammatologic violence that becomes simulacric of a cultural past. Culture then, as in Babelian performance, must be seen as a figurative transference of meaning across language systems, across geo-graphic s/cites, across b(i/o)graphic enunciations -- transgressive, invasive and becomes another text of knowledge, discourse, memory, resistance and power. And if according to Heidegger, a boundary is not that at which something stops but, is that from which something begins its presencing, identity occurs in the moment of recognition, in the place of enunciation, in a strategic naming which is always a misnaming, a pseudonaming.

Through an unspeaking, a NOT naming, through ambivalence, division and disidentification, Cixous and Derrida, shift the s/cite of "the jew" from epistemological object to an enactive enunciatory site which opens up possibilities for other narrative gestures of cultural signification. Thus, they produce a contingent and liminal space, a multiaccentual politics of desire which confounds the ordering of a cultural hegemony

(because there *is* no hegemony that is horizontal and homogenous...conceived in a state of equilibrium, co-ordinated and maintained by good law; governed by a teleology of progress, the anonymity of individuals, the spatial horizontality of community and the homogenous time of social narratives),⁴⁴

traumatizing tradition, and provides a narrative strategy for a hybrid site of cultural negotiation. They then engender the emergence and negotiation of not a "Jew essence" but a *jouissance*, "a text of pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat...a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the tongue, not the meaning of language".⁴⁵

So, as *etran-je[w]sans* swells in intransigent surges, *j'ouis sens*, *(jeu)ne naissance* spirals in a surplus of censors,

*jouir(en)je(u)-i-sense, je suis ensouciance,
je-i-sanse(e) issuance, jew-ess sans errance,*

Cixous and Derrida question the univocity of the Law, and produce a narrative of culture spoken through ambivalence, catachresis, contingency, iteration and palimpsestic abscesses. And though their hermeneutic praxis is not locked into identity, fixity, closure, it's never "free floating" because law, meaning, power, closure is built into it. **Not nomadic but monadic**, it remains always already in a dialogic position of calculation. Through a process of reinscription and intersection, intervention, it reverses displaces and seizes the apparatus of value coding and produces a perverted context.

So, in diasporic degeneracy, Cixous and Derrida produce an epistemic impossibility where fixity opens up beside itself. As a series of migrations, deracinations, abseit s/cites resited beside, it performs a supplementary space which is not transcendent, transparent, unitary, organic or autonomous but emerges as both symptom and effect of an intersubjective matrix, and produce a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of iteration and incommensurable insurgent relinking, and signs itself as a supplementary space of cultural signification.

And though their writing is made contingent *on* and rooted *in* a specific historical and geographic context, in a hyperbolic surplus of spectrality, sacrality, alterity, Cixous and Derrida accumulate a heredity, and thus operate as systems of cultural reproduction. In the process of deconstructing the metaphysics of the *propre* of logocentrism, linguisticism and phonologism, the demystification of the de-sedimentation of the autonomic hegemony of language, they locate themselves within an incommensurable exteriority. Through the linking of modalized presents, they restage cultural temporalities into the

invention of tradition and thereby question inheritance as that which is not natural, transparent or universal, but an irreducible legacy inscribed through cultural memory, *culturalingual* iterability and palimpsestic processes of prosthetic supplementarity.

ENDNOTES

1. Marina Tsevetseva, "The Poem of the End" in Selected Poems (Newcastle on Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1990), p.136. However, *Yid*, from *Yiddish* is an *Ashkenazik* term. As *Sefardim* are not "yids" in their own self conception, to say "all poets are yids", Tsevetseva's axiom does not necessarily mean that "all poets are *Ashkenazim*", but provides an interesting displacement whereby the *Sefardim* are further exiled from their own identity.
2. Jacques Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p.248. Implying, of course, that every signified becomes a signifier ad infinitum.
3. Moshe Idel, Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), p.94.
4. See Wisdom of the Zohar Vol.II, p.567.
5. Zohar I. See appendix II, p.386. Further, according to the Zohar, "The letter *Yud* represents how male and female are combined: "the mystery of the creation of the first [being]. Who was created with two faces." (Zohar I:26-3a). The *Yud* then foregrounds gender as an accumulative and shifting economy.
6. Jacques Derrida, "Shibboleth" in Midrash and Literature, eds. Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p.338.
7. Jacques Derrida, Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.152.
8. Jacques Derrida, Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International, p.138.
9. Jacques Derrida, Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Working of Mourning, and the New International, p.126.
10. Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.68.
11. Edmond Jabès, From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop, intro. Richard Stamelman (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991), p.124.
12. Edmond Jabès, From the Book to the Book: An Edmond Jabès Reader, p.125.

