Dialogue as a Trans-disciplinary Concept

Studia Judaica

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Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums

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Band 83

Dialogue as a Trans-disciplinary Concept

Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue
and its Contemporary Reception

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Introduction: Dialogue as a Trans-Disciplinary Concept

In a moment of disarming candor, Buber explained to a friend who was seeking to promote his appointment to the faculty of the Hebrew University: "*Ich bin kein Universitätsmensch*" – I am not a university person.[1] By this confession, written just before he left Germany for *Eretz Yisrael* in March 1938, Buber meant that he did not fit into – nor did he care to fit into the disciplinary classifications of the university. His appointment to the faculty to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was delayed by many years, primarily because those advocating his appointment– such as Gershom Scholem and even the president of the fledgling university, Judah Leon Magnes – could not convince their colleagues that Buber was indeed a *Universtätsmensch*.

Was Buber a philosopher? To be sure, he wrote extensively on philosophical themes, but his mode of exposition did not quite conform to the accepted disquisitional protocol of academic publications. Was he a scholar of comparative religion (*Religionswissenschaft*), which he taught as a *Honorarprofessor* or adjunct professor at the University of Frankfurt? Was he a biblical scholar? After all he translated (initially with Franz Rosenzweig) the Hebrew Scriptures into German, wrote innumerable essays and (by 1938) no less than four major books on biblical subjects? Was he a scholar of Hasidism and mysticism? Or perhaps he was an art historian, having also written about art? He was of course all these, yet not quite any. He lacked a clear disciplinary profile. Finally, after ten years of negotiations a compromise was reached and he was granted a professorship in social philosophy, which soon evolved into the founding chair of the Hebrew University's department of sociology.[2] Although Buber had studied sociology and social philosophy with the likes of Georg Simmel and Wilhelm Dilthey, and edited a highly acclaimed series of forty monographs in social psychology, *Die Gesellschaft*, one would hardly regard him in the strict sense a sociologist.

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1 Buber to S. H. Bergmann, letter dated 16 April 1936. Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, ed. Grete Schaeder (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Scheidner, 1973), vol 2: 589.
2 On the complex trajectory of Buber's academic career, see my article "Buber's Rhetoric," in: *Martin Buber: A Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr
(Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities/Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 1–24.

In a word, he was a polymath of exceptional learning, a fact to which his friend Franz Rosenzweig attested in a letter explaining why he had invited Buber to join the faculty of the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt am Main:

> I would not have invited him ... had I not been utterly convinced from the very first moment of his absolute genuineness, to be exact, the integrity that has slowly taken hold of him. ... I do not know of anyone else who is as honest as he is with respect to spiritual and intellectual matters, and as dependable in human affairs. I do not readily employ superlatives.... [Yet I must acknowledge that] Buber is for me an imposing savant (*Gelehrter*). I am not easily impressed by knowledge, because I myself have some. ... But in comparison to Buber's learning, I regard myself a dwarf (*Gegen Bubers Gelehrsamkeit aber emfinde ich mich als einen Zwerg.*). In the course of my conversations with him, every time I seek to say something new, I encounter a commanding erudition – without a trace of pretentiousness – not only in German and foreign literature 'about,' but also in the primary writings of individuals whose names I hardly know. That I am also impressed by his Judaic and Hebrew knowledge says less, although in recent years I have developed a certain sense and learned to distinguish between a 'little' and a 'great' [knowledge in Jewish matters]. There are areas of Judaica in which he is certainly in the strictest sense of the term an expert (*Fachmann*).[3]

Buber's reading was not only voracious but catholic, covering encyclopedic interests in the human and social sciences, the arts and literature. The enormous breadth of his intellectual universe is also registered in the catalogue of his personal library of over 40,000 volumes and from the thematic scope of his writings. Buber's interdisciplinary horizons are also reflected in the critical edition of his writings that are currently in preparation initially under the joint sponsorship of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, and since 2009 with Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf, and The Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities, will comprise some 21 volumes, some containing two books, and each volume dedicated to a specific theme. For example:

Myth and Mysticism
Hasidism
Psychology and Psychotherapy
Philosophical Anthropology
Chinese Philosophy and Literature
Pedagogy
Philosophy of Religion
Philosophy of Language
Messianism and Eschatology

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3 Rosenzweig to Eugen Meyer, letter dated 23 January 1923, in *Rosenzweig. Der Mensch und sein Werk: Gesammelte Schriften*, Part 1: *Briefe und Tagebücher*, ed. Rachel Rosenzweig and Edith Rosenzweig-Scheinmann, II: 883.

Judaism
Christianity
Zionism
Political Philosophy
Social and Cultural Theory
Theories of Translation
Theater and Literature
Art Criticism and Art History

Indeed, Buber's interests were trans-disciplinary. What ultimately characterizes his work in these multifarious fields is the principle of dialogue, which he employed as a comprehensive hermeneutic method.

As an interpretive method, dialogue has two distinct but ultimately convergent vectors. The first is directed to the subject of one's "investigation": one is to listen to the voice of the other and to suspend all pre-determined categories and concepts that one may have of the other; dialogue is, first and foremost, the art of unmediated listening. In a sense Buber's principle of dialogue extends Isaac Newton's maxim: *Hypotheses non fingo:* I feign no hypotheses. Dialogue is, of course, more than a method ensuring maximum objectivity; dialogue has manifest cognitive and thus existential significance. By listening to the Other attentively, by allowing the voice of the Other to penetrate, so to speak, one's very being, to allow the words of the Other – articulated acoustically and viscerally – to question one's pre-established positions fortified by professional, emotional, intellectual and ideological commitments, one must perforce be open to the possibility of being challenged by that voice. As Eugen Rosenstock-Heussy put it: *Respondo etsi mutabor,* I respond, although I will be changed; "I respond, even though I may change in the process!" Genuine dialogue thus entails a risk, the 'danger' that by truly listening to the other – be the other an individual, a text, a work of art – that one might, indeed, be changed, transformed cognitively and existentially.

On a more prosaic but no less significant level, Buber envisioned dialogue as a scholarly conversation–conducted between various disciplinary perspectives. In his study of the origins of the biblical conception of Messianism, *Königtum Gottes*, he not only drew upon the canon of biblical scholarship, demonstrating a mastery of textual skills finely honed by exhaustive philological analysis (grounded in a nuanced knowledge of ancient Near Eastern languages), but also upon archaeology, history, and sociology. Incidentally, in this monumental study, Buber was in particular beholden to the work of Max Weber, whom he knew personally and whom he effusively extolled in the pref-

ace of the volume as "a most extraordinary person" (*ein außenordentlicher Mensch*).[4]

And it is Weber who comes to mind when adjudging Buber's transdisciplinary disposition. In his memorable lecture of 1918 *Science as Vocation* (*Wissenschaft als Beruf*) Weber bemoaned the imperious, but given the inherent logic of modern science a necessary drive to disciplinary specialization:

> In our time, the internal situation [of scholarship is] conditioned by the fact that [it] has entered a phase of specialization previously unknown and that this will forever remain the case. Not only externally, but also inwardly, matters stand at a point where the individual can acquire the sure consciousness of achieving something truly perfect in the field of science only if he is a strict specialist. All work that overlaps neighboring fields ... is burdened with the resigned realization that at best one provides the specialist with useful questions upon which he would not so easily hit from his specialized point of view. ... Only by strict specialization can the scientific worker (*Wissenschaftler*) become fully conscious... that he has achieved something that will endure. A really definitive and good accomplishment is today always a specialized accomplishment.[5]

And whoever lacks this "passionate devotion," as Weber put it, to specialized research – "without this strange intoxication, ridiculed by every outsider" – "you have *no* calling for science and you should do something else."[6]

Nearly seventy years after Weber penned this plea for a sober resignation to "the fate of our times"[7] that knowledge must be pursued by way of often radically divergent disciplinary paths and with the circumscribed tools of the specialist, Jürgen Habermas questioned whether specialization has not gone too far. With respect to the social sciences, he lamented that they are each locked into a "restrictive line of inquiry" creating a condition of "mutual incomprehension," such that the adherents of different methodological approaches "scarcely have anything to say to one another."[8] Such scholarly autism, Habermas suggested, prevails in the humanities as well. Far more distressing, in Habermas's view, is the resulting isolation of the academic inquiry from the "life-world," the real life of human beings to which he believes science should ultimately serve.

Two alternative responses to stem the centrifugal tendencies to disciplinary fragmentation have emerged in the last decades, which have witnessed an ever-

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4 Buber, *Königtum Gottes* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1932)

5 Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in: *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* trans. and ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948), 134 f.

6 Ibid., 135.

7 Ibid., 155.

8 Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action,* trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), vol. 2: 375.

increasing attention to inter-disciplinary scholarship. The first has been a call to put a halt to the fragmentation of knowledge due to what is perceived as inordinate specialization by development of an epistemological synthesis, yielding it is hoped a comprehensive unified theory of knowledge. Wary of the theoretical monism implied by such a synthesis, other scholars have called for what Charles Camic and Hans Joas have recently described as a "dialogical turn." [9]

Focusing on the social sciences, Camic and Joas observe that:

> Rather than decry the multiplicity of theories, methods, and research findings and then seek their integration in a unifying framework, the characteristic of this response is that it welcomes the presence of a plurality of orientations and approaches as an opportunity for productive intellectual dialogue. [10]

The intention of dialogue – Camic and Joas underscore – is not a strategy to promote some ultimate synthesis, but simply to foster cross-disciplinary conversation. "Dialogue among different intellectual perspectives is a paramount objective in its own right." Further, they remark, "in contrast to programs for synthesis that would minimize intellectual differences, or pluralist alternatives that would neglect their productive interplay, the dialogical approach is" – and here Camic and Joas cite one of the leading proponents of the dialogical turn in the social sciences, David N. Levine – "one that connects different parts of the community [of scholars], while fully respecting what appear to be irreducible differences."[11] Levine, incidentally, is explicitly indebted to Buber and his teaching that dialogue takes place in an ontological space – *das Zwischenmenschliche* – that arises between one human being and another when they meet as two independent, utterly autonomous subjects, a meeting Buber more poetically called *eine Ich-Du Beziehung*, an I-Thou relation.

Weber had perhaps also such a dialogue in mind when he parenthetically noted in the citation we brought from his lecture "Science as a Vocation" that the specialist may turn to other disciplines in order to garner "useful questions upon which he would not so easily hit from his own specialized point of view."[12] To be sure, Weber acknowledged this form of inter-disciplinary dialogue in less buoyant terms than Camic and Joas; nor would he of course endorse Buber's on-

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9 *The Dialogical Turn: New Roles for Sociology in the Postdisciplinary Age*, eds. Charles Camic and Hans Joas, (Landham, Maryland: Rowman and Littefield, 2003).

10 Ibid., 5

11 Ibid., 9 f. The citation is from Levine, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 297.

12 Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 134 f.

tological presuppositions. What he would regard as crucial is the urgent need for a trans-disciplinary conversation.

In support of the dialogical turn we may also conscript Goethe. In contrast to romanticism, which he defined as an illness, the great poet celebrated classicism as sanity. The early romantic poet and philosopher Novalis, it is said unwittingly provided the key to a fuller understanding of Goethe's judgment by his assertion that the essence of romanticism is to transform a single event or individual fact into an absolute and general explanatory principle. In contrast, classicism, according to Goethe, while recognizing several principles as fundamentally independent of one another, although closely interconnected and organically related. Only by virtue of their organic interrelatedness are these disparate principles capable of creating and forming humanity's spiritual world.[13] Buber shared this conviction that our spiritual universe is comprised of a multitude of ontically independent and irreducible voices, which are to be brought into harmony though dialogue, a conversation that unfolds in the ontological space of *das Zwischenmenschliche – in dem Treffpunkt des Zwischenmenschlichen.*

The objective of this volume is to explore the reception of Buber's philosophy of dialogue in some of the disciplines that fell within the purview of his own writings: Anthropology, Hasidism, Inter-Faith Encounter, Psychology, and Conflict Resolution, especially as it bears upon the seemingly intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict that so profoundly exercised Buber.

The transdisciplinary perspective that this volume seeks to promote is inspired by a statement that Buber gave towards the end of life in response to a request that he summarize his life's work in one succinct thesis. His reply was: "*Ich habe keine Lehre, aber ich führe ein Gespräch*" – I have no doctrine, but I conduct a conversation. It is this conversation we wish to continue in this symposium. And if I may add a Buberian sentiment, we will exchange ideas and listen to one another, "risking" the danger that we might change our opinions along the way.

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13 Cf. Dimitri Gawronsky, "Ernst Cassirer: His Life and Work", in *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed., P. A. Schlipp (La Salle, IL, 1973), 34 f.

Jürgen Habermas*
A Philosophy of Dialogue

On 24 November 1938, Martin Buber, who had emigrated to Palestine just eight months before, wrote to his friend and son-in-law Ludwig Strauss: "To judge by a necessarily vague message from Frankfurt, all of our possessions in Heppenheim seem to have been destroyed."[1] The Kristallnacht pogroms undoubtedly mark a deep caesura in Buber's long and incomparably productive career. The next twenty-seven active years at the Hebrew University certainly give weight to the second part of his adult life. But Buber, at 60, was already a world-renowned figure when he reached this safe harbour. At the time, he could already look back on a full life in the German-speaking world, devoted from the start to the Jewish cause. This circumstance may explain the honourable but far from obvious invitation extended to me, a German colleague, to deliver the inaugural lecture in this newly established series. For this, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Israel Academy.[2]

Historical representations of Jewish culture in the German Empire and in the Weimar Republic depict Martin Buber not only as a leading figure in the Zionist movement but more specifically as the authoritative spokesman of a Jewish cultural renaissance that enjoyed the support of a younger generation.[3] The *Jung Judah* movement, which took shape around 1900 within the orbit of the other youth and reform movements, understood this awakening as the birth of a modern Jewish national culture. Buber made himself its spokesperson when he delivered his first programmatic speech at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1901. Following his publications on the hasidic Stories of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav and The Legend of the Baal Shem Tov, the wider public also regarded him as the spiritual leader of so-called cultural Zionism. In 1916, Buber realized his long-cherished plan of publishing a monthly Jewish periodical. *Der Jude* pro-

1 Tuvia Rübner and Dafna Mach, eds., *Briefwechsel Martin Buber – Ludwig Strauß* (Frankfurt a.M: Luchterhand, 1990), 229.
2 The present text has much benefited from the careful editing of Deborah Greniman of the Academy's Publications Department. Prof. Paul Mendes-Flohr kindly read the edited text and made some important corrections.
3 Martin Brenner, *Jüdische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2000), 32ff.

vided the intellectually ambitious platform that brought together such diverse writers as Franz Kafka, Arnold Zweig, Gustav Landauer and Eduard Bernstein.

Buber's friendship with Franz Rosenzweig acquired major importance. In 1920, after returning from the war with his book *The Star of Redemption*, Rosenzweig opened the *Jüdisches Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt, which was destined to become a model for similar institutions throughout the republic. With his program of 'New Learning', Rosenzweig channelled the impulses of the contemporary adult education movement in a direction that could not fail to be congenial to Buber. As he announced in his opening address, Rosenzweig supported 'a learning in reverse order. A learning that no longer starts from the Torah and leads into life, but the other way round: from life, from a world that knows nothing about the Law, or pretends to know nothing, back to the Torah. This is the sign of the time'.[4] Rosenzweig secured Buber as a permanent lecturer in the Lehrhaus and his closest collaborator. The famous Bible translation based on the leitmotifs discernible in the original Hebrew was also a product of their cooperation.

In retrospect, the list of lecturers at the Lehrhaus is made up almost exclusively of famous names – including, among others, Leo Baeck, Siegfried Kracauer, Leo Strauss, Erich Fromm, Gershom Scholem, S. Y. Agnon, Ernst Simon and Leo Löwenthal. If we read today in Michael Brenner's historical study[5] that Martin Buber was the 'most prominent teacher' in this circle and 'the most famous German-Jewish thinker of the Weimar period', we needn't scratch our heads over a letter written in his support by the dean of the University of Frankfurt's philosophical faculty. When Walter F. Otto applied to the Education Ministry in 1930 to transform the lectureship that Buber had occupied since 1924 into a salaried honorary professorship, he could confine himself to the laconic statement that there was nobody more suitable than Buber, "who is so well known that one can dispense with a detailed description of his achievements."[6] Buber resigned from this chair in 1933, immediately after Hitler's accession to power, without waiting for the purge that would strip the University of Frankfurt of one third of its faculty.

In 1953, a couple of years before I began my academic career at this same university in the role of Theodor Adorno's assistant, I encountered Martin Buber on a single occasion (though only in the midst of a huge audience of stu-

4 Franz Rosenzweig, 'Upon Opening the Jüdisches Lehrhaus', in idem, *On Jewish Learning*, ed. Nahum Norbert Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1955), 98.

5 Brenner, *Jüdische Kultur* (above, note 3), 90, 96.

6 Notker Hammerstein, *Die Geschichte der Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1989), vol. 1: 120.

dents). Buber had returned to Germany for the first time after the war and the Holocaust. Time and again my wife and I have recalled that memorable evening in Lecture Hall no. 10 at the University of Bonn – less so the content of the lecture than the moment of Buber's appearance, when the clamour in the overflowing auditorium suddenly fell still. The entire audience rose to its feet in awe as Federal President Theodor Heuss, as if to underscore the extraordinary nature of the visit, solemnly escorted the comparatively small figure of the white-haired, bearded old man, the sage from Israel, down the long passage leading from the row of windows to the podium. Seen through the lens of memory, the entire evening becomes focused on this single dignified moment.

What I did not understand at the time was that this scene also embodied an essential idea in Buber's philosophy: the power of the performative, which overshadows the content of what is said. I must confess that today my reflections on the public role played by Buber in the early years of the Federal Republic are tinged with a certain ambivalence. In those years he featured centrally in Jewish–Christian encounters, which happened to link up with his earlier and similar initiatives in the Weimar era. These encounters certainly were not devoid of serious substance, and they will have fostered a critical attitude on the part of many. However, they also fit into the then-pervasive intellectual climate, which responded to a muddled need for an inward-looking and a-political assimilation of the "recent past" – a genre to which Adorno attached the label "jargon of authenticity." In post-war Germany, Martin Buber, the reconciliatory religious interlocutor, was the antipode of the implacable Gershom Scholem, who opened our eyes during the 1960s to the obverse side of such casual invocations of the so-called German–Jewish symbiosis.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have not invited me here to speak on the religious author and wise man, the Zionist and popular educator Martin Buber. Buber was a philosopher as well, and as such, toward the end of his life, he rightly became the twelfth laureate in the pantheon of those honoured by inclusion in the distinguished *Living Philosophers* series, following, among others, John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, Bertrand Russell, Ernst Cassirer, Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Carnap. In that framework, some of the best minds in the discipline engaged in the discussion of his work.[7] At its centre was and still is the I–Thou relationship around which Buber's philosophical thought crystallized. I will address his thought, firstly, by situating this philosophical idea in

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7 Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman, eds., *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1967). Among the participants in this volume of critical evaluations of Buber's philosophy were Gabriel Marcel, Charles Harthorne, Emmanuel Levinas, Emil Brunner, Max Brod, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Jacob Taubes, C. F. von Weizsäcker, Helmut Kuhn and Walter Kaufmann.

the history of philosophy. I would then like, secondly, to explain the systematic import of this foundational idea by hinting at the implications that can be drawn from Buber's approach, independently of his own interests. I will conclude, thirdly, with the characteristic philosophical achievements of religious authors as translators from one domain into another. In Martin Buber's case, the humanist grounding of his Zionism can be understood in terms of the translation of particular religious intuitions into generalizing philosophical concepts.

