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"Theological Fragments:
Ultimate Concerns and Partial Conclusions"
The Jewish and Christian Post-Holocaust Reformation

Marc P. Lalonde

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Religion

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
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ABSTRACT

"Theological Fragments:
Ultimate Concerns and Partial Conclusions"
The Jewish and Christian Post-Holocaust Reformation

Marc P. Lalonde

Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust theology claims that the Holocaust experience ruptures past expressions of faith, and makes necessary a new theology. This requires a drastic reformulation of the fundamental religious doctrines of each religion. The goal of post-Holocaust theology is to reconcile faith with the Holocaust through such theological revisions, and in the process, to provide a more authentic religious world view. However, a comparison between the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust thinkers suggests that both factions fail to realize this end. They do not reconcile faith to the Holocaust, and their theological reconstructions do not engender a genuine faith. Ultimately, post-Holocaust theology uses this event as a profound piece of evidence that substantiates ulterior theological concerns.

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Introduction

"And yet with my last strength I came up on top of the grave, and when I did, I did not know the place, so many bodies were lying all over, dead people; I wanted to see the end to this stretch of dead bodies, but I could not. It was impossible. They were lying all over, all dying; suffering, not all of them dead, but in their last sufferings; naked; shot, but not dead. Children crying. "Mother", "Father"...but they were all smeared with blood and one could not recognize the children. I cried for my daughter..." (Greenberg 1977:16)

This is the type of experience that post-Holocaust theology claims to confront, investigate, and reconcile. My thesis ultimately challenges this assertion, suggesting that it may be impossible to arrive at authentic theological conclusions from such frightening and morbid events.

The post-Holocaust theologians which are examined in this thesis, understand the Holocaust to be an event that raises a number of imposing questions about the relationship between the human being and God. For the Jewish theologian, the paramount questions are; did God abandon the Jewish people during the Holocaust? Is the divine covenant no longer an eternal bond between the Jew and God? Was the Torah consumed in the flames of Auschwitz and Treblinka? For the Christian theologian, the Holocaust raises radical doubts about the message and intent of the Gospels and the Christian religious tradition. The Holocaust experience leads the Christian thinker to question the credibility of the divine atonement; the priority of the spirit over the flesh; the belief in a realized redemption; and, the affirmation of the messiahship of Jesus.

For the Jewish and Christian thinkers discussed in the following pages, the Holocaust undermines the efficacy of their religious presuppositions. They believe that the Holocaust presages a reevaluation and reconstruction of traditional expressions of faith. Thus, they understand the urgent task of post-Holocaust theology to be the revision of our religious world views, so that it can survive the overwhelming implications of the Holocaust destruction.

Yet because of this fundamental redirection of theology, the post-Holocaust thinker views the religious Jew and Christian to be poised on the edge of a new age of faith. Post-Holocaust theology intimates that the Holocaust may in fact lead us toward a more genuine relationship with the divine because it may ultimately reveal the spurious and distorted beliefs of the past. But before we can begin the business of worship, the post-Holocaust theologian contends that we must create new religious stories that will guide us toward this new relationship.

In light of this understanding of life after the Holocaust, Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust theology appears to be a religious Reformation. Leading the way for the Jewish community are Emil Fackenheim, Arthur Cohen, and Irving Greenberg. The Christian perspective is advanced by Rosemary Ruether, John Pawlikowski, Franklin Littell, and Alice and Roy Eckardt. Although these theologians represent only a small sample of post-Holocaust responses, they are nevertheless, profound and widely acclaimed thinkers. They have the capacity to affect a great variety of people in

their respective communities. However, their real significance lies in the intent of their reformulations of faith. These particular thinkers do not simply announce the death of traditional religious doctrine only to leave its corpse for others to revive. On the contrary, they attempt to delineate the form and content of an authentic existence beyond the rupture of tradition.

The responses to the Holocaust within the Jewish community ranges from the death of God position, to interpretations that view this event as divine punishment.¹ Between these extremes exist a huge variety of considerations, each with their own nuance of meaning. For example, Martin Buber responded to the Holocaust experience by suggesting that God was silent during this period of history. Others, such as Eliezer Berkovits, have attempted to view the Holocaust as a problem of theodicy. Ignaz Maybaum places the Holocaust within a philosophy of history that understands the murder of the Jews to be a vicarious atonement for the sins of the 20th century. According to the Jewish theologians discussed in this thesis, the type of response forwarded by Buber, Berkovits, and Maybaum, fails to boldly confront the horrible truth of the Holocaust. Their explanations attempt to fit the Holocaust experience into preconceived theological systems that cannot accommodate the earth shattering implications of the Holocaust. For Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg, authentic post-Holocaust theology attempts to create a theology that is directly responsive to the Holocaust reality, one that does not use the Holocaust to

prove ulterior theological "truths".

Within the Christian community, responses to the Holocaust also include a multitude of considerations. Some theologians believe that the Holocaust occurred because the Jewish people continued to reject Jesus as their ultimate path to salvation. On the other hand, some Christian thinkers have concluded from their encounter with the Holocaust that Jesus was not God incarnate.² Between these extremes, many Christian thinkers, such as Jurgen Moltmann, Ulrich Simon, and Franklin Sherman, have viewed the Holocaust experience in light of a "theology of the cross". In this instance, the sufferings of the Jewish people during the Holocaust represent the crucifixion writ-large. The Holocaust is understood as a confirmation of the Christian "truth". For Ruether, Pawlikowski, Littell, and Alice and Roy Eckardt, this type of response constitutes a complete disregard for the trials of the Jews during the Holocaust. Worse, it reflects traditional Christian triumphalism and supersessionism. What such explanations fail to grasp according to them, is that the triumphant and supersessionary tendencies of Christian theology may have actually contributed to the development of the Holocaust. For the Christian thinkers considered in this work, the anti-Judaic sentiments present in Christian triumphalism and supersessionism represent the horrible truth that Christians must confront in their encounter with the Holocaust reality. Therefore, Ruether, Pawlikowski, Littell, and Alice and Roy Eckardt do not attempt to explain the Holocaust by

traditional Christian theology, but appear to move toward a more authentic expression of faith by struggling with the dubious aspects of the Christian religion.

In effect, the Jewish and Christian theologians examined in this study consider their responses to the Holocaust to mark a significant advance in post-Holocaust theology. They believe that their theories embody a more honest, vigorous, and sophisticated approach. Furthermore, they imply that their theological reformulations may actually constitute an essential religious expression of life with God. These assertions of post-Holocaust theology are colossal: therefore, our investigation should be no less.

Alice Eckardt has noted "that there is simply no comparison between the responses and reactions of the Jewish and Christian communities to the reality of Hitler's Final Solution" (Eckardt 1974:453). More than a decade after this statement, Eckardt's observation remains unheeded. Undoubtedly, Eckardt sensed that the fast growing body of post-Holocaust theology required an in-depth and comprehensive examination. This goal may be fulfilled by comparing and contrasting the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust responses. This approach allows the critic to distance him or herself from the idiosyncrasies of a particular thinker or theory. As a result, we can better focus on the larger framework that forms and directs the main issues.

In the case of post-Holocaust theology, a comparative analysis reveals three fundamental stages to the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust response. The first stage concerns

the Jewish and Christian rationale for a theological point of departure. Here we endeavour to discover how these thinkers justify their radical reformation of traditional expressions of faith. The second stage deals with the exact nature and character of the theological revisions. This consideration examines how these thinkers reconcile religious belief with the Holocaust experience. The third stage relates to the potential for a renewed Jewish-Christian relationship. At this point we attempt to ascertain if post-Holocaust theology provides a unique opportunity for Jews and Christians to develop shared concerns and lasting bonds. These stages are elaborated in three chapters.

In the first chapter, "'Surfacing From the Deluge': A Jewish Theology for a New Age", we begin by recognizing the overwhelming challenge that the Holocaust poses for the Jewish community. The apparent meaninglessness of this event paralyzes traditional theological exposition, revealing its shortcomings and limitations. In response to this problem, Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg, neither explain away the evil of the Holocaust, nor do they ignore it. Instead, they attempt to account for this evil by developing a theological vision that incorporates the possibility for such a catastrophe.

The first stage of the Holocaust dynamic for the Jewish thinkers, is addressed in our consideration of "The Holocaust and its Historical Uniqueness". Here we illustrate that it is the uniqueness of this event that substantiates the Jewish reformation. One question that we try to answer is whether

the uniqueness of the Holocaust is understood as an interpretation, or as an established, irrefutable reality. The second stage of the Jewish post-Holocaust response concerns "The Nature and Character of the Post-Holocaust Reality". In this section we try to determine the possible ramifications for belief that result from the theological reformulations.

In chapter two, "'The Trying Descent': Christian Theologians Confront the Holocaust", we turn our attention to the serious implications that the Holocaust may have for Christianity. Ruether, Pawlikowski, Littell, and Alice and Roy Eckardt, represent a courageous group, willing to expose the most sensitive aspects of Christian theology to the Holocaust experience.

The first stage of the Holocaust dynamic for the Christian theologians discusses "The Relationship Between Christianity and the Holocaust". The possibility that the Christian anti-Judaic teachings influenced the events of the Holocaust, forms the Christian theological point of departure. Our task is to decide if these theologians follow through on their incriminatory interpretation of this relationship. The second stage involves "The Reformulations and Reinterpretations of the Post-Holocaust Christian Faith". Again, our concern is to assess the impact that the revisions will have on belief.

Our final chapter, "'Opening Statements': Dimensions of the Jewish-Christian Post-Holocaust Dialogue", also represents the third stage of the post-Holocaust dynamic. The

post-Holocaust dialogue suggests that the Holocaust is not just a matter of historical debate, or theological reconstruction; but, a continuing religious issue that bears upon the future of Jewish-Christian relations. These concerns will be examined in two sections. First, we consider "Post-Holocaust Jewish Attitudes Toward Christianity". Second, we focus upon the "Post-Holocaust Christian Attitudes Toward the State of Israel". At this juncture, we try to determine if post-Holocaust theology inspires a genuine spirit of tolerance and mutual respect between Judaism and Christianity; or, if it aggravates latent hostilities.

Ultimately, the general conclusions of this study are intimated by our title: "'Theological Fragments': Ultimate Concerns and Partial Conclusions. The Jewish and Christian Post-Holocaust Reformation". "Theological Fragments" refers to the scope of the theological responses to the Holocaust. Its overpowering destruction, suffering, and perversity, suggests that no single theological response is able to explain the full meaning of this event. This notion of fragmentation also describes the sense of religious truth forwarded by the post-Holocaust theologians who understand the human search for meaning to be an ambiguous and imperfect endeavour. For these reasons, the theological enterprise can only hope to provide "partial conclusions", reconciling the Holocaust to faith in half measures only.

This fragmented world, however, does not prevent human beings from developing and sharing "ultimate concerns".

Through common struggle with the problems confronting our age, we may be able to underscore the priorities of an authentic existence. Such an approach may help the Jewish and Christian faiths to create a new world. However, we must constantly question if this quest for ultimate concerns is inspired by the Holocaust, or if these issues arise from elsewhere.

.. It may be suggested that post-Holocaust theology is an attempt to work out a new direction for the Jewish and Christian missions. Where these missions will lead is the matter to which we now turn.

CHAPTER ONE

"Surfacing From the Deluge":
A Jewish Theology For a New Age

Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, modern Jewish religious thought avoided the challenge of this event. As critics often note, Jewish thought needed time to absorb the impact of the Holocaust. It needed time to gather the facts, and attempt to organize them in a fashion that provided some sense of direction. This task has proven to be very complex. As academics apply a variety of methods in search of meaning and explanation, many find themselves at a loss to adequately place the Holocaust in a proper context of understanding.

The theologians discussed in this chapter attempt to meet this methodological impasse by constructing an interpretation of the Holocaust that accounts for its challenge for Jewish thought, life, and faith. For Emil Fackenheim, Arthur Cohen, and Irving Greenberg, the Holocaust has violently ushered in a new age of Jewish self-understanding. They view the post-Holocaust world as an unparalleled era in the history of the Jews, and, for humanity as a whole. It might be said that these thinkers are surfacing from the deluge of the Holocaust; rising above its overwhelming destruction in an effort to provide a sense of orientation for belief in the post-Holocaust age.

A consideration of their respective theological theories is discussed in two parts. First, "The Holocaust and its Historical Uniqueness". Second, "The Nature and Character of the Post-Holocaust Reality". The intention of this subdivision is to map the dynamic of Jewish post-Holocaust theology: moving from a confrontation with the event, through to the radical changes suggested for Jewish life.

The following examination of Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg contends that the new direction for faith advocated by these thinkers is perhaps unnecessary, and ultimately destructive for religious belief. However, their struggle with the Holocaust points toward the significant issues facing the modern Jew. In this way, post-Holocaust theology may serve to underscore the kinds of questions that are in need of further deliberation. But, it is impossible to say that we have arrived at the answers. The Jewish thinkers presented here hastily push aside traditional religious concepts that have been a significant source of self-understanding through the ages. Their rush to change the face of Judaism, therefore, ignores the depth and substance of the flexible Jewish religious perspective; its vibrant community of faith; and the Jewish matrix of symbolic language that communicates the love of God.

The Holocaust and its Historical Uniqueness

Historical continuity is shattered because "at Auschwitz not only man died, but the idea of man"; because our "estrangement from God" has become so "cruel" that, even if He were to speak to us, we have no way of understanding how to "recognize" Him. We need a new point of departure and a new category because the Holocaust is not a "relapse into barbarism," a "phase in an historical dialectic," a radical-but-merely-"parochial" catastrophe. It is total rupture (Fackenheim 1982:250).

This statement by Emil Fackenheim illuminates his belief that the Holocaust radically undermines preconceived beliefs about the nature of God, the human being, and their relation. The Holocaust confronts humanity with an unprecedented reality: one which interrupts the flow of time and history.¹ The central issue for Fackenheim is to prove the contention that the uniqueness of the Holocaust is an observation based on empirical fact, and not on opinion or interpretation. The concrete nature of the Holocaust's rupture, then, urges theological revision: one inspired by necessity and not preference.²

Fackenheim suggests that to truly illustrate the uniqueness of the Holocaust, "what needs to be faced is...not the 'symbol' Auschwitz but Auschwitz itself" (Fackenheim 1982:11). Fackenheim carries out this confrontation through an examination of the "Nazi logic of destruction".³ By studying the accounts of Holocaust survivors, he observes that the Nazis purposely tormented the Jews, placing them in absurd and insane situations, reversing

the "natural" order of reality. The author concludes that "(t)he S.S. logic of destruction aimed at their victims' self-destruction..." (Fackenheim 1982:208) Two powerful and frightening examples are; the witnesses to "excremental assault", and the drowning of infants in the presence of the mother (Fackenheim 1982:208,213).

The incredible experiences of the Holocaust survivors convinces Fackenheim that the mindless and senseless torture of the Jews was an end in itself.⁴ This resulted in the "Muselmann", that is, those who are "dead while still alive" (Fackenheim 1982:215). These persons were unable to wage battle against the Nazi logic of destruction. According to Fackenheim, the Muselmann is a new type of being-in-the-world. It is the "truly original contribution of the Third Reich to civilization" (Fackenheim 1982:215).

Fackenheim's investigation focuses on the surreal quality of the death camp experience. It evokes an immediate reaction of disbelief as we try to comprehend that "'much more is real than possible'" (Fackenheim 1982:233). What we discover is that the mind cannot really process the empirical facts of the Holocaust. Thought, especially metaphysical thought, is "'paralyzed'" (Fackenheim 1982:23) in the face of Auschwitz. The author suggests that thought can no longer transcend the facts, ignoring the particular with sweeping generalizations.⁵ The unprecedented reality of the Holocaust freezes the intellect. It is for this reason that Fackenheim denotes the Holocaust as a completely unique event that yields no historical counterpart. It is totally unique

not only for the Jewish people, but for all of humanity.

In response to the above dilemma, Fackenheim proposes that thought must become empirical. This implies a simple approach: that the data (i.e., the experiences of the death camp inmates) will structure and form his own post-Holocaust theory. However, empirical thinking presents a special problem for Jewish theology. Fackenheim notes that the rabbinic tradition views Judaism to be above the challenge of history. The rabbis "affirm that nothing decisive has occurred, or can occur, between Sinai and the Messianic Days" (Fackenheim 1982:16). Because of this, a new way of thinking must be constructed if the Holocaust is to be understood by faith.

To assist the movement toward empirical thought, Fackenheim employs the concepts of "Root Experience" and "Epoch-making Event".⁶ Root experiences, such as Sinai, represent events which create and define religious identity and belief. It is an occurrence witnessed by a community of faith who understand it to be a source of direction and orientation towards ultimate ends. Epoch-making events, such as the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, challenge the validity of the root experiences. It is one which threatens to fracture the very foundations of the community. These unique historical events call for serious reflection and radical questioning of our religious tradition.

By Fackenheim's definition, the Holocaust is an epoch-making event. However, in this case, the root experiences are not easily reaffirmed. Thus, Fackenheim

recommends that "Jewish thought in our time, ... move forward toward self-exposure to epoch-making events" (Fackenheim 1982:16). The cornerstones of the Jewish faith must risk confrontation with the Holocaust if a sense of security is ever to be restored. Only by facing that which threatens chaos can a resolution be found.

Arthur Cohen is another theologian who believes the Holocaust is unique. In The Tremendum, Cohen writes that the

content of the tremendum is always historical-- its cruelties and murders; the caesura, however, is that the tremendum marks off and breaks. The caesura is the formal definer of holocaust, what makes it special, separable, ontic (Cohen 1981:53).

This passage illustrates Cohen's interpretation of uniqueness. As he suggests, 'a holocaust' means rupture, creating a yawning gap between the present era and the previous age. Cohen, therefore, shares Fackenheim's concern that the Holocaust presents an unprecedented reality.⁷ Cohen's particular argument is established by isolating a radical evil in the death camps which undermines thought and faith. However, unlike Fackenheim, Cohen does not consider this rupture to be relevant to all of humankind. Instead, he implies that the rupture primarily concerns the Jewish theological point of view. Cohen illustrates that the uniqueness of the Holocaust can be perceived in two different fashions: one, from an historical, or a mundane perspective; and another from a theological point of view. This

distinction allows Cohen to forward the notion that thought, and subsequently belief, may survive the attack on meaning inherent in the Holocaust experience.

Cohen's interpretation of the Holocaust as a human tremendum (as opposed to Otto's description of the divine presence as mysterium tremendum) permits him to entertain the above qualifications. As he writes, "the human tremendum, [is] the enormity of an infinitized man, who no longer seems to fear death or" (Cohen 1981:19) God. The tremendum denotes a form of being-in-the-world which disregards all conscience, rational behavior, human dignity, and self-respect. It is humanity "infinitized" as a type of false god, obsessed by the denial of mortality. For Cohen, the tremendum is still a caesura, but one "without the complementarity of God's authentication" (Cohen 1981:79). This statement is not meant to deflect the challenge of the Holocaust for faith. But, it does suggest the challenge is primarily directed toward human self-understanding. The task, then, is to investigate the hideous human power that became manifest in the death camp reality.

Cohen suggests that the uniqueness of the Holocaust is substantiated by "an ontological gathering of evil..." (Cohen 1981:83) He regards the Holocaust as a particular kind of evil, discernable for the first time in history. It is an autonomous force, with its own "structure" and "potency" (Cohen 1981:33). The evil present in the death camps is "an order of being which sinks roots deep into the human passio and...lurks in the spirit available to succor and renaissance"

(Cohen 1981:48). Its ontic character defies resolution through facile theodicies. In effect, this evil is not the mere "absence of good" (Cohen 1981:32). It is the alien force that undermines our presuppositions about reality.

The ontic presence of evil, however, reflects a human quality. This interpretation allows Cohen to consider the Holocaust from a rational perspective. As a human event, it permits some contact, whether rational, linguistic, or both. The point to be considered, is that "(i)t is the immensity of the event that is mysterious but its nature is not mystery" (Cohen 1981:29). Although reason and language may not assume their previous forms in the face of the caesura, they are not rendered completely futile. Cohen believes that the impulse to seek an explanation for the tremendum is a natural reaction. As he comments, "I cannot make the tremendum of the Jews so distinctive that nothing can be said of it-- language requires, for the barest use, some analogia..." (Cohen 1981:37) However, Cohen is quick to qualify this insight. The "barest use" does not make the Holocaust 'meaning-full'. Still, it assists the search for a proper understanding, as opposed to insisting on the complete dislocation of the Holocaust from a human environment.

The whole of Cohen's argument eventually discloses his dualistic perspective. On the one hand, the Holocaust is caesura; while on the other, it partially yields to thought. For Cohen the Holocaust is

a reality with a double valence: an historical life which, however immense and monstrous, must be regarded as historical and a theological reality that insists upon a new reading of Jewish meaning (Cohen 1981:51-52).

From this statement it seems that the "historical life" of the Holocaust refers to its human dimension. That is, the event is decidedly this-worldly, although unique to this world. The evil present in the Holocaust does not emerge from an alien source despite the fact that it manifests an "alien immensity" (Cohen 1981:40). The historical life of the tremendum denotes a mundane, or concrete orientation whereby this event "is not sundered or torn free of its moorings in causality and aftermath." (Cohen 1981:51) This view of the Holocaust expresses a hope for the survival of thought in the face of overwhelming destruction. Such an allowance does not guarantee success, but it points toward the potential to think the Holocaust.⁸ Because of this aspect of Cohen's argument, it can be claimed that he does not view the Holocaust as universally unique. The possibility of applying reason to the Holocaust is furthered by Cohen's treatment of the "theological reality". He understands the uniqueness of the Holocaust in a symbolic and metaphorical sense. In its religious dimension, the tremendum may be "perceived as bracketed and independent of its historical enmeshment, that it may be lifted out of temporality and regarded as an enduring pointer and symbol" (Cohen 1981:52). Cohen implies that there is something peculiar about the theological consciousness. It understands the Holocaust as able to transcend history,

and reorientate the believer within the context of faith. "In this manner, the tremendum "discloses something new about our relation to God and God's relation to creation..." (Cohen 1981:52)

Cohen justifies the double valence of the Holocaust reality with a distinction between the Holocaust as "ultimate", and as "final". As an ultimate event, the tremendum affects the search for meaning. In this way the event has a message. It speaks something to the human being. The Holocaust's "symbolic resonance [is] permanent; its repetition is the continuous assurance of its potency; its very ultimacy is prefiguration" (Cohen 1981:49). Insofar as a symbol participates in that to which it points,⁹ the symbolic representation of the tremendum must express an intimate involvement with radical evil; its unparalleled manifestation; and its ever present ability to reemerge from the depths of humankind.

If the Holocaust were "final", a symbolic confrontation with the tremendum would be superfluous. For, "(i)f final, everything is intended to evil" (Cohen 1981:49). If this were the case, there would be no obligation to hear the witness of the Holocaust. Their message is significant only if there is some potential for good. Absorbing this message may prove to be another matter. In the end it may require, as Cohen believes it does, a revision of the divine reality. Such a reformulation is possible only if one accounts for the ultimacy of the tremendum in its symbolic "resonance". It is this which prevents the Holocaust from being final.

Similar to Arthur Cohen, Irving Greenberg suggests that the Holocaust is not a radically unique event. Greenberg, however, expounds this position to a far greater degree than Cohen. As Greenberg notes,

(f)or traditional Jews to ignore or deny all significance to this event [i.e., the Holocaust] would be to repudiate the fundamental belief and affirmations of the Sinai covenant: that history is meaningful, and that ultimate liberation and relationship to God will take place in the realm of human events (Greenberg 1977:24).

Greenberg, therefore, does not characterize the Holocaust as total rupture: the bond between traditional Judaism and the post-Holocaust world is still perceptible. This latter assertion is especially attested to by the restoration of the State of Israel. In this event, the post-Holocaust Jewish community witnesses the ongoing covenantal relationship with the pre-Holocaust God.

Despite Greenberg's insistence on continuity, he nevertheless understands the Holocaust and the State of Israel to be 'unique' events. They serve to orient faith, carrying on the spirit of Sinai in a new form and direction. It appears that Greenberg applies the category of uniqueness in a much broader sense than either Fackenheim or Cohen. For Greenberg, uniqueness marks the reorientation of belief, a process that points toward a new revelation. In effect, the Holocaust and Israel are unique because they mediate a divine calling, requiring the faithful to respond with that same sense of awe first evoked at Sinai.