13. Edmond Jabès, "The Solitude of the Question" in *The Book of Dialogue*, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), p.42.
14. Cited in Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p.67.
15. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Politics and Literature* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1948).
16. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the jews"*, trans. Andreas Michel and Mark Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

I write "the jews" this way neither out of prudence nor lack of something better. I use lower case to indicate that I am not thinking of a nation. I make it plural to signify that it is neither a figure not a political (Zionism), religious (Judaism), or philosophical (Jewish philosophy) subject that I put forward under this name. I use quotation marks to avoid confusing these "jews" with real Jews. What is most real about real Jews is that Europe, in any case, does not know what to do with them: Christians demand their conversion; monarchs expel them; republics assimilate them; Nazis exterminate them. "The jews" are the object of a dismissal with which Jews, in particular, are afflicted in reality. (p.3).

17. David Carroll, in the forward, "The Memory of Devastation and the Responsibilities of Thought: *And let's not talk about that* in Jean Francois Lyotard', *Heidegger and "the jews"*, p.xiii.
18. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p.186.
19. See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.153.
20. Michael Weingrad, "Jews (in Theory): Representations of Judaism, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in Postmodern French Thought" in *Judaism* (Issue No.177, Vol.45, No.1, Winter 1996), p.80.
21. Or, as Bhabha might say "becomes the s/cite where particularity intersects with historical contingency" *The Location of Culture*, p.147.
22. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Willis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p.82.

23. "And though she herself is 'telling' will not undo that somewhere else she is told". See Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jaen-Loup, Just Gaming, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p.150.
24. Hélène Cixous, "Sorties" in New French Feminisms, eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivon (New York: Schocken, 1981), p.71. This is similar to Jabès who states, "In the cemetery of Bagneux, *departement de la Seine*, rests my mother. In old Cairo, in the cemetery of sand, my father. In Milano, in the dead marble city, my sister is buried. In Rome where the dark dug out the ground to receive him, my brother lies. Four graves. Three countries. Does death know borders? One family. Two continents. Four cities. Three flags. One language: of nothingness. One pain. Four glances in one. Four lives. One scream." (Edmond Jabès, From the Book to the Book), p.75.
25. However, as R. Gasché points out in The Tain of the Mirror (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), it's "not that this ability...shows a lack of power; rather this inability is constitutive of the very possibility of the logic of identity" (p.210).
26. "Between the end of the First World War and Algerian independence [was] a period marked by a significant population boom and the rise of several important political movements. Colonialist and racist ideologies and groups continued to proliferate amongst the European population as Algerian Nationalism grew. Virulent anti-Semitism produced a profound separation between Jews and their Christian 'compatriots'...and forced the Jews back to their 'native' origins alongside the Muslim population." Joëlle Bahloul, The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937-1962, trans. Catherine du Peloux Menage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.47.
27. Hélène Cixous, Newly Born Woman, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p.38.
28. Hélène Cixous, Newly Born Woman, p.93.
29. Hélène Cixous, Newly Born Woman, p.20.
30. Hélène Cixous, Vivre l'Orange (Paris: des femmes, 1969), p.34.
31. Jacques Derrida, "Question of the Book" in Writing and Differance, p.75.
32. Gerald Bruns, "Midrash and Allegory" in The Literary Guide to the Bible, eds. Frank Kermode and Robert Alter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p.637.
33. Jacques Derrida, Glas, trans. by John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p.84.