(1) Buber wrote his dissertation on Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Böhme. Aside from his love of Hasidism,[8] which had arisen partly in response to the emergence of the Frankist sects inspired by Sabbatai Zvi, the question arises of whether Buber already then had some inkling of the astounding affinity between the imagery invoked by Böhme and that limned by the doctrines of Jewish mysticism – an affinity to which Scholem would later draw attention with an anecdote about the visit of the Swabian Pietist F. C. Oetinger to the kabbalist Koppel Hecht in the Frankfurt ghetto.[9] Buber himself describes his breakthrough to the major philosophical insight that would shape the remainder of his work in the manner of a conversion extending over the years of the First World War. Whereas up to that point he had interpreted his religious experience in mystical terms, as withdrawal into an extraordinary dimension, he henceforth rejected the loss of self into unification with an all-encompassing divinity. The place of this absorbing and dissolving contact was now taken by a dialogical relationship to God that is as it were normalized, though it is not levelled down. Contrary to the speechless mystical experience, this relationship between the individual and God as a second person is mediated by words.

In his old age Buber described his repudiation of mysticism in stark words:

> Since then I have given up the 'religious' which is nothing but the exception, the extraction, exaltation or ecstasy .... The mystery is no longer disclosed, it ... has made its dwelling here where everything happens as it happens. I know no fullness but each mortal hour's fullness of claim and responsibility. Though far from being equal to it, I know that in the claim I am claimed and may respond in responsibility ... If that is religion then it is simply *all that is lived in its possibility of dialogue.*[10]

These words summarize the inspiration underlying the reflections on which Buber had been working since 1917 and which he published in 1923 under the

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8 On Buber's interest in Hasidism see Hans-Joachim Werner, *Martin Buber* (Frankfurt a/M–New York: Campus, 1994), 146 ff.
9 Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1995), 238.
10 Martin Buber, 'Autobiographical Fragments', in Schilpp and Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (above, note 7), 26.

title *Ich und Du* (*I and Thou*). His later writings are footnotes to this major work. The interpersonal relationship with God as the "eternal Thou" structures the linguistic network of relations in which every person always already finds himself or herself as the interlocutor of other persons: "to be man means to be the being that is over against other human beings and god."[11]

As can be read off from the system of personal pronouns, however, the situation of human beings in the world is conditioned by the fact that this 'being over against' must be differentiated into two different attitudes, depending on whether those who are 'over against' one are other persons or other objects. The interpersonal relationship between a first and a second person, between an 'I' and a 'Thou,' is different in kind from the objectifying relationship between a third person and an object, between an 'I' and an 'It'. Any interpersonal relationship calls for the reciprocal interpenetration of the perspectives that those involved direct to each other, such that each participant is capable of adopting the perspective of the other. It is part of the dialogical relationship that the person addressed can assume the role of the speaker, just as, in turn, the speaker can assume that of the addressee. In contrast with this symmetry, the observer's gaze is fixed asymmetrically upon an object – which cannot return the gaze of the observer.

In relation to this difference between the I–Thou and the I–It relationship, Buber provides compelling phenomenological descriptions. He discovers a corresponding difference between the roles of the respective subjects who say 'I.' In the one relationship, the 'I' features as an actor, in the other as an observer. An actor 'enters into' an *interpersonal* relationship and 'performs' this relationship, usually by means of a speech act. This performative aspect of speech is different from the content and the object of communication; that is, we must distinguish the performative aspect of the conversation from its content. Because those involved do not spy or eavesdrop *upon* one another as objects, but rather open themselves up *for* one another, they encounter each other in the social forum delimited by dialogue and, as contemporaries, become narratively involved in each other's stories. They can both occupy the same place in social space and historical time only when they encounter each other as second persons in this performative attitude. Moreover, an encounter assumes the form of making the other present in his or her entirety. This 'making the other present' as a person forms the compass within which the perception of the other is selectively *focused* on the features that are essential to the individual person herself, rather than

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11 Ibid., 35.

shifting at will from one detail to the next, as in the case of the observation of an object.

Buber describes in somewhat flowery terms this priority of the performative in the encounter: "The primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word *I–It* can never be spoken with the whole being."[12] To be sure, the observer also acts, insofar as he has to 'adopt' an objectifying attitude toward the object; but, *in actu,* the performative aspect completely disappears *for him* behind the object itself, the theme of his perception or judgment. *Intentione recta*, the observer disregards his own situation; by attending to something in the world as if it were 'from nowhere', he abstracts himself from his own anchoring in social space and lived historical time. This first move of juxtaposing actor and observer is too simple, however. Even acting subjects often have shielded egos; they, too, can screen themselves off and treat their interlocutors not as second persons but as objects – not as partners in dialogue, but instrumentally, like a doctor operating on the body of a patient, or strategically, like a clever bank manager palming off loans upon his customers.

From the perspective of cultural criticism, these monological modes of action can even become the dominant mode of interaction in society as a whole. Against the background of his overall sceptical attitude toward the progressive expansion of the social domains of strategic and purposive-rational action in the course of social modernization,[13] Buber's practical interest focused narrowly on a couple of outstanding face-to-face relationships such as friendship or love. Even within the set of communicative actions, these samples of intimacy constitute only a marginal segment, but they are emblematic of what Buber calls 'dialogical being'. What stands out in this ideal type of unprotected encounter, in which the participants are 'turned toward each other' in authentic togetherness, are those performative aspects that are otherwise hidden by the thematic or content aspects of conversations and interactions.

Buber shares this attention to the performative with other versions of contemporary existential philosophy, which try as well to uncover, beneath the 'what' of the supposed 'essence' of human beings, the buried mode and modality of this life, the 'how' of its being-in-the-world –which oscillates in turn between authentic and inauthentic being. For the distinguishing feature of human life is that it is up to the individual to lead it, and this effort can fail. Phenomenology, historicism and pragmatism share this interest in the performative

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12 Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans., Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Continuum, 1957), 11.
13 Ibid., 56: "But in times of sickness it comes about that the world of *It*, no longer penetrated and fructified by the inflowing world of *Thou* as by living streams but separated and stagnant, a gigantic ghost of the fens, overpowers man."

character of life as it is lived. In this respect all modern philosophers are heirs of the Young Hegelians, who initiated the de-transcendentalization and deflation of reason – what Marx had called the 'decomposition' of Hegel's absolute spirit. This philosophical movement situates reason itself in social space and historical time. It takes as its goal the embodiment of reason in the human organism and in social practice – that is, in the cooperative ways in which communicatively socialized subjects cope with the contingencies and conflicts of their environment. Buber was as alert to this Young Hegelian heritage as he was to the affinity of his thinking with contemporary existential philosophy. He engaged with Feuerbach, Marx and Kierkegaard as intensively as with Jaspers, Heidegger and Sartre. What sets him apart within this extended family, however, is the attention he paid to the communicative constitution of human existence, which he describes, following Wilhelm von Humboldt and Ludwig Feuerbach, in terms of a philosophy of dialogue.[14]

(2) The point of departure is the phenomenon of being spoken to: 'Life means being addressed'[15] such that the one must 'confront' the other, and this in a twofold sense. The person addressed must *allow* himself to be confronted by the other, by being open to an I–Thou relationship; and he must *take a stance* on what this other says to him, in the simplest case with a 'Yes' or a 'No.' In being willing to be called to account by another person and to be answerable to her, the individual addressed exposes herself to the non-objectifiable presence of the other person and recognizes her as a non-representable source of autonomous claims. At the same time, she subjects herself to the semantic and discursive commitments imposed by language and dialogue. By the same token, the reciprocity of the reversal of roles between addressee and speaker lends the dialogical relationship an egalitarian character. The willingness to accept the dialogical obligations imposed by the other is bound up with a pattern of attitudes that is as egalitarian as it is individualist. However, Buber is not painting an irenic picture. Exactly in the most intimate relationship, the other must be taken seriously in her individuated nature and be recognized in her radical otherness.[16] In the need to balance these two contradictory expectations – Buber speaks of

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14 On Humboldt, see Martin Buber, *Zwiesprache*, in idem, *Das dialogische Prinzip* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1979), 178; on Feuerbach, see Buber, *Das Problem des Menschen* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1982), 58 ff. On the stimuli that Buber received from his contemporaries, see especially Michael Theunissen, *The Other: Studies in the Social Ontology of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Buber,*trans., by Christopher Macann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), §46.
15 Buber, *Zwiesprache* (above, note 14), 153.
16 Martin Buber, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen*, in idem, *Das dialogische Prinzip* (above, note 14), 233; on this issue, see Werner, *Martin Buber* (above, note 8), 48 ff.

"expansion into its own being and turning to connection"[17] – he identifies the source of the unease generally lurking in this kind of communicative socialization.

To be sure, the *religious author* radicalizes the philosophy of dialogue into the 'true conversation' in which the finger of God is at work; but the inquiry of the *philosopher* also offers interesting points of contact for the deflated post-metaphysical mode of analysis. In the years since Buber set out this idea, the relevant discourses have branched out in different directions. Let me begin with the most important and highly controversial question: What is more fundamental, self-consciousness and the epistemic relationship of the self with itself, or the communicative relationship with the other in dialogue? Which of the two can claim priority over the other – monological self-relation or dialogical mutuality? In his 1964 postdoctoral dissertation, Michael Theunissen positioned Buber's philosophy of dialogue as an alternative approach to Husserl's derivation of the lifeworld from the constitutive acts of the transcendental subject.[18] I may refer in this context – and not merely by way of local interest – to the question Nathan Rotenstreich once posed to Buber: "whether reflection itself is but an extraction from the primacy of mutuality or whether mutuality presupposes reflection."[19]

In classic mentalist terms, Rotenstreich defends the primacy of reflection against the interpersonal relation. According to the mentalist argument, realizing a relation between a first and a second person presupposes that the subject who is capable of using the word 'I' has already differentiated himself from another subject; and this act of differentiation presupposes in turn an antecedent epistemic relationship to self, because a subject cannot distance himself from other subjects without first having perceived and identified himself as a subject.[20] The fraught tenor of Buber's detailed response to his Jerusalem colleague shows that this controversy turns on a deep-seated paradigm dispute. Are human beings basically cognitive subjects who first relate to themselves reflexively in the same objectifying attitude as that in which they relate to something

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17 *I and Thou* (above, note 12), 87.

18 Theunissen, *The Other* (above, note 14), 291.

19 Nathan Rotenstreich, "The Right and the Limitations of Martin Buber's Dialogical Thought," in: Schilpp and Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (above, note 7), 124 f.

20 Ibid., pp. 125 f.: "If we do not grant the status of consciousness of one's own self we are facing the riddle how could a human being realize that it is he as a human being who maintains relations to things and to living beings and is not just submerged but amounts to a twofold attitude of detachment (i.e., in the I–It-relation) and attachment (in the I-Thou-relation) ... How is it possible to be both detached and attached without the consciousness of oneself as a constitutive feature of the whole situation?"

in the objective world? In that case, what sets them apart from all other living beings is self-consciousness. Or does one subject first become aware of himself as a subject in communication with the other? In that case, it is not self-consciousness but language and the corresponding form of communicative socialization that is the distinguishing feature of human existence.

Buber conceives of human beings not primarily as subjects of cognition but rather as practical beings who have to enter into interpersonal relationships in order to cope, through cooperation, with the contingencies of the objective world. In his view, human beings are distinguished, too, by their ability to distance themselves from themselves – but not in the manner of self-objectification: "It is incorrect to see in the fact of primal distance a reflecting position of a spectator."[21] The feature that sets human beings apart from animals is not self-reflection in the sense of turning a reiterated subject–object or I–It relationship upon oneself. Our lives are instead performed in the triadic communicative relationship between a first and a second person while communicating about objects in the world.[22] The phenomenon of self-consciousness is derived from dialogue: 'The person becomes conscious of himself as sharing in being, as co-existing'.[23] In advance of any explicit self-reflection, the subject is caught up in an interpersonal relationship and first becomes aware of herself performatively by adopting the perspective of the other towards herself: "The I that (first) emerges is aware of itself, but without reflecting on itself so as to become an object."[24]

Buber has a rather special justification for the priority of the dialogical relationship over self-consciousness: the *a priori* of prayer. Buber accords the relationship with the 'eternal Thou' a constitutive status. And because the encounter with the original word of God structures all possible conversations within the world, Buber can assert: "Nothing helps me so much to understand man and his existence as does speech."[25] Note: 'speech,' and not language as such! Like Rosenzweig, Buber participates in his own way in the linguistic turn of twentieth-century philosophy.[26] Understandably enough, he has no interest in a semantics which, in Richard Rorty's words, is merely a continuation of seventeenth-century epistemology by language-analytical means. Wittgenstein's turn

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21 Martin Buber, 'Replies to my Critics', in Schilpp and Friedman, *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (above, note 7), 695.

22 Karl-Otto Apel, 'Die Logos-Auszeichnung der menschlichen Sprache', in idem, *Paradigmen der Ersten Philosophie* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011).

23 Buber, *I and Thou* (above, note 12), 52.

24 Ibid.

25 Buber, 'Replies to my Critics' (above, note 21), 696.

26 On this see Apel, *Paradigmen der Ersten Philosophie* (above, note 22), Part I.

to the use of language was more congenial to Buber's view. At any rate, he had the important and correct intuition that without the dialogically created 'between' of an intersubjectively shared background, we cannot achieve objectivity of experience or judgment – and the converse is true as well.

With his analysis of the twofold perspective of the I–Thou/I–It relation, Buber directs attention to the interpenetration of two equally fundamental relationships: the intersubjective relationship between addressee and speaker (which is constitutive for communication), on the one hand, and the intentional and objectifying relation to something in the world (about which both communicate), on the other. The mutual perspective operating between I and Thou makes the sharing of intentions towards objects in the world possible, while individual perceptions of something in the world acquire their objectivity only by the fact that they are shared between different subjects. This complex relationship is reflected in the competent use of the system of personal pronouns and of the associated referential terms. The very knowledge of competent speakers about how to use personal pronouns and deictic expressions, which forms the pragmatic frame for any possible communication, depends upon the systematic interpenetration of I–Thou and I–It relations.

Allow me to mention in passing an empirical confirmation of this philosophical proposition that is very close to Buber's fundamental insight. In psychological experiments on language development, Michael Tomasello has demonstrated the relevance of the triadic relationship for interactions with children *at the prelinguistic* stage.[27] Children of around twelve months follow the pointing gestures of caregivers (or point with their own fingers) in order to draw the attention of the other person to certain things and to share their perceptions with them. At the horizontal level, mother and child also grasp each other's intentions through the direction of gaze, so that an I–Thou relation – i.e., a social perspective – arises which enables them to direct their attention to the same object in the vertical I–It direction. By means of the pointing gesture – soon also in combination with mimicry – children acquire knowledge shared intersubjectively with the mother of the jointly identified and perceived object, and on this basis the gesture then ultimately acquires its conventional meaning.

(3) Martin Buber did not pursue further the obvious path of developing his dialogical-philosophical approach in terms of a philosophy of language.[28] Nathan Rotenstreich already criticized him, not entirely without justification, for fo-

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27 Michael Tomasello, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); idem, *Origins of Human Communication* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008).
28 See Jürgen Habermas, *Philosophische Texte* (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 2009), II: *Rationalitäts- und Sprachtheorie.*

cusing on the performative aspect of the I–Thou relationship, on the 'how' of the 'making-present' of the other person, while neglecting the cognitive aspect of the I–It relation, that is, the representation of a state of affairs and the corresponding truth claims. Buber's well-taken critique of the fixation of the major philosophical traditions on the cognitive grasp of beings, on the self-reflection of the knowing subject and the representative function of language, often slides too quickly into cultural criticism. In lumping all objectifying stances toward the world together with the objectivistic tendencies of the age, he throws the baby out with the bathwater by exposing them all to blanket suspicion. On the other hand, there is a trivial reason why Buber did not exhaust the theoretical potential of his own approach: his overriding interest in issues of ethical-existential self-understanding. The weak normativity that is already inherent in the pragmatics of linguistic communication as such is eclipsed by the strong ethical normativity of binding oughts and authentic life projects.

Buber the philosopher cannot be detached from the religious author. He belongs to the small set of distinguished religious authors with philosophical ambitions reaching from Kierkegaard, Josiah Royce and William James, through the young Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin and Emmanuel Levinas, up to contemporaries such as Jacques Derrida. These thinkers continued under the changed conditions of modernity a labour of translation that could take place in an inconspicuous, osmotic way as long as Greek metaphysics was administered and developed under the auspices of the theologians of the Abrahamic religions after the closure of the Academy. Once this fragile symbiosis was dissolved by nominalism, the subversive and regenerative force of an assimilation of religious semantics by the rational discourse of philosophy could unfold only in the broad daylight of advancing secularization.

The philosophers now had to 'out' themselves as religious authors, as it were, if they wanted to salvage untapped semantic contents from the well articulated wealth of the great axial religions by their translation into generally accessible philosophical concepts and discourses. Conversely, a pluralistic public has something to learn from these authors precisely because, in a manner of speaking, they pass religious intuitions through a philosophical sieve and thereby strip them of the specificity and exclusivity lent them by their original religious communities. This role of the religious author in modern times may also explain the position that Martin Buber assumed in the political public arena. His disagreement with Herzl is well known. For Buber, the Zionist project was more than just a political undertaking whose aim was first the state's foundation and later its self-assertion as a sovereign Jewish state. But not every interpretation of cultural Zionism was incompatible with such a project; in some readings, cultural Zionism was meant to complement national power politics. Buber per-

ceived the remaining difference from the perspective of a religious author who wanted to ground the project of a Jewish national culture in the concepts of a philosopher. He was interested in a justification of Zionism issuing not only from an ethno-national perspective – a justification grounded in normative terms and in arguments intended to convince everybody.

Buber thought that it was necessary to justify the Zionist idea in humanist terms. That would be unsurprising from a Kantian point of view. But Buber was no more a Kantian or a Neokantian than Gershom Scholem, Ernst Simon or Hugo Bergmann. This generation of German-Jewish intellectuals took their inspiration, in the spirit of a contemporary philosophy of life, from Herder's early romantic discovery of the nation, of language and of culture, rather than from the tradition of the Enlightenment proper. On the one hand, from their perspective, the meagre rational substance left of religion after Kant, Cohen and the science of Judaism was too little; more interesting, for them, was the mystical underside of religion or the dark side revealed by Bachofen. On the other, they had forgotten neither the household deities who presided over their parental homes – Spinoza and Lessing, Mendelssohn and Kant, Goethe and Heine – nor the nationalism behind the everyday discrimination to which they had been exposed in their European homelands. The moral sensitivity with which this generation of Zionists reflected on and analyzed the so-called Arab problem from the very beginning, around 1900, to the end of their days, testifies to the rather cosmopolitan and individualist perspective from which they wished their national project to be understood.[29]

It is true that Buber, the existential philosopher, did not have an adequate sociological-conceptual frame at his disposal. He treats 'the social,' too, against the backdrop of an ideal-type embodying – as the counterpart of the authentic I–Thou relationship – an "essential We."[30] Yet outlines of a political theory are discernible. In 1936, while still in Germany, Buber subjected Carl Schmitt's friend-foe idea to a devastating critique. He recognizes that these categories arise "at times when the political community is threatened", but "not at times when it is assured of its survival." Therefore, according to Buber, the friend-foe relation is not fit to serve as the "principle of the political." He sees this instead "in the striving (of a political community) toward the order proper to it". But communal life, founded in language and culture, still has priority over Hegel's *Not- und Verstandesstaat*, the institutions of the modern state: "The person belongs to the community into which he was born or in which he lands, whether he wants to

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29 Buber, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen* (above, note 16), 254 f.
30 Idem, *Das Problem des Menschen* (above, note 14), 116.

make something of this or not."[31] Nor is there any necessary correlation between the grown nation and a coextensive state consciously constituted by its citizens. Buber was not a liberal nationalist. It is well known that Buber at times could well conceive of a bi-national state for Israel.[32]

But whether nation or state, the normative justification of all social and political forms of coexistence ultimately depends on the authentic and considered positions of their individual members. What is right or wrong in a political sense is also founded in the 'interpersonal space' of dialogue. Each individual must conscientiously bear a responsibility of which s/he cannot be relieved by the group. This individualism finds expression in the remarkable statement that true belonging to the community "includes the experience of the limits of this belonging," an experience, however, "that escapes definitive formulation."[33]

This humanist vision could not easily be reconciled with the political realities, of course; and after the founding of the state, the goal of a single state that would unite citizens of Jewish and Arab nationality on an equal footing had in any case lost its *fundamentum in re*. The political humanism of these German-Jewish outsiders, notwithstanding their influence within the educational system, is a closed chapter. Does this conclusion also hold for the philosophical stimulus that once informed this high-minded program? To be sure, Buber's spirit lives on in the weak discourse of academia under different assumptions and in a different theoretical context (I am thinking, for example, of Chaim Gans' book on the 'morality of the Jewish state').[34] We must acknowledge without sentimentality that traditions come to an end; only in exceptional situations can they be recovered with a 'tiger's leap into the past', and even then only in a new interpretation and with different practical consequences. With his image of a tiger's leap, what

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31 Idem, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen* (above, note 16), 241.