According to Greenberg, a reorientating event "bring[s]

"humans into contact with a reality beyond themselves..."

(Greenberg 1982:63) This reality may appear to undermine all that is considered sacred, as in the Holocaust; or, it may seem to fulfill all that is considered sacred, as with the founding of the State of Israel. In both cases, the human being cannot remain unaffected. A reorientating event imposes itself "like a screen through which one checks and filters out the significance and appropriateness-- that is, the compatibility with final value-- of behavior and methods developed along the way" (Greenberg 1982:64). Thus, for Greenberg, such occurrences serve as an ideological and behavioral critique. By confronting the event we move toward a more authentic existence.

In light of the function of reorientation, Greenberg views the Holocaust and Israel as having a significant impact on both religious and secular values. Concerning the religious factor, Greenberg simply remarks that the Holocaust is reorientating because "there can be no covenant without the covenantal people, [and therefore] the fundamental existence of the Jews and Judaism is thrown into question by this genocide" (Greenberg 1977:8). By the same token, the State of Israel suggests the Jews still have an essential relationship with God. However, the divine encounter necessarily changes. It must now exist within the dialectical tension between the Holocaust and Israel. The implicit meaning for both events has a fragmentary quality: the Holocaust is not complete rupture, but neither is the founding of Israel total redemption.

Greenberg also extends his notion to the 'secular city'. He suggests that the Holocaust discloses the inadequacy of certain modern values, which in themselves may have contributed to the conception, maintenance, and perpetuation of the death camps. The author takes note of "(t)he total nature of the Nazi decision" to murder all Jews everywhere. It "suggests that a new cultural factor is operating, that is, a tendency unique to modern culture of functioning by 'universal and comprehensive categories" (Greenberg 1982:67). Modern ideals, such as the quest for universalism, contributed to the murder of the Jews: a people who refused to conform to a 'universalism' that denied their particularity.¹¹

At the same time, Greenberg also recognizes that the creation of the State of Israel rested on a prominent secular drive for national and political autonomy. The author concludes that the religious relevance of Israel is inextricably bound with this modern secular self-determination. Because of this, Jews must reorientate themselves toward this positive expression of secularism that so greatly impinges upon the future of Jewish well-being. Greenberg, therefore, considers the secular aspects of Israel to be unique as well.

Greenberg's considerations suggest that the uniqueness of the Holocaust and Israel point toward a reorientation of religious and secular values. This may require adjustments to traditional perspectives, but continuity with the past remains a distinct possibility. As Greenberg states the matter;

the Holocaust [and Israel] leads not so much to a change of ultimate direction as to a change in the manner and approaches to getting to the final ends. The Holocaust sheds light on the earlier pattern of the religious and general culture even as it leads to some redirection of tactics and of paths. The reshaping of values constitutes the recognition of the Holocaust as reorientating event' (Greenberg 1982:72).

The preceding pages have attempted to outline each theologian's consideration of the Holocaust's uniqueness. Fackenheim feels that the force behind this uniqueness is the Nazi logic of destruction. It also seems evident that he identifies this destruction as an epoch making event. In Cohen's case, the argument is substantiated by the ontological gathering of evil. It permits either an historical or a theological reading. Finally, Greenberg argues for a dialectical perspective of uniqueness. This designates both the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel as reorientating events. This attitude calls for the revaluation of religious and secular values.

That an event can be interpreted as historically unique is justifiable if we recognize that our conclusions represent an interpretation. As such, they are subject to certain limitations. It seems inappropriate for Fackenheim to insist that the uniqueness of the Holocaust is an empirical truth. His method suggests that historical events contain some discernable 'objective' meaning. However, he overlooks the fact that "meaning is not given but is created" (Wurzbarger 1980:15).¹¹

For example, to claim that the Nazi murder of the Jews was an end in itself imparts a specific rationale to a particular action. It goes beyond the empirical facts to suggest an intention. Intentions are rarely self-evident truths, and require some manner of 'reading between the lines'. This is not to say that Fackenheim's reading of the events is inadequate, only that it is an interpretation.

Fackenheim's use of the "death camp reality is a high powered play on our human emotions. Through the horrific scenes of the Holocaust, Fackenheim forces the critic to feel the event. Here we feel obliged to acquiesce to the demands of the rupture and proclaim the Holocaust unique. This "argument by terror" (Cohen 1983:230), does not allow us to fairly assess Fackenheim's theory.¹² To take issue with the Nazi logic of destruction is also to criticize the Holocaust victims. We cannot doubt that for the death camp inmate the Holocaust was complete rupture. But, this is not the point of contention. We are not challenging the terror of the death camps, but the manner in which Fackenheim employs these moments from Auschwitz. These stories shield Fackenheim from serious counter evidence and alternate interpretations. He writes as if he has found the definitive insight that will allow us to somehow encounter the Holocaust experience for what it really was. Considering the nature of the death camp reality, I do not comprehend how this is a reasonable possibility.

Nevertheless, it seems that this encounter with Auschwitz is what Fackenheim wishes to create for his readers. Despite

his claims for the radical uniqueness of the Holocaust, he implies that there is a sense of continuity between this event and the present age. The point of contact is the rupture itself. This is evident in the idea that the Holocaust discloses the illusory nature of traditional thought and belief. The question that arises is; "if the traditional Judaic and philosophical world-views cannot lead to authentic existence, does the Holocaust reveal the ultimate truths that will permit us to form more appropriate paths of living?" It may be too soon in our examination of Fackenheim to adequately reply. Yet, it seems clear that Fackenheim views the death camp experience to be more than an epoch-making event. This reflects the extreme direction that he leads his post-Holocaust theology. At this juncture we may ask if Fackenheim is serious enough about the meaning of the Muselmann.

Contra-Fackenheim, Cohen cannot be accused of forming an argument from terror. Despite David Tracy's admission that "Cohen will force us to feel, and through that feeling to think the tremendum" (Tracy 1981:ix), Cohen does not attempt to dramatize the ontological gathering of evil. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The author assumes that the death camp reality was complete rupture for its victims. He does not insist, however, that this rupture determine his total point of view. As Cohen remarks, part of the post-Holocaust theological task is to form a response sensitive "to all those of us...who must continue to live in a world where such has taken place [i.e., the Holocaust] and

is henceforth possible again" (Cohen 1981:50).

The above attitude denotes the significance of Cohen's distinction between the historical and the theological reality of the Holocaust. If a theologian is to assist "all those of us" living with the legacy of this event, then the ability to provide a theological interpretation is highly important. Although Cohen, like Fackenheim, holds to the idea that the Holocaust "exceeds the discernable causalities of history" (Cohen 1980:30), he does not allow this concept to govern his search for meaning. Since Cohen does not believe that the Holocaust is universally unique, his theory incorporates a flexible perspective (although operating within certain limitations). We can offer the observation that Fackenheim's unwavering commitment to empirical thought unnecessarily binds our understanding to the Nazi logic of destruction. Cohen, however, is able to free thought from the radical negativity and propose a way to cross the abyss in language. It appears as if Fackenheim approaches the Holocaust as "final", that is, where all life is constantly moving toward evil; while Cohen finds an "ultimate" reading of the Holocaust to be the more appropriate path to follow.

Irving Greenberg may be said to intensify Cohen's conception of the Holocaust's ultimate nature. Greenberg begins by searching for the implications of uniqueness instead of establishing its absolute status. This attitude seems to be most compatible with the perspective of the faith community. Here, belief does not require a complex method to illustrate that the Holocaust is unique for the Jews. The

six million deaths more than establishes this fact.

Yet, we cannot ignore the possibility, that Greenberg accepts, a priori, Fackenheim's argument from terror.¹³ This is indicated by Greenberg's principle for establishing authentic theological statements. The author suggests that "(n)o statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children" (Greenberg 1977:23). This ridiculous maxim is similar to Fackenheim's misuse of the Holocaust victims. In this case we feel that it is impossible to say anything in such a situation. But that is just the point: what could be said in the presence of burning children? Nothing, absolutely nothing. However, Greenberg does go on to say something, distancing himself from the presence of this horror.¹⁴ Both he and Fackenheim are able to speak about the Holocaust in such terms because they have not really confronted the event.

In the final analysis, the attempt to prove the uniqueness of the Holocaust may be a futile exercise. After all, any event can be understood as completely unique, insofar that there never has been, nor will there be, two events that mirror the exact same historical configuration. This suggests that the Jewish theologians examined here neglect to outline a criteria for defining historical uniqueness. In all likelihood no such criteria exists.

Another difficulty indicated by Steven Katz, suggests that the post-Holocaust theologians must first "produce a philosophy of Jewish history in which uniqueness, even if

real, is shown to be theologically relevant" (Katz 1983:215). Although Katz's criticism is accurate, it does not seem unreasonable that Jewish theology be preoccupied with the Holocaust, and its special challenge. To be considered special, however, is a far more flexible view than the idea of uniqueness. It is with this understanding that we now turn to our next area of concern.

The Nature and Character of the Post-Holocaust Reality

In the first section of this chapter, we established that Fackenheim considers the Holocaust to represent a new reality. It is one that is not "merely a new debating point for old philosophies or theologies" (Fackenheim 1982:28), but an epoch-making event. In keeping with his emphasis on the empirical dimension of the Holocaust, Fackenheim constructs a way over the rupture, again, by examining the 'flesh-and-blood' experiences of the death camp inmates. Fackenheim believes that the key to renewed faith lies in the example of those persons who were able to resist the Nazi logic of destruction. These select individuals represent the polar opposite of the Muselmann. Their way of being-in-the-world also signifies a novum in the history of humanity. The empirical nature of these acts of resistance constitutes an extra-ordinary event because "(t)he Nazi logic of destruction was irresistible, yet was being resisted: this is the enormous fact that must be grasped" (Fackenheim

1982:201).

According to Fackenheim, the resistance to the death camp destruction indicates a paranormal response, defying logical analysis. These acts denote "a way of being" (Fackenheim 1982:224), that is, they have "ontological status" (Oppenheim 1985:113). The author cites a number of examples which he feels reflect this unique quality of resistance. These include women in the death camps who chose to give birth in spite of the child's sure death (Fackenheim 1982:216-17); and, the Buchenwald Hasidim who risked starvation to purchase a pair of tefillin (Fackenheim 1982:218-19).

Fackenheim's study of resistance suggests that 'somehow' the Nazi logic of destruction could be fought.¹⁵ Recognizing the power behind this 'somehow' is what Fackenheim wishes to comprehend. After discounting the possibility that resistance is empowered by a sense of human dignity or self-respect only, the author concludes that, through these acts "we have touched an Ultimate" (Fackenheim 1982:217). Again, Fackenheim is not merely referring to an interpretation of resistance, but to its unbelievable actuality. These acts are not just symbolically ultimate, but "ontologically ultimate" (Fackenheim 1982:248). In effect, Fackenheim is intimating that the source behind this behavior is the divine presence. In very plain terms, God is present at Auschwitz in the acts of resistance. The "saving" (Oppenheim 1985:110) voice from this whirlwind proclaims the 614th commandment: "Jews survive!"¹⁶

With this revelation of the ultimate, Fackenheim suggests

that we witness the basis of Tikkun Olam: "mending the world".¹⁷ The acts of Tikkun are empirical facts that disclose an unprecedented ontology. They form "(f)or our thought now, ...an ontological category" (Fackenheim 1982:248). For this reason, the patterns of resistance serve as an authentic model for life and thought in the post-Holocaust age.

For Fackenheim, this way of being-in-the-world is evident in the State of Israel. It is the living witness for the death camp Tikkun. The Jewish people are already experiencing what thought is just beginning to realize: that Tikkun Olam is resistance. The Jewish homeland is the foundation from which religious and secular activities may progress beyond the rupture.¹⁸ Israel is 'the sole basis for future Jewish life. Fackenheim concludes "that if in our time there was no State of Israel, it would be religious necessity, with or without the help of God, to create it" (Fackenheim 1982:324).

Despite Israel's redeeming force, it is only a fragmentary solution. It is fragmentary because it came too late to save the Muselmann. Jewish thought and life must exist in a dialectical tension between the Muselmann and the State of Israel. It is from within this tension that decisions about authentic existence are to be made. It must colour our world in such a way that its significance is never lost from sight. Nevertheless, the essential Tikkun for the Jewish people "is Israel itself" (Fackenheim 1982:312).

In light of Fackenheim's understanding of the State of

Israel, the acts of Tikkun ultimately provide a "root experience" for the post-Holocaust age. It is in the death camp that modern Jewry is to discover its self-understanding. Fackenheim therefore defines Jewish identity in the following way: "...one who, except for an historical accident-- Hitler's loss of the war-- would have either been murdered or never been born" (Fackenheim 1982:295). The modern Jew inherits the sacred duty to live the life that the Muselmann never had the chance to express: the life of resistance.

As noted earlier, Arthur Cohen's distinction between the historical and the theological reality of the Holocaust allows him to posit the potential for authentic thought. This section discusses further Cohen's consideration of the theological interpretation. Here he attempts to account for the 'ontological gathering of evil' by revamping the human conception of God. Unlike Fackenheim, Cohen does not hear the commanding voice of Auschwitz. God does not speak to humanity through this event, but "(m)an speaks at and toward God in the tremendum..." (Cohen 1981:79) Ultimately, 'speaking toward God' is Cohen's primary concern. The theological reality of the Holocaust, and its sense of 'ultimacy', directs Cohen's attention to the reformulation of the God-story.

Theology as story, with its emphasis on the metaphorical and symbolic nature of human understanding and expression, is the vehicle that brings the Jews to the other side of the abyss. For this crossing to be legitimate, Cohen believes that the God-story must "estimate what consequence [evil] has

for our thinking about the nature, existence, and action of God" (Cohen 1981:34). Accordingly, the tremendum does not legislate changes for specific ways of being-in-the-world. But, it calls for a rehaul of the human imagination as it reaches out to the silent God of Auschwitz.

Cohen's quest for a new manner of describing the divine reality employs a complex mixture of Kabbalistic cosmology, and the philosophical interpretations of language as developed by Franz Rosenzweig and Schelling.¹⁹ From these sources Cohen devises one possible model of the post-Holocaust deity. The author consciously leaves room for other 'God wonderers' to fulfill the same task.²⁰ The main point is, that such revisions "allow us to speak of the abyss but not to fill it" (Cohen 1981:37).

Essential to Cohen's 'speaking' of the divine reality is the "dipolar vision" (Cohen 1981:91) of God as esse and posse. The former represents God's unknowable being, and is humanly perceived as God's non-being, nothingness, limitation, and abyss. Metaphorically, it may be described as God's silence. God's posse denotes his or her self-manifestation or Revelation. This is experienced by humanity in the variousness of Creation. It is expressed metaphorically as God's personality, love, or speech. Through this life affirming aspect of God, the human being experiences an imaginative freedom that inspires a linguistic response. The human attraction toward the abundancy of God suggests that the human's "essential character is freedom," and therefore, "(i)t is not reason that makes man a little

lower than angels, but freedom and speech" (Cohen 1981:92).

The relationship between esse and posse is a quintessential bond. God's nothingness limits the abundancy in order that freedom remain intelligible. That is, only if there is some kind of limit to life is freedom made efficacious. In effect, there is a dialectical relationship between esse and posse. It is like a pulse that reverberates within the nature of existence. It is in this fashion that God may be said to be present in history. However it is a passive presence. Here God does not cause nor prevent events from occurring, but is nevertheless affected by their happening. Thus, God is "in continuous community and nexus" (Cohen 1981:97) with the actions of humanity. Cohen describes God's presence in the world to be like a "filament". This adjective is meant to convey that

the divine element of the historical is a precarious conductor always intimately linked to the historical...and always separate from it, since the historical is the domain of human freedom (Cohen 1981:98).

The "precarious" presence of God does not allow humanity to recognize the filament, nor manipulate it to achieve desired ends. The world is the stage of the human being, who plays out his or her wishes; attempts to fulfill goals; or creates elements that destroy the very qualities that allow for this freedom. And, through all of this, God remains illusive for thought, yet responsive to human actions.

To provide a more concrete example of Cohen's revision, we can examine his consideration of the post-Holocaust meaning

- of Torah. Here, Torah in itself is a "schema of revelation," (Cohen 1981:100) that is, a model that serves to illustrate ways of being-in-the-world. They reflect a web of possible relationships with the 'speaking God'. By enacting these models of the divine-human relationship, the individual becomes open to hearing and responding to the divine voice. Scripture is not nomos but "Torah": instruction, guidance, and teaching. For Cohen, Torah is a sensitive human vision which gives expression to the total life situation of a people living and dying; wrestling with the direction of their destiny; and probing the divine for the freedom of imagination and creative language. Thus, the fulfillment of freedom through the creative act is made efficacious by adhering to the ways of Torah. God is active in history through the Jews' freedom to address the problems and concerns of existence. It is a way of life that continues the "creation made articulate by revelation" (Cohen 1981:98).

In the case of the Holocaust, we witness a radical reversal of the "creation made articulate by revelation". The tremendum is the anti-model, one that distorts the presence of the dipolar God, but does not destroy him or her. The effect of humanity's behavior during the Holocaust unraveled the bond between esse and posse. This resulted in

the dissolution of the fragile human integration of energetic caprice and orderly reason, the union of nonbeing and being, and, as if by some monstrous reversal, the structure of being was dislocated, order rather than reason machining caprice and the energy of caprice immolating reason...(Cohen 1981:95)

The above statement indicates that humanity freed itself from the limiting presence of esse, from the proper limits to thought, language, and behavior. They opted for a super-actualization of posse, shattering the boundaries of freedom and creative action. Instead, sheer caprice empowers an activity bent towards destruction, murder and evil. The choice of "infinite man" to surpass all limits overloads the divine filament, thereby eclipsing God's presence in the world. Such an event can only be fueled "by a[n]...
oppository chthonic subscension. It is this which is meant by the abyss of the historical, the demonic, the tremendum" (Cohen 1981:98).

In light of Cohen's reformulation of God, it would seem obvious that the Jew's relation to the divine reality also changes. In keeping with Cohen's dualistic understanding of the Holocaust as historical and theological, the author posits a dualistic comprehension of Jewish identity for the post-Holocaust age.

From the historical perspective, Jewish identity is intimately tied to the Holocaust. Like Fackenheim, Cohen writes that "every Jew who has endured to this hour is a survivor in fact or an accidental survivor..." (Cohen 1981:22) Cohen binds the Jew to the 'historical enmeshments and the moorings of causality'. The Jew as an individual cannot escape this truth. However, the Jew as a member of a community of faith, has a corporate self-understanding which accords to the theological reading of the Holocaust. Therefore, "as symbol, the belief in the eternity of the

Therefore, "as symbol, the belief in the eternity of the Jewish people is still important" (Oppenheim 1987:411). Cohen implies by this dual description, that the Jew as historical agent is always susceptible to 'cruelties and murders'; while the Jew as part of the sacred reality, can be taken out of history as a symbol of the divine. As the author states, "(r)edemption is not for the single man nor even for the single Jew, but for the Jewish people, the House of Israel" (Cohen 1981:108).

If the above statement reflects Cohen's theological understanding of the "House of Israel", then his consideration of the State of Israel intimates his historical comprehension. Here Cohen sounds a forbidding note, suggesting that the State of Israel is not a symbol or a sign that redemption is unfolding. In his own words;

if the Jewish people takes up the arms of the world before the world, its reality is for the first time measured against the magnitude of the world, its resolute independence becomes its isolation...It may well be that the full entrance of the Jewish people into the lists of the historical is more threatening even than genocide has been... (Cohen 1981:101)

Cohen leaves no doubt that Israel has no part in the theological meaning of the House of Israel. Nationhood means historical becoming and passing. History cannot actualize theological stories. It is for these reasons that Cohen understands himself as a Jew who is "(o)utside the Jewish State, any state for that matter, but never outside the Jewish people" (Cohen 1981:109).

Similar to Cohen's revision of God, Irving Greenberg reinterprets the meaning of the Jewish covenant. As noted in the first section of this chapter, Greenberg suggests that the Holocaust is not a complete rupture, for "there are still moments when the reality of the Exodus is reenacted and present" (Greenberg 1977:28).²¹ This thread of continuity with past traditions reflects the author's dialectical understanding of the Holocaust and Israel. Despite their radical differences in content, both events are reorientating for religious and secular values. This fragmentary quality of the post-Holocaust reality is expressed by Greenberg in the ideas of the "unfolding covenant" and "holy secularity".

The theory of the unfolding covenant is, according to Greenberg, evident in the history of Judaism. Greenberg regards Jewish history to exhibit a progressive dynamic towards an increased independence from God. The pattern suggests that specific historical events signal the gradual disengagement of God from the world, allowing humanity a heightened sense of autonomy. Thus, with events like the destruction of the Second Temple,

(t)he Rabbis ultimately concluded that the covenant was still valid but that Israel was called to a new level of relationship with God. God was more hidden now; God was using great self-control and allowing humanity-- even the evil ones-- freedom of action. God was more hidden, but humans-- the Jews in particular-- were called to seek God out (Greenberg 1982:80).

This statement illustrates that Greenberg's theory concerns an historical process at work in the world. It is one that

moves toward a reality bereft of a divine presence. The 'divine calling' is an indirect plea from God, asking humanity to fill the void created by the deity's egression from the stage of human affairs.

The task that arises from this movement in history is the demand to create authentic action within this new found freedom. As suggested in the above passage, the unfolding covenant necessarily permits a greater possibility for the occurrence of evil. This potential in no way communicates the will of God, but ultimately reflects the desires of humanity. Because of this increased room for evil, the individual is called upon to exhibit a "new [sense] of maturity, authority, and responsibility" (Greenberg 1982:82) for their fellow person.

In this schema of covenantal understanding, the Holocaust summons humanity to the ultimate level of responsibility. Indeed, the Holocaust illustrates that "(t)he hiddenness of God is even deeper..." (Greenberg 1982:82) Yet, the restoration of the State of Israel is a reminder that the covenantal faith is still operative, but with an intensified human participation. The individual's role in bringing about the redemption of the world becomes paramount. The egressing God will not save this planet: its fate rests with the decisions of humankind:

For Greenberg, this latter observation is particularly evident in the founding of the modern State of Israel. In this instance, the Jewish people responded to their new relationship with the hidden God by taking control of their

destiny. Both religious spirit and secular determination came together in order to meet the challenge of the unfolding covenant.

This event sets a number of precedents for post-Holocaust existence. The State of Israel signifies a political reality that affirms a positive evaluation of power. As Greenberg remarks, "(a)bsolute powerlessness corrupts even more than absolute power" (Greenberg 1982:74). That is, to leave a minority group open to genocide, provides the opportunity for another group to follow through on their triumphant ideologies. In this way, Israel acts as a paradigm for bringing about the redemption of the world. It shows that the way of the future lies in the responsible distribution of power. It is a caring for one's neighbour as they are in themselves, and as they choose to be. That is, the sharing of power must not be made contingent upon assimilation to the majority culture. The post-Holocaust ideal is "the 'messy' way of compromise, pluralism, middle of the road [which] must attain a new level of respect..." (Greenberg 1982:75)

Another aspect of the post-Holocaust age that "must attain a new level of respect" is Greenberg's understanding of "holy secularity". This phrase designates the actualization of the above political reflections. Similarly, it is in the State of Israel that such a way of being-in-the-world is present. The founding of the Jewish State illustrates that religious and secular values need not work at cross purposes.

Holy secularity denotes a reality where the demands of the unfolding covenant are met on a day to day basis. They are

burdened, however, only by those who freely choose to accept the responsibility. It is a "voluntary covenant" (Greenberg 1982:83) which emphasizes the conscious decision to serve God in an authentic manner. For Greenberg, authentic religious action is expressed through political participation. This secular sphere must be imbued with a sense of sacredness by exercising a wisdom credible "in the presence of burning children" (Greenberg 1977:23). In this light, the Jew is a person who actively seeks the redemption of the world in a manner that fulfills the cries of the Holocaust victims. The Jew gladly "takes up the arms of the world" (Cohen 1981:101) and embraces a holy secularity.

The above theories presented by Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg reveal the nature and character of the post-Holocaust reality. All three theologians regard this reality to manifest somekind of fragmentary quality. Fackenheim's position connotes a partial Tikkun in the acts of resistance, and ultimately in the founding of the State of Israel. This Tikkun coupled with the 'commanding Voice of Auschwitz' adumbrates the post-Holocaust existence. Here Jews begin mending the world by resisting all unauthentic forms of thought and life. They must live within the dialectical tension between the Muselmann and Tikkun.