34. Joëlle Bahloul, The Architecture of Memory, pp.84-6.
35. Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture, p.215.
36. Joëlle Bahloul, The Architecture of Memory, p.24.
37. Jonathan Boyarin, Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).
38. Edmond Jabès, Book of Questions, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991), p.28.
39. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.126.
40. Jacques Derrida, Aporias, trans. Thomas Dutoit, eds. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery (California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p.81.
41. "Jews in the Maghreb spoke Arabic (though different than that spoken by the Muslims) since medieval times. After being collectively granted French citizenship in 1870, Algerian Jews gradually adopted French culture through massive secular education. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, French became the first language of many Jewish children whereas their parents born in the late nineteenth century continued occasionally to use their ancestor's Arabic. In the early twentieth century, French was used in family communication to urge integration into a promising Western society". (Joëlle Bahloul, The Architecture of Memory, pp.86-7). Also, it is interesting to note here that French began to penetrate family life initially through the naming system: ie. Moshe became Marcel, Sultana became Reine, Abraham became Albert.

And ELIE became JACQUES.

42. Jacques Derrida, Glas, p.9.
43. Joëlle Bahloul, The Architecture of Memory.
44. Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture, p.172. parentheses added.
45. Roland Barthes, Pleasure of the Text, trans. R. Miller (New York: Hill, 1975), p.49.

CON/COLLUSION

The thought of this historical opposition...is not simply empirical and it cannot be thus qualified without abuse and misunderstanding.¹

This thesis is not intended to be a traditional historical exercise focusing on a limited time frame and exploring religious meanings, but, rather it investigates the ongoing problems generated by hermeneutic / exegetical methodological practices, and how these praxes (re)define new possibilities for meaning production and cultural construction. By exposing the conflictual framework of two seemingly oppositionist discourses: (two hermeneutical strategies that *perform* literature, put it into play, establish and question its laws), this thesis provides alternatives way of thinking about language, G-d, gender and culture.

Though Kabbalistic and deconstructionist hermeneutical practices are grounded in what seems to be an antithetical or oppositionist framework (one appearing as a metaphysically inscribed, onto-theologic discourse, and one calling into question all of Western Metaphysics; one as post (or *pata*) philosophical and one as pata-religious), they are distinguished only through a network of *intention* (who it is for, why and in what context).

However, if, as according to Derrida, *intention* is only ever a counter-signed rewriting which tries to erase the singularity and historicity of its act according to the after-the-event structure of any identification of an origin, then, as no more than "a parade of fiction of mastery"², *intention* immediately parasites itself, mimes itself, fictionalizes itself in the possibility of its repetition and opens the domain for the simulacra.

So, as both strategies are always already grounded within a multitude of codes, borders, frames, genres, it is impossible to position Kabbalah or deconstruction as either metaphysical or empirical. Neither discourse can be acknowledged *in* and *of* themselves, but must be acknowledged as a complex of traces, echoes, specters, folded through each other. A writing of tension, bands, laces,³ bonds.

Just as "deconstruction" is often challenged as being either Philosophy or Literature, and this itself is a philosophical opposition (one which philosophy produces and thus constitutes itself against its other), Kabbalistic discourse, drawing from *itself*, and its *other*, remains a ghost or double of itself, (re)inscribed through its ever-generative other. Thus, this thesis then explores ways in which both discourses function through the movements of reversal and re-inscription, (displace the general system of secundarization without claiming to install a signifier or writing in the place of signified or voice).