32 Steven Aschheim has described the position of the intellectuals united in *Brit Shalom* and later in *Ichud:* 'This, then, was a nationalism that was guided essentially by inner cultural standards and conceptions of morality rather than considerations of power and singular group interest. Its exponents were united – as many saw it, in hopelessly naïve fashion – by their opposition to Herzl's brand of "political" Zionism both because they had distaste for his strategy of alliances with external and imperial powers and because they did not hold the political realm or "statehood" to be an ultimate value: their main goal was the spiritual and humanist revival of Judaism and the creation of a moral community or commonwealth in which this mission could be authentically realized. To be sure, it is not always easy to separate the more general German and "cosmopolitan" ingredients from the recovered, specifically Jewish and religious dimensions of their vision.'" Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German-Jewish Legacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 16.

33 Buber, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen* (above, note 16), p. 241.

34 Chaim Gans, *A Just Zionism*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Walter Benjamin had in mind was seizing hold "of a memory such as it flashes up at a moment of danger."[35] Perhaps this beautiful and endangered country, which is overflowing with history, has too many memories.

We, too, in our comparatively comfortable Europe, have manoeuvred ourselves into a dead end. Everyone knows that the European Union has to found itself anew. But there are no signs of this occurring, anywhere.

35 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in idem, *Illuminations* (English transl. by Harry Zohn), New York: Schocken, 1968, VI and XIV.

Julia Matveev
From Martin Buber's *I and Thou* to Mikhail Bakhtin's Concept of 'Polyphony'

Bakhtinian scholars and Buber's commentators tend to treat the relation between Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin differently. The former, with very few exceptions, introduce Bakhtin's dialogism either as developed independently of Buber or as incompatible with his teaching of the 'I–Thou' relationship. The possibility of talking about Buber's influence on Bakhtin is mostly avoided or denied because of the absence of explicit references to Buber in Bakhtin's writings. The latter, stressing striking conceptual similarities between both thinkers, neither exclude nor asseverate Buber's possible impact on Bakhtin. The problem of influence remains open. It is precisely this unresolved problem that has inspired the present paper, devoted to an investigation of Buber's influence on Bakhtin's concept of dialogue, on which his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* elaborated. This investigation is divided into two parts. The first part reconstructs the history of the origin and rise of Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky and posits the question of the influence of Buber's classic work *I and Thou* on Bakhtin's thought. In the second part a number of significant parallels between Buber's and Bakhtin's concepts of artistic creativity as one of the forms of dialogue will be analyzed.

I

Bakhtin's first major work entitled *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo* (Problems of Dostoevsky's Art), renamed *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* in the second, considerably revised and enlarged edition in 1963, appeared in Leningrad in 1929. Not only was this a significant contribution to Dostoevsky studies, but also it was Bakhtin's first and foremost philosophical project in which his great concept of dialogism ("polyphony") was initially announced to the world.

Our knowledge of Bakhtin's biography up to 1929 and hence of the period he had been at work on his 1929 book on Dostoevsky is very sketchy. From Bakhtin's correspondence with Matvey Kagan,[1] we know that he began working on his study of Dostoevsky at least from 1921. In a letter to Kagan dated January 18, 1922, he writes, "I am now writing a work on Dostoevsky, which I hope to finish

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[1] Matvey Isaevich Kagan (1889–1937), philosopher and Bakhtin's closest friend.

very soon...."[2] According to the Petrograd newspaper *Zhizn iskusstva* (The Life of Art), seven months later, in August 22–28, 1922, a monograph by Bakhtin on Dostoevsky was finished and being prepared for publication. However, this book was first printed only seven years later, in 1929. Caryl Emerson, the most knowledgeable Bakhtinian scholar in the United States, the author of several highly regarded books on Bakhtin and the translator of Bakhtin's work, claims in the editor's preface to the second English edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984): "This 1922 manuscript has not survived, so we do not know its relationship to the 1929 published text."[3] Also, Tzvetan Todorov, another renowned Bakhtinian scholar working in France and the author of the monograph *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, has claimed: "In 1929 he [Bakhtin] published a book: *The Problems of Dostoevsky's Work*; it is known that an early version, probably quite different from the published one, had been completed as early as 1922."[4]

Exactly when Bakhtin wrote his Dostoevsky book of 1929 is not clear, even today. There is no evidence that "this 1922 manuscript," which Bakhtin had been working on at least from 1921, was sent to press. Neither draft pages nor a final copy of this manuscript are known to be extant; what remains of it are the letter from Bakhtin to Kagan, the newspaper notice in which the Dostoevsky book was announced in August 1922 as forthcoming—both cited above—and myths about its disappearance.

According to the testimony of Samson Broitman, who knew Bakhtin personally, Bakhtin claimed that the book was written four or five years prior to its publication,[5] that is, in 1924 or 1925, thereby making it clear that the 1922 manuscript had indeed not been finished. Moreover, in his text published in 1929, Bakhtin refers to critical literature mostly published (in Russia and Germany, and in both languages) during the period from 1922 to 1925. The text also includes references to the books published in 1926[6] and 1928.[7] These references are actually

2 Quoted in K. Nevelskaja, pseud., ed. *M. M. Bakhtin & M. I. Kagan* (po materialam semeinogo arkhiva – Materials from a Family Archive), *Pamjat* no. 4 (Paris: YMCA Press, 1981), 263.

3 See Caryl Emerson, trans. and ed., editor's preface to Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxxix.

4 Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle* in *Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 13 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1998), 4.

5 S. N. Broitman, *Dve besedy s M. M. Bakhtinym* (Two Conversations with M. M. Bakhtin) in S. N. Broitman and N. Gorbanov, eds., *Khronotop* (Dagestan: Dagestanskii gosudarstvenyi universitet, 1990), 112.

6 Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1926).

not just corrections made in an earlier Dostoevsky text, which was completed at the end of 1922 as announced in *The Life of Art* (but for unknown reasons failed to appear) and only revised seven years later for the book's final publication. Rather, they are proofs that the 1929 publication is the result of reworking and rewriting the same book which, although published in 1929, was started in 1921. Moreover, reworking of the Dostoevsky book was a task that occupied Bakhtin again thirty years later in 1961–62.[8] It would be, therefore, not wrong to assume that Bakhtin wrote his study of Dostoevsky's novels in stages. Thus, the process of writing can be described as follows: he abandons his first 1922 version, but then, rewrites it in 1924–25, and not once, but over and over again, never really finishing this work, even in 1929.

It is important to note at this point that the references in the 1929 version show that the period between 1922 and 1925 was most intensive and extraordinarily productive for Bakhtin. It is precisely during that time frame that Bakhtin read the great majority of the books and articles in different disciplines that affected his work on Dostoevsky. The following works, quoted by Bakhtin to which he gave great attention in his study of Dostoevsky, should be mentioned here first of all: S. A. Askoldov, *Religiosno-eticheskoe znachenie Dostoevskogo* (Religious-ethical Meaning of Dostoevsky), 1922; Otto Kaus, *Dostoevski und sein Schicksal*[9] (Dostoevsky and His Fate), 1923; B. M. Engelgardt, *Ideologiecheskij roman Dostoevskogo* (Dostoevsky's Ideological Novel), 1924; V. Komarovich, *Roman Dostoevskogo "Podrostok" kak khudozestvennoe edinstvo* (Dostoevsky's Novel *The Adolescent* as an Artistic Unity), 1924; L. P. Grossman, *Put' Dostoevskogo* (Dostoevsky's Path), 1924; and *Poetika Dostoevskogo* (Dostoevsky's Poetics), 1925. Bakhtin's polemic with these scholars occupies the central place in his discussion of the key theoretical and methodological problems of critical literature on Dostoevsky.

Needless to say, that along with the explicit polemic with scholars quoted by Bakhtin there is a hidden polemic with other philosophers not mentioned in his study of Dostoevsky. The philosophical significance of German–Jewish thought for Bakhtin, in general, and the influence of Hermann Cohen and Ernst Cassirer on his philosophy, in particular, were already widely discussed by many Bakhti-

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7 F. M. Dostoevsky, *Pisma* [Letters] (Moscow: Leningrad, 1928), vol. 1; and G. Simmel, *Gete* [Goethe] (Moscow: Izd. Gosudarstvennoj academii khudozestvennykh nauk, 1928). Russian translation.

8 M. M. Bakhtin, "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book," in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. C. Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 283–302.

9 Bakhtin quotes Kaus in German.

nian scholars.[10] Brian Poole's archival work[11] has uncovered notebooks in which Bakhtin made copious notes from Cassirer's work. Pool has argued that several pages of Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (1965) are lifted word-for-word from Cassirer's *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (1927), without reference to the original. Furthermore, according to Pool, the ethics described in Bakhtin's work *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* (written between 1920 and 1927) are mostly derived from a source Bakhtin does not even mention, namely, the phenomenology of Max Scheler, whose text *The Essence and Forms of Sympathy* merited a 58-page synopsis in a notebook of Bakhtin's from 1926.[12] It is, therefore, not surprising that Bakhtin does not mention Buber in his Dostoevsky book.[13] But if, as Broitman testifies, the book was written in 1925, or at least no earlier than 1924, that is, a year or two after the appearance of Buber's philosophical essay *Ich und Du* (I and Thou), 1922–23, could Bakhtin not have been familiar with Buber's work, which – precisely at this time—lay at the very core of

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10 See Caryl Emerson, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 230–231. On the influence of the Marburg school on Bakhtin's aesthetics, see Brian Pool, *Nazad k Kaganu* [Back to Kagan] in *Dialog-Karnaval-Khronotop*, ed. N. A. Pankov (Vitebsk, 1995), no. 1, 38–48.

11 Brian Pool, "Bakhtin and Cassirer: The Philosophical Origins of Bakhtin's Carnival Messianism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 97, 3/4 (Summer/Fall 1998): 537–578.

12 Brian Pool, "From Phenomenology to Dialogue: Max Scheler's Phenomenological Tradition and Mikhail Bakhtin's Development from 'Toward a Philosophy of the Act' to His Study of Dostoevsky," in Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd, eds., *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, 2nd edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 109–135.

13 To the list of German philosophers, whose concepts Bakhtin borrowed without acknowledging his sources, we can add, though only hypothetically, Jacob Boehme. It seems to be more than a pure coincidence that Bakhtin's central notion of 'polyphony,' by which he means "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, [...] with equal rights and each with its own world, [which are] combine[d] but not merged in the unity of some spiritual event" (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 6, 13), resonates with Jacob Boehme's conception of the Spirit as a divine, polyphonically tuned organ, in which every voice and every pipe, in piping out its own tone, echoed the eternal Word (Boehme deals with this theme in chapter 14 of his *De signatura rerum* (The Signature of All Things), 1635. And although Bakhtin insists that the term "polyphony" is only a musical term, "a simple metaphor" (22), and he never, as we will see, really displayed any familiarity with specific theological sources, we know from his lectures on Kant given in the mid-1920s that he was familiar with German Christian mysticism (See K. G. Isupova, ed., *M. M. Bakhtin: Pro et contra*. vol. I, St. Petersburg: Izdatelstvo russkogo christianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 2001, 73–74, lecture 6, Nov. 16, 1924) and therefore his notion of 'polyphony' might be of a more religious character than has been recognized in any of the literature on Bakhtin.

his interest? Hardly likely. Some Bakhtinian scholars[14] as well as Buber's commentators, such as Maurice Friedman[15] and Steven Kepnes,[16] stress striking terminological and conceptual similarities between Buber's 'I–Thou' teaching and Bakhtin's concept of dialogism introduced in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*. The most explicit example is the correlation between Buber's concept of "the eternal Thou" and Bakhtin's concept of "the third party." Friedman points this out as "the most surprising resemblance"[17] between Buber and Bakhtin. The point is that, like Buber, Bakhtin does not reduce the dialogical 'I–Thou' relationship to the relation between men alone. For him the saying of "Thou" takes place

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14 Nina Perlina, "Bakhtin and Buber: Problems of Dialogic Imagination," *Studies of Twentieth Century Russian Literature* 9:1 (1984): 13–28. Perlina argues that Bakhtin has an affinity with Buber. She writes that Bakhtin and Buber "belonged to the same cultural epoch" (26) and probably arrived at their conclusions simultaneously through their common fascination with Cohen's philosophy and their interest in Goethe, Christ, and Socrates (22). However, as Maurice Friedman stresses, "like most other Bakhtin critics she has very little understanding of Buber." See Maurice S. Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, 4th ed., revised and expanded (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 354. Among the papers devoted to Bakhtin and Buber, see also A. B. Demidov, "Osnovopolozenija filosofii komunikazii I dialoga" (The Foundations of a Philosophy of Communication and Dialogue) in *Dialog-Karnaval-Khronotop*, vol. 4, ed. N. A. Pankov (Vitebsk 1992), 5–35. Demidov places Bakhtin's concept of the 'I–Thou' relationship in the larger European context. Of special interest for him are the 'I–Thou' categories elaborated by Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber, and Semyon Frank. For Caryl Emerson's remarks on the Bakhtin–Buber debates in the late 1990s, see in her publication *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*, 225–227. See also E. A. Kurnosikova, *Problema Ya-Ty v zerkale refleksii* (The I–Thou Relationship through Mirror Reflection) in *Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin v Saranske: Ocherk zizni I dejatelnosti* (Bakhtin in Saransk: A Sketch of His Life and Work), ed. G. B. Karpunov, et al. (Saransk: Izdatelstvo Saratovskogo universiteta, 1989), 170–172.

15 Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, Appendix B, *Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogue of Voices and the Word That Is Spoken*, 353–366. Speaking of Buber's influence on Bakhtin, Friedman points to the fact that Bakhtin himself said in an interview, "But Buber is a philosopher. And I am very much indebted to him, in particular for the idea of dialogue. Of course, this is obvious to anyone who reads Buber." Ibid., 353. Friedman quotes these passages from Josef Frank in "The Voices of Mikhail Bakhtin," *The New York Review of Books* (October 23, 1986), 56. Frank, however, had cited Maiia Kaganskaia's essay "Shutovskoi khorovod," *Sintaksis* 12 (1984): 141. Friedman is obviously not familiar with Kaganskaia's literary essay, which is a mixture of fact and fantasy. In this essay Kaganskaia also writes: "Recently I have met Bakhtin on the Champs-Elysées; he was wrapped in a white toga with an epitaph written in Latin. He stood at the border between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages." Ibid., 144 In the light of this vignette, the source appears not to be credible.

16 Steven Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 63–71.

17 Friedman, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, 357.

in man's relation with the world, that is, with "the world order, nature,"[18] the world of physical objects and different objective phenomena, and this includes the saying of "Thou" to God. In his analysis of Dostoevsky's characters, he writes that for them "to conceive of an object means to address it;" the Dostoevskian hero "does not acknowledge an object without addressing it," "does not think about phenomena, he speaks with them,"[19] he thinks and talks about the world and its order, "as if he were talking not about the world but with the world."[20] The world, to which one addresses oneself dialogically, becomes a "Thou" for the speaker; he reacts to it, he sees himself "personally insulted by the world order, personally humiliated by its blind necessity" and "casts an energetic reproach at the world order, even at the mechanical necessity of nature."[21] "But while speaking [...] with the world," Bakhtin says, the hero "simultaneously addresses a third party as well: he squints his eyes to the side, toward the listener, the witness, the judge,"[22] he speaks "to God as the guilty party responsible for the world order."[23] And this "third," Friedman claims,[24] is an application of Buber's concept of the "eternal Thou," according to which "in each *Thou* we address the eternal *Thou*."[25]

Moreover, Bakhtin makes use of such characteristic Buberian terminology and concepts as 'meeting/encounter',[26] 'three spheres in which the world of relation arises',[27] 'affirmation of the being addressed' (transformed by Bakhtin into

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18 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 236.

19 Ibid., 237.

20 Ibid., 236.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 237.

23 Ibid., 248.

24 Friedmann asserts, however, that the Bakhtinian scholar Michael Holquist has previously arrived at the conclusion that "if there is something like a God concept in Bakhtin, it is surely the superaddressee" (third party). See Friedmann, *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, 358. See also Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, eds., *M. M. Bakhtin: Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), Slavic series, no. 8, xviii.

25 Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, 2nd edition, trans. R. Gregor Smith, (New York: Scribner/T.& T. Clark, 1958), 22.

26 The German word *Begegnung* used by Buber means both "meeting" and "encounter." Accordingly, in English editions of Buber's work this term appears in both variants in the translation. In Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky, we find also both variants: *vstrecha* [meeting] and *stolknovenie* [encounter].

27 In investigating the dialogic life of the Dostoevskian hero and his 'I–Thou' attitude to the world and himself, Bakhtin describes three spheres of relation (akin to Buber's three spheres in which the world of relation arises: man's life with nature, with other men, and his life with 'spiritual beings;' see Buber, *I and Thou*, 21–25): (1) "the world order, nature," (2) the

his own characteristic terminology of 'dialogical addressivity'), 'making the other present' or 'seeing the other from within' (which Bakhtin variously called 'seeing *the man in man*' [italics in original], 'the intimate contact with someone else's discourse about the own self and the world', and 'penetrating in someone else's deepest "I"'). Furthermore, he shares certain emphases, for example, the radical distinction which he, like Buber, makes between 'dialogue' and 'dialectic', as well as between the 'dialogical relationship' and the 'subject–object relation'. In view of the chronological precedence of Buber's work *I and Thou* with regard to Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book, it is by no means implausible that Bakhtin's use of some of Buber's key concepts suggests Buber's direct impact on Bakhtin's development as dialogical thinker. Besides, the fact that Bakhtin was introduced to Buber's work is indisputable. Bakhtin's other work *Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel* (1937–38) is the striking evidence of this statement:

> [...] the motif of meeting is one of the most universal motifs, not only in literature (it is difficult to find a work where this motif is completely absent) but also in other areas of culture and in various spheres of public and everyday life. In the scientific and technical realm where purely conceptual thinking predominates, there are no motifs as such, but the concept of contact is equivalent in some degree to the motif of meeting. In mythological and religious realms the motif of meeting plays a leading role, of course: in sacred legends and Holy Writ (both in Christian works such as the Gospels and in Buddhist writings) and in religious rituals. The motif of meeting is combined with other motifs, for example that of apparition ("epiphany") in the religious realm. In those areas of philosophy that are not strictly scientific, the motif of meeting can be of considerable importance (in Schelling, for example, or in Max Scheler and particularly in Martin Buber).[28]

However, it is hard to explain why after having read Buber and mentioning him in his work of the late 1930s, Bakhtin insists on the originality of his idea of dialogism, writing in 1961: "After my Dostoevsky book, but independently of it, the ideas of polyphony, dialogue, unfinalizability, etc., were widely developed."[29] But it seems highly likely that the reason for the absence of Buber's name in Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book—in both versions, its earliest publication in 1929 and the 1963 second edition—was purely political.