Irving Greenberg's concern for the dialectical tension between the Holocaust and the State of Israel also indicates a fragmentary quality to the post-Holocaust reality. Like Fackenheim, Greenberg attempts to confront the radical negativity of the Holocaust experience, and concludes with a

positive affirmation of the Jewish State. In the final analysis, both authors see Israel as the future for the Jews and Judaism. Although the Jewish State does not guarantee an untroubled course, it at least points the way toward a genuine Jewish existence in the post-Holocaust world.

We might also suggest that Greenberg emphasizes the importance of Israel in a more consistent manner than Fackenheim. As Michael Oppenheim notes, Fackenheim "is not as eloquent in reflecting upon either the relationship between 'Auschwitz and Jerusalem' or the unique challenge of Jerusalem as he is in treating the negative challenge of the Holocaust" (Oppenheim 1985:107). However from the start of Greenberg's deliberations, Israel forms part of the historical configuration that marks reorientation. Greenberg's handling of "Auschwitz and Jerusalem" displays a straightforward concern that does not lose sight of the impact of Israel on the life of modern Jewry.

With Cohen we noted that the State of Israel does not contribute to the saving of Jewish thought and life in the post-Holocaust era. For him, the resolution lies in the regenerative power of imagination and language. Interestingly, Cohen's revision of the human conception of God involves a fragmentary method, piecing together elements of Kabbalah and modern philosophy. The result is a fragmented deity, whose movement from a wholeness of Being (esse) to an abundant creation (posse), illustrates that God is also limited by the act of creation. God's historical passivity well demonstrates this point. Here the divine

presence in history is continually vulnerable to the absurd behavior of humanity. In short, this post-Holocaust God is not omnipotent, and like human beings, exists in this world under certain conditions.

It is apparent that Cohen's concern for the proper God-story is reflected in Greenberg's exegesis of the unfolding covenant. The idea that God is gradually drawing back from the world signifies an ongoing relationship that safeguards the divinity from full responsibility for the Holocaust. Like Cohen, the post-Holocaust God cannot remain hostage to the 'ontological gathering of evil'. Greenberg, along with Cohen, devises a theological rationale that permits the Holocaust to occur without God's active participation in the event. For Cohen, God is immanent within the Holocaust as "filament"; but, it is the human being's responsibility that God's life affirming presence was eclipsed with the unraveling of esse from posse. In Greenberg's case, God is at a distance from the causal factors of the Holocaust. What is interesting is that the egression of God from the world is not considered a negative factor, but a positive development, ultimately allowing the State of Israel to be reborn.

Concerning the presence of God at Auschwitz, both Cohen, but especially Fackenheim, connect God with this event. Again, the differences between their theories is evident in their respective God-stories. As noted above, Cohen's placing of God at the Holocaust reflects a passive presence. However with Fackenheim it is obvious that God's presence at

Auschwitz is manifest in the acts of Tikkun.

These correlations between the theologians under discussion, does not over ride the particular problems of their theories. Each theologian applies his own unique interpretation to life after the Holocaust. It is to the details of these suggestions that we now turn.

From first glance, it seems that there are many problems with Fackenheim's proposal that the 'commanding and saving presence' of God is evident in the death camp experience. Steven Katz has stated, that Fackenheim's position can only be affirmed because he avoids applying the "'empiricist falsifiability thesis'" as developed by A.J. Ayer.²² Consequently, God remains unchallenged by the radical negativity of the Holocaust. As Katz explains, Fackenheim avoids "direct confrontation with the empirical evidence to such an extent that all discussion and evaluation becomes irrelevant" (Katz 1983:226). This insight seems highly ironic considering Fackenheim's emphasis on the need for empirical thought. Katz's remark reflects a valid point which was intimated earlier in the discussion about Fackenheim's 'argument from terror'. As discussed there, Fackenheim is developing an hypothesis which is ultimately shielded by the respect and reverence accorded to those who braved the Nazi logic of destruction. In other words, Fackenheim creates a situation where it is virtually impossible to point toward facts that might serve to counter his claims, or at least suggest a revision of his perspective.²³

Katz's suggestion that Fackenheim side steps the empirical falsifiability thesis is an important observation, but one that does not reflect the whole depth of the matter. Fackenheim seems to employ Ayer's test but, one might say, in reverse. Fackenheim uses the acts of Tikkun as empirical evidence that falsifies the claim that God's voice is silent during the Holocaust, or the even more extreme proposal, that 'God is dead'. This latter assertion, made famous in the Jewish community by Richard Rubenstein, is, ironically, deduced by utilizing the empirical falsifiability thesis.²⁴ This development suggests two conclusions.

First, that both Rubenstein and Fackenheim do not properly adhere to the full implications of the empirical falsifiability thesis. In the case of Rubenstein, the author ignores the restoration of the State of Israel as possible counter evidence to his 'death of God' position. For Fackenheim, we may question whether his vow to hold fast to the image of the Muselmann is abandoned. This possibility is reflected in the fact that Fackenheim does not argue the Muselmann's case against the 'commanding and saving' presence of God at Auschwitz. After all, why does the divine presence save the select few while the majority perish?²⁵ It is the radical injustice of Fackenheim's God that makes it difficult to accept the idea that there was a saving God at Auschwitz. This question concerning the injustice of God suggests that the acts of Tikkun are even less than a partial mending.

The second conclusion that arises from the comparison between Rubenstein and Fackenheim, is that the application of

the empirical falsifiability thesis is inappropriate for theology. Such a test implies that the existence or nonexistence of God can be proven by empirical categories. Both Rubenstein's and Fackenheim's arguments assume that God's manner of encountering the world is, or was, a concrete and physical confrontation, much in the same way as described in the biblical narratives at a superficial level. For this reason, Katz labels Fackenheim's post-Holocaust theory to be an "existential supernaturalism" (Katz 1983:152). It seems that Fackenheim understands the nature of God too literally, applying unrealistic demands to a reality that, more often than not, seems to escape human description.

Nevertheless, even if one accepted Fackenheim's interpretation as valid for faith, one must come to terms with his designation of the Holocaust as a root experience. As noted earlier, a root experience is "one which continually transforms Jewish consciousness and experiences for it demonstrates that God acts in history" (Oppenheim 1985:100). For the post-Holocaust age, Fackenheim comprehends Jewish consciousness to be transformed into an 'accidental survivor'. The result is that Hitler is the power behind this change in Jewish self-understanding: it is the Nazi logic of destruction that forms the content of the post-Holocaust root experience. It is not God nor the community of faith that nourishes belief, but Hitler. Such a root experience, like the Nazi movement itself, can only prove to be destructive; of God's presence in history, and of the Jew's relationship to God.²⁶ It is one thing to feel a

sense of obligation to those millions of Jewish lives who fell victim to the Nazis: it is quite another to live our life constantly under their forbidding shadow, as if the death camp reality becomes the ground of our own.²⁷ Yet is this not the gist of Fackenheim's conclusions? His use, or misuse, of the acts of Tikkun illustrates that not only "we" have touched an Ultimate, but "they" have come to experience some kind of special relation with God during the Holocaust. In effect, it is a revelation in the midst of death that orients life in the post-Holocaust era.

In the case of Arthur Cohen's reformulation of the post-Holocaust deity, we confront a very different direction in comparison to Fackenheim. Cohen neither hears God's commanding voice, nor does he consider a Tikkun to be possible. As Cohen suggests, "(t)o make...the tremendum even the symbolic equivalent of Sinai is false" (Cohen 1981:79). Cohen responds to the Holocaust as an event that does not touch God's self-existence as esse, but it does affect the way human beings describe and understand God. In brief, if the empiricist falsifiability thesis is employed by Cohen, it is applied to the nature of religious language. It is not used, however, to prove or disprove the presence of God in history.

There is something compelling about Cohen's perspective toward the post-Holocaust reality. The central issues that he addresses suggests that the Holocaust is a result of human choice, and action. Similarly, Cohen tries to understand the presence of evil that we may feel to be evident in the death

camp experience, as opposed to a saving presence. This attitude allocates the responsibility to the human being. The mediation of the Holocaust and faith is therefore a human endeavour requiring no magnificent sign or miracle from God. Perhaps most importantly, Cohen's reformulation has a preventative thrust, reflected in his depiction of Torah as model. This allows human freedom to express itself within proper boundaries that prevents the distortion of freedom into sheer caprice.

It appears that the emphasis on the above mentioned issues is a result of Cohen's distinction between the historical reality of the Holocaust and its theological reading. The direction of the theological interpretation seems sound, but we may wonder if Cohen's redescription of God engenders belief. The language, symbol, and metaphor, used by the author does not evoke a sense of right living as intimated in his reinterpretation of Torah. For instance, "God as filament" lacks the human point of contact that sustains the divine-human relation. To agree with Oppenheim, Cohen's description of the post-Holocaust God "does not have the power to direct our lives" (Oppenheim 1987:413).

This insight focuses our attention to Cohen's attitude on traditional religious language. The author may be underestimating the "elasticity" (Oppenheim 1987:412) of traditional conceptions of God. As Fackenheim assumes a too literal understanding of God's presence in history, Cohen accepts a too literal comprehension of traditional religious language, ignoring its sensitivity to human imagination and

freedom of expression. Contrary to Cohen's self-appraisal, his conception of the post-Holocaust God is not a deity, "whom we may love and honor, but whom we no longer fear..." (Cohen, 1981:97) However, Cohen's designation of the tremendum as a human event may assist ways of investigating the metaphor of "God as person" (Oppenheim 1987:415) as a possible mediator for faith and the Holocaust.²⁸

According to Greenberg's view of the post-Holocaust world, there may be no room for the idea for God as person. The notion that the Holocaust and Israel are scenes in the drama of the unfolding covenant, presents a deity who is withdrawing from the human sphere. The absent God leads towards the necessity of establishing a 'holy secularity', which denotes the nature and character of life after the Holocaust.

The idea of holy secularity presents some obvious conceptual problems. If secular activity is to be "the preferred religious mode" (Greenberg 1982:77) in the post-Holocaust age, then how are we to make the distinction between the religious and the secular? In this sense both terms are rendered meaningless. Similarly, this designation of religious behavior does not leave room for a person to decline from being identified as religious. In Greenberg's scheme, a person who wishes to lead a thoroughly secular life will be thought of as religious. The bottom line is that Greenberg's holy secularity does not allow for self-definition: whether secular, or strictly religious. This does not seem to be the way of "messy compromise", but has a

triumphant ring to its implications.

Besides this conceptual difficulty, the very notion of the unfolding covenant seems to suggest there are some rather serious ramifications for understanding the purpose of the Holocaust. The idea that this event actually has a purpose beyond the demonic plans of the Nazis, is hard to believe. Greenberg seems to be working within a theology of history that makes unreasonable demands. To reconstruct his hypothesis, we discover that; first, the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel are in keeping with the 'spirit of Sinai', that is, these events form part of the divine plan for humanity. This is indicated by the historical process operating throughout Jewish history. Second, in his interpretation of the Holocaust, this event acts as the primary signal that God is disengaging from the world. Third, Israel is proof positive that this increased independence is for the benefit of humankind. In effect, the Holocaust is the price paid for the founding of the State of Israel. Greenberg's theological rationale for the Holocaust implies that humanity is not regressing from the proper norms of behavior, but progressing toward an authentic existence: a holy secularity.

Conclusion

Our critique of the theologians here under study suggests that there are grave difficulties in their attempt to view the Holocaust as a life affirming, orienting event. If one accepts their reformulations of faith, I believe that a

relationship with God is greatly jeopardized. This limitation stems from its simplistic impression of traditional religious language. Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg seem to imply that a new way of speaking about the divine reality will have to be formulated to regain a genuine sense of continuity with the past, while remaining true to the present existential situation. Although this recommendation points to the need for modern Jewish thinkers to struggle with the Holocaust, it too quickly dismisses the flexibility of the Jewish tradition. No doubt a response is necessary, but it need not be totally divorced from the Jewish matrix of symbol, and metaphor. Thus, even though the Holocaust itself is a radical event, it does not necessarily follow that a radical theological departure is required.

In spite of this problem, it may be suggested that the works of Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg assist the individual in their confrontation with the issues of the modern Jewish situation. Fackenheim's consideration of Tikkun underscores the need for the Jewish people to ensure their own survival. The 614th commandment proclaims the central importance of the State of Israel. It is the axis about which the future of Jewish life and thought must revolve. Indeed, after Auschwitz, Israel is the paramount issue which every modern Jewish theology must take as its point of departure.

Arthur Cohen's designation of the human responsibility for the Holocaust, illustrates the need for humanity to seriously consider the ramifications of their actions. His suggestion

that human behavior directly affects the divine presence in the world denotes that God is to be found in love of neighbour, in authentic human interaction, while violence eclipses the presence of God. The emphasis here is on the need to properly harness human freedom. This is accomplished through co-creatorship and co-responsibility with God for the world.

Similarly, Greenberg concentrates on the role of the human being as steward of the Creation. The redemption of the world is to be brought about by human beings working together, compromising in difficult situations, allowing other persons to fulfill their own purpose in life.

It appears that all three thinkers conclude that there is a future for Jewish thought and life beyond the rupture of the Holocaust. Although this event forever colours the Jewish perception of the world, the Holocaust is "ultimate" but it is not "final".

For modern Jewish thought, issues such as Jewish survival, human responsibility, and the human role in the redemption of the world are essential points of deliberation. They are part of the modern history of the Jewish people and continue to be addressed today in a number of different settings, both in the Diaspora and in Israel. Nevertheless, it does not seem that the Holocaust is The Event that is required to raise such points for consideration. In fact, the above issues are already accounted for in the Halachic world view and in the various 'sub-traditions' (such as Kabbalah) of the Jewish faith. In effect, the radical departures advocated by

Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg are not necessary for such insights as Jewish survival, human responsibility and redemption.²⁹

The aspects that are radically new in their revisions appear to have negative implications for the Jewish faith. Thus, Fackenheim's encounter with 'epoch-making events' relies upon an empirical method that misuses the experiences of the Holocaust victims. It forces faith into an inappropriate category for understanding the human relationship to God. Cohen's unique redescription of the human perspective of the divine reality is not an adequate substitute for understanding God as person. As a result it endangers belief instead of securing it against the 'ontological gathering of evil'. Similarly, Greenberg's regressing deity ultimately is responsible for the Holocaust since the increased human autonomy forms part of the divine plan. In the final analysis, the ideas that seem profound are part of the pre-Holocaust tradition, while the negative aspects of their work represents the post-Holocaust reinterpretation. Therefore, the radically new innovations offered by these post-Holocaust thinkers does not invoke a sense of authenticity.

In the same way that the theories of Fackenheim, Cohen and Greenberg do not advance our understanding of the Holocaust, it seems that neither do they progress beyond their own mandate for change. That is, the problems that they identify with pre-Holocaust theology are not surmounted in their reformulations.

For Fackenheim, an important goal is to risk Jewish thought to the judgment of history. Yet, as we saw, the author does not follow through on this principle. He avoids confronting God with the radical negativity of the Holocaust.

In Cohen's case, his hope to progress beyond the view forwarded in his earlier work, The Natural and the Supernatural Jew, is not completely achieved. In this work Cohen believes that he "tried to take the Jews out of history" (Cohen 1981:35) suggesting that Judaism is impervious to the challenges of historical events. However, Cohen's distinction between the historical reading of the Holocaust, and the theological reality of this event as presented in The Tremendum is merely a slight revision of his previous position.

The theological interpretation of the Holocaust suggests that this event may be lifted out of history as symbol. In the same manner the eternity of the 'House of Israel' is also affirmed by Cohen as beyond the taint of the historical. As we noted, this qualification is essential for the continuing validity of Judaism in the post-Holocaust world. In this way, Cohen's theological reading seems to reflect aspects of the 'supernatural Jew'. The ability to rise above history, therefore, seems to be an important part of the religious vocation for Cohen.

This insight is further supported by Cohen's consideration of the "natural Jew" within The Tremendum. Here the author presents the solitary Jew as an accidental survivor, and the State of Israel as a kind of "Fall" into the false ambitions

of political triumph. This attitude does not provide a clearer understanding of the Jew as historical agent. Instead of illustrating how this return to history could be liberating for the Jewish people, the author intimates that this development devalues the meaning and purpose of Jewish life. Thus, Cohen presents a bifurcated Jewish self-understanding. The historical, which designates the mundane, natural Jew: and the theological, which points toward the meaningful supernatural Jew.

Finally, it seems that Greenberg also does not progress beyond his critique of modernity. As considered in the first section of this chapter, Greenberg suggests the Nazis represent the modern tendency to operate by "universal and comprehensive categories" (Greenberg 1982:67). This reflects a false universalism which undervalues the particular and thereby serves to oppress minority groups that choose to affirm their own self-understanding. Yet, despite this valid insight, Greenberg continues on to present a notion of holy secularity that reflects the same false universalism. He writes that holy secularity "will shift the consciousness of God's presence from the more limited number of sacred settings to an almost universal presence..." (Greenberg 1982:83) In result, Greenberg is incorporating a cultural value that he had concluded to be unauthentic.

In this light, it appears that the Jewish post-Holocaust reality is less confusing than the post-Holocaust theology. What this suggests is that a radical theological departure may not prove to be the healing factor for the post-Holocaust

world. The three theologians discussed in this chapter do not give traditional religious thought and language a thorough consideration before branching out into new avenues of thought. The encounter between traditional Jewish religious thought and the Holocaust may require more time before a sufficient response is forth coming. In the mean while, Jewish thinkers must resist the rush to invent a solution that may ultimately undermine the values that continue to serve the Jewish community of faith.

CHAPTER TWO

"The Trying Descent":

Christian Theologians Confront the Holocaust.

Introduction

The confrontation between Christian thought and the Holocaust has produced a number of striking developments. The most significant yet "dangerous" position, recognizes an anti-Judaic tradition. The assertion that Christian scripture, theology and behavior reflect a "teaching of contempt"¹ for the Jewish people is a serious charge. The possibility that Christian antisemitism contributed to the historical process that culminated in the Holocaust, critically compounds the allegation. Ultimately, radical doubts are raised about Christian "moral credibility/noncredibility..." (Eckardt 1986:65) Can the Christian faith survive the charge that the events of the Holocaust were founded on this anti-Judaic sentiment?

This question is genuinely addressed by the post-Holocaust theologians, Rosemary Ruether, John Pawlikowski, Franklin Littell, and Alice and Roy Eckardt. These thinkers view the anti-Judaic dénouement as a precedent for renewal. Their writings try to account for the Christian involvement in the Holocaust; to diagnose and expunge the "illness" which fostered the involvement; and, to offer alternative interpretations of Christian belief which affirms the

integrity of the Jew and the Christian. Although the goals are clear, the means have proven to be a painful process. The "descent" of the post-Holocaust theologian into the shadow-self of Christian identity is a "trying" encounter. It is one that threatens the very life-source of their faith.

The efforts of Ruether, Pawlikowski, Littell, and the Eckardts, will be analyzed in two parts. First, we will consider their arguments for "The Relation Between Christianity and the Holocaust". Second, we will examine "The Reformulations and Reinterpretations of the Post-Holocaust Christian Faith".

It is my contention to show that the post-Holocaust Christian reformulations tend to sustain and perpetuate the "teaching of contempt" for the Jews and Judaism. The theories for renewed faith do not dissolve the Christian propensity for triumphant and supersessionary theology. Although their revisions hold promise for an authentic dialogue with the Jewish people, they fall short of their goal. It cannot be doubted that the post-Holocaust Christian agenda is well guided. There are moments in the ideological critique where real break-through seems imminent. However, in the final analysis, their theories fail to engender an authentic Christian perspective toward Judaism. The theologians presented here attest to an important insight: that the Christian anti-Judaic sentiment is more deeply embedded than even they first assumed.

The Relationship Between Christianity and the Holocaust

Perhaps the first Christian theologian to earnestly consider the challenge of the Holocaust is Rosemary Ruether. Her book, Faith and Fratricide caused a storm of response. Ruether's hypothesis that the anti-Judaic tradition is inextricably bound to Christology, produced both outrage and acclamation. The author does not hesitate to admit the negative influence that antisemitism had on early Christian religious consciousness. As she states, "the root of the dialectic of christology and anti-Judaism is found in Christian faith from the beginning, from the Easter faith" (Ruether 1979:237). Thus, to fully analyze the problem, Ruether begins with a solid historical investigation of the origins of Christianity. From this foundation, she traces the anti-Judaic sentiment to its most grim manifestation: the Nazi Final Solution.

According to Ruether, the anti-Judaic attitude is a consequence of "the raising up of faith in Messiah Jesus as a supersessionary covenantal principle...that caused the break between the Church and Israel" (Ruether 1974:56). The Jewish "no" to the messianic claim inspired the first Christians to expound a dogma of domination and displacement of Judaism. Here the Jew became the negative witness to the Christian "truth". Jesus was proven to be the Christ because those who rejected him were blind, immoral, and doomed to a life of misery. Ruether terms this ideological development, "the left-hand of christology". She believes that it "totally

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governs the entire story line of all the Gospels" (Ruether 1974:89); it was further incorporated in the writings of the Church Fathers²; and was taught to faithful Christians throughout the centuries.

Another teaching which augments the problem is the spiritualizing and historicizing of the eschatological. The spiritualizing of the eschatological was a response to the absence of a concrete change in the world after the resurrection. Because it failed to dramatically alter the Jewish historical situation, the Kingdom of God was said to be within the individual. As such, the follower of Christ experienced a transfiguration of the spirit, superior to any historical transformation.

The delay of the parousia, however, necessitated a community to preserve the message of Jesus. Ruether interprets the emerging Church as the vehicle for historicizing the eschatological. Since the Church assumed a spiritual fulfillment, its participation in the world concretized this absolute. This refers to "the imposition of models of messianic perfection upon historical institutions created by the Christian community" (Ruether 1979:245). As a result, the infallibility of the Church and its doctrine became a cornerstone of the Christian faith.

The above teachings had catastrophic ramifications for the Jewish people. The Church acted on its anti-Judaic tradition with the confidence of moral superiority. This tendency intensified with the merger of Christianity and the Roman Empire. It gave birth to a triumphant conglomeration driven

by ambitions for world domination. For the Jewish people, this translated into oppression, expulsion, and pogrom.

This tragic situation prevailed until the European Emancipation of the late nineteenth Century. However, the promise of freedom and equality was overshadowed by the pressures of assimilation. The "enlightened" thinking of Voltaire and others, permitted the Jew to be the universal (Christian) person, but not the particular, self-defined Jewish individual. It was merely a philosophical version of Christian spiritualization, while its historicization was pursued in the political arena. In effect, the "Jews were offered an ideology of emancipation which was itself based on a rationalist version of anti-Judaism" (Ruether 1974:219). The religious antithesis between Christian and Jew had crossed over to the socio-cultural environment. But, it was now expressed as the conflict between German and Jew, Austrian and Jew, and so forth.

The logical step from this historical development suggests Nazism represents the nadir of Christian anti-Judaism. As Ruether remarks;

(w)e begin to realize that what Nazism revived was not a long-dead set of attitudes and practices, but a world only recently dissolved in the West, still maintained in the East, whose myths were still live, glowing embers easily fanned into new flames. Moreover, the very processes of emancipation, the arguments on which it was based, the price it demanded of Judaism revived anti-Judaism in new forms, translating the basis for contempt from theological to national, then racial grounds (Ruether 1974:215).

For John Pawlikowski, the relation between Christianity and the Holocaust is approached from a wider perspective. He tries to understand the significance of the Holocaust for the human condition and its relationship to history. Pawlikowski writes that "(t)he real challenge of the Holocaust is whether we can say anything positive and constructive about the dignity of man after the exposure of the evil forces within humanity during this period of history" (Pawlikowski 1978:16). Hence, the Holocaust is viewed as a symptom of the human attraction to evil. It is not the "dignity" of the Christian alone at stake, but that of humankind.

Although Pawlikowski's point of view diverges from Ruether's study, he nevertheless reaffirms many of her conclusions. Pawlikowski essentially agrees with Ruether's assessment of the anti-Judaic tradition, and its influence on Christian support of the Nazi regime. As the author comments, "the satanic machinations of Hitler and his cohorts could never have attained the heights they did ~~if~~ it were not for the centuries-long tradition of anti-Semitism in Christian theology and preaching" (Pawlikowski 1978:24). Where Pawlikowski parts company with Ruether, is over the role of modern Western thought: and, the spiritualizing and historicizing of the eschatological.