Further, though both Kabbalistic and deconstructionist discourses posit themselves as hermeneutic strategies, what distinguishes them both from functioning as "A Critique" (in the Kantian sense) is that they *intervene* in

praxis. Acknowledging that *trans* is moving *across* and *through*, both Kabbalistic and deconstructionist discourse refuse the transcendental (in the Kantian conception) in favour of a passage **through** the transcendental. Contesting the transcendental privilege, these discourses show how the empirical can not be separated from the transcendental. For, acknowledging that (as the trace is always inscribed in its enunciation, the *transcendental* is not produced on the basis of an absolute outside, but an outside which is immediately folding back into the inside), both discourses, then, foreground *how* the empirical is the transcendental of the transcendental (of the empirical), and operate between the empirical and the contingent, necessarily displaced through the trace of its passage and thus produce an arena of undecidability. An undecidability which then remains like the metaphysical (that which is excluded from a system purged like vomit, like masturbation, like writing⁴), or rather like the 'pataphysical, which is beyond and beside the topography of its telos.

Thus, writing **between** each other, this thesis does not function within a modality where an active discourse is operating on a passive one, (a Derridean reading of Kabbalah or a Kabbalistic reading of Cixous), but just as Derrida describes how "if Jewish thought is other than Greek thought, it cannot be absolutely external to it, but folded, along the nonenveloping figure of invagination, into this nonidentical same",⁵ this research acknowledges that deconstruction and Kabbalistic thought operate where the *same* and the *other* touch in their very interruption. Thus, through the negotiation of singularity and the *letting be* of the other thing in its alterity, each affirms the necessity of contamination, a parasiting of the other by Being and of Being by the other.

Yet, as neither Kabbalah or deconstruction can be apprehended from a naively historicist forum or seen as a culturizing relativization, one becomes like the *parergon* of the other -- as they both brush up against, push or rub against, and become both essential and accessory, both frames for each other, rebordered in *aborder* (excess). In substitution and remainder, break up into widely scattered historical contingencies.

This thesis then takes place *between* philosophy and literature, politics and religion. And as both *prey* and *beneficiary* to, explores how Derridean, Cixouvian and Kabbalistic texts become writing that bleeds through a series of traditions, genres, (genders) cultural politics, ethics and histories, where Truth, Authenticity, Meaning, Time and Historicity are nothing more than "ideological effects". Therefore, it investigates how, (in what ways) these two hermeneutic praxes foreground how culture is both transnational *and* translational -- which is then not to dismiss Kabbalah as a Jewish cultural phenomenon but to acknowledge that though rooted in *specific* histories of cultural displacement, it is heterogeneous to thematization, and thus questions a "nationalist" pedagogy by simultaneously bearing witness *and* intervening.

Thus, through a contiguous praxis of liaison and deliason through diversity and consistency, and in complicitous contamination (where one has no contingent privilege), post-structuralist and Kabbalistic texts form themselves into a forbidden and inevitable framework, and function within the law of repetition, translation, *traduit*, transgression, and *become* translations of each other. And so, not only through the infinitely interpretable methodology of their hermeneutic projects, but through producing a non-original, non goal-oriented,

non mimetic praxis (which does not abolish mimesis, reference, form, content, genre, origin, intention), but by staging, suspending and testing these constructs, together and separately, Kabbalistic and deconstructive practices foreground the "production" of culture and the "invention" of tradition. Through aporia, ambivalence, indeterminacy, they write themselves into the interstices of a contramodernity, between philosophy and religion, between gender, politics and culture.⁶

ENDNOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, "That Dangerous Supplement" in Acts of Literature, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.107.
2. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.216.
3. See Jacques Derrida, The Truth in Painting, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.255-382.
4. Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, Jacques Derrida, p.284.
5. Jacques Derrida, Writing and Differance, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.152.
6. And if indeed, as Weingrad points out, "French theory developed alongside the rise of European fascism, and the relationship between this thought and this history continues to be a pressing and tangled subject", [Michael Weingrad, "Jews (in Theory): Representations of Judaism, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust in Postmodern French Thought" in Judaism (Issue No.177, Vol.45, No.1, Winter 1996), p.80.], it is very interesting then that, as marginalized Others, Cixous and Derrida insert themselves into this framework; participate in a writing praxis where, (both inside and outside of the "institution"), they simultaneously destabilize *and* confirm, and provide a de-totalizing interrogation, where truths are contingent, and nothing is transparent.

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