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sphere of human relationships, in which the relation "of *I* with another and with *others* takes place," and (3) "the sphere of ideas (but not of ideas only)", see Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 236, 280, and 32, respectively.

28 M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 98–99.

29 Bakhtin, *Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book*, 285.

Sergei Averintzev, who met Bakhtin in the 1970s, claims that the lack of references to Buber's work and the absence of his name in Bakhtin's Dostoevsky study does not point to the fact that Bakhtin was not influenced by Buber already in the 1920s. "As I first met Bakhtin," Averintzev says, "I asked him directly [...] why he did not refer to Buber. 'You know how it was in the 1920s' was his reluctant answer. Although the term anti-Zionism has been invented by us later."[30] On the basis of Averintzev's testimony, we can not only posit the influence of Buber on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, but also understand the reason why Bakhtin could not refer to Buber at that time.

In Russia of the early 1920s, Buber was quite well known as both a Zionist and religious thinker, but most likely primarily as the former rather than the latter. His speech given at the Fifth Zionist Congress on Jewish art as well as his *Three Speeches on Judaism* were translated into Russian and published in Jewish journals[31] as well as in books.[32] (The *Three Speeches on Judaism* were translated in 1919 by I. B. Rumer,[33] a cousin of the poet Ossip Mandelstam.) It is clear that both dimensions of Buber's philosophy made it impossible for Bakhtin to mention Buber's name in the Dostoevsky book.

The years 1922–1929 were a time of what was called "proletarianization" in all areas of cultural life. The campaign to proletarianize Soviet culture (known also as the anti-religious campaign, which began in 1922 and reached its peak in 1928) aimed at eliminating religion from Russian culture in order to form a new, atheistic Communist culture. The Bolshevik ideology sought the wholesale rejection of religion, which in the words of Karl Marx was "the opiate of the masses." Nadezhda Mandelstam, the wife, and later widow, of Ossip Madelstam, recalls in her memoirs *Hope Against Hope* (1970) that in the middle twenties "even such hackneyed expressions as 'thank god' were regarded as a concession to religion," not to mention that any reference to God was something that no-

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30 Quoted in Mikhail Gasparov, "Iz razgovorov S. S. Averintzeva" [From Conversations with S. S. Averintzev] in *Sapisi I vypiski* [Notes and Extracts] (Moskwa: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008), 110. It is crucial to note here that Averintzev, who with Sergei Bocharov, has edited Bakhtin's writings: M. M. Bakhtin, *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva* [The Aesthetics of Verbal Creation], eds., S. S. Averintzeva and S. Bocharov (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979), also notes in his commentaries to this publication that Bakhtin had greatly admired Buber (389).
31 His speech at the Fifth Zionist Congress was published in the weekly newspaper *Buduschnost* (*Future* or *Futurity*) in 1902.
32 M. Buber, *Evreiskoe iskusstvo: Referat, chitannyi na V Sionistskom kongresse* [The speech at the Fifth Zionist Congress on Jewish Art] (Charkov, 1902).
33 M. Buber, *Obnovlenie evreistva: Perevod s nemezkogo* (Renewal of Judaism: Translation from German), trans. I. B. Rumera (Moscow: Safrut, 1919).

body "officially could afford to do."[34] This campaign against religion as such was accompanied by intensified assaults not only on the Russian Orthodox Church and all Christian religious organizations, groups, and circles, but also on Jewish religious institutions. During the years 1922–1929 not only churches, Christian theological institutes, and religious associations among the intelligentsia were closed down, but also synagogues and traditional institutions of Jewish education, such as the *yeshiva* and the *cheder*. Religious propaganda in general was prohibited and it became forbidden to even print religious books and Jewish calendars. The authorities clamped down on expressions of Jewish nationalism, be they expressions of the Jewish religion or Zionism. Zionist activities and Zionist publications were considered to be anti-Soviet activity and counter-revolutionary agitation against Soviet Russia. During these years there were mass arrests of Zionists, accused of having close ties with foreign countries united against the Soviet government. In fact, for almost the same reasons—foreign connections and opposition to the Soviet regime—many leading religious thinkers, Christian and Jewish (such as Nikolai Berdjaev, Lev Schestov, Fedor Stepun, and Lev Karsavin, to name only a few) were arrested and expelled from Russia, not to mention scholars who committed themselves to the Christian religion rather than to Marxism. The stated purpose of these arrests was to purge public and academic institutions of those who were considered enemies of the people.

Bakhtin himself was arrested around January 7, 1929 (other sources say on December 24, 1928), as a minor figure in the Voskresenie,[35] an intellectual "underground" religious–philosophical group with which Bakhtin was associated in the 1920s. The subject of most burning concern for the majority of the Voskresenie group, which included two Protestants, two Roman Catholics who were formerly Russian Orthodox, and several Jews, was the German philosophy of religion. For instance, in 1926, writing to Kagan, Lev Pumpiansky (a philosopher and literary scholar, one of the leading representatives of the so-called Bakhtin Circle and a prominent member of the Voskresenie group, arrested in 1928) described the meetings of the Voskresenie circle thus: "All these years, and especially this one, we have kept busy dealing with theology. The circle of our closest friends remains the same: Yudina [the pianist], Bakhtin, Tubiansky [the Indic scholar] and myself."[36] In 1928–1929 several members of his circle were arrested. Bakhtin was condemned to five years incarceration in the concentration camp at Solovki; for health reasons, however, his sentence was commuted to exile in Ka-

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34 Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope*, trans. from the Russian by Max Hayward, The Modern Library: New York 1990, 90.

35 The group's name, Voskresenie, means both "Sunday" and "resurrection."

36 Quoted in Nevelskaja, *M. M. Bakhtin I M. I. Kagan*, 266.

zakhstan. The publication of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* coincided with its author's arrest and exile in May 1929.

In those years of the growing restrictions on religious activities and public discussions of theological questions, references to religious discourse and religious philosophy of all belief systems had to be deleted from scholarly texts. For example, we know that several references to religious discourse were deleted from an early version of another of Bakhtin's texts, *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, from roughly the same period.[37] The omission of any mention of Buber, a German-Jewish religious philosopher and a Zionist, in Bakhtin's 1929 book on Dostoevsky is, hence, also not surprising.

But by the late 1930s the official position on Zionism in the USSR began to change to a more favorable one. It is precisely at this time that Buber's name appeared first in Bakhtin's work. By the early 1960s Soviet anti-Zionism, merged with Soviet anti-Semitism, started again and intensified after the 1967 Six Day War.[38] And again at precisely this time, any acknowledgment of Buber's work is absent in Bakhtin's Dostoevsky book of 1963.[39]

II

The purpose of the present paper is not only to elucidate why Buber's work is not acknowledged in Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky, but also, more importantly, to show how Bakhtin applied Buber's ideas from *I and Thou* to the fields of literary criticism and scholarship. A characteristic example is Bakhtin's concept of artistic creativity, which plays a major part in his analysis of Dostoevsky's "non-objectified" and "non-monological," that is, "dialogical" and "polyphonical," mode of "artistic visualization" (Bakhtin's terms) and representation of the world, and which can be regarded as the application of Buber's model of the 'I–Thou' relationship of man with spiritual entities (*geistige Wesenheiten* or as R. Gregor Smith translates it, "spiritual beings"[40]) that illustrates this relation-

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37 See Averintzev's and Bocharov's commentaries to this text: M.Bakhtin, *Avtor i geroi* (Author and Hero), ed. S. G.Bocharov (St. Petersburg: Izdatelstvo "Azbuka" 2000), 322–25.

38 Also known as the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

39 It is important to note that in the 1970s many of Buber's works were withdrawn from the public libraries in the USSR and moved to special departments of restricted access. See in Kratkaja ebreiskaja enziklopedia (Short Jewish Encyclopedia) (Jerusalem: Carmel, 1982), vol. 1, col. 552–554. At that time references to government-suppressed literature could lead to arrest. Not surprisingly, we do not find in Bakhtin's work any reference to Buber in the 1970s, as well.

40 Buber, *I and Thou*, 22.

ship from the realm of art. The investigation of the similarities between Bakhtin and Buber proceeds in two steps. In the first, we will consider section eleven in *I and Thou* in which Buber explicates his view of human spiritual creative activity and which is an essential part of his teaching of the 'I–Thou' relationship. The second step analyzes Bakhtin's exposition of this activity—drawn into discussion of Dostoevsky's dialogic feeling for the world[41] and "his artistic perception of the world"[42] in the categories of coexistence and interaction – all this, in Bakhtin's own words, "prepared the soil in which Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel was to grow"[43] and is apparent, as he shows us, in the way a fictional character is represented in Dostoevsky as well as in the very principle of novelistic construction created by Dostoevsky, that is, in "the unity of a polyphonic novel."[44] Also belonging to this analysis is a consideration of Bakhtin's critical remarks on the traditional methods used at that time for interpreting of Dostoevsky's work. This last step, we would stress, examines Bakhtin's view of the process of creation in close connection with Buber's understanding of the creative act (considered in the first step). In Buber's terms this is a relational event that takes place between two separate existing beings—an artist and a sensed form (*Gestalt*)—and becomes present to us through the mediation of those fields of symbolic communication, such as literature, sculpture, and music. Finally, it should be mentioned here that having said that Bakhtin was introduced to Buber's work *I and Thou* already in the 1920s, we shall present Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky following the original 1929 edition of his Dostoevsky book. Thus, the expansions included by Bakhtin in his second 1963 edition will be not examined here.[45]

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41 The present paper does not deal with the question of whether Bakhtin, constructing an image of Dostoevsky as the creator of the polyphonic novel, presents in his book an objective view of Dostoevsky's aesthetics or not. For an in-depth treatment of this question, see Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1984), 276; Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860–1865* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 346; Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 231; and René Wellek, "Bakhtin's View of Dostoevsky: 'Polyphony' and 'Carnivalesque,'" *Dostoevsky Studies* I (1980): 31–9.

42 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 29.

43 Ibid., 31.

44 Ibid., 16.

45 Since the first Russian edition of Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art* (1929) does not exist in English, all references to this book will be cited according to the second English edition of Bakhtin's revisited version of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) and to Appendix I of that edition, where we find the passages from the original edition of the Dostoevsky book (M. M. Bakhtin, *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoevskogo*, Leningrad: Priboi 1929). However, all quo-

Now we will consider section eleven in Buber's essay *I and Thou* more close-ly, attempting to highlight the unique aspects of his dialogic aesthetics, which left distinct traces in Bakhtin's concept of artistic creativity. At the basis of Bub-er's aesthetic position lies the conviction that the work of art is neither an im-pression of objectivity nor an expression of subjectivity. Rather, it is the witness of the 'I–Thou' relationship between the artist or "onlooker" as Buber calls him (in Smith's translation, the "beholder"[46]) and the *Gestalt* which arises out of the stream of perception, proves to be something unique and meaningful and calls on the artist to perform a creative act:

> This is the eternal source of art: a man is faced by a form [*Gestalt*], which desires to be made through him into a work. This form is no offspring of his soul, but is an appearance [*Er-scheinung*[47]] which steps up to it and demands of it the effective power. The man is con-cerned with an act of his being. If he carries it through, if he speaks the primary word out of his being to the form which appears, then the effective power streams out, and the work arises.[48]

As Buber explains to us in the following paragraphs, this form which the artist meets outside as well as within the soul does not spring from his own imagina-tion and also does not originate in his past experience or, in Buber's own formu-lation, it is not "an image" of his "fancy" (*ein Gebild der Einbildung*) nor "a thing among the 'inner' things,"[49] familiar and known, already experienced, and placed in the ordered scheme of things. On the contrary, such a form rises to meet his senses "through grace"[50] in the present moment of intense perception, revealing itself as something unexpected, exclusive, not on a par with other things in "the world which is experienced."[51] And though the visualization of form is an ability that is already present in the perception of the artist, the form does not arise out of him and therefore out of detached subjectivity, but out of life. That is, it emerges into view (the German term *Erscheinung* may loose-ly be called "emergence-into-view") in the real intercourse of the artist with his

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tations from the second English edition will be corrected and brought in conformity with the 1929 Russian edition.

46 Buber, *I and Thou*, 25.

47 In R. Gregor Smith's translation, this term has been translated into English as 'appearance,' but it may also be translated as 'apparition' (or 'epiphany'). Interestingly, precisely this theolog-ical term has been used by Bakhtin in his comments—quoted above—on the motif of meeting in Buber's work. See Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 98 – 99.

48 Buber, *I and Thou*, 24.

49 Ibid., 25.

50 Ibid., 26.

51 Ibid., 25.

surrounding reality. This means consequently that art, according to Buber, cannot be understood as autonomous of reality, as something existing only as a content of one's single experience or imagination. At the same time, Buber's point is not that art making its discoveries in the outside world deals with real actual objects (*Gegenstände*). What the artist is faced with is not plain reality, but the *Gestalt*, which may be termed 'vision' that lacks a concrete image and is thus a "vision without image."[52] One "can neither experience nor describe the form," says Buber, "if a test is made of its objectivity [*Gegenständlichkeit*] the form is certainly not 'there'" but "the relation in which [one] stand[s] to it is real."[53] In his concept of human creative activity, Buber ascribes enormous importance to what takes place between the artist and the form in the reality of that relation. This relation, to his mind, plays an infinitely greater part in aesthetic experience than has been hitherto thought.

In order to explain this part of Buber's concept of the human relation to creative work, it becomes necessary to characterize his central concept of *I and Thou* with greater precision. The basic premise of Buber's exposition of the life of dialogue is that there is no 'I' in itself; 'I' exists only either in the relation 'I–Thou' (*Ich–Du–Beziehung*) or 'I–It' (*Ich–Es–Verhältnis*). These two combinations—'I–Thou' and 'I–It'—are two primary principles or two "primary words,"[54] as Buber terms them, governing man's attitude to his own self and to the world in which he lives. This "twofoldness" runs through every human activity. But whatever we do, Buber says, the 'I' that speaks the primary word 'I–Thou' sees the world in a different way than the 'I' of 'I–It' and, to be sure, the 'I' can pass from the realm of 'Thou' to the realm of 'It' and back again, thus changing its 'I–It' relation to the 'I–Thou' relationship.

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52 In his 1956 essay *What Is Common to All* [Dem Gemeinschaftlichen folgen] published in the *Neue Rundschau* Buber, speaking of the English novelist Aldous Huxley, describes this act thus: "In fact, the artist is removed from the common seeing in his decisive moments and raised into his special formative seeing; but in just these moments he is determined through and through, to his perception itself, by the drive to originate, by the command to form. Huxley understands this manner of seeing everything in brilliant coloration and penetrating objectivity not only as 'how one should see', but also as 'how things are in reality'. What does that mean concretely? What we call reality always appears only in our personal contact with things which remain unperceived by us in their own being; and there exists personal contact which, freer, more direct than the ordinary, represents things with greater force, freshness, and depth." Martin Buber, What Is Common to All, in: Judith Buber Agassi (ed.), Martin Buber on Psychology and Psychotherapy: Essays, Letters, and Dialogue, Syracuse University Press 1999, 102.
53 Buber, *I and Thou*, 25.
54 Ibid., 19.

The man entering into the 'I–It' or subject–object relation views the world as 'It' (*Es–Welt*), that is, the world of indifferent and neutral objects, standing before him, external to him, and existing in and for themselves. And "the primary connection of man with the world of *It*," Buber writes, "is comprised in *experiencing* [italics in original]".[55] In order to "'find [his] bearings' in the world"[56] surrounding him, man's desire is to experience it. More precisely, this means to observe the world, to approach it from various points of view, to study it in parts, to analyze it objectively, and then to connect the "objective products" of human spirit together into "manifold systems of laws"[57]—"the law of life," "the law of the soul," "the social law," or "the cultural law."[58] In that relation, the 'I' declares itself to be "the experiencing *I*,"[59] that is, the bearer of knowledge, and the world round about to be the object that "permits itself to be experienced."[60] Taking up of this attitude to the world, the man speaks "the word of separation" through which "the barrier between subject and object has been set up."[61]

In *I and Thou*, Buber considers another attitude to the world—the 'I–Thou' relationship—which does not involve objectification, as the combination of 'I–It' does. The 'I' of 'I–Thou', standing, as it were, face to face with the world, transcends objectification. "When *Thou* is spoken," writes Buber, the man "has no thing for his object [*Gegenstand*],"[62] but is concerned throughout with how his being relates to the world that surrounds him. Here, the man sees the world not as the sum total of things to be experienced, but as the wholeness and unity of being, which "is opened to him in happenings, [...] affects him,"[63] fills his life, touches him, "stirs in the depth" of his soul, and "gives itself"[64] to him. Correspondingly, "the *I* of the primary word *I–Thou* makes its appearance as person"[65] who rises above the neutral attitude to the world and takes up the personal attitude to the reality around him, that is, "becomes conscious of

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55 Ibid., 48.
56 Ibid., 50.
57 Ibid., 30.
58 Ibid., 62.
59 Ibid., 55.
60 Ibid., 21.
61 Ibid., 35.
62 Buber says that "when *Thou* is spoken, there is no thing. [...] When *Thou* is spoken, the speaker has no *thing* [italics in original]; he has indeed nothing. But he takes his stand in relation." Ibid., 20.
63 Ibid., 42.
64 Ibid., 43.
65 Ibid., 67.

himself as sharing in being, as co-existing"[66] and thus affirms that reality as "a being [which] neither merely belongs to him nor merely lies outside him."[67] In this case, the man desires with his whole being—and in Buber "the primary word *I–Thou* can be spoken only with the whole being"[68]—"the full sharing in being"[69] and the more direct "contact with the *Thou*"[70] (*die Berührung des Du*) rather than the information about its essence. And if this act is performed by man as "*the* [italics in original] act of [his] being"[71] in relation to the 'Thou', if it is an act of "affirmation of the being addressed"[72] and of "response of man to his *Thou*,"[73] and if there is a "mutual giving," saying 'Thou' to what meets him, the man gives himself to *it*, in turn, *it* says 'Thou' to him and gives itself to him,[74] in this case, that act can be the source of creative inspiration and also the source of spirit.[75] For in this case, man's attitude to the world is lifted to a higher spiritual plane of being, though "it does not help to sustain [him] in life, it only helps [him] to glimpse eternity."[76] By this Buber means eternal values, a true order of being, independent of time and socio-historical changes, "the eternal *Thou*," and "divine meaning in the life of the world,"[77] to be sure, not the meaning of "'another life', but that of this life of ours, not one of a world 'yonder' but that of this world of ours."[78] Such an attitude to the world is associated in Buber's *I and Thou* with the dialogical life.