Contrary to Ruether, Pawlikowski sees modern Western liberal philosophy as primarily responsible for the events of the Holocaust. He believes that its anti-transcendent tenor inspired a revolt against the divine. The modern individual felt threatened by the all-demanding God which denied the

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person's sense of uniqueness and autonomy. These philosophies of human rebellion communicate a significant insight for Pawlikowski: a God who is far removed from the world, who is unable to genuinely comprehend the risks involved in human life, cannot inspire love, or obedience.

Although Pawlikowski admits the rejection of divine judgement resulted in the Holocaust, he understands this development as a progression in human self-awareness. He suggests that

(t)he Nazis were right in at least one respect. They correctly perceived that basic changes were taking place in human consciousness. Under the impact of the new science and technology, mankind was beginning to undergo the Prometheus Unbound experience on a mass scale. People now began to recognize a greater sense of dignity and autonomy than most of Western Christian theology had allowed for until then... (Pawlikowski 1978:8)

In this light, the Holocaust does not necessarily represent a regression in the human condition. It was an aberration of the human consciousness coming of age. However, this new sense of "dignity and autonomy" requires a proper framework and direction.

For Pawlikowski then, the failure of Christianity is not its contribution to antisemitism and the Nazi movement, but its inability to absorb the sudden burst of freedom-consciousness. Theology in the post-Holocaust age must therefore be "faithful to the new understanding of human freedom that" liberal philosophy "so dramatically brought to the modern consciousness" (Pawlikowski 1978:13).

To meet this challenge, Pawlikowski suggests that religion be reinvested with "a fresh sense of transcendence" (Pawlikowski 1978:10). Interestingly, he believes the solution resides with a renewed understanding of the spiritualizing and historicizing of the eschatological.³ The spiritualizing of the eschatological establishes an intimate relationship with God that respects human freedom. Controlling its expression comes by identifying freedom with the unique spiritual quality of the human being as a creature of God. Thus, freedom and God are not opposing forces, but concomitant entities. The historicizing of the eschatological represents the actualization of this spiritual uniqueness. In this fashion, bringing forth the spirit to the world denotes the human role of co-creator. The divine presence is thereby made evident by the historical agent. Pawlikowski's understanding suggests that if freedom is viewed in its sacred context, its expression will be constructive.

To further discuss Pawlikowski's reinterpretation of spiritualizing and historicizing the eschatological would extend our analysis beyond what is immediately necessary. At this stage, it is important to emphasize Pawlikowski's perspective in contrast to Ruether's view. Whereas Ruether saw the spiritualizing-historicizing tendency as a vehicle for the anti-Judaic tradition, Pawlikowski suggests they mediate the divine-human ontological link. This difference adumbrates each author's understanding of traditional christology. This issue will be discussed fully in part two

of this chapter.

When we encounter Franklin Littell's position, it appears to reflect aspects of both Ruether and Pawlikowski. In his text, The Crucifixion of the Jews, Littell shares Ruether's concern that the anti-Judaic tradition is largely responsible for the historical conditions that permitted the Holocaust. Yet, with Pawlikowski, Littell suggests that an essential reason for the Holocaust is also discovered in the nature and character of modern thought. However, in Littell's case, he centres on the modern tendency to support the power structures of the general society. In the end, Littell contests that true Christianity had been betrayed, its members bolstering the dominant authority, thereby assisting the growth and acceptance of Nazism in "the heart of Christendom" (Littell 1975:45).

Littell affirms that Christian doctrine played a significant role in supporting the Nazi death camps. Indeed, he states his case in very clear terms. For instance, Littell remarks that "(t)he genocidal note is already present in the superseding or displacement myths" (Littell 1975:30) of Christian belief. Even more to the point, the author believes the writings of the Church Fathers, and the works of the Reformation thinkers to illustrate that "the Nazi 'final solution' was a logical extension of" their claim that "God was finished with the Jewish people" (Littell 1975:30). At this point, Littell seems in complete accord with Ruether's analysis. However, this parallel is qualified by Littell's defense of Pauline theology, and his examination of

Christianity as a culture religion.

According to Littell, "Paul, for all of his harsh language toward those who rejected the Christ, never in a single line implied God's rejection of the Jewish people" (Littell 1975:25). Littell asserts that Paul's objective was to place the gentile population within the sacred history of Israel, an intention supported by the Gospels. Littell suggests that the typical passages used to evince Christian supersessionism are "highly speculative" (Littell 1975:31).⁴ Their appropriation as supersessionary reflects more upon the character of the exegete, than on the Gospels themselves. Because of this, Littell believes that the New Testament is not inherently anti-Judaic. In fact, true "(t)heological Antisemitism began with the gentile converts" (Littell 1975:25) and not with the original Christian community.

For Littell, Christian antisemitism is the product of "baptized gentiles" (Littell 1975:36): those persons who abandoned the authentic Christian vocation. Their "theology of boasting and triumphalism" (Littell 1975:29) forms the basis of Christendom. This relationship raises a very serious question for Littell. He wonders; "(h)ow can Christianity survive the discovery that after a thousand years of its being Europe's official religion, Europe remains pagan at heart?" (Littell 1975:45-46).

The search for its answer brings Littell to consider the religion of the "pagan heart": positive Christendom. This term denotes a faith "without intellectual discipline or ethical content beyond that imposed by the society at large"

(Littell 1975:35). It is a religion devoid of particularity, uniqueness, and spiritual substance. As such, it is easily manipulated by political leaders. It mobilizes the masses for issues of governmental concern, and represses individual thinking and action. In brief, it was the type of Christianity that supported Hitler.

This support, however, was not particular to Christianity alone. Littell points to modern thought as a staunch ally of positive Christianity. Similar to culture-religion, modern thought has a tendency to ignore the concrete aspects of existence. Its propensity to overspiritualize gave rise to a hollow social ethic, one that attached itself to the whims of the general society. In this way, the human subject was reified as an object of the state, gaining identity solely from the collective. In this milieu, the Jewish person seemed a threat to the social system. The Jew, as a particular, nonconformist, unique human being, symbolized the very values excluded by modern Christendom. Thus, Littell describes the Zeitgeist of Nazi Germany as a

flight into speculative abstractions, the flight from concrete historical events, the anxiety about the essential Jewishness of Christian tradition and belief-- all are a part of the same spirit of gentile rebellion. And they resulted in our own time in the mass murder of Jews and the mass apostasy of Christians (Littell 1975:42).

At this stage in our investigation, it seems that Ruether, Pawlikowski, and Littell hold similar perspectives toward the relation between Christianity and the Holocaust. Each

affirms, in varying degrees, the influence of the anti-Judaic tradition and modern liberal thought on the Holocaust. With Alice and Roy Eckardt, we engage some very different concerns. Although they strongly support the conclusions of Ruether's study, the Eckardts radically diverge into a discussion of the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

As intimated above, the Eckardts' book, Long Night's Journey into Day, supports the correlation between the anti-Judaic tradition and the events of the Holocaust. They consider that "(t)he Christian contribution fell primarily, though by no means exclusively, within the...propagation and maintenance over many years of an atmosphere hostile to Jews" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:64). The crux of this hostility is located in the belief of a consummated resurrection. It "is the relentless force behind every...Christian derogation of Jewry" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:130). The triumphant and supersessionary interpretation of the resurrection suggests that those outside the Christian faith are sub-human. For this reason, "moral responsibility for the Endlosung clearly extends to the Christian community" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:65).

For the Eckardts, the recognition of the Christian teaching of contempt is only one aspect of the Holocaust challenge. The authors also try to understand this event as a "uniquely-unique" occurrence in the history of humankind. This designation represents "a truly transcending or metahistorical event..." (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:45) As such it splinters human presuppositions of reality. It

reorientates the human world-view, radically challenging the way we perceive ourselves and others. In this fashion, the Holocaust experience is comparable only to precedent setting events like "the Exodus or the giving of Torah..." (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:45) Succinctly stated, a uniquely-unique event is "an ontological redirecting of the course and the fate of human history" (Eckardt 1986:45-46).

The Eckardts realize, however, that if the Holocaust is a uniquely-unique event, then the historical influence of the anti-Judaic tradition is rendered noneffective. That is, the Holocaust as sui generis cannot be explained by historical developments, or as a result of a particular ideology. Yet, as we have seen, the Eckardts profess the causal role of the anti-Judaic sentiment. To mediate this impass, the authors propose that if the phenomenon of antisemitism "is itself sui generis, and provided also that the specific event (the Holocaust) is to be grasped as the uniquely-unique climax-incarnation of antisemitism" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:48), then the dilemma is resolved. In this explanation, both the Holocaust and the disposition from which it grew, share a unique character. As such, they are connected through the category of uniqueness. But, antisemitism is not a holocaust, nor is the Holocaust merely a manifestation of antisemitism.

The point of the Eckardts' philosophical exposition is to safeguard the integrity of the Holocaust as a Jewish tragedy, while keeping sight of the "moral responsibility" of Christian antisemitism. Yet, how do the authors substantiate

the uniqueness of antisemitism? This is accomplished through "the concept of the 'devil'" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:50).

The figure of the devil is employed to communicate the unique evil of the antisemite. As the Eckardts' define it, "the word 'devil' is the symbol of the transcendently unique and persisting power of evil and destructiveness, a concept marked, therefore, by a necessity comparable with that of God" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:52). The devil, like God, also has a faithful remnant, willing to carry out his or her wishes. The devil is the anti-God, and strives to murder God's chosen people. Antisemitism is an ontological force, with a pervasiveness and longevity that defies logical explanation. In this sense, the idea of the devil does not represent abstract evil, but a very specific kind of sentiment and behavior. The Eckardts conclude that "(t)he 'devil' and 'antisemitism' are correlative symbols: antisemitism is born of the devil and the devil receives his sustenance from antisemitism" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:53).

In light of this devil hypothesis, the Christian anti-Judaic tradition is evidence of the devil's work, and the Holocaust represents his or her ultimate achievement. Consequently, Christianity is related to Nazism in a unique way. Although not all Christians were Nazis, it can be proposed that all Nazis were Christians. As Roy Eckardt remarks;

...the freely chosen deeds of Nazi men succeeded in gaining identity with Satan himself, applying yet going beyond the punishments...that had already been fabricated by...the Christian writers, priests, and theologians whose heirs the Nazis were (Eckardt 1986:31).

Eckardt's passage underscores the main thrust of the Christian Post-Holocaust argument: the power of ideology in history. This is especially evident in Ruether's analysis, and implied in the works of Pawlikowski, Littell, and the Eckardts. However, critics note that ideas cannot be singled out as principal influences in the creation of events.⁵ It oversimplifies the complex process through which events materialize. To suggest there is a direct link between a first century Christian idea and a twentieth century Nazi act seems a remote possibility. No doubt, the critic's suspicion has a certain validity. History, especially the history of events surrounding the Holocaust, are extremely involved. Nevertheless, Ruether's warning that one may also "undervalue" (Ruether 1979:233) the influence of ideology seems a wise suggestion. This is particularly true in the case of the anti-Judaic tradition. Considering this attitude was embellished with a sacred context, supported by the Church, and expounded by esteemed religious leaders, lends plausibility to the "power of ideology" hypothesis. These latter factors have great impact on human behavior, and Ruether is correct in attending to this issue.

Ruether's thorough investigation of the anti-Judaic bias appears to identify the Holocaust as its ultimate

consequence. This is clear in many statements in Faith and Fratricide and supported by reviews of this work. However, along side these conclusions, Ruether includes a surprising counter-argument to her own thesis. The result is a lapse into unauthentic thought about the Holocaust, and a betrayal of the raison d'être of her monumental work. This occurs in three ways. First, she confuses the meaning of Christian identity. Second, she denies Christian participation in the events of the Holocaust. Third, Ruether robs the Holocaust of its Jewish content.

Ruether's "flight from history" is evident when she states that "(t)he Nazis, of course, were not Christians. They were indeed anti-Christian..." (Ruether 1974:184) Yet, it is not inaccurate to claim that for at least twelve years many Christians were members of the Nazi party. Hitler himself never formally left the Church, nor was he excommunicated. Ironically, Ruether is well-aware of these factors. She writes; "the fact that the Nazis declared themselves anti-communist, anti-liberal, and anti-Semitic was enough to guarantee that they were on the side of Christianity and the restoration of Christendom..." (Ruether 1974:224) But how can Hitler be both anti-Christian yet received in his day as a defender of the Christian faith? In this contradiction the question arises as to what constitutes Christian identity. As we can see, Ruether is most vague on the issue.

The problem with Christian identity indicates a more general problem in Ruether's argument. Inevitably, she deflects the moral responsibility for the Holocaust from

Christianity. Ruether comments "that Christian anti-Judaism was not genocidal" as "Christianity demonized the Jew religiously, not racially" (Ruether 1979:249). Yet, clearly her initial analysis leaves little doubt that racial antisemitism owes its origin and sustenance to Christian anti-Judaism. In fact, Ruether disproves the latter statement only a few pages further. There she remarks that Christians "who pursued the Jews as deicides must know themselves as the ones who laid the ground for genocide" (Ruether 1979:253).

These contradictions, however, represent only the surface difficulty with Ruether's conclusions. She eventually arrives at the following ludicrous deduction:

[Hitler] wished to destroy the Jews to also pull out by the roots the foundations of the Church. He corrupted and neutralized the churches, but we cannot doubt that Christians were intended to be his final victims" (Ruether 1979:247). [My italics]

Ruether actually suggests that Christians were somehow victims of the Nazis! Quite simply, nothing could be further from the truth. In this passage, we witness the climax of Ruether's lapse into unauthentic thought. By claiming that Christians were scheduled for genocide, Ruether falsely places the Christian with the suffering Jews of the Holocaust, denying Christian complicity in the murderous act.

Although Pawlikowski does not suggest that Christians were the victims of Nazis, he nevertheless forwards an interpretation that reflects the tendency to sever Christian

moral responsibility for the Holocaust. In fact, Pawlikowski places Christian anti-semitism out of view. As he states the matter, the real "threat before us is rather ovens and gas chambers manned by those who would claim the ultimate replacement for the religious perspective" (Pawlikowski 1978:11-12). From this, it seems that the anti-Judaic problem is a dead issue. It was not the Christians who operated the death camps, but those who proclaimed an anti-transcendent philosophy.

Yet what is most disturbing about Pawlikowski's argument is the positive evaluation of the "Prometheus Unbound" experience. Although he recognizes the gravity of the modern desire to "supplant the Creator" (Pawlikowski 1984:48), the author still affirms this freedom-consciousness as a progressive development in human self-awareness. He writes; "(t)he ultimate assertion of human freedom from God in our time that the Holocaust represents may in fact prove the beginning of the final resolution of the conflict" (Pawlikowski 1984:48). Therefore, the 'final solution' suddenly becomes the 'final resolution' for the developing human condition. Sadly, this was also the perspective of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

Pawlikowski's attempt to see the Holocaust as part of the evolution of the human being is, to say the least, quite astonishing. For he is not merely pointing to the lessons of the Holocaust. On the contrary, Pawlikowski intimates there is something inherent in the Final Solution that makes clear such a progression. One can only presume that the author is

unfamiliar with the character of the death camp reality. To even hint that the death camps are related to "a greater sense of dignity and autonomy" (Pawlikowski 1978:8) is loathsome.

For Franklin Littell, the Holocaust experience represents a definite regression in the Christian "sense of dignity and autonomy". As he explained, positive Christianity excludes the latter qualities by definition. Yet in spite of this fact, Littell continues the present trend and deflates Christian moral responsibility for the Holocaust.

This difficulty is first noticed in Littell's defence of Pauline theology. His claim that Paul does not abrogate the Jewish covenant is itself "highly speculative". As the theologian Gregory Baum comments, "(e)ven in Romans 9-11, Jewish religion has become null and void, and grace is offered to Israel only through conversion to Christ" (Baum 1979:138). The intention here is not to pursue an exegetical debate: but, Baum's interpretation of Paul's attitude toward Judaism qualifies Littell's reading.

Concerning Littell's deliberations on the role of Christianity in the Holocaust, we witness a pattern similar to Ruether and Pawlikowski. In spite of his insistence that Christianity had a significant influence on the events of the Holocaust, he says that Nazi "teachings and practices went far beyond the theological Antisemitism of the educated and cultural Antisemitism of...the masses of Christians" (Littell 1975:76). This directly contradicts his initial reflection that genocide was already well advanced in Christian circles.

Littell tries to explain this contradiction by making a distinction between cultural antisemitism, and political antisemitism. He suggests that "the Christian 'establishments' can be fairly charged with theological and cultural Antisemitism, [but] they are not directly guilty of political Antisemitism..." (Littell 1975:111) This difference is essential to Littell's "saving" of Christianity.

Cultural antisemitism denotes a passive support for whatever sentiment seems popular in the general society. Political antisemitism, on the other hand, is an active promulgation of the particular attitude.

Littell characterizes the political antisemite as a person lacking a secure identity and self-awareness. They are a "nobody" trying to become a "somebody".⁶ Most importantly, "they are breakaways from... [the Christian] ethos" (Littell 1975:112). The "ethos" the political antisemite ignores is, according to Littell, Augustine's affirmation of the "mystery of Israel". This attitude suggests that the Jews must remain a negative witness to Christ, until the end of time when the Jews will be converted to Christianity. For Littell, this doctrine prevents "the outright murder of the Jews..." (Littell 1975: 104) However, it was doctrines such as "the mystery of Israel" that Littell contested to advance Christian antisemitism. So, how can breaking away from such a foundation result in political anti-semitism? The illogic of this deduction suggests that cultural and political antisemitism are contiguous manifestations of the same phenomenon.

In effect, Littell removes the Christian from his or her involvement in the conditions that lead to the Holocaust. The Christian sin of omission is clearly separated from the Nazi sin of commission. This results in placing the brunt of responsibility on a select group of individuals, who rejected Christian doctrine in toto. What Littell fails to consider is how all of Europe could "break away" from the Christian ethos simultaneously. As he notes, "Adolf Hitler, the Third Reich, the Aryan paragraphs, and the Death Camps...were not accidental appearances in the heart of Christendom" but "the legitimate offspring of a 'Christian civilization'..." (Littell 1975:45). Again, like Ruether and Pawlikowski, Littell's conclusions do not correspond with his initial analysis of the Christian relationship to the Holocaust.

For the Eckardts, the category of unique-uniqueness is meant to prevent the reduction of the Holocaust to evil-in-general, while preserving its essential link to Christian antisemitism. However, it actually diminishes the degree of Christian participation in the Holocaust. Their description of antisemitism makes it into an autonomous ontological force. As such, it cannot be contained by any one thing, including Christian doctrine. Whether one assigns this ontic presence to the devil or something else, the effect is the same. That is, Christianity is anti-Judaic insofar as it participates in the larger force of antisemitism. In this sense, anti-Judaism is not inherent to the Christian faith.

This difficulty is mirrored in the Eckardts' comments on

the devil. This theory, or story, ultimately places Christian moral responsibility in a mythic dimension, mediating the explicit impact of Christian complicity. Even if the figure of the devil is understood in a symbolic or metaphoric sense, the concept takes priority over the particular Christian as historical agent. It transfigures the concrete person into a pawn within a cosmic battle. Therefore, the Eckardts' devil hypothesis is wholly unrealistic and constitutes a serious flight from history.

It would appear, then, that the post-Holocaust theologians under review share the tendency to ignore the concrete and the historical. Although each thinker emphasizes the influence of Christian anti-Judaism, they also undermine its significance. This observation may be a symptom of their coming to terms with the Christian anti-Judaic dilemma. But, the degree to which they deflect Christian moral responsibility suggests that the problem runs much deeper. Indeed, their overspiritualization indicates an implicit triumphalism. In Ruether's case, the Holocaust is turned into a Christian catastrophe. For Pawlikowski, it becomes a boon for humankind, and for Christian theology. Littell's separation of Christian-cultural antisemitism from Nazi-political antisemitism, and the Eckardts' devil theory, both undermine the historical concreteness of the Holocaust. Their interpretation of the facts, therefore, eclipses the Jewish significance of the event. In each example, the Jewish victim is pushed aside and the Christian concerns dominate. In the final analysis, this domination serves as a

modern Christian version of the traditional supersessionary doctrine.

The overspiritualization of the Christian relationship to the Holocaust is connected to the problem of Christian identity. The authors seem to have no definite criteria for determining who is a "real" Christian. As we noted, Ruether denies Hitler's Christian identity despite his baptism, church attendance, and formal ties to the Vatican. Pawlikowski takes the Christian out of the perpetrators of the death camp, and instead, calls them anti-transcendent philosophers. Littell makes the distinction between the "baptized gentile" and the "true" Christian. But since when was a Christian not a baptized gentile? For the Eckardts it seems, that a true Christian is the person who saves her or his soul from the devil. Even if one were to grant this devil hypothesis plausibility, a positive Christian identity must involve more than this. In brief, Christian identity is so vague that the theologians are able to mold it to fit their specific theories as they progress. This serves to remove the ethereal "true" Christian from the effects of what "false" Christians enact.

As I have often commented, the above ideas and explanations constitute a lapse into unauthentic thought about the Holocaust. In the next section of this chapter, we will see if these theologians are able to return to a more appropriate perspective and approach.

The Reformulations and Reinterpretations
of the
Post-Holocaust Christian Faith

Ruether's confrontation with the Holocaust raises a straight forward question: can Christianity still affirm the Redemption in view of six million murdered Jews in the centre of Christian Europe? The immediate response is "no". Ruether therefore understands her task to be a reinterpretation of the person of Jesus and the Christian faith. Her goal is to eradicate triumphalism, supersessionism, and the belief in a realized eschatology. The revision strives to reflect the unredeemed nature of the world, and the precarious human situation. The author hopes to invest a genuine faith in Jesus without simultaneously saying, "and the Jews be damned" (Ruether 1974:246).

Ruether claims that any reformulation of the Christian faith must be guided by the Jewish understanding of messianic times. The arrival of a messiah represents only half of the hope for redemption: it must be accompanied by a concrete change in the corrupt nature of existence. Since this change did not occur with the coming of Jesus, Ruether redefines him as the "proleptic Christ". The ministry of Jesus exposed points of contact for potential eschatological encounters. His principle message that "the Kingdom of God was at hand" was meant to direct human vision toward the future "eschatological horizon" (Ruether 1974:255) of existence. In this manner, Jesus instilled a desire to seek out redemption.

His words and deeds inspired the human being to bring history into collision with religious ideals of right living.

From this understanding, Ruether suggests that Jesus may be remembered as the person who actualized this eschatological orientation. He revealed a way of being-in-the-world that exists within the tension of "what is" and "what ought to be". Christians may therefore view Jesus

as a paradigm of that final hope which has not yet been accomplished, but still lies ahead of our present possibilities. This memory may then be reexperienced as a paradigm again and again, in that community which preserves this memory, providing the pattern for experiencing the eschatological in history (Ruether 1974:248).

As this passage suggests, through the life of Jesus, Christians experience a "foretaste" (Ruether 1974:250) of the final fulfillment of the world. However, it is only a glimpse of the Redemption. Ruether repeatedly notes that the coming of Jesus is not "the final eschatological event in history..." (Ruether 1974:248) Rather, he represents only one possible way to support a hope for the future reign of God.

This revision of the message of Jesus forms Ruether's understanding of the resurrection. In keeping with the unredeemed nature of existence, Ruether must confirm that Jesus died on the cross. Yet, the story of his resurrection communicates an essential theme of his mission: "Easter is hope against what remains of the reality of the cross" (Ruether 1979:251). The resurrection therefore denotes the

continued affirmation of hope in spite of the trials and tribulations of life. It is the resurrected message of hope and faith in God that lives on after the life and death of Jesus. Hence, "(t)his is the paradigm through which Christianity mediates encounter with God and constantly reawakens messianic hope, projecting again upon the future what has been absolutized in its past moment of experience" (Ruether 1974:255).

Thus, the proleptic Christ serves to emphasize the unredeemed nature of existence which appears not to contradict the Jewish comprehension of the messianic ideal. This also rids Christianity of its belief in the spiritualization and historicization of a realized eschatology. Since Jesus is referred to as a paradigm, Ruether implies that he is not God incarnate, and consequently, Christianity cannot claim to possess the perfect formula for salvation. These relativizations prevent the supersessionary and triumphant perspectives from dominating Christian doctrine. As such, Christianity no longer has an ideological foundation that abrogates the Jewish people and tradition. Christianity along with Judaism, now waits and hopes for the final redemption of the world through God. But for Christians, this hope is mediated and expressed in the life of Jesus.

For Pawlikowski, we have already noted that "human autonomy is the principle theological issue to arise out of reflection on the Auschwitz experience" (Pawlikowski 1984:45). The task of post-Holocaust Christian thought is to

contain and channel the revolutionary sense of freedom-consciousness, so that it works with God, instead of against her or him. The cap-stone for this explosive self-awareness can only be discovered in a "fresh sense of transcendence". That is, humanity needs a relationship to God which limits freedom-consciousness while nurturing its growth and expression.

This goal is ultimately connected with Pawlikowski's concern for the spiritualizing and historicizing of the eschatological. On one level, these world views point to humanity's intimate relation to God, and the unique role of co-creator. On another level, these eschatological categories reveal the nature of the human condition. It is this "bond between historical consciousness and inner consciousness" (Pawlikowski 1978:18) which forms authentic existence, accounting for the unique freedom of humanity as a creature of God.

Pawlikowski expresses the profound link between God and the human being by providing a different view, or story, of the Creation. The author suggests that God separated his or her humanity from the godhead "in order to develop and become truly God" (Pawlikowski 1978:21). This description denotes three essential aspects about the nature of the divine-human relationship.

First, it suggests that humanity shares in the existence of God. That is, there is an ontological continuity between the individual and the divine. This connection similarly points to the principle foundation of human identity; namely

God. Second, the description also accounts for the ontological discontinuity between humankind and God. Since humanity was "separated" from God, there is also a profound difference between their natures. Together, the ontological continuity and discontinuity, indicates our third point: the human role of co-creator, and its implication of co-responsibility. The ontological continuity implies a purpose. By fulfilling the role of co-creator, the human being assists God in bringing about the redemption of humanity. The ontological discontinuity allows the human freedom necessary to carry out this purpose. Yet, at the same time, this freedom makes humanity co-responsible for the fate of the world. Thus, the human being is granted his or her freedom, but it is a freedom limited by co-creatorship and co-responsibility.

According to Pawlikowski, this type of divine-human relationship was not immediately obvious to humankind. Upon separation from the godhead, humanity was left to rediscover a proper orientation to the life-source. This search for identity led to many false conclusions. One such conclusion was the paternalistic understanding of God which inspired the Holocaust. In effect, humanity has yet to truly understand their role of co-creator, and its demand of co-responsibility. However, Pawlikowski suggests the answer is explicit in the story of Jesus Christ. The author writes that the traditional christology

tried to express a new sense of how profoundly humanity is embedded in the divine self-definition. The ultimate significance of this Christology lies in its revelation of the grandeur of humanity...Incarnational Christology can help the human person realise that he or she shares in the very life and existence of God (Pawlikowski 1984:47).

Although Jesus represents the ultimate expression of the divine-human connection, his crucifixion reminds humanity of the ontological gap between God and the individual. Indeed, "this is the ultimate explanation of why Jesus had to die on the cross" (Pawlikowski 1979:162), illustrating that human freedom and the divine presence exist within certain limits and boundaries.

What, then, is the ministry of Jesus all about? Pawlikowski suggests that humanity learns they do not have to overcome the Creator God in order to fulfill their sense of dignity and autonomy. In fact the opposite is true: only by working in harmony with the divine reality is true freedom expressed. Thus, as co-creator, the human being realizes "the bond between inner consciousness and historical consciousness". This is the core meaning of salvation through Christ; it brings "wholeness" (Pawlikowski 1979:162) to the human condition.

With Littell's reinterpretation, the difficulty to be addressed is the nature and character of the true Christian community. Although he asks, "(w)as Jesus a false messiah?" (Littell 1975:17) the question is not pursued. Thus, Littell's concern is not centred on the meaning and message.

of Jesus, but with the meaning and message of the community who profess to follow the Christ. Consequently, the author understands the post-Holocaust task to be the reorientation of the community of faith toward an authentic structure and expression.

Considering Littell's critique of positive Christianity, he believes the true Christian community is the polar opposite of culture-religion. "The basic nature of the church as a pilgrim people, as a community of disciplined witness, as a general priesthood living in anticipation of a better age to come" (Littell 1975:123) is the fundamental constitution of authentic Christianity. It denotes a return to the "counterculture" (Littell 1975:21) roots of early Christianity. It declares a "prophetic and discordant" (Littell 1975:21) role within the world, formed by a concrete and historical sense of vocation. Such a transformation in community, can only be accomplished by a concomitant change in religious consciousness. The latter is affected by reinvesting faith with the primal desire "to remember, to recaptulate, to reenact primordial events" (Littell, 1975:124) that direct the person toward the original vision of the church. By returning to the counterculture roots of Christianity, Littell believes that Christianity will once again be a genuine force within the world.

One key to understanding Christianity as a counter-culture is Littell's examination of the Christians who resisted the Nazis. The behavior of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Littell 1975:49-51) and Kurt Gerstein (Littell 1975:53-55) exemplify

the quintessential spirit and purpose of the Christian counterculture. Both these men died for their efforts to uphold true Christianity. They were the Suffering Servants of Isaiah, "willing to draw the knife to win Isaac" (Littell 1975:57), acting against the primary sentiments and beliefs of gentile Christianity. However, the martyrs Bonhoeffer and Gerstein were the exception. As Littell asserts time and again, the majority of Christians "betrayed the life into which they were called" (Littell 1975:80). They failed to comprehend that "culture is shaped by faith" (Littell 1975:90), and not faith by culture.

As we saw in section one of this chapter, the Eckardts have a complex view of the relation between Christianity and the Holocaust. In spite of their deliberations on the devil, this concept fades from view as they concentrate on resolving the theological dilemma inherent in the anti-Judaic tradition. Here their efforts turn to eradicating the problem of the "consummated Resurrection..." (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:130). However, it is primarily Roy Eckardt's book, Jews and Christians, that addresses this issue. This work better articulates the themes only briefly considered in Long Night's Journey into Day. Still, Roy Eckardt's text has many important points in common with the earlier collaborative work, and therefore, our exposition will depend on both studies.

Roy Eckardt makes an interesting suggestion when he writes, that despite the Holocaust experience, "(t)he teachings that victimize human beings" in Christianity "are

promulgated as much today as they ever were" (Eckardt 1986:150). For the concerned Christian, this fact sadly points to the rootedness of the consummated resurrection in Christian belief. Because of this, many may feel to have no alternative but to abandon the Christian faith. Eckardt finds this predicament most tragic. Must the true Christian sacrifice his or her relationship to the God of Israel in order that the children of Israel be allowed to survive? Consequently, Eckardt's task is to discover a way to abandon the doctrine of the consummated resurrection, while still maintaining a special Christian bond to the God of Israel.

Astonishingly, Eckardt resolves this dilemma through the modern State of Israel. The restoration of Israel is the "historical witness that God continues to accept human beings wholly apart from the Resurrection of Jesus/Christ" (Eckardt 1986:155). Therefore, the God whom Christians have worshipped for centuries, cares for the well being of those who rejected the Christ. This is the truth that Christians must come to realize. It is not necessary to profess the resurrection in a way that triumphs and supersedes other faiths and peoples. Salvation, and redemption, does not come solely through the Christ, but ultimately through the grace of God: "...the act of accepting the unacceptable" (Eckardt 1986:89).

The idea of divine grace is the basis of Eckardt's reformulation. This doctrine suggests that "there is nothing here of achieved goodness" (Eckardt 1986:89). That is, God does not hand out specific awards for particular "virtuous"

acts. This conclusion is perhaps the only positive lesson to be learned from the consummated Resurrection. Its logic suggests that the faithful Christian must force their belief on others in order to carry out the will of God. The result is often disastrous for other people, namely the Jews. Christian "good intention" does not alter the situation. To counteract this triumphant tendency, Eckardt believes that Christians, and Jews, must affirm the saving God, the graceful God. For Christians, the message is;

...(y)our victimization of Jews and Judaism is in no way a function of your human acceptance by God and hence it is not necessary to your acceptance of yourself. You simply do not need any such "works-righteousness" or "works-unrighteousness". You do not even have to be "religious" (Eckardt 1986:155).

In this way, the caring Christian is assured that those who abandon traditional christology are accepted by God. However, Eckardt wonders if there may be a way to maintain the Christian's relationship to its historical religious faith in the God of Israel? As intimated in Long Night's Journey Into Day, such a relationship can only be proclaimed if Christians share in the history, fate, and destiny of the Jewish people.

The link to the Jewish people and the revived State of Israel may be incorporated into Christianity through the Jewish identity of Jesus. In the post-Holocaust age, Jesus cannot be portrayed as the universal human archetype. On the contrary, Jesus was a faithful child of Israel, "a specialist in celebrating the image of God" (Eckardt 1986:153). Because

of Jesus' loyalty and dedication to the Jewish tradition, Alice and Roy Eckardt suggest that the followers of Jesus have the potential to participate in the Jewish community. Therefore, Jesus may be thought of as

the joy that ends the desolation of those who have been without hope. Jesus is a second Abraham, the Abraham of the gentiles, patriarch to the pagans. We who are gentiles must somehow be rescued from religion, from all those pitiful gods that tempt us, from all our idolatries. When Jesus is turned into an idol-- seven words that form a most fitting single title for the whole story of Christendom-- we are only returned to our sins, our idolatries, our hopelessness. The Christian is given the chance to live out a unique and independently valid challenge to be an adopted child of God, within the covenant of promise. In the course of his pilgrimage from time to eternity, the Christian must never leave the bedrock of Jewish historicalness. It gives meaning to his life, ever helping him to separate truth from heresy, (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:126).

In this fashion, Jesus the Jew is a point of contact between Israel and the gentiles. The faith of Jesus extends to those who see him as essential to their belief in God. As such, the loyal Christian is brought near the God Israel, guiding the individual toward an authentic existence.

One might suspect that affirming the historical Jesus refutes the resurrection altogether: not so for Roy Eckardt.⁷ Although he abrogates the consummated resurrection, he nevertheless feels there is room for a valid reinterpretation. The author supports the resurrection story forwarded by J. (Coos) Schoneveld. This Dutch theologian believes the resurrection exemplifies "the validation of the

Torah and vindication of the Jewish people as God's beloved people" (Eckardt 1986:85). The resurrection confirms the value and relevance of Judaism. The Jew Jesus, faithful to Torah, died "for the sanctification of God's Name" (Eckardt 1986:85). Jesus' life story attests to the power and mercy of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As such, the resurrection of Jesus is another episode in the sacred story of Israel. But, it is one that brings the gentile into the divine promise.

The above reformulations and reinterpretations of the meaning and message of post-Holocaust Christianity will be analyzed in two ways. First, we will consider how the proposed changes support or undermine Christian belief. Here the role of theologian is emphasized. As representatives of their respective communities, do their revisions mediate the difficult questions facing the modern Christian? Or, are the problems compounded? Second, we will investigate the relationship between their hypotheses and Judaism. Do these post-Holocaust theologians succeed in creating a fair attitude towards the parent faith? Or, do they perpetuate the anti-Judaic tradition?

As we noted earlier, Ruether's revision of Jesus as paradigm relativizes his message and meaning for Christians. The Proleptic Christ only anticipates the final redemption by exemplifying a way toward the goal. This understanding of Jesus, however, may raise some serious pangs of Christian conscience. For to relinquish belief in the Incarnation may seem like betrayal to many honest believers. Ruether seems

to forget that viewing Jesus as God involves more than intellectual assent. It includes long-standing loyalties and emotional bonds that are tied to important concerns. It would seem that a responsible theologian should be sensitive to this factor, especially if one wishes to affect Christian praxis.

Thus, is Jesus as paradigm a significant replacement for the incarnationalist point of view? It is difficult to say. However, if Jesus is a human model only, why should he be given priority over other potential models of behavior? Ruether's answer denotes the eschatological message of Jesus as the unique quality which deserves Christian faith. But, is this enough to substantiate a sense of vocation and devotion? It seems unlikely. Faith is a broad stream of impulses requiring a variety of sources and orientations for growth. As a dynamic process, faith focuses on a number of different concerns not within the purview of the "eschatological horizon". In this way, Ruether's reformulation seems to deny Jesus a sacred uniqueness that inspires worship and prayer. After all, how does one ask for strength, guidance, or forgiveness from a paradigm? Faith is more than exempla, it is also a dialogue with God.

These criticisms underscore the major gap in Ruether's deliberations. The author does not consider in detail what kind of relationship the Christian can have with God as a follower of the proleptic Christ. Her insistence that hope becomes the central affirmation lacks foundation. Along with Pawlikowski, one may question what this hope is based on.⁸

Part of the answer may be revealed when we consider Ruether's revision in relation to Judaism. For now, it is important to note Ruether's failure to address the basic questions of the traditional believer. For if it is not this person that she is trying to convince, her efforts may be inconsequential.

If Ruether's revision neglects to fully articulate the nature of the relationship to God, Pawlikowski's revision makes it the centre of his study. He forwards an understanding of Jesus as the Christ which stresses the human-God ontological connection. Pawlikowski believes this perspective will foster an abiding respect for co-creatorship and co-responsibility.

Considering the difficulties that arise with Ruether's relativization of Jesus, it may be that Pawlikowski communicates a profound note by emphasizing the spiritualizing and historicizing of the eschatological. As he suggests, any reformulation of the Christian message must provide for "the healing of the inner person..." (Pawlikowski 1978:18). But, does Pawlikowski achieve this by making the God-human relationship too intimate? That is, does he go beyond his interpretation of traditional christology so that the possibility of relation is overwhelmed by incarnation?

Our exposition of Pawlikowski suggests that he supports the traditional christology of the Church. The difference is one of emphasis. The author lays more stress upon the human being's God-image, and intimates that each individual has the resources to make condescent his or her divine spark. As he remarks, "in a very real sense God did not become man in

Jesus...God always was man. The Christ event was merely the occasion through which this reality became clearly manifest to the world" (Pawlikowski 1979:161-62). It would follow from this explanation, that the ontological discontinuity represented by the crucifixion is lost. If "God always was man", what difference exists between the creature and the Creator? Here the potential for incarnation eclipses the potential for relation. In effect, Pawlikowski's revision mirrors the difficulty he hoped to correct: the desire to supplant the "Creator God".

Littell's revision, as we have seen, neglects to comment on christology. This may be viewed as a weakness in his argument. Nevertheless, his discussion of the true Christian community makes central an important issue. It illustrates that salvation depends on one's relationship and responsibility to, their fellowperson. Yet, is Littell's description of the true Christian community as counterculture a reasonable hypothesis? Ultimately, his definition does not suffice.

Littell's understanding of original Christianity as a counterculture is not wholly inaccurate. Also, there are grounds for such a position within the New Testament. However, Littell overemphasizes the importance and purpose of the counterculture ideal. To represent such a movement, it seems logical that the community be aware of its role. That is, it is a stance which requires a conscious decision, and acceptance of such a world view. In the case of the early Christians, conscious acceptance of the counterculture role

does not really apply. Although this community did contrast the dominant culture of its day, it was more accidental than a planned response. A person became a Christian to be a member of a community in itself, and not to fulfill a counterculture ideology. Indeed, an overall Christian ambition was to make itself the religion of the majority. This ambition was fulfilled when Christianity joined forces with the Roman Empire. Any vestiges of a counterculture sentiment have since been erased.

Consequently, Littell's statements referring to the abandonment of "true" counterculture Christianity by the "baptized gentiles" is historically inaccurate, and sentimental. Littell seems to believe that Christians can resolve their difficulties by simply obliterating 1600 years of Christian culture-religion. Yet, even if one were to accept Littell's idea quite apart from its historical problems, another difficulty arises. In plain terms, how can the majority culture realistically become counterculture? This aspect points toward a more serious problem with Littell's argument. Judging from his consideration of Bonhoeffer and Gerstein, it would seem that Littell views the counterculture role as contiguous with martyrdom. The Eckardts suggest that this type of doctrine represents the "suffering servant syndrome" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:120). This phrase refers to the glorification of suffering as a legitimate path to God. Such a belief will not serve to prohibit another Holocaust, but it may very well assist it.

Martyrology is not an appropriate belief for a community

which controls the centres of power in society. With power is given the opportunity to manipulate the lives of minority groups. When this situation is coupled with a valuation of suffering, the potential for oppression is an ever present danger. However, this danger is often deflected when a power group adheres to martyrology. For how can a community of "would-be" martyrs impose suffering on others? Thus, insofar that the Christian community represents a power group in Western society, martyrology is not an appropriate doctrine. What is required is a belief system which supports the responsible use of power in ways that prevent the oppression of minority groups. For Littell to suggest that Christians should be countercultural, is not a realistic alternative nor a suitable attitude for the modern Christian. In light of this, Pawlikowski's emphasis on co-creatorship and co-responsibility represents authentic concerns of the post-Holocaust age.

The reformulation of Christian belief by Alice and Roy Eckardt is marked by a branching out into new avenues of thought and imagination. This description surely applies to Roy Eckardt's unusual solution to the consummated resurrection and its reinterpretation. At this stage of our critique, we will focus on the Eckardts' understanding of "Christian Jewishness" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:125), and the concept of Grace.

The term "Christian Jewishness" accurately reflects the Eckardts' revision of Christianity for the post-Holocaust age. Judging from the importance given to the restored State

of Israel, the stress on the Jewish heritage of Jesus, and the support of J. (Coos) Schoneveld's resurrection story, it seems that "Christian Jewishness" expresses a significant qualitative change for Christian self-definition. But, what is the ultimate picture presented, and can the Christian believer appreciate this change in identity?

According to Roy Eckardt, Christianity "is not to be reduced to a version of Judaism..." (Eckardt 1986:88) Therefore Christian Jewishness does not imply the appropriation of Halakhah, nor other central aspects of Jewish life. But how is a Christian to cultivate a feeling for Jewishness if they do not participate in those very aspects that substantiate Jewish identity? This question underscores the ambiguity of the Eckardts' revision.

Roy Eckardt's use of the State of Israel to negate the consummated resurrection is difficult to evaluate. It seems to suggest that Israel has religious significance for Christianity, yet Eckardt contests "that Israel is a special event within the spiritual life of the Jewish people and the Jewish people alone" (Eckardt 1986:80). In other words, he does not support certain Christian fundamentalist interpretations which cast the revived Israel in the drama of events precipitating the Second Coming. It would appear that Israel does not have a positive religious significance for Christianity, but a negative one, insofar as it removes the necessity of the consummated resurrection for acceptance by God. Still, Eckardt views this negation as a positive affirmation of Christianity, that is, post-Holocaust

Christianity. Inevitably, this reasoning makes Israel a post-Holocaust Christian event as well as a Jewish event. The point is, Israel has import for Christian self-understanding. Whether this understanding be a fundamentalist or a post-Holocaust interpretation, the effect is the same. In both cases, the return to Israel somehow advances Christianity toward its ultimate meaning. Granted, the Christian post-Holocaust "ultimate" is radically different from the Christian fundamentalist understanding. However, it is the thought structure that is similar. The Jewish return to Israel is not respected in itself as a Jewish triumph. Somehow, the Christian mind-set makes this event a triumph for Christianity.

The above difficulty with Eckardt's use of the State of Israel is reflected in the resurrection story offered by J. (Coos) Schoneveld. The significance of this story for Eckardt is its renunciation of triumphalism and supersessionism. This is accomplished by emphasizing the Jewish identity of Jesus, which suggests that the resurrection is a Jewish event. At first glance, this revision may seem to be significant. But, in the final analysis, this emphasis on Jewishness seems contrived rather than authentic. First, it cannot be known for certain if Jesus was faithful to Torah. Yet whether the answer is "yes" or "no", the issue does not really affect faith. The followers of Jesus have persisted not because he was a faithful Jew, but because he is understood as the Christ. To remove this essential factor and replace it with a symbolic

Jewishness, means that Christians will be worshipping "Jewishness". This is neither appropriate nor realistic. Second, the resurrection cannot be a Jewish event if Jews do not recognize it as such.⁹ It may be that Eckardt can push aside two thousand years of understanding Jesus as the Christ, but it seems unlikely that the Jews could ever forget its consequences. Because of this, to suggest the resurrection is a Jewish event is to impose a model of Jewishness on the still-existing-Jewish people, that does not assist their struggle with God. On the contrary, it only assists the post-Holocaust Christians.

However, as indicated in our discussion on Eckardt's reformulation, it is the concept of Grace which ultimately substantiates his claims. Even if one discards the "Christian Jewishness" hypothesis, it is still possible to suggest that Christians are accepted by God, because "(w)here sin abounds, grace abounds the more. Grace says: 'You are accepted'" (Eckardt 1986:89). Yet, this may be the one aspect of Eckardt's revision that many Christians could accept. This is possible because the concept of "Grace over works" is a traditional Christian doctrine. It is tied to the idea that the son of God died for the sins of humanity. Because of the divine atonement, humankind need only have faith in Jesus Christ to be saved. In effect, Eckardt excludes an essential part of the doctrine of Grace, and applies it to the God of Israel. Consequently, this shift reflects a triumphant perspective. If Eckardt wants the Christian concept of God, he should do so without imposing it

on the Jewish understanding of the divine-human relationship.

This last factor brings us to the second part of this analysis: the relationship between the reformulations and the Jewish tradition. It is this relationship which reflects the adequacy of the post-Holocaust interpretation of Christianity. The implicit goal of their deliberations is to substantiate the integrity and distinctiveness of Christianity. That is, despite their negation of traditional Christian doctrine, these post-Holocaust thinkers do not want to suggest that Christianity is less worthy, or less valuable than Judaism: but that these faiths are co-equal.

For Rosemary Ruether, the task of making Christians co-equals with the Jewish people centres on the issue of Jewish election. For, if the proleptic Christ does not inaugurate a "new election or covenant", does not the Jewish covenant nullify the relativized Christian relationship to the God of Israel? In other words, if Jesus is not God, why should the Christians not convert to Judaism? Ruether answers this in two ways.

First, the author suggests that the proleptic Christ is in keeping with the Jewish dialectic between particularism and universalism. As Ruether remarks, the Jewish conception "accepts the general humanity and possibility for salvation of others, without trying to define their identity for them" (Ruether 1974:254). In this way, a Christian has the right to interpret a special relation with the God of Israel through Jesus. By embracing this Jewish dialectic, each community is free to develop its own self-definition, and a

particular kind of divine-human relationship. This suggestion seems most appropriate. Such a development need not threaten Jewish particularism, as long as Christian self-definition is a particular definition, and not thrust upon the Jews against their will.

The second way Ruether affirms the mutuality of Judaism and Christianity is by equivocating the nature and character of the two groups. She suggests that the Jewish people are not exceptionally different from the Christian community. Both religions incorporate a variety of nationalities, joined together by a shared belief system. According to Ruether, "Jews in the Diaspora have long since ceased to be identifiable as descendents of a local Semitic tribe. Even the Nazis were unable to describe the Jews genetically as a 'race'" (Ruether 1974:252-53). In this instance Ruether violates the particularist-universalist dialectic. She denies the Jews the right to define themselves as a nationality, and worse, summons Nazi authority to support her claim. The author feels "(t)hey are a people only because they have all adopted the Jewish covenantal identity" (Ruether 1974:253). Therefore, it seems that Ruether must relativize Jewish particularism in order to assert the post-Holocaust Christian particularism. The idea of Jewish national election by God threatens Ruether's relativized comprehension of Christianity because following a paradigm does not guarantee a relationship to the God of Israel. For this reason, Ruether must make the Jewish people into a "voluntary" peoplehood. Consequently, the author's revision

of Christianity furthers the anti-Judaic sentiment in a Christian post-Holocaust form.

For Pawlikowski, the relation between his conception of post-Holocaust Christianity and Judaism is largely based on his reading of the Christ event. As we noted, the author views Jesus Christ as the ultimate manifestation of the proper human condition: the synchronization of the divine image and creatureliness. Pawlikowski claims that this conception is not completely foreign to Jewish thought. In fact, the author traces its roots to the Pharisaic movement. Pawlikowski suggests that incarnationism is a logical extension of the Pharisaic stress on the internalization of Torah. In each case, the sacred value of the individual is intensified. Yet Pawlikowski does not explain christology as merely an extreme expression of the Pharisaic tendency, but as its perfection. He understands "the final version of the church's christology as the culmination of the Jewish tradition" and "the fulfillment of the growing sense of the dignity and uniqueness of the human person..." (Pawlikowski 1979:162). Therefore, Pawlikowski's revision perpetuates the triumphant and supersessionary aspects of Christianity.