This view on the relationship of man to the world forms the foundation of Buber's concept of human relations with 'spiritual beings' in the realm of art. The latter is also "twofold." But Buber believes that only the 'I' of 'I–Thou'

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66 Ibid., 68.
67 Ibid., 67.
68 Ibid., 16 and 26.
69 Ibid., 68.
70 Ibid., 67.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 30.
73 Ibid., 48.
74 Ibid., 43.
75 What Buber means by "spirit" is not "intellect." Ibid., 37. "Spirit in its human manifestation," he argues, "is a response of man to his *Thou*." Ibid., 48. "Spirit" he writes, "is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe. Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his *Thou*. He is able to, if he enters into relation with his whole being. Only by virtue of his power to enter into relation is he able to live in the spirit." Ibid.,49. On the meeting between 'I' and 'Thou' as the source of 'action' and 'creative inspiration,' Ibid., 22, 24–26.
76 Ibid., 43.
77 Ibid., 83.
78 Ibid., 105.

can have a true relationship with the form, for that form is not an object but a 'Thou' which is "disclosed to the artist as he looks at what is over against him."[79] Objectification destroys it, making it into an 'It'. "If [the artist] [does] not serve it aright," writes Buber, if he "turn[s] aside and relax[es] in the world of *It*," "it is broken."[80] Thus, to get access to the form, it is for him 'to step into direct contact with it' through activity. And this activity does not by any means imply a merely 'objective' observation of the form apart from any personal relation to it or neutral description of the general qualities of the form and integration of parts in a synthetic or an analytic way into an artificial totality (what is usually meant by 'synthesis'). Quite to the contrary, a genuine 'I–Thou' relationship of the artist to the form consists in affirming its existing wholeness, its unity, its "exclusiveness,"[81] its true 'otherness', and its independence from any external standard or rule prescribed by formal laws of artistic canons as well as from the artist's own stylistic preferences. This relationship "includes a sacrifice and a risk;" these are two conditions for seeing and "bodying forth"[82] the form as a 'Thou':

> This is the sacrifice: the endless possibility that is offered up on the altar of the form. For everything which just this moment in play ran through the perspective must be obliterated; nothing of that may penetrate the work. The exclusiveness of what is facing it demands that it be so. That is the risk: the primary word can only be spoken with the whole being. He who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself.[83]

According to the above paragraph, the first condition is the affirmation of the form as existing being, as something which is really active of itself, something more than a passive object of the artist's experience but with rights equal to those of the artist. This condition means also the confirmation that the form can dictate the mode of expression, thus "the endless possibility" to express it 'otherwise' must be sacrificed "on the altar of the form." The second condition implies 'mutual giving', the openness of the artist, as a partner, to his vis-à-vis (*Gegenüber*), the wholeness of the form vis-à-vis man's wholeness, for they presuppose one another, but also "the directness" of the relationship between the two—"no system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy," Buber adds in the next paragraph, "intervene between *I* and *Thou*."[84] These two conditions

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79 Ibid., 50.
80 Ibid., 25.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., 26.

characterize the true 'I–Thou' relationship as distinct from the 'I–It' relation. And it hardly needs to be emphasized that only the former, in Buber's view, allows the artist an intimate glimpse into the depths of what is presented to him. What the form presents, then, or, more precisely, opens up to the artist is a portal into "the heaven of *Thou*," "the cradle of the Real Life,"[85] and also into "the starry heaven of the spirit."[86] "And yet I behold it [i.e., the form]," Buber continues in the first person discourse, "splendid in the radiance of what confronts me [...] I behold it [...] as that which exists in the present. [...] It affects me, as I affect it."[87] It follows a process of interaction between forces going from the form to the man and from the man to the form, a process in which the effect of 'I' on the form is as creative as that of the form on 'I' and which is thus by its nature the dialogical relationship. The aim of creative work, as set in the final passages of section eleven, is to "draw forth" that which is disclosed to the artist, to "body it forth," to give it aesthetic "shape," and finally to "lead the form across"—in and through his work—"into the world of *It*,"[88] where it becomes a thing, "an object among objects [...] fixed in its size and its limits."[89] But, Buber insists, even after becoming a thing, the work of art is always ready to become someone else's 'Thou' or, more exactly, it can be re-encountered by someone else as his 'Thou', for "from time to time," he writes, "it can face the receptive beholder in its whole embodied form."[90]

This last quotation is of significant importance for understanding Buber's concept of art, which, as could be argued, frees the experience of art from its basis in the external, material existence of the artwork. As Buber contends in the previous section, the work of art, which was produced by an 'I–Thou' relationship and becomes present to us by way of language or sound, is not just "the verse made up of words" nor "the melody made up of notes" but "a unity" (*Einheit*), a lived unity of the life of dialogue, a unity which indeed can be "scattered into these many pieces,"[91] but if we do this, it ceases to be that which it actually is, and we are left only with a thing among things, able to be experienced and described as a sum of qualities. But, for Buber, the work of art cannot be left as a thing. The mystery of mutual action, the creative burning of the spirit in it, the eternal values which it bears in itself, as well as the

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85 Ibid., 24.
86 Ibid., 51.
87 Ibid., 25.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., 30.
90 Ibid., 25.
91 Ibid., 24.

effects of art on man cannot be described in this way at all. To properly interpret the work, the interpreter must take the attitude of a "receptive beholder." That is to say, he does not simply experience a work of art nor does he concern himself in the first place with partial qualities and isolated 'contents' or formal laws of technique and style, limiting his relationship to art to the subject–object relation. Rather, he finds himself 'bodily confronted' by the work as a 'Thou' that stands over against him, fully present in the unity of the whole, and breeding the response in him.[92]

At this point it remains to be seen how Bakhtin makes use of Buber's concept of the 'I–Thou' relationship with *geistige Wesenheiten*. First of all, Bakhtin's interpretation of the wholeness and unity of Dostoevsky's work proves to be a significant confirmation of Buber's attitude toward the work of art as 'Thou' that requires the affirmation of its 'otherness' as well as its wholeness and unity, which is more than a framework of the material arranged by the author in his work and not just the matter of the sum total of formal devices.

Bakhtin's monograph, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Art*, opens with the clarification that the present book offers a different view of Dostoevsky's work than any of the earlier and still popular approaches to Dostoevsky—socio-historical, ideological, and psychological—and suggests studying the Dostoevskian novel as "genuine polyphony."[93] This type of novel, Bakhtin argues, is an entire "universe"[94] unto itself, i.e., it "does not fit any of the preconceived frameworks or historico-literary schemes that we usually apply to various species of the European novel,"[95] but it is comprehensible as a "wholeness"[96] and "an organic unity"[97] in its own right. To be sure, Bakhtin emphasizes that the latter does not lend itself "to an ordinary pragmatic interpretation at the level of the plot"[98] or to "a monologic understanding of the unity of style,"[99] that is, it cannot be understood just in terms of generic and compositional features of the novel and is different in principle from a "mechanical"[100] or technical unity of fixed elements in the author's design. Moreover, Bakhtin refuses to accept "the ulti-

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92 See also Kepnes' interpretation of Buber's dialogic aesthetics. Kepnes' work focuses on the problem of the interpretation of the work of art and the response to the text as 'Thou'. Kepnes, *The Text as Thou,* 23–26.

93 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 6.

94 Ibid., 16.

95 Ibid., 7.

96 Ibid., 8.

97 Ibid., 14.

98 Ibid., 7.

99 Ibid., 15.

100 Ibid., 16.

mate whole"[101] of Dostoevsky's work as a result of "the author's synthesis" or of "the unified, dialectically evolving spirit, understood in Hegelian terms,"[102] i.e., "the spirit of the author himself, objectified in the whole of the artistic world he had created."[103] For, as he understands it, this is the unity of a dialogically perceived and understood world, that is, "a higher unity, a unity, so to speak, of the second order, the unity of a polyphonic novel"[104] which has to do with "Dostoevsky's artistic vision"[105] and "his artistic perception of the world,"[106] whereas the novel itself is merely a material embodiment of it.

Furthermore, in Bakhtin's critique of "the methodological helplessness"[107] of the critical literature on Dostoevsky, unable "to understand the profound organic cohesion, consistency and wholeness of Dostoevsky's poetics,"[108] we find the striking parallel with Buber's understanding of the 'I–It' relation to art which involves objectification as well as direct application of scientific–objectified methods of analysis[109] and therefore blocks avenues to the understanding of artwork as 'Thou'.

All of the Dostoevskian scholars, Bakhtin claims, were faced throughout with separate problems in particular spheres of Dostoevsky's work and none of them with all its complexity. As a result, Dostoevsky's work has been studied as "some sort of conglomerate of disparate materials,"[110] to be considered from different points of view. Critics either devoted themselves to an investigation of the ideological content in Dostoevsky's novels, "seeking above all purely philosophical postulates and insights" expressed "in the pronouncements of Dostoevsky (or more precisely of his characters),"[111] or "took Dostoevsky's world as the ordinary world of the socio-psychological European novel"[112] that gives us insight into the psychic and mental life of man, and, according to this, investigated the consciousness of Dostoevsky's heroes, to be sure, chiefly the psychological content of their consciousnesses. However, the object of Bakhtin's most vehement attacks is not as much this 'taking in pieces' of Dostoevsky's work as

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101 Ibid., 18.

102 Ibid., 26.

103 Ibid., 277.

104 Ibid., 16.

105 Ibid., 5.

106 Ibid., 29.

107 Ibid., 6.

108 Ibid., 8.

109 See Buber's discussion of knowledge in Buber, *I and Thou*, p. 50.

110 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 8.

111 Ibid., 276.

112 Ibid., 9.

first and foremost the consistent "objectification"[113] and "monologization"[114] of the world represented in Dostoevsky. As Bakhtin's outline of the peculiar feature of the critical literature on Dostoevsky demonstrates, these are two basic attitudes of critical thought to Dostoevsky's work, typical as well for the narrowly ideological treatment of his work as for the purely psychological approach. The former considers the Dostoevskian novel as "a philosophical monologue"[115] with divided roles, that is, as a mere play of the intellect[116] concerned with the arrangement and rearrangement of the ideas and "philosophical stances, each defended by one or another character,"[117] turned into objects through which the author manages to issue his speech. The naïve realism of the latter—that fell into a dependence upon the so-called 'sciences of man', psychology and psychopathology—"swims in too shallow waters."[118] Here, Bakhtin argues, Dostoevsky's work and the world he created in it, regarded as "the objectified world"[119] of the old and traditional European novel, has been reduced to the study of a fragmentary part of that world—of "psyches" of the heroes, "psyches perceived as things"[120] among other things in the "world corresponding to a single and unified authorial consciousness,"[121] to be sure, such things that have minds and act by psychological laws. The fact that we have to engage here with quite different objects, says Bakhtin, presented "after all, in the language of art, and specifically in the language of a particular variety of novel,"[122] and not with "a materialized psychic reality,"[123] has been simply ignored.

Both approaches, Bakhtin summarizes, are equally incapable of visualizing "a dialogicality of the ultimate whole"[124] (Buber would say that they do "not know the dimension of the *Thou*"[125]) that permeate all of Dostoevsky's works, in which nothing and nobody becomes "an object for the other"—"and this consequently makes the viewer [i.e., the author himself] also a participant," and not

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113 Ibid., 12.

114 Ibid., 10.

115 Ibid., 9.

116 Speaking of the philosophical plane in the Dostoevskian novel, Bakhtin notes that it is not an "abstract playing with ideas." Ibid., 24.

117 Ibid., 5.

118 Ibid., 9.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid., 9.

122 Ibid., 20.

123 Ibid., 13.

124 Ibid., 18.

125 Buber, *I and Thou*, 71.

a detached "all-encompassing"[126] observer. In clarifying this point, Bakhtin insists that both approaches simply replace the wholeness and unity of Dostoevsky's work by a totalization of the whole, perceived either as a so-called 'objective' description of the external, empirical world, or as a 'subjective' romantic realism, or as a "philosophy in the form of a novel."[127] This is why, says Bakhtin, "all the major monographs on Dostoevsky [...] contribute so little toward understanding"[128] what he formulates as "Dostoevsky's fundamental task."[129] This task comprises "destroying the established forms of the fundamentally *monologic* (homophonic) European novel" [italics in original] and "constructing a polyphonic world,"[130] i. e., a polyphonic space in which there is no objectification and which is neither objective nor subjective but is pure activity and intense dialogic interaction of "independent and unmerged consciousnesses"[131] and "pure voices"[132] joined together in the unity of some spiritual event. This insight, as must already be evident, demonstrates also that for Bakhtin as for Buber to gain access to the original Thou-ness of the work of art means to understand it properly.

Now, attention must be drawn to Bakhtin's definition of the Dostoevskian novel as a novel in which dialogue is real, present, and performed, which sounds like Buber's definition of the work of art as the witness of the life lived in the dialogue. Here, it needs to be said that, in Bakhtin's understanding, the polyphonic novel created by Dostoevsky is not a report of the dialogical life of other people observed from without or a vision of the imagination or a philosophical theory that Dostoevsky's work represents or exemplifies. That would be "possible in a novel of the purely monologic type as well, and is in fact often found in that sort of novel,"[133] as Bakhtin tells us. He emphasizes that polyphony is not so much the content or the theme as the immanent structure of the Dostoevskian novel which displays a living interaction and fully realized dialogic contact of the writer's 'I' with another and with others. According to Bakhtin's interpretation, the attitude of the author to his hero is that of 'I–Thou'. Dostoevsky, he writes, does not see his hero as a "voiceless object of the author's

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126 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 18.
127 Ibid., 26.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid., 8.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid., 6.
132 Ibid., 53.
133 Ibid., 10.

words"[134] or "a created thing;"[135] he does not construe an "objectified image of the hero"[136] or use his hero as "merely material"[137] or "an explanatory function"[138] in his work. Rather the hero is for him a free and autonomous subject, a fully valid 'thou'—"thou art,"[139]—and he makes him present in his wholeness, that is, portrays him as "a carrier of a fully valid word"[140] on himself and the world and is interested in him as a personality "with equal rights and [...] with its own world."[141] Moreover, the author appears not in the aspect of an external authority over the hero, superior to him, but the author's discourse is, as it were, "dialogically *addressed* [italics in original] to him," as if to another person, so that "the author speaks not *about* a character, but *with* him [italics in original]."[142] In Bakhtin's view, such a dialogic relationship between the author and his characters as performed in the work of art is not invented. It is rather a representation of what Dostoevsky found and discovered in reality itself and what continues to be repeated in the work of art. In this regard, when Bakhtin calls Dostoevsky the innovator "in the realm of the novel as an artistic form"[143] and "the creator of the polyphonic novel"[144] and "polyphonic world,"[145] he does not mean that Dostoevsky as an artist created a world of his own, which is not deduced from, or generated by, anything and is, as it were, produced by the author out of himself, and hence "in essence [...] [is] fabricated from beginning to end."[146] Rather, he means by this something quite similar to Buber's formula regarding the task which confronts the artist who "is faced by a form which desires to be made through him into a work" and is concerned with realization—"to produce is to draw forth, to invent is to find, to shape is to discover. In bodying forth I disclose."[147]

More significant parallels with Buber's view on human creative activity or, more specifically, on the relationship between the artist and the *Gestalt*, are

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134 Ibid., 63.
135 Ibid., 64.
136 Ibid., 53.
137 Ibid., 54.
138 Ibid., 49.
139 Ibid., 10.
140 Ibid., 63.
141 Ibid., 6.
142 Ibid., 63.
143 Ibid., 276.
144 Ibid., 7.
145 Ibid., 8.
146 Ibid., 65.
147 Buber, *I and Thou*, 24 and 25.

still to be found in Bakhtin's discussion of "Dostoevsky's creative vision,"[148] which we will be examining in some detail below. Particularly illustrative is the notion of "vision" in itself. In Bakhtin's study of Dostoevsky this notion, like Buber's notion of *Gestalt* in *I and Thou*, is bound up with the process of artistic creation. Moreover, similar to Buber, Bakhtin associates this notion with the source and the origin of the work of art. Following Buber's claim that the *Gestalt* is not "the offspring of the [artist's] soul" or "a thing among the 'inner' things" reflected and expressed in his work, Bakhtin argues that "the soil in which Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel was to grow" is neither Dostoevsky's "worldview in the ordinary sense of the world"[149] nor his own thoughts, evaluations, and points of view[150] transformed into artistic images of his novels. Rather, it is his artistic vision of the "now," in the present, and is a result of the interaction between the author and the world around him and a discovery of something outside of him, something which is expressed as yet by no one and calls to be made into a work of art, something which is both new and eternal but at the same time something that refers to the world of men, in which people's lives and interrelations between human beings unfold. Such a "vision," according to Bakhtin, implies the artist's "extraordinary capacity" and "gift"[151] to "penetrate"[152] into the deepest and most intense layers of life,[153] to see beyond the observable material of reality and superficial forms of life, to see "the world in terms of interaction and coexistence,"[154] to conceive all its contents and forces as coexisting simultaneously among people, on different planes, in the external objective social world[155] and in "the depths of the human soul,"[156] and "to guess at their interrelationships in the cross-section of a single moment."[157] In describing Dostoevsky's artistic vision of the dialogic nature of the human world, Bakhtin also emphasizes that this vision—although it does reflect "the objective com-

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148 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 28.
149 Ibid., 29.
150 Ibid., 186–198.
151 Ibid., 30.
152 Bakhtin quotes Vyacheslav Ivanov who defined "Dostoevsky's realism as a realism based not on cognition (objectified cognition), but on 'penetration,'" and, indeed, the former affirms this definition. However, in Bakhtin's opinion, Ivanov "did not show how this principle [...] becomes the principle behind Dostoevsky's artistic visualization of the world, the principle behind his artistic structuring of [...] the novel." Ibid., 11.
153 Ibid., 30.
154 Ibid., 30–31.
155 Ibid., 27.
156 Ibid., 277.
157 Ibid., 28.

plexity [...] and multi-voicedness of Dostoevsky's epoch"[158]—is different from that which is concerned with concrete social order or certain problems connected with human inner life or human relationships in one specific limited epoch. Like Buber, he characterizes this vision in terms of 'opening up a portal into eternity' (to paraphrase Buber's words[159]). Dostoevsky's artistic vision, he says, rises above time; it is "the triumph over time" and "overcoming time in time;"[160] it is directed upon the essential in life and valid "for any epoch and under any ideology;"[161] it is addressed to the eternal,[162] to a different order of existence independent of "all concrete social forms (the forms of family, social or economic class, life's stories),"[163] that is, to "the abstract sphere of pure relationship, one person to another,"[164] to oneself, and to the whole world[165] and inevitably leads up to the relation between man and God.[166] Thus Bakhtin stresses that "if we were to seek an image toward which this whole world [i.e., Dostoevsky's polyphonic world] gravitates, an image in the spirit of Dostoevsky's own world-view, then it would be the church as a communion of unmerged souls, where sinners and righteous men come together."[167] "But even the image of the church," Bakhtin insists, "remains only an image, explaining nothing of the structure of the novel itself."[168] Like Buber, he believes that "artistic vision" is not an "image" that can be described or expressed in a conventional symbol, but something that

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158 Ibid., 30.

159 Ibid., 79.

160 Ibid., 29.

161 Ibid., 278.

162 In Bakhtin's own words, only things which are "essential" are incorporated into Dostoevsky's world; "such things can be carried over into eternity. [...] That which has meaning only as 'earlier' or 'later', which is sufficient only unto its own moment, which is valid only as past, or as future, or as present in relation to past or future, is for him [i.e., for Dostoevsky] nonessential and is not incorporated into his world." Ibid., 29.

163 Ibid., 264, 278, and 280.

164 Ibid., 265.

165 Ibid., 237.

166 For an extensive discussion of the religious/theological aspects of Bakhtin writings, see L. A. Gogotishvily and P. S. Gourevitch, ed., *M. M.Bakhtin kak filosoph* (Bakhtin as Philosopher) (Moscow: Naauka, 1992), 221–252; Carol Adlam, et al., eds., *Face to Face: Bakhtin in Russia and the West* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 45–53; Ruth Coates, *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Anton Simons, "The Author's Silence: Transcendence and Representation in Mikhail Bakhtin" in *Flight of the Gods: Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology*, eds. Ilse N. Bulhof and Laurens Ten Kate (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 353–374.

167 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* 26–27.

168 Ibid., 27.

after being embodied in a work of art may open up, affording a glimpse of new sides of human life.

Moreover, for Bakhtin as for Buber the creative act does not mean a mere mirroring of what is revealed to the artist into the artwork. This act presupposes sacrifice. And although Bakhtin does not use this term, he posits nevertheless that the creation of "a polyphonic world," which permits only certain artistic means for revealing and representing itself, implies the act of offering the will to domination and authoritarian control for the sake of "the artistic will of polyphony."[169] The latter, he explains, is "a will to combine many wills, a will to the event" that strives for "a unity of a higher order than in homophony,"[170] therefore "the monologism of an artistic world,"[171] dominated by the author's authoritarian voice, must be destroyed. This is apparent, as Bakhtin shows us, in the very principle of novelistic construction created by Dostoevsky.

Thus Bakhtin writes that "the affirmation of someone else's consciousness— as an autonomous subject and not as an object—is the ethico-religious postulate determining the *content* [italics in original] of the [Dostoevskian] novel."[172] But this ethico-religious principle governing Dostoevsky's worldview "does not in itself create a new form or a new type of novelistic construction."[173] In saying this, Bakhtin tends to link the creation of the polyphonic novel to aesthetic, artistic activity rather than to ethical activity, to be sure, for him, the former presupposes the latter. Therefore, he insists that the unity of Dostoevsky's world – "a genuine polyphony," in which "a combination of several individual wills takes place" and "the boundaries of the individual will" and "a single voice" are in principle exceeded—cannot under any condition be reduced "to the empty unity of an individual act of will."[174] That is why, to his mind, Dostoevsky shifts "the dominant"[175] or "the center of gravity"[176] in this new kind of unity from "a

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169 Ibid., 21.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid., 57. Thus Bakhtin writes that "Dostoevsky's major heroes are, by the very nature of his creative design, *not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse.* [italics in original] In no way, then, can a character's discourse be exhausted by the usual functions of characterization and plot development, nor does it serve as a vehicle for the author's own ideological position (as with Byron, for instance). The consciousness of a character is given as *someone else's* [italics in original] consciousness, another consciousness, yet at the same time it is not turned into an object, is not closed, does not become a simple object of the author's consciousness." Ibid.,7.
172 Ibid., 10.
173 Ibid., 11.
174 Ibid., 21–22.
175 Ibid., 13.

monological sermon,"[177] from "a monologically formulated authorial world-view,"[178] and from "a realization of one's own private personality" to an "internally dialogic approach"[179] to the characters created by him, none of which becomes an integral and unified voice or merges with the voice of the author himself, that is, serves "as a mouthpiece for the author's voice,"[180] but each "sounds, as it were, alongside the author's word and in a special way combines both with it and with the full and equally valid voices of other characters."[181] "The very distribution of voices and their interaction," Bakhtin emphatically stresses, "is what matters to Dostoevsky,"[182] and what he, as the artist, is concerned with is not the expression of a sole and single writer's 'I'[183] but the "fundamental task" which he set for himself [184] and which, as Bakhtin defines it, is "the realization of the polyphonic project,"[185] that is, the transformation of his special polyphonic artistic vision—which cannot be subject to artistic assimilation from the "monologic position"[186]—into an "artistically organized coexistence and interaction of spiritual diversity."[187]

With this, we conclude our survey of the similarities between Bakhtin's and Buber's views on artistic creation, although we are far from having exhausted the subject. We have only touched upon several basic principles of their aesthetic position, which should by now be apparent and which have underlain our thesis – advanced from the very beginning of the present paper – on Buber's influence on Bakhtin. This survey clearly reveals the importance of Buber's 'I–Thou' philosophy for literary studies in general and for understanding of Bakhtin's concept of polyphony in particular. Buber's ideas expressed in *I and Thou* shed additional light on the problem which was central to Bakhtin, namely, the problem of how to understand a literary text as both the product of a single author and the intersection of several unmerged voices or, in other words, how to deal with the

176 Ibid., 14.
177 Ibid., 13.
178 Ibid., 11.
179 Ibid., 14.
180 Ibid., 5, see also 51.
181 Ibid., 7.
182 Ibid., 279.
183 Ibid. In chap. 5, sect. iii, *The Hero's Discourse and Narrative Discourse in Dostoevsky*, Bakhtin also speaks of weakening authorial discourse as connected with Dostoevsky's artistic task to break down the monologic canon.
184 Ibid., 65.
185 Ibid., 204.
186 Ibid., 18; see also 78.
187 Ibid., 31.

phenomenon of a text whose multivoicedness contradicts the reigning notions of authorship.

Jeffrey Andrew Barash

Politics and Theology:
The Debate on Zionism between
Hermann Cohen and Martin Buber

In 1915, shortly after the outbreak of the First World War in Europe, Hermann Cohen published a pamphlet expressing nationalistic convictions in favor of the German war effort, in which he at the same time underlined the Jewish historical contribution to German culture and politics. On the basis of his reflections in this pamphlet, entitled *Deutschtum und Judentum*, Cohen argued for the legitimacy of a specifically Jewish minority as an essential component of the German national identity. Following the appearance of this pamphlet, Cohen published an article entitled "Religion und Zionismus. Ein Wort an meine Kommilitonen jüdischen Glaubens" (Religion and Zionism. A Word Addressed to Fellow Members of the Jewish Faith) in which he sharply criticized fellow Jewish Germans who, instead of devoting their efforts to the promotion of German cultural ideals and political goals in a time of war, were concerned above all with the creation of a separate Jewish political entity. Cohen's writings on this theme were a source of passionate commentary in this period among broad segments of the German intelligentsia. They provided the occasion for a famous debate Cohen engaged in with the young Martin Buber who, in direct response to Cohen's critique of Zionism, articulated an influential argument in favor of the creation of a Jewish "homeland."[1] Buber presented this plea in the article "Völker, Staaten und Zion. Brief an Hermann Cohen", (Peoples, Nations and Zion. A Letter to Hermann Cohen), which appeared in the journal *Der Jude*, in July 1916. In response to this critique Cohen published a further article entitled "Antwort auf das offene Schreiben des Herrn Dr. Martin Buber an Hermann Cohen" (An Answer to the Public Writing of Dr. Martin Buber addressed to Hermann Cohen). Buber then answered this response with the article, published in the September 1916 issue of

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[1] In the early decades of the Zionist movement the so-called *Endziel* (ultimate objective) was deliberately ill-defined and thus debated. The reference to a "homeland" (*Heimstätte*) served to maintain the ambiguity. It was only with the rise of Hitler to power and the intensification of anti-Semitism that the movement decisively defined its objective to be the founding of a sovereign political state. Buber was affiliated with those Zionists who even at this juncture rejected this envisioned *Endziel*. On the debates within the Zionist movement regarding its ultimate political objective, see Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), ch.1.

Der Jude: "Der Staat und die Menschheit. Bemerkungen zu Hermann Cohens Antwort" (The State and Humanity. Remarks on Hermann Cohen's Response).

It would reach beyond the framework of this brief essay to provide a detailed reexamination of the arguments advanced by Hermann Cohen and Martin Buber for and against the creation of a Jewish homeland, which have aroused great interest in recent years. I will focus, rather, on the specifically *political* dimension of the debate. In highlighting the political ramifications of their pleas for and against the creation of a Jewish State, Cohen and Buber each articulated what seem to me to be paradoxical attitudes toward politics, expressing from divergent perspectives the complexity of Jewish political theology in the period of the First World War.

I will begin by examining what I take to be paradoxical in Hermann Cohen's political opposition to Zionism and then, in a brief analysis of the critique directed against him by Martin Buber, argue that Buber's political interpretation of Judaism led him to embrace a position which was no less paradoxical than that of his opponent. As I will suggest, the paradoxes which their respective political positions involve reflect both the specific problem of Jewish political existence during this period of the Great War that subsequent decades have done little to attenuate, and the more general difficulty, which is hardly limited to theories elaborated by Jewish thinkers, of reconciling theology and politics in 20th century conceptions of the State.

I

The paradoxical character of Hermann Cohen's attitude towards Jewish political existence comes to light in his pamphlet *Deutschtum und Judentum*, which takes to task any attempt on the part of German Jews to establish a State beyond German borders. Cohen's argument draws upon what he takes to be a profound kinship between Germanity and Judaism based on a historical relation reaching back to the bible and to Greek antiquity. This kinship derives from what was for him central to both Jewish and German Christian culture: their "idealism". According to this argument idealism led Jewish thinkers, beginning with Philo of Alexandria, to seek a common ground between the Old Testament and Plato as a basis for ethical truth, and this quest similarly inspired seminal German thinkers of the late middle ages and the Renaissance, such as Nicholas of Cusa. In a later period and in a somewhat different perspective, Cohen identified idealism with the German Reformation in its emphasis on spirituality and on the role of individual conscience in the quest for justification (*Rechtfertigung*) before God alone, independent of worldly influences. For Cohen, the central place that

medieval thinkers such as Maimonides accorded to the transcendence of one God as the creator of the world, in opposition to all forms of polytheism and pantheism which identify God with an immanent nature, had anticipated the German Reformation; it was as such the "emblem of Protestantism in medieval Judaism."[2] A deep affinity became manifest in the idealist emphasis that both German Jews and German Protestants placed on individual judgment, as on the intellect and the pursuit of learning. It was confirmed by the importance both groups attributed to ethical action freely chosen in light of rational deliberation that Kant's philosophy subsequently brought to fruition. In both Jewish and German Protestant contexts idealism found further expression in the liturgical role they each accorded to music. Cohen at the same time downplayed what had long been taken to be the radical distinction between Judaism and German Protestantism: the Jewish insistence on the role of Halakha or law and of works, as opposed to the Protestant belief in justification by faith. Following Grotius, as Cohen pointed out, the Protestant tradition revived the doctrine of natural law which acknowledged an explicit source in Mosaic law. And here Cohen drew support for his interpretation from the works of the great 19th century Aristotelian scholar, Adolf Trendelenburg, who in his book on natural law had written that:"Perhaps no legislation, not even that of Rome, has done so much as the Mosaic law to propagate the feeling for law among the cultivated nations.'"[3]

The full political ramifications of Cohen's broad historical sketch come to light in his interpretation of the affinity between German Protestantism and Judaism that crystallized during the centuries following the Protestant Reformation. He underlined above all the role of German humanism that found its classical expression in Herder's *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität*. This work, for Cohen, expressing the religious conviction that mankind moves forward toward an ever higher expression of its humanity, brought to fulfillment Enlightenment hope, most eloquently voiced by Lessing, concerning the future development of human culture. Herder's philosophical formulation of this hope was of paramount importance for later generations, and its insight was more profound than that of his great Jewish contemporary Moses Mendelssohn who, in his book *Jerusalem*, abandoned any prospect of general advancement for humanity. Herder's efforts showed here a profound affinity with an earlier Jewish tradition of messianism, and it was important for Cohen in this perspective that Herder

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2 "Wahrzeichen des Protestantismus im mittelalterlichen Judentum", Hermann Cohen, *Deutschtum und Judentum* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1915), 11.

3 "Vielleicht hat keine Gesetzgebung, selbst nicht die römische, solche Verdienste um das Gefühl des Rechts unter den Kulturvölkern, als die mosaische." Ibid., 12–13. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

developed his insight in his reflection on ancient Judaism and on the Old Testament in his work *Über den Geist der ebräischen Poesie*. Here we discover the deepest source of the kinship between "Deutschtum" and "Judentum", for Cohen, during the early period of the First World War:

> At this high point, everyone should once again feel the inner community between Germanity and Judaism. For the concept of humanity originated in the messianism of the prophets of Israel. And, even aside from Herder, there is no doubt that the biblical spirit had a most profound impact on German humanism. Messianism, however, is the foundation of Judaism; it is its crown and its root. It constitutes the creative and dynamic basis of monotheism, as Herder had already stressed: 'As Jehovah was unique, the creator of the world: so was He also the God of all humans, of all races'. And messianism is its supreme result. Admittedly it was linked from the beginning to national politics and to national religiosity.[4]

Whereas Jewish thinkers such as Mendelssohn no longer comprehended original Jewish Messianic conceptions, German Protestants such as Herder revived them and thereby provided an essential impulse to the later development of Judaism in Germany and in Europe as a whole. In the contemporary context of the First World War, Cohen underlined the mission of German Christians and Jews alike to promote the rebirth of a new sense of ethical purpose leading beyond the limits of nationalistic perspectives oriented in terms of narrow material interests. This requires the creation of a confederation of nations which would alone be capable of ensuring lasting peace. Cohen speculated that this future confederation would permit different nationalities and religions to co-exist in peace in the framework of modern nation-states, and it would enable different nation-states to remain at peace with each other; this is the inner truth of the idealism of both German Jews and Christians (especially Protestants), issuing from a common source in Biblical religiosity and Greek philosophy, and it is the ultimate goal of the messianic ideal. Far from requiring the assimilation of the Jews, the messianic ideal calls for the ongoing existence of Judaism, which continues to provide a unique contribution to German cultural and political life as a whole. In the future, the es-

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4 "An diesem Hauptpunkte sollte nun wiederum jedermann die innere Gemeinschaft zwischen Deutschtum und Judentum fühlen. Denn der Begriff der Menschheit hat seinen Ursprung im Messianismus der israelitischen Propheten. Und es dürfte, auch abgesehen von Herder, ausser Zweifel stehen, dass der biblische Geist auch im deutschen Humanismus als tiefste Ursache gewirkt hat. Der Messianismus aber ist der Grundpfeiler des Judentums; er ist seine Krone und seine Wurzel. Er bildet das schöpferische Grundmotiv des Monotheismus, das Herder schon hervorhebt: ,War Jehova der Einzige, der Schöpfer der Welt: so war er auch der Gott aller Menschen, aller Geschlechter'. Und er ist seine höchste Konsequenz. Freilich war er von Anfang an mit der nationalen Politik, wie mit der nationalen Religiosität verbunden." Ibid., 28.

sential purpose of Jewish monotheism would be to serve as an indispensable bulwark for ethical culture.[5]

As interpreted by Cohen in *Deutschtum und Judentum*, messianism was not simply a biblical image, nor was it limited to the sphere of religious faith. Well beyond the domain of pure religion, it engaged the political authority of the State which, in its capacity to dominate and harmonize the discord that arises from religious and ethnic ("racial") differences, no longer rests on an arbitrary exercise of power, but on an ethical conviction and a moral purpose that come to fruition in the process of historical development. Cohen's philosophy as a whole provides a curious mix of messianic prophetism and philosophy of history derived from German idealism, especially of the Kantian variety.

This brings us to the central point: a tradition of German Protestants reaching in the modern period from Johann Kaspar Lavater to Paul de Lagarde, and up to Cohen's contemporary, the economist Gustav Schmoller, took Jews in Germany to task who had maintained their distinctive religious identity. And the question had often arisen concerning why the Jews, if they sought to become Germans, should let their religion stand as a barrier between them and the vast majority of their Christian co-citizens? Why did they not adopt the Christian religion as a means of assimilating and erasing the last differences separating the Jewish minority from German Christians? In subsequent years, of course, the accent placed on insurmountable racial distinctions would render such questions wholly irrelevant, but they remained important in the period of the First World War.

Cohen attempted to provide a convincing answer to these questions on the basis both of arguments in favor of Jewish existence in Germany and against Zionist pleas for the separation of Germans and Jews through the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. Cohen's reasoning on this matter was expounded above all in his 1916 article "Religion und Zionismus" and in his response in the same year to Martin Buber's rebuke of this article; in these writings he elaborated on the arguments presented in *Deutschtum und Judentum* in favor of the continued existence of Judaism as a separate religion in the German nation state. In the space of this short essay I will not attempt to reconstruct the whole gamut of Cohen's objections to Zionism, but I will focus on the curious mix he concocted between messianism and politics. Here the argument concerning history as the arena of development of the political authority of the State, inspired by messianic ethical principles, provided the basis for what he termed "political reli-

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5 "Der Monotheismus des Judentums ist das unerschütterliche Bollwerk für alle Zukunft der sittlichen Kultur." Ibid., 40.

giosity" (*politische Religiosität*),[6] in terms of which he presented his objection against the establishment of a separate homeland for all Jews.

According to Cohen's interpretation, the Jews had forfeited any particular *political* vocation following the destruction of the second temple during Roman antiquity. Although the Jews never subsequently created a political society, they were able to maintain themselves as a religious group, in spite of their dispersal among the nations. Without the support of a Jewish State, the Jews were thus able to maintain their distinctive religious identity throughout the centuries. The continuity in this identity indicated to Cohen that Jewish religiosity, and above all the messianic ideal it sustained, does not correspond to a particularly Jewish political structure but, on the contrary, can only be perverted by attempts – such as those of the Zionists – to impose such a structure upon it. If the Jews are indeed God's chosen people, they are not chosen to be representatives of a particular State but, as mediators between God and all of humanity, of the messianic ideal itself. In his initial critique of Zionism, "Religion und Zionismus", Cohen wrote in this respect: "He who reserves the fundamental teachings of Judaism for the Jewish people denies the unique God of messianic humanity. We recognize the election of Israel only as the historical mediation in view of the Divine election of humanity."[7] It is for this reason, according to Cohen, that Zionist attempts to bind Jewish religiosity to a political principle forsake Judaism in its very essence. Zionism harks back to an ancient period of political autonomy of the Jewish people which it seeks to re-enact. The prophets, however, look forward to the messianic destiny of all humanity and therefore, following the destruction of the second temple, they can only sanction the Jewish diaspora in view of the future redemption of mankind as a whole.

Here we apprehend a curious paradox that runs throughout Cohen's argument. He stated in *Deutschtum und Judentum,* and reiterated in his critique of Zionism, that the Jews were not the unique representatives of the messianic principle, for they shared this with German Protestants. In this vein, Cohen went to the point, in his response to Buber's protest against his initial critique of Zionism, of rephrasing this idea in the strongest of terms: "Therefore do I love in the unity that the German Spirit manifests in its science as in its State the Prov-

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6 "Antwort auf das offene Schreiben des Herrn Dr. Martin Buber an Hermann Cohen." *Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Schetschke u. Sohn, 1924), 336.

7 "Und wer das Judentum in seiner Grundlehre grundsätzlich für das jüdische Volk reserviert hält, der verleugnet den einzigen Gott der messianischen Menschheit. Die Erwählung Israels erkennen wir nur als die geschichtliche Vermittlung für die göttliche Erwählung der Menschheit an." Hermann Cohen, "Religion und Zionismus." *Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 2: 32.

idential path toward attainment of the messianic goal."[8] This statement, however, brings to light a curious paradox in Cohen's interpretation as a whole: if German Christians are capable of representing the messianic ideal, what possible argument could be advanced in favor of the survival of Jewish religiosity in Germany? To my mind, Cohen presented no satisfactory answer to this question, neither in *Deutschtum und Judentum*, nor in his pronouncements against Zionism, nor in his 1917 rebuttal of the arguments of Gustav Schmoller, who explicitly raised doubts concerning the claims of Jews to equal rights in Germany given their refusal to abandon religious separatism.[9]

This question intensely preoccupied Cohen in the years before his death in 1918. His last posthumously published work, *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*, was nonetheless not able, any more than his earlier writings, to provide a satisfactory answer to it. In this final work, he elaborated his reflection on the essentially political character of Jewish messianism which he contrasted with the otherworldliness of Platonism that he qualified as utopian and eschatological. Jewish messianism in this final work was now also contrasted with Christian messianism which, in its insistence on otherworldliness, assumed an essentially eschatological form.[10] Messianism, in contradistinction to eschatology, seeks to realize its ethical purpose in the real political world. But this insistence on the *political* character of messianism only highlights the profoundly paradoxical character of the notion of "political religiosity" that he applied to the Jewish faith: if, indeed, as Cohen reiterated in *Religion der Vernunft*, messianism finds its source in Old Testament prophecy and if the Jews are direct bearers of a messianic ethical mission, then we are led to the conclusion that a people which, over the centuries, has been deprived of any particular form of political existence has been chosen to fulfill humanity's eminently political task. It is ultimately this paradox that comes to light in the idea of a providentially guided unfolding of the historical process which is propelled by the political messianism of the Jewish people.