For Littell, the very title of his text, The Crucifixion of the Jews, suggests that he understands the Jewish people to be quasi-Christians. This designation seems plausible in light of Littell's support of martyrology. In an attempt to shock Christian sensibilities, he asks; "(i)s the Jewish people, after all inspite of two millennia of Christian calumny, the true Suffering Servant promised in Isaiah?"

(Littell 1975:17). In other words, Littell wonders if the Jews might be the "true" Christians. Here the author imposes the Christian understanding of the suffering servant model on Jewish identity.

This aspect is supported by Littell's claim that the Jewish people represent an authentic expression of the counterculture community. In fact Littell believes that the Jews were murdered because they were "an unpleasant reminder that New Testament standards require Christians to be a counterculture too..." (Littell 1975:78) This reasoning suggests that the Jew is always the victim. Similarly, it views the Holocaust experience as an affirmation of the Jewish faith, ignoring the challenge it presents to the modern Jew. Ultimately, this represents another side to the "suffering servant syndrome". Littell's understanding of the true Christian community seems to maintain the teaching of contempt for the Jews and Judaism.

Concerning the Eckardts' revision, our discussion of "Christian Jewishness" necessarily focused on the relationship between post-Holocaust Christianity and Judaism. There we noted that there are some difficulties with Roy Eckardt's use of the State of Israel; his support for J. (Coos) Schoneveld's reinterpretation of the resurrection; and, Alice and Roy Eckardt's affirmation of the Jewish identity of Jesus. Also, we commented that Roy Eckardt's deliberation on the doctrine of Grace implies the traditional Christian concept of divine atonement. Nevertheless, it is a doctrine which he sees as valid for Jewish belief. It is to

this aspect of Eckardt's revision that we now turn.

According to Roy Eckardt, the idea of works-righteousness is no longer a valid belief for Christians or Jews. We noted earlier that such a consideration is not alien to Christian belief, but what about for Judaism? For traditional Jewish thought, to abrogate works-righteousness would undermine the very core of rabbinic Judaism: Halakhah. Undoubtedly, Eckardt is well aware of this factor. However, he is able to offer his concept of Grace to the Jews by following Irving Greenberg's idea of "the voluntary covenant". Greenberg's theory suggests that after the Holocaust, a Jew must choose to be a member in the covenantal community. This belief focuses on the primacy of conscience over divine election and its subsequent Halakhic obligations. In effect, the Jew is no longer bound to works-righteousness.

In light of Greenberg's understanding of post-Holocaust Judaism, Eckardt can affirm that the Jew and the Christian are both ultimately accepted by God, as reflected in the restoration of the State of Israel. Thus, for both communities, works-righteousness no longer has a place in the divine-human relationship. All is dependent upon "a voice that says 'I accept you'" (Eckardt 1986:88). It is because of the graceful God that a Jewish-Christian encounter is still possible after the Holocaust.

The problem with the above relationship between Eckardt's revision and Judaism is three-fold. First, his reliance on Greenberg's theory is premature. That is, Greenberg is not representative of the majority Jewish perspective toward the

covenant. If Eckardt's goal is to foster genuine Christian relations with the Jewish people, then he cannot so easily bypass the rabbinic understanding of Halakhah.

Second, Eckardt's suggestion that the doctrine of works-righteousness leads to "works-unrighteousness" (Eckardt 1986:155) is only applicable if the values one enacts are corrupt. For Eckardt, this may be true for Christianity, but it is not necessarily true for Judaism. The Christian problem with works-righteousness arises when they assume to be the bearers of universal truth, and then force this truth on others against their will. This has never been a problem for rabbinic Judaism. Jewish works-righteousness, or Halakhah, is particular to the Jewish people. Thus, if Eckardt is sincere when he writes "that belief-systems are ever subject to judgment at the hands of their human consequences" (Eckardt 1986:135), then there is no reason why Judaism must see Halakhah as contrary to authentic faith.

In light of this, our third point is, that Eckardt's notion of Grace may be a "cheap grace" (Littell 1975:44). Essentially, he is suggesting that God accepts every human being no matter what they have done. Although he differentiates acceptance from personal redemption, his theory nevertheless attributes a characteristic to God which at best can be a story, a midrash, but not a certainty. And if it is a midrash, is it the appropriate one for Christians to forward after the Holocaust? Implicit in Eckardt's theory of Grace is the notion of forgiveness. Yet, forgiveness for Christian complicity during the Holocaust is something that

can only be given by the murdered victims of the Holocaust. Forgiveness here is not God's to give. It may well be that Eckardt senses this, and therefore ignores the connection between divine Grace and the traditional Christian doctrine of divine atonement. The above factors, together with the Eckardts' understanding of Christian Jewishness, illustrates the triumphant tendency in this reformulation.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the post-Holocaust theological revision, we are presented with a Jesus who is a paradigm; a Christ who is a candescent God-image; a counterculture Christian community; and, a Christian Jewishness substantiated by Grace. An obvious question arises; are these reformulations and reinterpretations the product of confronting the Holocaust? Or, are they the result of other kinds of reflection? It seems that one does not need the Holocaust to suggest any of the above revisions. Indeed, as we illustrated in part one of this chapter, each thinker moves back from a direct confrontation with the event. But why then the pretense of confrontation? A possible answer is that their initial recognition of Christian support for the Nazi Final Solution is accurate. In this sense, they are right to struggle with the dilemma. The Christian religion does foster antisemitic attitudes and behavior. The ultimate truth of this assertion is provided by the post-Holocaust theologians themselves.

The difficulties reflected by these Christian thinkers is no light matter. Ruether, Pawlikowski, Littell, and the Eckardts, represent a radical stream in Christian thought. Their ideas are extreme in comparison to the more traditional perspective. Yet, their considerations do not transcend the anti-Judaic sentiment, but contribute. Their investigations reflect the perennial Christian difficulties. The tendency to be triumphant and supersessionist; to overspiritualize; to impose self-definition on other groups; and to lack a clear understanding of Christian identity. Perhaps Roy Eckardt summarizes the problem best when he writes; "(t)he difficulty is that...[they are] striving to have things two ways: to be fair and just to Jews while retaining a theological position that has, historically, caused all the unfairness and all the injustice" (Eckardt 1986:137).

However, it may seem that my own critique is unfair. First, I fault the theologians for their perpetuation of traditional Christian theology and its anti-Judaic bias. Second, I fault them for relativizing Jesus Christ and abandoning the traditional believer. I feel this contradiction points to a basic truth for Jewish-Christian dialogue: that, there must necessarily be a serious tension between the two faiths. Christianity and Judaism are very different. Their dialogue will not be facilitated by making Jesus into a human being only, or by attempting to return to a pristine Jewish eschatological cult. Dialogue does not necessarily require acceptance of the same faith claims or concerns. That is, two groups engaging in conversation about

their respective faiths do not need to have the exact same conceptions of God for such an encounter to be productive. What is required is a deep respect for religious pluralism, and the recognition that such differences between religious world views add to the richness of our lives.^o Perhaps the Jewish-Christian dialogue should be a forum to assist the other in the struggle for authentic faith as they define it. This goal may be better served through contrast than similitude. Such a contrast, however, need not be antagonistic.

Yet, this idea of "serious tension" does not relinquish the Christian from searching for ways to correct its anti-Judaic tradition. Here, a Jew can encourage the Christian to continue the struggle, and remind him, that the anti-Judaic sentiment is still a problem despite the efforts of certain post-Holocaust theologians.

CHAPTER THREE

"Opening Statements":

Dimensions of the Jewish-Christian Post-Holocaust
Dialogue

Introduction

Although the Holocaust is an event that underscores deep divisions between the Jewish people and the Christian community, it is also an event that seems to force these two groups toward a frank encounter. For the Jewish theologians examined in this work, the principle issue of the post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue is the question of Christian culpability for the events of the Holocaust. The primary concern for the Christian thinker, is to demonstrate that their confrontation with the Holocaust has resulted in a better understanding of the Jewish people and their religious tradition. Yet in the final analysis, the post-Holocaust dialogue arises because of the Jewish and Christian hope that such an event will never reoccur.

However, despite this mutual concern to prevent another Holocaust, the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust dialogue is a difficult and trying endeavour. It requires that each side wrestle with some painful episodes from their religious histories. Yet because of this cathartic aspect, the post-Holocaust dialogue may prove to be an unique opportunity to reconstruct the Jewish-Christian relationship. The

forthright quality of the Holocaust encounter may actually serve to purge this relationship of its past prejudices and biases. Our purpose is to discover if the post-Holocaust theological reformation serves as the starting point for such a regeneration.

In the first section of this chapter we will examine the "Post-Holocaust Jewish Attitudes Toward Christianity". In the second part we will consider the "Post-Holocaust Christian Attitudes Toward the State of Israel". What these reflections will illustrate is that the post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue is still in its initial stages. Each party is searching for a point of contact while coping with an unfamiliar religious tradition, and the difficult emotions that such an encounter stimulates. As such, some of their comments suggest that this "dialogue" is more a monologue. However, such a conclusion mistakes an awkward introduction for a stormy farewell. What we witness in this exchange are the "opening statements" of the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust encounter. Although this dialogue is not free of all disaffection, its basic direction is encouraging.

Post-Holocaust Jewish Attitudes Toward Christianity

For Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg, a response to Christianity in light of the Holocaust is deemed essential. Their comments underscore three central challenges for this dialogue: first, the recognition that the Holocaust may

represent an unbridgable lacuna for Jewish-Christian relations: second, that the Christian anti-Judaic tradition deepens the abyss separating the two communities: third, that the Christian reaction to the Nazi "Final Solution" indicates a tragic absence of Christian solidarity. Nevertheless, our Jewish theologians do not judge Christianity to be hopelessly compromised by the events of the Holocaust. But, they feel that any future relationship between Judaism and Christianity depends on reaching a common understanding of the post-Holocaust reality. This point of contact affirms the unredeemed nature of the world, and its ensuing ambiguity. As a result, "truth" is fragmented, partial, and particular, but never absolute.

Fackenheim begins his deliberations by clearly marking the problem to be overcome in the post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue. In keeping with the basic character of his argument, Fackenheim places this challenge squarely within the Holocaust world. He writes that "the arduous task" to be addressed is the "narrowing [of] the abyss between 'Aryans' and 'non-Aryans'--i.e., most Christians and all Jews-- created and legislated in 1933..." (Fackenheim 1982:279) For Fackenheim, the evaluative distinction between Jew and Christian is a profound wedge forming part of the persisting Holocaust rupture. The attempt to rebuild mutual trust and respect cannot be accomplished through facile theories or simplistic resolutions. Yet, Fackenheim does not despair over this dimension of the Jewish-Christian relationship. He prefers

to approach the problem by "attempt(ing) to enter into the Christian self-understanding, with a view to helping it confront the Holocaust. This is to serve the wider purpose of renewing-- of mending-- Jewish-Christian dialogue" (Fackenheim 1982:279). It is to this end that Fackenheim forwards his comments on Christianity.

Arthur Cohen understands his role in the Jewish-Christian dialogue to be pedagogical, as he introduces Christian theology to his hermeneutic of suspicion.¹ This perspective considers all theological exposition to be historically situated. As such, it represents one response by a specific community to particular situations. In this sense, theological insight can no longer be thought of as eternally true. The "suspicious" theologian is very much aware of this factor, and attempts to expose and deconstruct presuppositions of a particular doctrine which may no longer respond to the unique challenges of the present age. The theologian must rework the inadequate aspects of their religious tradition, and move toward a more appropriate expression of their faith.

Cohen suggests that the Jewish thinker may have an advantage when subjecting Christian theology to the hermeneutic of suspicion. The author believes that the historical experiences of the Jewish people naturally leads them toward a suspicion of any doctrine that offers a realized redemption. As Cohen states the matter, the Jew "is already conditioned to regard the world as a place where injustice is normative". (Cohen 1982:418). Thus, the Jewish

theologian can assist Christianity by acting as one pole in the critical pursuit of a new self-understanding.

For Irving Greenberg, the Jewish-Christian dialogue plays an important role throughout his work. He judges Christianity to be equally reorientated by the Holocaust and the restoration of the State of Israel. As a result, the Christian community is summoned to fulfill a role within the unfolding covenant along side the Jewish people. The concerned Christian must also redescribe their goals and aspirations, remaining open to the possibility of a new revelation after the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In the final analysis, the "task of faithful believers", whether Jew or Christian, "is not to rule out further illumination but to respond gratefully to any reorientating event that sheds light on the tactics, the goal, and the way" (Greenberg 1982:86).

In many ways, it seems that all three theologians are employing the hermeneutic of suspicion. In each case, Christianity is seen as vulnerable to events that affect human perception of the world. This understanding is carried forward when Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg reflect upon the relationship between Christianity and the Holocaust.

Although Fackenheim does not view Christianity to be directly responsible for the historical conditions that lead to the Holocaust, he nevertheless, understands it to have played an essential role.² Fackenheim writes that "without Jew-hatred in Christianity itself, Auschwitz, in the heart of Christian Europe, would have been impossible" (Fackenheim

1982:281). Yet, Fackenheim's analysis of the Christian problem does not focus on the anti-Judaic tradition. Instead, he tries to illuminate the existential crisis facing the Christian community, as revealed by the Holocaust experience.

According to the author, Christians missed a world historic opportunity to actualize the "Good News of Man" during the Holocaust. If they had attempted to prevent the death camps from operating, the principle Gospel message-- "to love one's neighbour"-- would have received its ultimate expression. But since this was not the case, Fackenheim concludes that "never" was a kairos more betrayed, the Holy Spirit more wounded, than when the Word was not spoken, and instead there was a dead, murderous silence" (Fackenheim 1982:291-92). It appears that Fackenheim directs Christian conscience to confront the possibility that this "murderous silence" indicates an abysmal emptiness: the absence of commitment, solidarity, and genuine community. The Christian failed to speak the Word when it was crying out to be spoken. As a result, the "Word" itself is depleted.

Fackenheim underscores this crisis by reflecting on the "Word made flesh". He wonders; "(w)here would Jesus of Nazareth have been in Nazi occupied Europe? If he was who he is said to have been, he would have gone to Auschwitz or Triblinka voluntarily..." (Fackenheim 1982:280-81) For Fackenheim then, the crux of the Christian problem is discovered by asking the simple question; "what would Jesus have done during the Holocaust?" Fackenheim's answer is meant to show the direction Christians should take in the

post-Holocaust age.

Cohen's examination of Christian responsibility for the events of the Holocaust, provides a glimpse of his hermeneutic of suspicion at work. Cohen suggests that patterns of Christian thought and meaning may have served as a veiled rationale for the Nazi "Final Solution". As the author notes, the ~~anti~~-Judaic scenario shows that "(t)he living Jew must become the dead Jew in order that the non-Jew be saved" (Cohen 1981:19).

This cryptic statement is argued more thoroughly in Cohen's article, "The Holocaust and Christian Theology: An Interpretation of the Problem". In this essay, Cohen reevaluates the Marcionite doctrine and its foundation in Christian thought. He believes that Marcion's separation of the "superior" and "true" Christian faith, from the "inferior" and "false" Jewish religion, is a distinction prefigured in the Gospel writings. What Marcion perceived was an illogical tension between the two faiths. If Christianity truly supersedes Judaism, and abrogates its laws and rituals as the New Testament proclaims, then the logical step to take is a complete divorce from the parent faith. In this light, Marcion's interpretation does not represent an aberration of Christian doctrine, but an exaggeration of an implicit understanding.

Cohen believes that the Church's suppression of the Marcionite heresy did not extinguish its inspiration. Its particularexert a powerful influence on the faithful. According to the author, it was this Marcionite impulse

toward separation from Judaism that was "renewed and strenuously advanced by the most potent anti-Jewish sectors of German Christian Biblical investigation during the last century, and on their own supplied a strengthened and invigorated strand in the historical matrix that was enacted at Auschwitz" (Cohen 1984:15). In effect, the relationship between Christianity and the Holocaust is mediated by the Marcionite tendency in Christian exegesis. It is the task of the post-Holocaust Christian to expose this aspect of Christian thought in its various manifestations.

Cohen's critique, however, does not end with a recommendation for theological deconstruction. Like Fackenheim, Cohen also points toward the failure of the Christian community to speak out against the Nazi atrocities. Yet, different from Fackenheim, Cohen focuses his argument on the established Church. He feels that the individual Christian has "nothing to apologize for" (Cohen 1982:421). The failure to act on behalf of the Jews during the Holocaust was aided by years of theological conditioning. The Church, on the other hand, is a different matter. This institution must be held accountable not only for its theology, but for its inability to provide genuine leadership. Cohen writes that

(i)n no direct challenge of this century has the Church behaved before tyranny with anything resembling the conduct of the most beleaguered community of Israel throughout its long diaspora existence. Not in Nazi Germany, nor in Vichy France, nor in Fascist Italy, nor in the Communist East, have Christians in any numbers chosen to say no and perish for their truth" (Cohen 1982:430).

This passage suggests that the hermeneutic of suspicion also applies to historical institutions. In this case, Cohen is responding to the Church's power to affect religious sentiment. It is a critique that addresses the historical situatedness of the religious adherent, who gages the appropriateness of their beliefs by referring to their religious leaders. For this reason, Cohen cannot ignore the role of the official Church in the process that lead to Auschwitz.

Irving Greenberg's comments on the relationship between Christianity and the Holocaust concentrates on the anti-Judaic tradition. He believes that

(i) if the Teaching of Contempt furnished an occasion-- or presented stereotypes which brought the Nazis to focus on the Jews as the scapegoat in the first place; or created a residue of anti-Semitism in Europe which affected the local populations' attitudes toward the Jews; or enabled some Christians to feel that they were doing God's duty in helping kill Jews or not stopping it-- then Christianity may be hopelessly and fatally compromised (Greenberg 1977:12).

As we can see, Greenberg's analysis leaves little room for Christianity to escape the grave implications of the Holocaust. Yet in spite of this judgment, the author believes that the Christian confrontation with its role during the Holocaust may prove to be a boon for its religious development. The eradication of the Teaching of Contempt may free the authentic "Gospel of love from...[its] incubus of evil and hatred" (Greenberg 1977:25). Such a deconstruction clears the way for an ultimate reconstruction.

What kind of issues, then, constitute a genuine Christian response to the Holocaust?

Fackenheim recommends that Christians must recognize that the "Good News that God saves in the Christ is itself broken by" (Fackenheim 1982:279) the Christian failure to resist the Nazi "Final Solution". It is for this reason that Fackenheim heralds the behavior of those few Christians who resisted the spirit of Nazism. These acts are the source for the Christian Tikkun, attesting to "the Word made flesh". Yet, this Christian Tikkun is only a partial mending. Fackenheim continues to emphasize that the death camp reality ruptures Christian belief.

One result of this rupture is the necessity to rethink the meaning of the divine atonement. Fackenheim believes it is impossible to genuinely advocate that the crucifixion vicariously atoned for all possible sin. For in the case of the Holocaust, Fackenheim asks, "(w)here is that sin vicariously atoned?" (Fackenheim 1982:285) The atonement as explained in Christian theology is overcome by the monstrous evil of the Holocaust experience. Basically, Fackenheim underscores the need for Christians to eradicate their belief in a realized redemption. Instead, Christian theology must cultivate a sense for the radical unredeemed nature of the world.

We have already noted Cohen's concern for applying his hermeneutic of suspicion, and thus far, it has revealed the Marcionite impulse of Christianity, and the shortcomings of the Church. It is these very kinds of limitations and

ambiguities that should guide the post-Holocaust Christian reconstruction. In this light, Cohen, like Fackenheim, believes it is impossible for Christians to suggest that Jesus' death atoned for the sins of humankind. He writes; "I cannot believe that any Christian theology of God who has already saved can make much sense after the tremendum..." (Cohen 1981: 76-77). Cohen, therefore, also advocates the need to affirm a fragmented post-Holocaust reality. The incorporation of this perspective will allow Christians to expunge the triumphant and supersessionary attitudes, dependent as they are on "a God who has already saved".

In Irving Greenberg's case, the concern for the unredeemed nature of the post-Holocaust reality reemerges. However, Greenberg goes farther than either Fackenheim or Cohen in suggesting possible reinterpretations of Christian doctrine. For Greenberg, the Christian response to the unfolding covenant must abandon the belief in the Incarnation. Its message emphasizes divine intervention, implying that only God's Grace redeems the human being. After Auschwitz, this concept is no longer appropriate. What needs to be promoted is the ideal of human participation in the process of redemption. The freedom to engage in this religious activity, however, is efficacious only in an unredeemed world.

Greenberg carries forward his analysis by offering alternative interpretations of the crucifixion, and the resurrection. He understands the traditional reading of the crucifixion to stress that "true victory is the renunciation

of power" (Greenberg 1982:79) which implies that salvation is achieved outside of history. However, Greenberg suggests that the crucifixion may be best understood as a symbol for "the ongoing unredeemed nature of the sociopolitical reality" (Greenberg 1982:80). In a similar fashion, he remarks that the resurrection should have "(a)n evocative rather than [a] manifest" (Greenberg 1982:85) meaning. What the author tries to communicate by these revisions, is a sense of the hiddenness of God after the Holocaust. In the post-Holocaust age, the divine presence is more ambiguous, and the human encounter with God less decisive. What is important is for Christians to take full responsibility for their beliefs, and the behavior they provoke. The thrust of Greenberg's reinterpretation "presages a major new emphasis on worldly redemption, personal responsibility, and human cocreativity in Christianity" (Greenberg 1982:85).

In many ways, it appears that Fackenheim, Cohen and Greenberg are familiar with the post-Holocaust Christian argument, and they do not radically diverge from its critique. Each thinker affirms that a Christian confrontation with the Holocaust is a prerequisite for a fruitful dialogue. Perhaps Fackenheim's analysis best describes why this is the case. The distinction in "being" between the Aryan and the non-Aryan are categories that disturb any facile resolution to problems dividing the Jewish and Christian communities. The resonances of these terms confronts the Jew with chilling possibilities. Undoubtedly it is a question of trust. But, the wounds of the Holocaust run deep, and one must perform a

thorough examination of the illness before the method of treatment can be known. In this way, Fackenheim is directly challenging Christianity to consider to existential impact of the Holocaust era before entering into abstract discussions of its tragic meaning.

Another concern of these Jewish theologians is the relationship between Christianity and the Holocaust. Although Fackenheim is hesitant to implicate Christianity as one of the root causes of the Holocaust, he nevertheless, affirms a definite connection. Greenberg's analysis appears to follow Ruether's basic thesis, while allowing a greater compass for the Teaching of Contempt. However, with Cohen's examination of the Marcionite doctrine, we encounter a unique interpretation.

The key to understanding Cohen's argument is the idea that Marcion merely exaggerated an implicit logic of New Testament theology. Cohen illustrates that Marcion's position is but a small step away from the supersessionary and triumphant aspects of traditional christology. "I believe the profundity of this insight becomes evident when we compare Cohen's interpretation with Ruether's.

At first glance, it appears that Cohen is simply pointing out that the anti-Judaic sentiment is fundamental to the Christian world view. Ruether also forwards this observation, but she arrives at a more tentative conclusion. Ruether's examination of the "left-hand of christology" ultimately suggests that it may have contributed to the antisemitic milieu that lead to the Holocaust. Yet in spite

of this relationship, there still exists a necessary bond with Judaism. As we noted in chapter two, Ruether explains that the anti-Judaic element of Christian thought was basic to the messianic affirmation of Jesus, and for Christian self-understanding. Although this connection is severely negative, it is an essential point of contact. Thus, the influence of Christian antisemitism on the Holocaust is tempered by this requisite association with the parent faith.

Cohen's consideration of Marcion, however, seems to deconstruct Ruether's "buffer zone" between Christian anti-Judaism and the Holocaust. Cohen's critique insinuates that the Marcionite doctrine, with its harsh dualism between the good Christian and the evil Jew-- the sons of lightness and the sons of darkness-- represents a more drastic form of the "left-hand of christology". Perhaps this underside of the left-hand might be described as the "nefarious-hand". We can characterize it as a dormant, but constant companion of the left-hand of christology.³ As such, there is a distinct possibility that this nefarious-hand represents a sub-tradition of Christian thought, which is not only anti-Judaic, but advocates the erasure of Judaism. According to Cohen, it was this element of Christianity that was revived by the pro-Nazi Christian theologians and "enacted at Auschwitz".

Cohen's critique of the Marcionite doctrine, therefore, points toward a deeper kind of anti-Judaism than Ruether had anticipated. Ultimately, this disclosure compounds the gravity of the Christian relationship to the Holocaust. The

task for the post-Holocaust Christian thinker is not only the eradication of the Teaching of Contempt, but the exposure of the Teaching of Obliteration.

Although Cohen's master example of theological deconstruction is not matched by either Fackenheim or Greenberg, all three thinkers concur that theological revision should be a priority of the post-Holocaust Christian. One common denominator resulting from the Jewish and Christian theological reconstruction, is the character and nature of the post-Holocaust reality. Both groups recommend developing a sense for the unredeemed nature of the world. For the Christian thinker this means undermining the belief in a realized eschatology. Instead, Christians should stress that redemption has "not yet" occurred. As we noted in chapter two of this thesis, the concern for the fragmented nature of the post-Holocaust age is a primary dimension of the Christian argument. Fackenheim, Cohen, and Greenberg, affirm that this ambiguity must guide all theological exposition, whether Jewish or Christian.

Where the Jewish interpretation eventually differs from the Christian analysis, concerns assessing the gravity of the Holocaust challenge. Judging from our examination in chapter two, one of the main questions for the Christian theologian is; "how can we reconcile ourselves to the Christian conception of God in light of the anti-Judaic tradition and its relationship to the Holocaust?" The Jewish theologians, however, state the matter more succinctly. In their own struggle with this event they ask; "why did God abandon the

Jewish people during the Holocaust?" When they turn to reflect on the Christian dilemma, we find this question inversed: "why did the Christians abandon God during the Holocaust?"

This question is largely championed by Fackenheim and Cohen. Although Fackenheim directs his accusation at Christians in general, while Cohen addresses the Church and its leaders, their concerns can be neatly paralleled. Both these thinkers attempt to steer Christian attention toward "their failure to believe in Jesus Christ" (Cohen 1982:438). It is this notion of betraying the Christian ideal that surfaces in their critique.

However, such an analysis seems unconstructive, and "un-deconstructive". First, most religious communities could be shown to fall short of the ideals of their tradition. Aside from this obvious counter-point, Fackenheim's and Cohen's understanding of the function of an "ideal", lacks depth and sensitivity. Both theologians could benefit from the ethical insight of Martin Buber. He perceptively understood that "'(t)here is no firmly established law, formulated once and for all, ...but only the Word of God and our current situation which we have to learn by listening. We do not have codified principles that we can consult. But we must understand the situation and the moment'" (Mendes-Flohr 1983:20). It may be that the Christian community should reflect upon their misunderstanding of the Holocaust situation, but it is unrealistic to suggest they "failed to believe in Jesus Christ".

The implied criticism that Christians were unable to emulate the behavior of Jesus, represents the second difficulty with this accusation of betrayal. It reflects a simplistic and one-dimensional understanding of the person and figure of Jesus. Their "insight" neglects to account for the plethora of views and interpretations of Jesus as the Christ. The viewpoint of Fackenheim and Cohen infers an observable essence to the Christian tradition: an essence judged to have been abandoned. This concern simply reduces the complexity of Christian theology, and enhances the pointedness of Fackenheim's and Cohen's critique. But, it does not assist the Christian struggle to confront the Holocaust.

Another difficulty with the Jewish examination of Christianity are the reinterpretations of the Christian root experiences. This is particularly evident in Greeberg's analysis of the crucifixion and the resurrection. In the same way that it is illegitimate for Christians to define the meaning of Jewish identity, so too is it inappropriate for Jews to comment on what authentic Christianity should entail. It is inauthentic for those outside the Christian community of faith to prescribe their theological stories. But, one is not barred from revealing beliefs that may be a source of injustice, even if it be another's theology. In this sense, Jewish reflection on the Christian anti-Judaic tradition and its relationship to the Holocaust is a legitimate exercise.

One more central issue of the Jewish response to Christianity, concerns the Christian understanding of the

modern State of Israel. This matter, primarily advanced by Fackenheim, suggests that Christians can demonstrate their repentance for their actions during the Holocaust, by actively supporting the Jewish State. This brings us to a most delicate topic: what do Christians think of the State of Israel? David Hartman has observed that Israel naturally "invites ideological passions" (Hartman 1987:229) from the Jewish people. As our next section illustrates, this also holds true for the Christian community as well.

Post-Holocaust Christian Attitudes

Toward the State of Israel

One litmus test of Christian willingness to engage in genuine dialogue, is to examine their attitudes toward the State of Israel. The Jew's relationship to the State is a vital aspect of their self-understanding. Israel incarnates an historic sense of communal responsibility for the destiny of the Jewish people and, more concretely, provides a place for the Jew in this world. This last factor is especially significant after the Holocaust. Israel raises the Jew from a powerless political situation, allowing the means to pursue self-determination. Thus, a thorough comprehension of the purpose of Israel is fundamental for a productive exchange. Such a perspective acknowledges the contemporaneity of the Jews as a people affecting the course of history: and, it recognizes the continuing validity of Judaism within this newfound political autonomy.

The initial reflections of Rosemary Ruether seem to support the above sentiments. She understands that "(i)f there is an answer to the Holocaust, it is for the Jews the State of Israel" (Ruether 1979:252). However, Ruether suggests that this "answer" must be interpreted in its proper context. The author firmly stresses that the Jewish return to Israel is not the "dawn of our redemption": the grave political difficulties of Israel undermine any such an interpretation. What Ruether is referring to here, is the Israeli "oppression" of the Palestinian population. She feels that the injustice of this situation constitutes a Jewish betrayal of the Holocaust experience. She writes that

(f)or the Jewish people, the answer flung into the teeth of the Holocaust is "never, never again". Does this mean only that "never, never again" will the Jews be victims? Or does this mean that never, never again will anybody be victims, Jews, but also Palestinians? (Ruether 1979:254)

This passage suggests that the Jewish preoccupation with survival has eclipsed their concern other victims of powerlessness.⁴ This most serious accusation underscores Ruether's disappointment with Israel: a sentiment she finds lacking among Jews. According to Ruether, only when Israel achieves "that better righteousness of Shalom without victims" (Ruether 1979:254) will the redemptive understanding of Israel be credible. Until that time, "(w)e have only grubby, mean, human success under sinful conditions" (Ruether 1979:254).

This latter thought is developed in depth in one of her most recent articles, "Zionism and the Ideological Manipulation of Christian Groups". Here Ruether asserts that Israeli Jews and some Diaspora communities, are collaborating to convince Christians to support Israel without concern for its political activities. A powerful weapon in this Zionist propaganda is the resolute nurturing of Christian guilt for the events of the Holocaust. Through such a strategy, Christians are goaded to view Israel as "a messianic sign of Jewish victory over the Holocaust" (Ruether 1987:63). This reasoning, thereby, equates anti-Israeli views with antisemitism and the precipitation of another Holocaust. Consequently, Christians cannot demur support without incrimination. Ruether cites the Vatican's refusal to formally recognize Israel as a typical target of such Zionist pressures. On this particular issue, Ruether sides with the Pope's appraisal which stresses that "recognition of Judaism as a valid religion and recognition of a Jewish state as a political entity are totally separate issues" (Ruether 1987:64).

Beyond this reference to Papal authority, Ruether recommends that the Jewish right to Israel rests on a conspicuous reading of history. The author tables three possible objections. First, she considers it "doubtful that most modern Jews are descendants of ancient Hebrews" (Ruether 1987:66) since intermarriage was a common occurrence throughout Jewish history. Her second objection, based on archeological findings, suggests that "it is very unlikely

that the ancient Hebrews were ever the sole residents of Judea and Samaria" (Ruether 1987:66). Finally, and perhaps ultimately, Ruether asks how one can "take seriously the claim that God gives any racial-ethnic group specific land?" (Ruether 1987:66) In effect, Ruether believes that the justification for a Jewish Israel is constructed on obsolete historical and theological presuppositions.

Pawlikowski's attitude toward the State of Israel is characterized by its absence. The most thorough examination of the State of Israel occurs under the heading, "Incarnational Christology and the Jewish Land Tradition". Essentially, Pawlikowski summarizes the religious view toward "land" in the Jewish tradition. He affirms that "land is in fact no less essential than peoplehood with respect to the carrying out of Israel's redemptive vocation" (Pawlikowski 1982:129). What the author avoids discussing is that the land is the modern State of Israel, to which the Jews have returned in full force.

Claire Huchet-Bishop has noted that Pawlikowski's indifference to this momentous event is continuous with the Church's response. According to this critic, the Church's withdrawal "into what it claims to be Christian impartiality" (Huchet-Bishop 1977:184) toward Israel, is actually a defensive reaction. The Jewish return to Israel contradicts the teaching of the exiled Jew, forever wandering due to their rejection of the messiah Jesus. Therefore, the Church prefers to ignore the contradiction by ignoring Israel. Doctrines aside, Huchet-Bishop believes that such silence

only serves to support the enemies of Israel, a critique that necessarily extends to include Pawlikowski.

With Franklin Littell, we encounter a view which Ruether highly criticized. Littell perceives a definite connection between Christian cultural antisemitism and anti-Zionism. The point of contact is revealed by the nature of the criticisms. He feels that Israel is judged by "the customary double standard...[which] finds fault with the Jews whatever they think or do" (Littell 1975:95). For Littell this observation is evinced by the lack of official church support, and the absence of Western political backing. He suggests such responses are conditioned by the Christian belief that "nothing important happens between the Ascension and the Second Coming..." (Littell 1975:96) Indeed, the foundation of Israel exposes the inadequacy of this perspective. In its place, Littell offers the following interpretation:

(t)he crucifixion and resurrection of the Jewish people is a sign that God is not mocked, that pride brings the biggest battalions low in the end, that the Author and Judge of history blesses the Suffering Servant and brings the human hero low (Littell 1975:98-99).

Therefore, the restoration of Israel provides an important religious insight for Littell. It illustrates that the God of the Jews and "true" Christians still reigns supreme, and the genuine devotee is rewarded. Thus, the ultimate religious model for the post-Holocaust age is the suffering servant: this is the truth to be grasped.

Perhaps the most involved examination of Israel is presented by Alice and Roy Eckardt. They suggest that the

majority of Christians do not truly comprehend the significant role Israel plays in the life of a Jew. As they remark, "Eretz Yisrael forms the answer to almost two thousand years of Jewish defenselessness" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:135). In this depiction, Zionism is a liberating force guiding Jews to a land where it would be possible to build a refuge against oppression. It is for this reason that Roy Eckardt describes "(t)he State of Israel ...[as] a singular Jewish celebration of life. This alone makes it a religious phenomenon, a hymn to the Creator of life" (Eckardt 1986:39).

This latter statement takes on special emphasis because of the Holocaust. However, the author is quick to note that the Jewish State of is not the causal effect of the Holocaust. Although these two events are inextricably bound, it is a relation preceded by "(t)he abiding Jewish link to the land" (Eckardt 1986:39). He recognizes that the Jewish people have always defined themselves in reference to Israel. This consciousness was alive long before either Zionism or the Holocaust came to be. Thus for Eckardt, Zionism and Judaism are not separate entities, but share the same heritage, symbol, and meaning.

Eckardt's investigation of the centrality of the State of Israel, is matched only by his understanding of the Christian dilemma over the existence of the Jewish State. He believes that

(t)he refusal or inability of some Christians to accept the State of Israel is a twentieth-century variation upon traditional Christian denial of Jewish rights and integrity. The treatment of Israel as a nation very largely recapitulates the treatment of the Jewish people throughout Christian history. Insofar as anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism reject the right of Jewish collective self-determination, while supporting other laic and national collectives; they incarnate antisemitism (Eckardt, 1986:74-75).

The above description of the Christian-Jewish/Israelite relationship is not made without regard for the Palestinian people. The author is well aware of their hopes for an autonomous homeland. In fact, Eckardt believes that one of the paramount lessons of the Holocaust recognizes that "(i)t is the minority peoples of this world who need political sovereignty the most if they are to protect themselves, to survive, to prosper" (Eckardt 1986:142). What he does object to, however, are critics of Israel who ignore the potential Palestinian threat to Jewish existence. The Eckardts suggests that these critics "demand of Israel...what...[they] fail to ask of the Arabs" (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:136). In this light, the Eckardts forward a fair appraisal of the Israeli situation. They understand the pivotal place Israel holds within Jewish religious consciousness; they comprehend its profound political implications for Jewish life; and, they are sensitive to the Palestinian struggle.

In comparison to this thorough presentation by the Eckardts, Ruether's analysis seems distortative. I believe that her difficulties with the State of Israel are similar to her problems with the Jewish religion in general. In both

cases, Ruether views the Jewish people as a covenantal community only. As a result, she negates the ethnic dimension of Jewish self-definition.⁵ This repudiation has obvious ramifications when discussing the State of Israel, for it is not merely a nation-state, but a Jewish State.

Ruether's awkwardness with Jewish ethnicity arises in her comments on the betrayal of the Holocaust experience. Although she suggests that the unjust treatment of Palestinians is the root of the betrayal, her conclusions reveal other concerns. She writes that for this nation to pursue its own self-interests "like all other nations is an abandonment of Israel's election" (Ruether 1979:254). This statement discloses two related points: first, it suggests that the "true" Israel (i.e., a covenantal community) is abolished by political empowerment: second, such a deduction exposes her Western-Christian bias toward the separation of religion and state.

The first suggestion not only exemplifies Ruether's prejudice against an ethnic Israel, but it forms her own betrayal of the Holocaust experience. As Fackenheim and Greenberg tirelessly remind us, it was the absence of political empowerment that almost abolished Israel. Thus, Ruether's undervaluing of the Jew's political independence marks a regression to a pre-Holocaust orientation. The second point illuminates the author's assumption that the separation of religion and state is the "correct" (i.e., the modern Western Christian perspective) pattern of social organization. Ruether's unwillingness to consider alternative political

visions undermines her critique of Israel, because Israel is an experiment in political alternatives. Israel represents a conscious attempt to establish a modern progressive nation with an acute sense of its religious heritage, meaning, and purpose. Ruether's oversight of this factor divulges her unfamiliarity with the historical and political development of Israel. Without such knowledge, it is impossible to understand the unique problems that confront the Jewish State, and therefore, equally impossible to provide insightful resolutions.

What, then, is Ruether's proposal for a lasting peace in Israel? She suggests that the way toward Shalom without victims "lies under the shadow of the crucified messiah. We can taste its first fruits only when each are willing to sacrifice something of our own so that the other may live" (Ruether 1979:255). Thus, it appears that Ruether's response to the Jewish struggle is the Christian answer to salvation: an answer that resonates with triumphalism. Similarly, the demand for a Shalom without victims shares in this triumphant perspective. It represents an unrealistic request, one that presupposes a Utopian view of moral and ethical conduct. In response to this, we can only reiterate the wisdom of Martin Buber: that ideals are not immutable laws or codes, but flexible guidelines for an inexact but caring involvement. The "project" of Israel represents just such an intromission. The fact that it is imperfect, that it is not a "Shalom without victims", does not undermine its significance. Indeed, this very precariousness denotes Israel's astonishing presence,

life, and actuality.

Ruether's determination to undermine the import of Israel culminates in her tripartite objection to the Jewish heir presumptive. The task here is not to challenge the author's "evidence" against the Jewish right to Israel, but to point out that Ruether actually infringes upon the right to Jewish self-definition. Whether the modern Jew is a true descendant of the ancient Hebrews or not, is unimportant. The fact remains that the Jewish people have chosen to understand themselves in this way, and continue to discover meaning and direction through this story. Ruether's repudiation merely represents another story, one which most Jews would find derogatory. Her suggestion that the Jewish conception of God should not be taken "seriously" indicates the depth of the author's triumphant bent. I find the only possible rejoinder to be; "how can one take seriously a modern post-Holocaust theologian who lacks sensitivity toward religious pluralism?"

Concerning Pawlikowski's attitude toward Israel, there is little need to go beyond the criticisms of Huchet-Bishop. She implies that Pawlikowski's indifference to the Jewish State considerably limits his penchant for sincere dialogue. To ignore the State of Israel, is at the same time, to disregard the still-existing-Jewish-people. But if Pawlikowski is not conversing with them, then exactly who is he addressing?

We intimated earlier that Littell's encounter with the State of Israel represents a more sophisticated understanding than either Ruether or Pawlikowski. However, Littell is not without his own difficulties. When we reconsider his

interpretation of the Holocaust-Israel experience as the "crucifixion and resurrection of the Jewish people", it seems he perpetuates "the Suffering Servant Syndrome" once again. This perspective ultimately implies that Israel is the reward for enduring the Holocaust. Littell's reasoning inevitably undercuts the "human hero" and "human pride", preferring to focus upon the victim as God's faithful servant. However, the very foundation of Israel may be understood to rest on the resilience of the human hero and human pride. Indeed, it was the Jewish hero and their Jewish pride which lead and inspired the Jewish people to take control of their destiny. In light of this, Littell's story illustrates that he too does not fully comprehend the historical development of Israel. Consequently, his dialogue would have a limited affect on the modern Jew.

If there is a hope for a fruitful Christian-Jewish dialogue, it resides with Alice and Roy Eckardt. Their knowledge of Jewish post-Holocaust theology, and the meaning of Israel within these writings, is surpassed by none. In many ways, their deliberations on Israel serve as a direct counter argument to Ruether. Inadvertently, the Eckardts underscore Ruether's problem in the following passage. They ask;

is there something more grievous than saying that Christians understand the meaning and goal of Judaism and the promises and intentions of God better than Jews do? Yes, at least one thing: to do this while claiming that we are not doing it. Christian triumphalism is unfortunate enough, but it is not as unfortunate as the triumphalism that denies, or does not see, the truth, the that is being triumphalist (Eckardt and Eckardt 1982:97).

This passage may be said to represent the purpose of our second chapter. As we concluded there, the Eckardts are not beyond their own observations on Christian triumphalism. Nevertheless, their statement illuminates one of the main difficulties with Ruether's reflections on the State of Israel: an implicit triumphalism. Roy Eckardt suggests that it is the "Christocentric polemic [that] still feeds conscious and below-conscious anti-Israelism in the church of today" (Eckardt 1986:78). Thus, Christian antisemitism and anti-Israelism are not separate issues as Ruether would like to believe. The Eckardts' recognition of this basic point could well lead the Christian community toward an equitable dialogue with the Jewish people. It grasps the importance of Israel for Jewish self-understanding, and it intimates the primary Christian problem with Israel's existence. Until this is realized by Christians, their comments and critiques are bound to be prejudiced by other concerns that will lead from dialogue toward conflict.

Conclusion

It is obvious from our reflections that the post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue is still in its initial stages. Because of this, both factions include careless statements and conclusions that betray their lack of understanding. To compensate, each group tries to simplify the other, giving the impression of a sound analysis and critique. Such difficulties seem to be part of the dialogue's complex

nature. The Jewish and Christian theologians are not only conversing with each other, but are also debating with their own communities of faith for a post-Holocaust theological revision. In a similar fashion, these thinkers must also illustrate that Judaism and Christianity have value for each other. This is not an easy undertaking. Only after these discussions have taken place is it possible to encounter the specific issues of the post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian dialogue.

However, there are other limiting aspects of this dialogue that reflect well rooted Jewish and Christian prejudices. One such instance concerns Fackenheim and Cohen's accusation of the Christian failure to "believe in Jesus Christ" and, Ruether's suggestion that Israel is religiously insignificant because it has failed to actualize a "Shalom without victims". This mutual slight is merely an attempt to weaken the other through accusations of moral inferiority. Both points are impetuous and reveal a latent animosity between the two factions. It is an animosity that overcomes their mutual emphasis on the unredeemed nature of the post-Holocaust world. As our comparison to Buber illustrated, Fackenheim, Cohen, and Ruether imply that ethical principles are beyond the taint of an unredeemed reality. Yet, the surprising point is, that all three thinkers would likely agree with Buber's interpretation. In this light, their accusations of betrayal may indicate that something else is at work here--anger.

If the above observation proves anything, it is that there

is much room for progress in this Jewish-Christian dialogue. Undoubtedly, anger is bound to play a role in the initial discussions, perhaps a cathartic one. Whatever the case, it is evident that the post-Holocaust theologians have taken an important step toward a meaningful Jewish-Christian encounter.

Conclusion

We post-War thinkers are less concerned with the revealed character of the true God or the true character of nature than with the survival of a truly human society. In asking for a truly human society we put the question of truth once more; but our specific endeavour is the living realization of truth in mankind (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970:2).

True or false?

Are the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust theologians "searching for a truly human society"? Such a concern would seem to be an obvious goal in light of the unhuman quality of the Holocaust world. However, at this stage of the deliberations, the answer is "no". The Jewish and Christian theological confrontation with the Holocaust may be a necessary prelude before such a search can be carried out. Perhaps only by comprehending the most horrible event in human history can we then learn how not to live, and thereby, discover how we should live. Of course, this reasoning implies that there are lessons to be culled from the Holocaust experience: lessons that will direct the human being toward a more authentic form of life. Yet, the post-Holocaust theologians suggest that even an apodictic interpretation of this event may be inappropriate.

What, then, do we learn about living in the post-Holocaust age? What is it that we must realize before we can begin to search for that truly human society? And, is there a significant difference between the Jewish and Christian

conceptions of where to start such a reconstruction? By summarizing the nature of the Holocaust challenge for both communities of faith, we may be able to better address these questions.

The Jewish theologians consider the Holocaust to undermine trust in the presuppositions of belief. This event significantly alters our existence, and as a result, changes the nature and character of the Jew's relationship with the divine. In turn, this change in the religious world view requires a parallel alteration of the expressions of faith. Different stories are needed to account for the Holocaust experience; stories that orient the religious person within this post-Holocaust reality. Ultimately it is the question of discontinuity with past expressions of faith that these thinkers address. This fundamental concern can be further divided into other questions: do we totally abandon these past expressions of faith and create new ones? Do we attempt to affirm a potential for continuity within definite limitations? Or do we suggest that, despite the Holocaust, continuity is assured?

When we come to reflect upon the Christian dilemma, one would expect to find different questions from those pursued by the Jewish community. Surprisingly, this is not wholly accurate. For the concerned Christian, the presuppositions of their faith are undermined by the relationship between Christian doctrine and the events of the Holocaust. The Christian is compelled to alter their God-story, or risk infecting the faithful with an intense anti-Judaic sentiment.

This conclusion changes the nature of the relationship with Jesus, and therefore, raises the question of continuity. Thus, similar to the Jewish community, the post-Holocaust Christian theologian asks; do we totally abandon the past expressions of faith and create new ones? Do we attempt to affirm a potential for continuity within definite limitations? Or do we suggest that, despite the Holocaust, continuity is assured?

Yet, within the above parallel there is an obvious contrast: the impact of the Holocaust on the existential situation. For the Jewish people, the Holocaust concretely changes their life. The cruel death of six million people is a permanent atrophy. Contrary to this, the Christian existential situation changes only insofar that a different God-story is capable of affecting one's life. Barring this, the Christian need not be radically altered by the events of the Holocaust. Furthermore, even if one were open to changing the God-story, it remains a matter of choice. The Jew, on the other hand, cannot logically choose to remain unaffected by the Holocaust because it is an event that touches the Jewish people. Therefore, the basic direction of the Holocaust challenge is dissimilar. For the Jews, it arises from within the experiences of the people and then confronts their religious doctrines. For the Christians, the challenge arises from within their doctrine and then moves toward a confrontation with the community.

Although the Holocaust challenge for the Christian community seems less intense, this does not mean that it is

less drastic. The Jew is responding to an irrational event, one which she or he did nothing to provoke. As such, the Jew is the innocent victim of an evil that arises from without. For the Christian, the Holocaust is not an irrational event. Its happening is explained, in part, by the anti-Judaic teachings of Christian theology. As such, they are not an innocent victim, but a culpable agent of the event. Here the evil arises from within. In effect, the Jew must battle with the memory of a desperate helplessness: the Christian must battle with the awareness of nurturing this helplessness: Jewish religious expression is shown to be inadequate to respond to the Holocaust evil: Christian religious expression is shown to be inadequate because it is connected to this evil. What this comparison illustrates is that the Holocaust challenge for Christianity is far from being insignificant.

This symmetry between the Jewish and Christian encounter with the Holocaust, also yields some of the ultimate concerns that arise for the post-Holocaust religious thinker. Ultimate concerns might be described as principle values and beliefs that direct the content of faith. These concerns represent individual and communal priorities that attempt to lead the adherent toward fulfillment within their particular situation. As such, they indicate the goals, or ends of the responsive religious life. It is in this spirit of understanding that the post-Holocaust theologians have offered their reformulations of traditional faith.