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8 "Darum liebe ich in der Einheit, die der deutsche Geist in seiner Wissenschaft und seinem Staat darstellt, den Weg der Vorsehung zur Erreichung des messianischen Ziels." Hermann Cohen, "Antwort auf das offene Schreiben des Herrn Dr. Martin Buber an Hermann Cohen." *Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 2: 340.

9 Hermann Cohen, "Betrachtungen über Schmollers Angriff." *Jüdische Schriften*, vol. 2: 381–397.

10 Hermann Cohen, *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums.Eine jüdische Religionsphilosophie* (Wiesbaden: Fourier, 1978), 357–392.

II

Buber's early political ideas concerning Zionism came to expression most nota-
bly in his attitude toward one of the principle theoretical sources of this move-
ment, the cultural Zionism of Achad Haam. In an article published in Hebrew in
1902, "The Renaissance of the Spirit," Achad Haam considered that the move-
ment toward emancipation and assimilation of the Jews since the period of
the eighteenth century Enlightenment or "Haskalah" had led to a loss of Jewish
identity and Jewish cultural vitality. This weakening of Judaism could only be
counteracted through the creation of a Jewish State in which a return to the He-
brew language and a fortification of the principles of Jewish learning would lead
to a general revival of Jewish culture.[11] Buber adopted a similar line of argument,
which at the same time aimed to surmount what he took to be Achad Haam's
narrow culturalism and intellectualism. Buber's assessment of Achad Haam's
work in the discourse "Die Erneurerung des Judentums" (The Renewal of Juda-
ism), the third of his early *Reden über das Judentum* (*Addresses on Judaism*) pub-
lished in 1911, was at once admirative and critical of this early theory of cultural
Zionism, which Buber sought to enrich in light of popular religious themes in-
spired by the Chassidic movement and through an intensified focus on messian-
ism. In "The Renewal of Judaism," Buber referred to messianism as "Judaism's
most deeply original idea."[12] The brand of messianism Buber advocated, as he
reiterated in the critique of Cohen he presented in the article "Peoples, States,
and Zion," initially published in 1916, went hand in hand with the bringing to
an end of the Jewish diaspora through the creation of a Jewish homeland.
This Zionist messianism found an important source in the mid-nineteenth centu-
ry writings of Moses Hess, which he evoked in his critique of Hermann Cohen:
"We lack the country through which to fulfill the historic ideal of our people;
this ideal is none other than the rule of God on this earth, the messianic time
that all of our prophets announced."[13] And here Buber presented a cogent cri-
tique of the messianic principles articulated by Hermann Cohen: "Judaism
may well be taken up in messianic humanity, to be melted into it; we do not,

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11 Achad-Haam, "Die Renaissance des Geistes" (1902), *Am Scheidewege*, vol. 2, tr. Israel Fried-
länder (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1913), 115.
12 "[...] die am tiefsten originale Idee des Judentums", Martin Buber, "Die Erneuerung des Ju-
dentums." *Reden über das Judentum* (Berlin: Schocken, 1932), 58.
13 "Uns fehlt das Land, um das historische Ideal unseres Volkes zu verwirklichen, welches kein
anderes Ideal ist als die Herrschaft Gottes auf Erden, die messianische Zeit, die von allen unse-
ren Propheten verkündet worden ist." Martin Buber, "Völker, Staaten und Zion. Brief an Her-
mann Cohen." *Die Jüdische Bewegung* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1920), 43.

however, consider that the Jewish people must disappear among contemporary humanity so that a messianic humanity might arise."[14] Buber's affirmation of Zionism, however, raises the immediate question concerning the specifically *political* principles which the foundation of the Jewish homeland might involve. Buber's writings, however, remained vague on this point and Cohen, in his response to Buber's critique, clearly identified this weakness in his adversary's position. Cohen brought to light, indeed, the wholly paradoxical character of Buber's variety of political messianism, lying in his attempt to combine it with Zionism and thus with national particularism.

In his answer to Cohen's critique of Zionism, Buber retorted that the Zionist goal of establishing a national homeland for the Jews could hardly be limited in its significance to the particular national existence of the Jews; it was at the same time "supranational" (*übernational*) in scope. "We want Palestine not 'for the Jews,'" as he wrote, "we want it for humanity, since we want it for the fulfillment of Judaism."[15] In his remarks on Buber's response, Cohen did not fail to point out the highly problematic character of this mixture of Jewish universalism with the *politics* of Zionism, which focused on the national existence of the Jews alone. Cohen did not hesitate to voice the suspicion that the claim to universalism of the political principles of Zionism was in reality no more than a means of promoting the sheer quest for power typical of particular nations.

In his later article "Der Staat und die Menschheit. Bemerkungen zu Hermann Cohens Antwort" (The State and Humanity. Remarks on Hermann Cohen's response), Buber addressed this crucial point. He stated that his brand of Zionism sought to avoid precisely the empty quest for power so typical of all forms of nationalism: "I have heard and seen," he wrote, "too many of the results of the empty need for power." But, without further addressing this problem, he simply reiterated his initial statement: "We want Palestine not 'for the Jews,' we want it for humanity, since we want it for the fulfillment of Judaism." At this point Buber added a further remark which, in view of his previous pronouncements, is at once puzzling and problematic: "In the work of the new humanity, toward which we aim, the specific violence of Judaism cannot be avoided – the violence that was once the strongest impulse for humanity toward the true life."[16] In his

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14 "In der messianischen Menschheit mag das Judentum dereinst aufgehen, mit ihr verschmelzen; nicht aber vermögen wir einzusehen, dass das jüdische Volk in der heutigen Menschheit untergehen müsse, damit die messianische erstehe." Ibid.

15 "Wir wollen Palästina nicht ‚für die Juden': wir wollen es für die Menschheit, denn wir wollen es für die Verwirklichung des Judentums." Ibid., 44.

16 "Ich habe von den Werken des leeren Machtbedürfnisses zu viel gesehen und gehört"; "Am Werk der neuen Menschheit, das wir meinen, kann die spezifische Gewalt des Judentums nicht

critical remarks on Cohen's political position, Buber did not clarify the precise sense of this "specific violence" of Judaism nor did he define the political form that the Jewish "homeland" was to assume. We learn only that this homeland was to be made independent of the preoccupations of nations (*Getriebe der Völker*) and of "external politics" (*der äusseren Politik enthoben*) so that it might marshal "all forces toward the inner elaboration and thereby the fulfillment of Judaism."[17]

Buber's reaction against contemporary expressions of nationalism is understandable in view of the catastrophic results of the politics of national interest that were being pursued in the First World War. But his idea of a homeland founded on the quest for spiritual goals and emancipated from the normal polit-

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entbehrt werden – die Gewalt, die einst dem Menschen den stärksten Antrieb zum wahrhaften Leben gab." Martin Buber, "Der Staat und die Menschheit. Bemerkungen zu Hermann Cohens Antwort", *Die Jüdische Bewegung*, p. 61. On Buber's critique of Cohen see Paul Mendes-Flohr, *From Mysticism to Dialogue. Martin Buber's Transformation of German Social Thought* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 109 – 110.

17 "[...] alle Kräfte um den inneren Ausbau und damit um die Verwirklichung des Judentums." "Der Staat und die Menschheit," 61. Less than two years later, Stefan Zweig, in an undated letter presumably written in late 1917 or early 1918, expressed his reservations concerning Buber's concept of a Jewish State in Palestine. "Since I am most clearly resolved", he wrote, "the more the dream threatens to become a reality, the dangerous dream of a Jewish State with canons, flags, orders, to prefer the painful idea of the diaspora, the Jewish fate more than the Jewish well-being. ("Denn ich bin ganz klar entschlossen, je mehr sich im Realen der Traum zu verwirklichen droht, der gefährliche Traum eines Judenstaates mit Kanonen, Flaggen, Orden, gerade die schmerzliche Idee der Diaspora zu lieber, das jüdische Schicksal mehr als das jüdische Wohlergehn.") In his answer to Zweig dated February 4th 1918, Buber responded as follows: "For today, only this – that I know nothing of a 'Jewish State with canons, flags, and orders', not even in the form of a dream. What will happen depends upon those who make it happen, and precisely for this reason must those like me, who think in terms of humanity and of mankind, also determine what develops, *here*, *where* in these times the creation of a new community depends on human action. I do not conceive as valid your historical conclusions regarding the *new* people, which is to be engendered from old stock. If Jewish Palestine will prove to be the end of a movement, that was only spiritual in content, then it will be the beginning of a movement that will bring the Spirit to fulfillment." ("Heute nur dies, dass mir von einem 'Judenstaat mit Kanonen, Flaggen, Orden' nichts bekannt ist, auch nicht in der Form eines Traums. Was werden wird, hängt von denen ab, die es schaffen, und gerade deshalb müssen die wie ich menschlich und menscheitlich Gesinnten bestimmend mittun, *hier*, *wo* es wieder einmal in den Zeiten in die Hand von Menschen gelegt ist, eine Gemeinschaft aufzubauen. Ihre geschichtlichen Schlussfolgerungen kann ich für das *neue* Volk, das hier aus altem Blute werden soll, nicht gelten lassen. Wenn ein jüdisches Palästina das Ende einer Bewegung sein wird, die nur im Geistigen bestand, so wird es der Anfang einer Bewegung sein, die den Geist verwirklichen will"), Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1972), vol. 1: 524 – 26.

ical preoccupations that the existence of a state entails is nonetheless highly paradoxical. Indeed, Buber's early political messianism savored of paradox, albeit for reasons that were radically opposed to the messianic "political religiosity" championed by his adversary, Hermann Cohen. Nonetheless, in spite of their implacable hostility to each other's positions, Cohen and Buber shared one common conviction standing at the heart of the paradox that – for opposite reasons – characterizes their respective standpoints: each believed that the political goals advocated by the Jewish people necessarily involved the redemption of all humanity – either because the Jews, while destined to remain stateless, were at the same time the wellspring of universal political aims, or because, in their quest for a particular state, their politics necessarily engaged a spiritual universality. In the last analysis, these two divergent concepts of politics were each fatefully tied to the ideal of political messianism, stemming from the conviction that the pursuit of political aims essentially fulfills a sacred mission. If this ideal was hardly limited to Jewish political thought, nor to the troubled period in which Cohen and Buber wrote, their opposing political positions paradoxically converged in an unquestioned willingness to interpret political principles in light of theology.

Samuel Hayim Brody

Is Theopolitics an Antipolitics?

Martin Buber, Anarchism, and the Idea of the Political

> *We have come to recognize that the political is the total, and as a result we know that any decision about whether something is* unpolitical *is always a* political *decision...*
> – Carl Schmitt, "Preface to the Second Edition" of Political Theology (1934)

> *Here is the serpent in the fullness of its power!*
> – Martin Buber, "Letter to Gandhi" (1939)

Introduction: The Shape of the Theopolitical Problem

"Antipolitics," writes Michael Walzer, "is a kind of politics."[1] This puzzling statement occurs in Walzer's recent discussion of the Bible, which he calls "a political book," but one that has "no political theory" in it; its writers are "engaged with politics" but are "not very interested in politics," although he admits that "writers who are uninterested in politics nonetheless have a lot to say that is politically interesting." Walzer has always been a clear writer, and if this series of statements seems convoluted, this may be due to the subject matter itself. Close examination of the relationship of religion and politics has a way of calling into question our very understanding of the nature of both "religion" and "politics" as distinct and separate spheres that can each be described according to its own special set of characteristics. This, of course, is an inconvenient state of affairs for university departments like Political Science and Religion, which would like to assume that the objects of their study do in fact exist.

This essay excavates and explicates the potential contribution of Martin Buber to the contemporary resurgence of interest in the borders between religion and politics, through an examination of the category "theopolitics" in Buber's mature work, particularly *Königtum Gottes* (1932), as well as his later biblical writings.[2] Interest in Buber, both during and after his lifetime, has centered on

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1 Michael Walzer, *In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), xiii.

2 The essay is part of a larger project on Buber's theopolitics. That project addresses many topics beyond what space allows here, including the historical context of theopolitics in Weimar Germany and its manifestation in a unique form of Zionism. What follows, however, will

his introduction of Hasidism to Western audiences, as well as his "philosophy of dialogue" as represented by *Ich und Du* (1923). During the vogue of "religious existentialism" in the 1950s and 60s Buber was a best-seller; the waning of this trend dimmed his star somewhat, and he settled into his current position: an important figure in Jewish ethics, who is still read in Protestant seminaries and liberal rabbinical schools as an exemplar of modern Jewish thought outside the strictures of *halakha*.[3] Few scholars have focused on Buber's political thought, and those who do often complain about their lack of company. Robert Weltsch, for example, writes: "To many it may appear that Martin Buber is not a political scientist. He is regarded as a religious thinker and as a social philosopher, not as a man of politics. Such a classification, however, would be a fallacy."[4] Twenty years later, Steven Schwarzschild remarks that little has changed:

> Much has been written about virtually all the vast and diverse aspects of the life and works of Martin Buber. His political philosophy and activities are a striking exception to this state of affairs, although socio-political matters were clearly of fundamental importance to him... In at least some instances this exception is made tendentiously: Buber's reputation is to be used for institutional and political self-advancement, but the nature of his political thought and programme would resist such purposes.[5]

Whether for the reason Weltsch suggests, that scholars simply do not *see* Buber as a political writer, or for the more insidious reason proposed by Schwarzschild, that they find the topic dangerous, it remains the case two more decades later that there is no definitive treatment of Buber's politics.[6]

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focus primarily on the theoretical tenets of theopolitics as it relates to other discourses that examine the border between religion and politics.

3 One could further speculate on the reception of Buber's "successors" as apples of the scholarly eye in the 1970s and 80s: Scholem's seemingly hard-headed and scientific interpretation of Jewish mysticism displaced Buber's "romantic" vision of Hasidism, while Levinas's ontology of alterity came into fashion for those who were attracted to the "philosophy of dialogue." Levinas's popularity, sometimes mediated through the prism of Jacques Derrida, in turn contributed to the "staying power" of Heidegger and Rosenzweig, both acknowledged influences on Levinas, as the discourse of "existentialism" faded into that of "postmodernism."

4 Robert Weltsch, "Buber's Political Philosophy," *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, The Library of Living Philosophers Volume XII, eds. Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (La Salle, IL: Open Court Press, 1967), 435–449.

5 Steven Schwarzschild, "A Critique of Martin Buber's Political Philosophy: An Affectionate Reappraisal," *The Pursuit of the Ideal: Jewish Writings of Steven Schwarzschild*, ed. Menachem Kellner (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 185–207. Originally published as "A Critique of M. Buber's Political Philosophy—An Affectionate Reappraisal," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* XXXI, 1986, 355–388.

6 Some scholars deny that he has a politics at all: "...[T]he two poles of Jewish life that would hold [Buber's] primary interest [were] the cultural and the spiritual. With the exception of his

Weltsch is right that scholars and the general public alike have simply been more interested in other aspects of Buber's work. But surely it is not that Buber just *happens* to be seen as a non-political writer, but that something about his work actively encourages the formation of such a perception. Politics seems to be consistently subordinated to other elements in his thought, lacking the proper independent treatment it receives in writers we recognize as belonging to the political theory canon. The latter insight has been articulated most explicitly by those who treat Buber as a philosopher. Even when Buber is recognized as having a politics, and even when this politics is investigated with respect, it is characterized as an adjunct to his philosophy: the political utopia Buber sought is related to his existential meditations on the I-Thou relation.[7] This stance makes eminent sense if we take ontology (or ethics) to be first philosophy, and read the philosophy of dialogue as Buber's ontology (or ethics). From the dialogical perspective, Utopia is that configuration of society with the fewest possible obstacles to the fundamental human desire for a community based on recognition and mutual concern. Social structures that discourage such regard, and demand subservience to laws of instrumentality, such as the state and the market, obstruct I-Thou encounters, although they may still take place under these conditions. Such social structures would be transformed in utopia, and would constitute a direct connection between Buber's philosophy and his politics. Bernard Susser sums up this approach: "[F]ederalism as Buber understands it is the principle of dialogue writ large and socialized."[8]

Thus, it would seem that one could achieve a more political reading of Buber simply by bracketing philosophy and attempting to isolate a political doctrine. However, significant disciplinary tendencies still militate in the direction of classifying Buber as "really" an ethicist or "really" a theologian. Foremost among these is the idea that if politics is to be treated as a subject in its own right,

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later efforts on behalf of Brit Shalom, a group committed to the reconciliation of Zionism and Arab nationalism, Buber was not particularly interested in politics and so did not himself produce a body of literature on the topic, although he wrote occasionally on political matters." Gilya Gerda Schmidt, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897 – 1909* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 118. Schmidt excludes Brit Shalom from her judgement that Buber is non-political, but Howard M. Sachar, whom she cites, includes them within this judgement: "The Brit Shalom was an ideological, not a political, group." Sachar, *A History of Israel, From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 180.
7 Paul Mendes-Flohr, "The Desert Within and Social Renewal—Martin Buber's Vision of Utopia," *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. Michael Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 219 – 230, 220.
8 Bernard Susser, "The Anarcho-Federalism of Martin Buber," *Publius* 9.4 (Autumn 1979), 103 – 116, 104.

then one must focus above all on the special rules or laws that are inherent to politics as a distinct sphere of life, what Max Weber called its *Eigengesetzlichkeit* or autonomy. The idea that politics is a craft demanding special knowledge is as old as Plato's inquiry into the *areté* or excellence of the statesman. But the idea of the *autonomy* of politics, the claim that politics issues its own laws to itself, may be much younger.[9] When Machiavelli is cited as the founder of modern political science, it is usually because he is said to have emancipated politics from its subordination to ethics or religion, enabling it to be studied as an autonomous realm. Political theorists may then be defined as those who follow in Machiavelli's footsteps, placing the recognition of the autonomy of politics at the foundation of their work.

There is a logical slippage here, however. Merely to acknowledge that politics is a craft, like shipbuilding or medicine, demanding a particular talent or excellence, is not yet to declare it autonomous, because it is not yet to say what the *telos* or *purpose* of politics is. The *areté* of a knife is to cut, and the *areté* of a ship is to sail; each possesses its *areté* to the extent to which it succeeds in fulfilling these purposes. One must posit a purpose for politics, then, in order to define "the *areté* of the statesman." Both Plato and Aristotle, in different ways, do subordinate politics to a *telos*, namely the Good. With Machiavelli, however, the move that allows his laser-like focus on political technique is precisely the refusal to articulate any *telos* for politics beyond the desire of the prince to "maintain his state," that is, to continue being a prince.[10] In line with what Weber called the rationalization of every sphere of human life, this isolation of the technique of politics can then be maintained as the *sine qua non* for the existence of political science as a scholarly discipline. This claim, in turn, serves as the foundation for many shades of political "realism," including Weber's own distinction between a politics founded in an ethics of responsibility, which pays political science its due, and one rooted in an ethics of conviction, which allows comprehensive conceptions of the good to determine political action. The latter politics is vulnerable to criticism in the terms used by Walzer, as "antipolitics," since by refusing to

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9 As we will see, Buber's view is that the autonomy of the political is at least as old as the Israelite monarchy.