One such ultimate concern is Revelation. For Fackenheim

and the Eckardts, this topic revolved about the issue of the Holocaust's uniqueness. For Irving Greenberg, revelation was interpreted as reorientation. What these thinkers are trying to express is that God's interaction with the world is an ongoing process. The divine presence did not disappear with the giving of Torah or the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Indeed, God is constantly confronting the human being in their daily life. The role of humankind is to search for authentic responses to this encounter. The religious quest is life, and therefore, the events of life and the machinations of history, participate in the divine scenum.

This affirmation of God's "presence in history" presents some obvious complications when considering the Holocaust. Yet, these theologians eventually provide an interpretation that shapes the Holocaust as part of a divine encounter. How is this possible? The evil nature of the Holocaust reality demands a religious response. As such, it is an important aspect of an encounter with God. It is not that God engineered the Holocaust in order to communicate Her or His desire for a theological revision; but, that God would expect such a revision in light of this historical event.

Yet, in the case of the Holocaust, the danger of glorifying its uniqueness may lead to the divine authentication of its evil. This is most evident in Fackenheim's interpretation. For him, the Holocaust becomes a root experience for the Jewish religion. This problem is also reflected in the analysis offered by Greenberg and Pawlikowski. For them, the Holocaust indicates an evolution

toward a more sophisticated religious consciousness. Cohen recognized this danger and stressed that humanity is speaking-- screaming-- at God through the Holocaust, but God is silent. The Holocaust has no part in the divine plan for humankind. Nevertheless, it is an event that still has the force to undermine our religious stories, since they are products of the human imagination. Thus, if the Holocaust is a revelation, it is a human one. To suggest that this event somehow illustrates an ontological truth-- as Fackenheim, Greenberg, Pawlikowski, and the Eckardts contend-- is a religious story that threatens genuine faith.

Another ultimate concern of post-Holocaust theology is Freedom. It has been intimated throughout our analysis that the Holocaust marks the 'exorcism' of morality and human conscience. The death camp reality denotes the omega of absolute freedom, where one's wish becomes one's supreme value. Pawlikowski interpreted this development as a stage in the psychological maturation of humanity. But, is this an appropriate understanding of freedom? In comparison to this, Cohen's distinction between freedom and caprice is most enlightening. The author demonstrates that freedom is not the ability to enact whim or fantasy, but to live within prescribed boundaries and limitations. In this explanation, Cohen seems to be addressing the misconception that limitations are necessarily oppressive. Clearly, the opposite appears more accurate. Without boundaries freedom loses its form, and its direction. True freedom is the conversion of capricious energy into a definite design. For

Cohen, it is the search for the appropriate design that constitutes the post-Holocaust task.

The desire to construct the correct design for post-Holocaust religious behavior, represents the ultimate concern for a Divine Paradigm. The impression is, that if the "proper" conception of God and His or Her relation to humanity can be created, then events like the Holocaust need never occur again. This idea is particularly prominent in the Christian confrontation with the Holocaust. The Christian thinkers examined here believe that if they expunge the triumphant and supersessionary aspects of Christian doctrine, then the religious person will be guided toward a fair understanding of the Jewish religion and people; and as a result, participate in a purified, more authentic Christianity.

There seems to be no major difficulty with the above depiction of the function of paradigm. It is logical to believe that religious teachings have a significant impact on the actions of the adherent. To disregard this religious influence on real life situations, admits the irrelevancy of faith. If the method and content of religious education can be improved by a revised theology, then the post-Holocaust thinkers should continue toward reformation and renewal.

The difficulty we confront here is not with the intention of revision, but with the actual reconstructions. We first encountered this with Ruether's notion of Jesus as an eschatological paradigm of religious behavior. The question we considered was; "why this paradigm and not another?" Why

should the Christian follow Jesus if he is only a model for human behavior? This same critique might also be applied to Cohen's reinterpretation of Torah as "theory". Again, why should religious Jews incorporate the theory of Torah into their lives as opposed to another theory of behavior? I believe this problem with paradigm indicates two important points. First, that for the purposes of description and analysis, understanding religion as paradigm may be helpful, but it seems insufficient to sustain a religious sentiment. Second, people take the leap of faith not merely to discover how to act, but to be closer to the "truth" of life. This truth can provide a secure ground for the development of community, friendship, and love. Because of this, the religious person is not only emulating a model or carrying on a tradition. They are also creating a way of living that is unique to their particular situation: a process of participation and alteration. To act in the world requires faith, and not only an intellectual decision to actualize a paradigm.

Similar to the concern for paradigm is the investigation of Resistance by Fackenheim and Littell. For both thinkers, the key to post-Holocaust religious action resides in the example of those who resisted the Nazis. Fackenheim found his primary examples in the death camp resistors, while Littell noted those Christians who upheld a counterculture position against Nazism. This issue could have sociological significance if resistance indicates a kind of revolutionary response to political oppression. Undoubtedly, this is part

of the meaning implied by Fackenheim and Littell. It suggests that a remnant of conscientious people can affect society by fighting against its injustices. In the final analysis, it is a question of power. Resistance, as described by these thinkers, is advanced from the perspective of a powerless community. We noted already how this undermines Littell's hope for a Christian counterculture. Christians are not a powerless group, and therefore, to define them as a resisting counterculture constitutes a martyrology. But, could the same critique be applied to Fackenheim?

In chapter three of this thesis, we noted Ruether's suggestion that Israeli Jews and some Diaspora groups, have played upon Christian guilt for the Holocaust in order to gain support for the political policies of the Jewish State. Essentially, this criticism is leveled against the function of the Holocaust story in the Israeli society. Ruether implies that it is used to justify political triumphalism against the Palestinians. To extend her insight, it may be true that the Holocaust story represents the Jewish equivalent of the "Suffering Servant Syndrome".

Fackenheim's reflections on Jewish post-Holocaust life suggests that its future resides with the "Resisting Servant". One result of this perception may be the confusion of the powerless "resisting servant" symbol with the empowered Israeli. Since Fackenheim's understanding of resistance arises out of the experiences of a powerless community, is it legitimate to apply this story to a

community which is no longer powerless? Fackenheim's use of this symbol of resistance implies that the modern Jew is still battling the Nazi logic of destruction. As one Israeli minister of education explained it; "...the Holocaust is not a national insanity that happened once and passed, but an ideology that has not passed from this world, and even today the world may condone crimes against us" (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1984:56). What this passage suggests is that there is a fundamental sense of continuity between the death camp reality and the trials of the State of Israel. However, Israel is not a death camp. To make this connection may serve to sanction political attitudes and actions that are inappropriate for the situation. In this way, the Holocaust story may function in the same manner as Christian martyrology. For, how can a powerless group of resisters be oppressive?

Despite this potential danger with the resistance story, it does point toward the virtues of Co-Responsibility and Co-Creativity. Perhaps more than the other ultimate concerns, these latter issues may represent the primary post-Holocaust values. According to Greenberg and Pawlikowski, the Holocaust demands that humanity cultivate a sense for their mutual interdependence, and the need to work together for freedom and peace. Yet, co-responsibility and co-creativity also describe the relationship between the individual and the divine presence. Humankind has a mission to fulfill with the Creator. Each party is therefore responsible to the other for the fate of this project. At

the same time, this covenant of shared responsiveness necessarily incorporates a co-creativity: humanity and God working in unison toward the redemption of the world.

The above concerns come closest to Rosenstock-Huessy's call to search for that truly human society. In this sense, Pawlikowski and Greenberg seem to be willing to suggest that the Holocaust does have important lessons to be absorbed, and enacted. Co-responsibility and co-creativity imply that there is hope for humankind after Auschwitz; that there are positive steps to be taken that will usher in a better world.

However, do these positive steps, these "ultimate concerns", actually arise from a true confrontation with the Holocaust? The concern for Revelation, for example, seems to merely reaffirm Buber's and Rosenzweig's interpretation. Their mutual concern for understanding God's presence in history, and the way we encounter the divine, does not appear to be significantly altered by the post-Holocaust reformulation. Similarly, the issue of Divine Paradigm also seems to be untouched by the Holocaust challenge. One does not need the Holocaust to suggest that Jesus is a human being only, or that Torah is simply a guide to right living. The reflections on Freedom continue this trend, as the discussion concentrates on the freedom of humanity to commit evil in the presence of the divine. With the concern for Resistance, we can do no better than to reiterate Steven Katz's insight that a Holocaust is not necessary to realize that people must resist evil. In the same fashion, the concern for

Co-Responsibility and Co-Creativity does not seem dependent upon the Holocaust experience. In many ways, these issues reflect traditional interpretations of the Covenant.

This suspicion of the post-Holocaust ultimate concerns suggests that these theologians do not really encounter the Holocaust. They have distanced themselves from its horror in order to provide some semblance of understanding. In the final analysis, it appears that the Holocaust acts as an ultimate piece of evidence that dramatically illustrates preconceived conclusions about God, world, and humanity. For the theologians examined here, the Holocaust lends a weight to their message: a weight that seems impossible to refute. As a result, their conclusions give the impression of being ironclad.

Our post-Holocaust theologians would likely counter the above criticisms by suggesting that their ultimate concerns represent only Partial Conclusions. They represent tentative answers because the post-Holocaust world is a Fragmented reality. The immense evil of the Holocaust automatically cancels the possibility for definite, unsuspecting conclusions. To forward abstract reflections about the Holocaust experience indicates the inability to really confront this event. This sense of fragmentarity is likewise embodied in the post-Holocaust theological response. The revisions and reformulations of faith mirror this splintered quality, imbuing the religious quest with a radical ambiguity. The full truth and meaning behind the Holocaust may not be available to human investigation. Therefore, the

insights advanced by post-Holocaust theology must be approached with this sense of limitation.

Yet, is this emphasis on partiality inspired by the Holocaust rupture? Or, is it a matter of advancing the modern religious sense of truth? I believe that the Jewish and Christian preoccupation with fragmentation, and unredemptiveness, signifies the postmodern concern for the pluralism of truth and doctrine. Fragmentation serves to relativize theological claims, which at the same time, allows the freedom for radical thinkers to pursue alternative religious visions. Again, it would appear that the Holocaust is used to legitimize an ulterior concern: the modern emphasis on the ambiguity of religious truth.

If the post-Holocaust conclusions are partial, it is because not enough time has elapsed to decide whether such a reformation is required. What is certain, however, is that a response to the events of the Holocaust is a necessary exercise. Rosenstock-Huessy has suggested that response is the sine qua non of the true human life. He believes an appropriate epigram for human existence should read: "Respondeo esti mutabor, (I respond although I will be changed)" (Rosenstock-Huessy 1970:2). We have examined the post-Holocaust response in depth; but, are they willing to change?

This work has judged that both the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust efforts have failed to reconcile faith to the experience of the Holocaust. Although their intention is to rescue faith from the ashes of Auschwitz, they are unable to

discover the life force required for such a regeneration of belief. Yet my conclusion is also a response, one that I will have to change. As theologians continue to wrestle with the issues of the Holocaust, new insights are bound to arise. There is still much room and need for further analysis of the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust writings. If scholars begin to take the answers of post-Holocaust theology seriously, undoubtedly we will witness research in areas such as post-Holocaust ethics,¹ and political theologies.² It is difficult to predict what such investigations will yield. Whatever the result, this type of activity attests to the importance of confronting the challenges of our age, constantly testing the relevancy of our doctrines, and beliefs. Hopefully, such a process will strengthen our conviction to search for that truly human society.

Notes for Introduction

1. Katz (1983:141-173) provides a thorough analysis of the nature and character of the Jewish responses to the Holocaust.
2. Although there is no adequate overview of the Christian responses to the Holocaust, Michael McGarry (1977) supplies an excellent study of the impact of the Holocaust on christology.

Notes for Chapter One

1. Some post-Holocaust thinkers, like Alice and Roy Eckardt (1982:45), suggest that time and history should be recounted in reference to the Holocaust. In this way, a particular date would be cited as either B.F.S., "Before the Final Solution", or as F.S., "in the year of the Final Solution". This designation is meant to express the radical implications of the Holocaust's uniqueness for our perception of the world.
2. In his paper on Fackenheim, Steven Katz writes that "(o)nly if the Holocaust is 'unique' in some specifiab^e and demonstrable way are the new and unusual theological departures advocated by Fackenheim required or justified" (1983:212). For the purposes of this thesis, Katz's insight may also be extended to include the post-Holocaust reflections of Cohen and Greenberg.
3. One straightforward way that Fackenheim attempts to illustrate the uniqueness of the Holocaust, is to make historical comparisons with other catastrophic events. The result of this procedure is a succinct list of 'empirical' factors that differentiate the Holocaust from these other events. The author concludes that it is difficult "(t)o find another catastrophe containing even one of these features" (1982:12). In this fashion, Fackenheim intimates that even a gloss of the external aspects of other possible 'holocausts' does not yield a direct historical counterpart. This method of examining the Holocaust, however, often leads to a reduction of the events under study. Despite claims that "(a)ll this is by no means to deny the existence of other catastrophes equally unprecedented, and endowed with unique characteristics of their own" (1982:12), the very nature of the comparative method reduces the significance of the events. For an example of how this approach to uniqueness fails to engender the legitimacy of such an exercise, see Yehuda Bauer, Et al (1980).
4. The notion that the murder of the Jews was an "end in itself" (1980:12) is an essential aspect of Fackenheim's argument for the Holocaust's uniqueness, as he continually stresses this point throughout the text. This insight appears as point number 4 on the author's list of empirical factors that substantiate the uniqueness of the Holocaust.
5. Fackenheim criticizes Hannah Arendt's philosophical argument about the uniqueness of the Holocaust because it allows the "unprecedented event of the Holocaust [to be] lost to the author, such a process deflects the truth of the particular situation, allowing one to ignore the imposing ramifications of an event like the Holocaust.

6. Although the concepts of "Root Experience" and "Epoch-Making Events" are barely dealt with by Fackenheim (1982), I believe that these categories of understanding are implied throughout the author's argument. For a thorough description of these concepts see Fackenheim 1970. For a critique of these categories, see Oppenheim 1985:87-114.
7. Like Fackenheim, Cohen (1981:27-58) also considers historical comparisons as a method for demonstrating the uniqueness of the Holocaust.
8. The idea that it is possible to think the Holocaust is indicated by Cohen when he states; "(h)ow can we regard the atomic bomb, or Vietnam, or the revelations of Solzhenitzyn's Gulag, if not as modalities of the abyss, excavations and elaborations of the human penchant to self-infinity, to the ultimate hubris which brings not only Jews but all creatures to the borderlands from which there is return for none" (1981:22). This statement illustrates that Cohen does entertain the idea of a fragmentary continuity between the Holocaust, and the post-Holocaust age.
9. This understanding of the symbolic is forwarded by Paul Tillich (1957).
10. This attitude is perhaps best summarized by the famous statement in the French National Assembly during the debates on the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen". It reads; "(t)he Jews should be denied everything as a nation, but granted everything as individuals" (Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz eds., 1980).
11. Fackenheim well recognizes the limitations of historiography. In fact, part of his argument for uniqueness is based on the insight that historians move "beyond the facts toward their explanation" (1982:230).
12. Although Cohen (1983) uses this phrase in a figurative sense, my intention is to emphasize a literal interpretation as a way to characterize Fackenheim's manipulation of the death camp experiences for his theology.
13. In a conference report by Baum (1974), he notes that Greenberg's post-Holocaust works tend to capitalize on a number of insights forwarded by other post-Holocaust Jewish thinkers, including Fackenheim.

14. Greenberg's propensity to distance himself from the Holocaust evil is given quintessential expression in his suggestion that "Jews and others who seek to orient themselves by the Holocaust will unfold another-sacral round. Men and women will gather to eat the putrid bread of Auschwitz, the potato peelings of Bergen-Belsen. They will tell of the children who went, the starvation and the hunger of the ghettos, ... (t)o enable people to reenact and relive Auschwitz..." (1977:54) I fail to see how this ritualizing of the death camps is anything but the worship of a god of torture and death.

15. Fackenheim considers many different types of resistance, such as armed resistance, and prayer as resistance. However, the essential acts of resistance for Fackenheim were those performed within the death camps. It is for this reason that we do not address these other kinds.

16. Fackenheim's 614th commandment reads as follows; "'Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims at Auschwitz lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish'" (1970:84).

17. The idea of Tikkun in its traditional Kabbalistic sense denotes "a divine-turning to the human being, and a human being-turned by the Divine..." (1982:251) After this initial encounter, humanity works with God, through prayer and Halakhah, perfecting Creation, returning to the divine what had become separated upon creation of the world. The point to be emphasized is that mundane human action can consciously be directed to contribute to the repair of the original perfection of the universe.

18. Fackenheim notes that "([w]ithout an originally-religious inspiration, the modern secular impulse to self-liberation would not have lead to Zion; and without the impact of secular self-activity, religious Jews would have continued to pray for the rebuilding of Jerusalem; rather than taking a share in rebuilding her)" (1982:145).

19. For the purpose of investigating Cohen's vision of the post-Holocaust reality, it is not necessary to carry out an in depth examination of his use of Rosenzweig and Schelling. For a more exact understanding of this aspect of Cohen's reconstruction, see Oppenheim, 1987.

20. Cohen (1982:415) employs this term to describe the essence of Jewish theology through the ages.

21. The notion that there is a potential for continuity between traditional religious expression and the post-Holocaust reality, is reflected in Greenberg's search for biblical models that may assist our understanding of the Holocaust experience (1977:34-41). The author examines three possible paradigms: Job, Isaiah's Suffering Servant, and the third chapter of Lamentations. Although this is an interesting development for post-Holocaust theology, Greenberg's exegesis does not add to the significance of his argument. His reinterpretation of these biblical works seems to lack depth and insight.

22. As Katz states, "the 'empiricist falsifiability thesis'" suggests "that propositions about God are to be straightforwardly confirmed or disconfirmed by appeal to empirical events in the world" (1983:179-80).

23. Oppenheim expresses a similar opinion, but within the context of Fackenheim's use of midrash. Oppenheim writes that Fackenheim's God-story "would be authentic to our deepest emotions and reflections only if it were accompanied by, and never separated from, an opposing story that spoke of God's absence" (1987:413).

24. For an analysis of Rubenstein's reliance on the falsifiability thesis, see Katz, 1983, 174-204.

25. It may be suggested that Fackenheim could free himself of this dilemma if he were willing to follow through on the logic of Buber's "I-Thou" relation, which is implicit throughout Fackenheim's considerations of Tikkun. Fackenheim could forward the idea that those persons who were able to resist the Nazi logic of destruction were actually more open to the presence of the Eternal Thou. However, if Fackenheim were to consider this possibility, he would inevitably criticize those persons who were unable to resist the death camp reality. As such, Fackenheim is trapped in his own "argument from terror".

26. As Oppenheim suggests, "Fackenheim does not salvage, but destroys for us the meaning and power of the notion that God acts or is present in history" (1987:413).

27. The suggestion that Fackenheim believes that the modern Jew should live in constant relation to the Holocaust is reflected in the following statement. He writes that he "heard of a recent Jewish wedding at which no expenses were spared. Thousands of candles lit up every part of the large hall, so that not a single spot was dark. Except for the bride, all members of her parents' family had perished in the Holocaust" (1986:117).

28. Oppenheim (1987:414-19) considers the idea of a providential God to be intimately tied to the notion of "God as person". This kind of understanding of the divine reality is one which the Jewish community of faith continues to respond to in the post-Holocaust age. It therefore has retained the power to direct the lives of the religious person. Although Oppenheim notes that Cohen's revision of God misses the mark, I believe that Cohen's approach is not totally at odds with the idea of "God as person". Cohen makes a very important statement when he writes that "in the tremendum, God does not speak to man, but man is talking at, or towards God" (1981:79). It may be suggested that Cohen's statement be extended to denote the character of humanity's religious language. Here, the idea of "God as person" could be interpreted as talking towards God; describing the human-divine relationship as a relationship between human beings.

29. Katz (1983:219) addresses this question to Fackenheim's 614th commandment. However, for our purposes, it is a question that can be applied to the post-Holocaust Jewish reformation in general.

Notes for Chapter Two

1. This phrase refers to a text composed by the Jewish historian, Jules Isaac (1964). This work, plus others by Isaac, may be said to have crystalized the depth of the Christian problem with Judaism and the Jewish people. It is Isaac's work that inspired a sustained effort on the part of Christian theologians to investigate the ramifications of the anti-Judaic tradition.

2. This position contradicts the one put forward by Pawlikowski in Challenge (1978:32). There he states that "only by reversing the process of 'spiritualization of the eschatological'...can the church finally remove the fatalistic tendency...and insure that it will not cause some future, far greater holocaust". However, this attitude is not pursued elsewhere by the author (1979, 1984). I consider these latter works to reflect Pawlikowski's actual position.

4. The passages Littell cites are Matt. 21: 18-22, and 22: 1-10.

5. See, for example, John C. Meagher's article; As the twig was bent: Antisemitism in Greco-Roman and earliest Christian times (Davies ed., 1979:1-26).

6. This interpretation essentially reflects Sartre's (1965) analysis of the antisemite.

7. This position toward the resurrection differs from the one expressed in Long Night's Journey (1982:150). In this work the Eckardts deny the resurrection. Still, they affirm the belief in a future resurrection, when "Jesus of Nazareth shall be raised" along with the murdered "children of Auschwitz". However, only some unknown future event can accomplish this feat.

8. Pawlikowski (1979:161) notes that "(i)t is not sufficient to maintain that hope is the central meaning of christology, as Ruether seems to do. We must go deeper and ask what is the basis of that hope."

9. Roy Eckardt (1986:60-61) supports the claim that Jesus may eventually be accepted as a faithful Jew by contemporary Jewry. The author points to the efforts of certain modern Jewish scholars that have attempted to reclaim Jesus as their own. But, these types of works should not be understood as representative of the majority Jewish opinion on Jesus.

Notes for Chapter Three

1. One Christian post-Holocaust thinker who has affirmed Cohen's hermeneutic of suspicion is David Tracy. For an example of Tracy's use of this method, see his article; Religious values after the Holocaust: A Catholic view (peck ed., 1982:87-107).

2. Fackenheim's examination of Christianity represents another limitation to his argument for the Holocaust's uniqueness. If the author were to strictly follow its logic, he would not suggest that Christianity influenced the events that lead to the Holocaust. Thus, for Fackenheim to challenge the Christian for their role in the Holocaust, he must negate the argument for uniqueness.

3. This insight is supported by David P. Efremson's article, The patristic connection (Davies ed., 1979:98-117).

In this paper, the author illustrates that Marcion's claims were not so much refuted by the Church Fathers, but shown to be misguided.

Marcion's position was attacked by four major Christian thinkers: Tertullian, Justin, Irenaeus, and Origen. What one discovers is that even within this inter-Christian conflict, the anti-Judaic argument is employed. Marcion's characterization of the Old Testament God as the evil, immoral, low god of the Jews, was explained away by the Church Fathers as a necessary response by God to a "stiff necked people". God's "unloving" actions subsided, however, with the development of the "true Israel in Jesus Christ".

What the contra-Marcion writings appear to illustrate is the inherent relation between the "left-hand" of christology, and what I have called, "the nefarious-hand". The objections against Marcion were not inspired by a love for Judaism, but because his doctrine would ultimately divorce Christianity from its messianic self-understanding. Thus, the nefarious-hand did not alarm the exegetes, but affirmed their basic disposition toward the Jewish religion and people. It was merely Marcion's conclusions that they fought, but not his basic interpretation. In this sense, the left-hand and the nefarious-hand are definitely on the same side of the argument.

4. A similar argument is forwarded in Marc H. Ellis's (1987) most recent work. For a critique of this text, see my forthcoming review in the Journal of Religion and Culture.

5. Ruether's interpretation of the Jewish people as a covenantal community only, fails to explain its implications for the secular Jew. This oversight raises the complex question of "who is a Jew?" Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to adequately discuss this issue, it is important to emphasize that Ruether forwards her comments without regard for the importance of this question for the modern Jewish community.

Notes for Conclusion

1. For an example of a post-Holocaust ethics, see Michael L. Morgan's article; Jewish ethics after the Holocaust (1984). Here the author examines the work of Fackenheim to arrive at a basic outline for ethics in the post-Holocaust age.
2. The concern for political theology in a post-Holocaust setting, is examined by Marc H. Ellis (1987).

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