10 Here I prescind from the debates swirling around how the Machiavelli of *The Prince* does or does not differ from the Machiavelli of the *Discourses*; whether one or both should really be perceived as republican or even radically democratic, rather than in the service of tyranny, etc. The point is not what the real Machiavelli, whose true doctrines had to be uncovered by revisionist scholarship, said, but what the Machiavelli who "founded modern political science" said. See Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

stipulate that the purpose of politics is to maintain the state, it refuses to allow politics its autonomous existence. The plea for objectivity that inaugurates political science, namely the demand that we describe the world as it *is*, and not as we think it *ought* to be, ends up smuggling ontology and ethics through the back door as it first tells us how the world really *is*, and then demands that we recognize this state of affairs in order to be responsible.

Weber, as the preeminent social scientist of his day, sets the terms of the discussion for much Weimar political thought. Maturity in politics for Weber is defined by the ability to recognize and endure the irreconcilable clashes of value between ethics and religion, on the one hand, and politics on the other. Meanwhile, the rationalization of every sphere of life attendant to modernity encourages the growth of bureaucracy, which in turn endangers "the political" itself, defined in a Nietzschean manner as *Herrschaft* [authority/domination] of one person or group of people over another. These basic claims serve as the nodal point around which numerous "symmetrical counter-concepts" form concerning the question of the autonomy of politics.[11] Here I will seek to define Buber's theopolitics as one such counter-concept, and to place it into dialogue with another, the "political theology" associated with Carl Schmitt. Following Christoph Schmidt, I argue that theopolitics functions as a radical inversion of political theology: Buber uses "theopolitics" only to define the *proper* relationship of the religious to the political, while "political theology" describes what theopolitics becomes if it betrays its proper task.[12] Theopolitics concerns itself with the same Weberian problems as does political theology—from secularization and technicity to representation and charisma—and thinks through them with a highly similar vocabulary, but it comes to diametrically opposite conclusions on one point

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11 Heinrich Meier speaks of the "conceptual symmetry" between Carl Schmitt's political theology and Leo Strauss's political philosophy; "Preface to the American Edition" of *The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: Four Chapters on the Distinction between Political Theology and Political Philosophy, Expanded Edition*, trans. Marcus Brainard and Robert Berman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), xv. The phrase recalls Reinhart Koselleck's use of the term "symmetrical counter-concepts" in his description of Schmitt's Friend-Foe dichotomy, "a description of oneself or of one's Foe that is open to simultaneous use by both sides." *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), 197.

12 Schmidt, "Die theopolitische Stunde. Martin Bubers Begriff der Theopolitik, seine prophetischen Ursprünge, seine Aktualität und Bedeutung für die Definition Zionistischer Politik," *Die theopolitische Stunde: Zwölf Perspektiven auf das eschatologische Problem der Moderne* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2009), 205–225. See my translation of a revised version of this essay, "The Theopolitical Hour: Martin Buber's Concept of Theopolitics, its Prophetic Origins, and its Relevance and Significance for the Definition of Zionist Politics," in Jacques Picard et al., eds., *Thinking Jewish Modernity* (forthcoming).

after another. Both question the continuing intellectual validity of the liberal border between religion and politics, but to radically opposed ends: if political theology deploys the power of the divine in the service of the authoritarian state, theopolitics denies any possibility whatsoever of legitimizing institutional human power. If political theology borders on the fascistic, theopolitics is its anarchistic antipode.[13] But a closer look at the scene laid out by Weber must precede consideration of Schmitt and Buber.

A 'Bourgeois' Politician: Secularism, Polytheism, and Anarchism in Max Weber

Wolfgang Mommsen argues for a connection between Weber's political doctrines and his conception of scholarship. Both date to Weber's early studies of the increasing population of Polish migrant agricultural workers in the East Elbian region, as demonstrated by his 1895 inaugural address at the University of Freiburg. Weber argued against protectionist policies that would artificially freeze German agriculture at its current point of development; neither did he favor allowing the high rate of Polish immigration to continue, despite the fact that the Junker landlords benefited economically from employing lower-paid Poles. Weber's primary concern was the German character of the national economy, and to that end he supported state subsidization of German small farmers in East Elbia, even if this ran afoul of the Junkers and the march of capitalism. "Ostensibly pure scientific value systems of whatever variety always appeared to stand in the way of such a consciously national economic policy," according to Mommsen. "Therefore Weber strove to refute the very existence of scientifically-valid normative categories. At the outset, his program for a value-free science rested largely on an effort to establish the ideal of the national

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13 Vincent W. Lloyd has helpfully delineated three senses in which the term "political theology" is used in recent discussions: 1) a narrow sense, in which it refers to claims made by Schmitt concerning the role of religious concepts in political theory; 2) an extremely broad sense, in which the phrase is interchangeable with almost any form of the conjunction "religion and politics"; 3) a "sectarian" sense, in which it refers to a branch of theology (usually Christian) that deals with political matters. Vincent W. Lloyd, "Introduction" to *Race and Political Theology*, ed. Vincent W. Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 1–21. I deal with political theology in the first, narrow sense, since the context in which it emerged and had its original reception is relevant to my discussion. My portrayal of it as fascistic and in the service of legitimation may be contested as a historical reading of Schmitt; it is, however, merely intended to convey Buber's own conception of where theopolitics stood.

state as the sole indisputable standard."[14] Mommsen's "therefore," controversial among contemporary adherents of Weber's sociology, may be too strong. Nonetheless, he demonstrates a connection between Weber's understandings of power and of scholarship that others have since broadened and deepened.[15] Weber himself once put it this way:

> Politics is a tough business, and those who take responsibility for seizing the spokes of the wheel of political development in the fatherland must have strong nerves and should not be too sentimental to practice secular politics. Those who wish to involve themselves in secular politics *must above all be without illusions* and...*recognize the fundamental reality* of an ineluctable eternal war on earth of men against men.[16]

This eternal war, according to Weber, is what social science, including the science of politics, must acknowledge from the very beginning if it is to maintain its status as a science. And this science, in turn, is the necessary basis of "secular politics." As Leo Strauss would later comment: "Conflict was for Weber an unambiguous thing, but peace was not: peace is phony, but war is real."[17] This view of conflict as fundamental naturally extends to the realm of values. Reason is incapable of judging between irreconcilably different value-systems—some scholars, drawing on Weber's own image of incommensurable values as warring gods demanding allegiance, have called this his "polytheism."[18] The metaphor of cosmic warfare may clue us in that Weber will not opt for the Anglo-American liberal response to what John Rawls much more mundanely calls "the fact of reasonable pluralism," namely that the public sphere should avoid making decisions about ultimate values. For Weber, this is simply impossible; political decisions always refer to values and are ultimately non-rational. This is one more reason that they cannot be based upon an objective social science, and this is also why the increasing bureaucratization of politics, the attempt to make it function according to set regular laws, endangers the ability of politics to preserve a space for individual decision at the highest level.[19]

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14 Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890–1920*, trans. Michael S. Steinberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 40.

15 Cf. e. g., Sheldon S. Wolin, "Max Weber: Legitimation, Method, and the Politics of Theory," *Political Theory* 9 (1981), 401–23.

16 Ibid., 41 (emphasis).

17 Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 65.

18 David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, "Introduction: Max Weber's Calling to Knowledge and Action," in *The Vocation Lectures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), xlvii-xlviii.

19 "...if you choose this particular standpoint, you will be serving this particular god and will *give offense to every other god*...As long as life is left to itself and is understood in its own terms,

Weber defined himself on many occasions as a representative member of his class, a "bourgeois" politician. This meant, on the one hand, that he lacked sympathy for the claims of the dying aristocratic landowner class, which was struggling during the Wilhelmine period to hold on to its oligarchic privileges; on the other hand, he cast a skeptical eye on the quest of the organized working class to seize power, whether through political means or direct economic actions such as strikes. With respect to the latter group, he argued forcefully that Marxism could have validity *either* as a diagnostic scholarly apparatus submitting falsifiable claims to social science in an attempt to increase understanding of modern capitalist societies, *or* as a purely ethically-derived call to overthrow an unjust social order, but never both. Since the majority of the organized working class in Germany operated through the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD), which was officially committed to an "orthodox" formulation of Marxist doctrine, this meant that there were few socialist activists who framed their work in a manner acceptable to Weber; when he came across them, however, he treated them with great respect and even befriended them. Such figures, including the sociologist Robert Michels and the playwright Ernst Toller, were most often closer to anarchist syndicalism or Tolstoyan thought than to Marxism, as the anarchist tradition lacked the Marxist aversion to depicting the struggle for socialism as voluntarist and dependent on the workers' own actions, rather than as an inevitable consequence of the march of the forces of history.

Despite his friendly personal relationship to figures such as Michels and Toller, however, Weber considered the anarchist quest for a society free from domination as the very paradigm of utopianism in politics. In fact, Mommsen argues, Weber based his famous description of the "ethics of conviction" on Michels.[20] Weber took for granted that the anarchist society was both impossible and undesirable (because it would eliminate *Herrschaft*, a primary source of human excellence, leading to a bleak world of Nietzschean "last men"), but he admitted that this was a value-judgment and that he could not dismiss it on the basis of reason. Rather, he shifted the grounds of disagreement onto the question of the ethics of practice, depicting an anarchist committed to revolution no matter what the short-term consequences of revolutionary actions might be,

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it knows only that the conflict between these gods is never-ending...Which of the warring gods shall we serve?" Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *The Vocation Lectures*, 26 – 7. Strauss points out here that this is a recipe for literal pandemonium, in the full sense implied by its Greek etymology; *Natural Right and History*, 45.

20 Mommsen, "Roberto Michels and Max Weber: Moral Conviction versus the Politics of Responsibility," in *Political and Social Theory of Max Weber: Collected Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 88.

in contrast to a responsible politician concerned primarily with taking responsibility for such short-term consequences. This contrast reaches its sharpest point when it touches the question of violence, for it is at this point that it reaches what Weber considered the very borders of politics itself:

> In the last analysis the modern state can only be defined sociologically in terms of a specific means [*Mittel*] which is peculiar to the state, as it is to all other political associations, namely physical violence [*Gewaltsamkeit*]. 'Every state is founded on force [*Gewalt*]', as Trotsky once said at Brest-Litovsk. That is indeed correct. If there existed only social formations in which violence was unknown as a means, *then* the concept of the 'state' would have disappeared; *then* that condition would have arisen which one would define, in this particular sense of the word, as 'anarchy'.[21]

For Weber, the state is the only locus of the political today. The political is defined by the deployment of the means of violence by associated groups of people; the state concentrates the "legitimate" use of such violence in one association in particular, which then claims a monopoly of this means. Here Weber's "polytheism" manifests in the form of a contrast between secularism and the ethics of conviction: "Anyone who makes a pact with the means of violence, for whatever purpose—and every politician does this...is becoming involved, I repeat, with the diabolical powers that lurk in all violence."[22] To attempt to create a society consisting only of formations "in which violence was unknown as a means" would be to attempt "anarchy." This, of course, is what many in Weber's original audience of student radicals had been attempting to do—for Weber, they were seeking a kingdom "not of this world."[23] It is this specific goal, I argue, and the way in which many in Munich in 1919 sought to achieve it, that links Martin Buber and Carl Schmitt to central themes of Weberian thought. Both were concerned not just with the surface-level question of whether the Bavarian Revolution would have good or bad consequences, but with the challenge posed by anarchism and non-violence to the very existence and coherence of the "political sphere." Schmitt tried to solve the problem by

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21 Weber, "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 310.

22 Ibid., 364–5.

23 The 'Politik als Beruf' lecture was delivered to the Freiestudentische Bund of the University of Munich. Weber resisted giving the lecture at first, until the convener, rector Immanuel Birnbaum, threatened to have Kurt Eisner give it instead; even then, he urged that Birnbaum replace him with Friedrich Naumann, founder of the German Democratic Party, a "representative German politician." See Strong, "Introduction," xxxv.

assimilating the kingdom of God *to* Weber's political; Buber by proclaiming that "there *is* no political outside the theopolitical."[24]

The *Charis* above Every Law: Anarchy, Legitimacy, and Theology in Buber and Schmitt

Both Buber and Schmitt were present in Munich during the revolution of late 1918–1919, between the end of the World War and the dawn of the Weimar Republic. Schmitt was working in the censorship office of the regional martial law administration at the time, while Buber came to lecture and to visit his best friend of twenty years, the anarchist Gustav Landauer, an important figure among the revolutionaries.[25] For both Buber and Schmitt, the vision of the anarchists would become a seminal influence—a resource for the former, a *bête noire* for the latter—which each would articulate within the field of Weberian political concerns. Schmitt's *Politische Theologie* (1922) had its origins in a festschrift for Weber, while Buber's theopolitics, first fully articulated in *Kingship of God*, admits its debts not just to Weber's *Economy and Society*, with its famous sociology of domination, but also to his magisterial representation of Israelite life in *Ancient Judaism*. The relationship between anarchism and the kingdom, or king*ship*, of God, stands behind each thinker's grappling with the nature of representation, the role of charisma in authority, the state of emergency, the nature of secularization, the ethics of political decision-making, and the political significance of rationalization and technicity in modernity. But whereas Weber argued that one had to choose *either* secular politics/polytheism *or* the otherworldly anarchist kingdom of God, Schmitt and Buber rejected this choice in opposite ways: for Schmitt, a secularized theology was at work *behind* and *for* the legitimation of politics and domination, while for Buber, the kingship of God was itself *this*-worldly, embracing and encompassing secular politics even at its most anarchistic.

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24 "…denn es gibt keine politische Sphäre außer der theopolitischen." Martin Buber, *Königtum Gottes* (originally published 1932, now available in Martin Buber Werkausgabe Band 15: Schriften zum Messianismus, ed. Samuel Hayim Brody [Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2015], 174). *Kingship of God*, trans. Richard Scheimann (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1967), 136.
25 Gopal Balakrishnan writes that Schmitt "experienced at first hand the tension and insecurity generated by the political polarization of the city when his office was broken into by a band of revolutionaries, and an officer at a nearby table was shot." *The Enemy: An Intellectual Portrait of Carl Schmitt* (New York: Verso, 2000), 20.

Although Schmitt does not explicitly deal with Buber, and Buber rarely deals with Schmitt, they fit into each other's respective worldviews as perfect foils.[26] From Buber's point of view, Schmitt epitomizes the excesses of modern power-politics; from Schmitt's point of view, Buber would at first appear to epitomize an anti-political tendency to remove personal strife from society and to transform politics and government into administration by eliminating domination.[27] Leo Strauss once noted that for Schmitt, "the ultimate quarrel occurs not between bellicosity and pacifism (or nationalism and internationalism) but between the "*authoritarian* and *anarchistic* theories."[28] I argue that if this is so, and if Schmitt takes up the authoritarian position, Martin Buber might just be the contemporary of Schmitt's who most radically assumes the anarchist position.

Schmitt, who may have attended Weber's public lectures in Munich at the time, also came to place violence at the center of his concept of the political. This is stated most famously in the "friend-enemy" criterion of *Concept of the Political* (1932), but can be seen already in his first major work, *Political Romanticism* (1919), which, while ostensibly concerned with the correct understanding of an eighteenth-century phenomenon, can easily be seen as an oblique response to his contemporary circumstances.[29] Schmitt argues that political ro-

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26 Buber's references to Schmitt begin with "The Question to the Single One" of 1936, originally a lecture in November 1933, his only explicit reference; *Between Man and Man* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 46–97. He also criticizes Schmitt, without referring to him by name, in "The Validity and Limitation of the Political Principle" (1953), referring to "teachers of the law…who, obedient to this trait of the times, defined the concept of the political so that everything disposed itself within it according to the criterion 'friend-enemy,' in which the concept of enemy includes 'the possibility of physical killing.' The practice of states has conveniently followed their advice." In *Pointing the Way*, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Schocken Books, 1957), 216.

27 Whether Schmitt read Buber is not known. Ludwig Feuchtwanger sent Schmitt a lengthy review of *Kingship of God* he had written anonymously; Schmitt's reply implies that he read Feuchtwanger's essay carefully ("Über Martin Buber kann ich nicht mitsprechen, doch habe ich Ihre Kritik aufmerksam und mit Nutzen gelesen."), *Carl Schmitt / Ludwig Feuchtwanger: Briefwechsel 1918–1935*, ed. Rolf Rieß (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2007), 377–379, 381–382. I thank Thomas Meyer for directing me to this source. It was Buber who, as part of the series of monographs he edited, *Die Gesellschaft*, first published Franz Oppenheimer's *Der Staat*, which Schmitt singles out for condemnation in 1932 as "the best example" of "the polarity of state and society" which has as its aim "the destruction of the state." *The Concept of the Political, Expanded Edition*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 76.

28 Leo Strauss, "Notes on Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*," trans. J. Harvey Lomax, in *Concept of the Political*, 113. Strauss is quoting Schmitt himself in the latter part of this sentence: "I have pointed out several times that the antagonism between the so-called authoritarian and anarchist theories can be traced to these formulas," *Concept of the Political*, 60.

29 Originally published as Carl Schmitt-Dorotic, *Politische Romantik* (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1919). Second, expanded edition: Carl Schmitt, *Politische Romantik* (München: Dunck-

manticism is found on both the left and the right; it occurs wherever one seeks to avoid a final political decision, since romanticism aesthetically prefers to leave all options open and not to confine reality within the limits of the single outcome that attends any decision: "In commonplace reality, the romantics could not play the role of the ego who creates the world. They preferred the state of eternal becoming and possibilities that are never consummated to the confines of concrete reality. This is because only one of the numerous possibilities is ever realized."[30] The roots of this position are found in Malebranche and his philosophy of occasionalism, which treats God as the only true agent in the world; everything else is simply an occasion for God's action. By centering all order in God in this way, Malebranche reduced the agency of human action; political romanticism inherits this outlook, and therefore it is always "at the disposal of energies that are unromantic, and the sublime elevation above definition and decision is transformed into a subservient attendance upon alien power and alien decision."[31] We can hear an echo here of Machiavelli's warning that the good prince will come to ruin among so many who are not good; Schmitt, however, has shifted the terrain from the unwillingness to take violent action to *decision itself*—for the political romantic, Schmitt claims, decision itself is violence and therefore must be avoided. This is the origin of the preference for "eternal discussion," which will soon become a theme of Schmitt's critiques of liberal parliamentarianism.[32]

Schmitt was anxious to sever the perceived link between romanticism and Roman Catholicism, and in *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (1923) he went on to argue that not only was the Church not romantic, it was in fact poised to become the last remaining home of true political "form" on Earth.[33] Marxist socialism, anarchist syndicalism, and American capitalism all line up on the side of the increasing de-politicization of the world that comes with increased rationalization of industry. "There must no longer be political problems, only or-

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er & Humblot, 1925). Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2011).

30 Ibid., xv.

31 Ibid., xiv.

32 Schmitt, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parliamentarismus* (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1923); cf. Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

33 Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (Hellerau: Jakob Hegner Verlag, 1923); second, revised edition München: Theatiner-Verlag, 1925. Cf. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996).

ganizational-technical and economic-sociological tasks."[34] If these ideologies continue to spread, only the Roman church will preserve Weberian *Herrschaft* against the onslaught of modern bureaucracy. True representation empowers one person to act in the name of another—to act freely, without needing to check back with the represented to re-confirm authority, in the manner of the workers' and peasants' councils of the revolution. The Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, is infallible and sovereign; his decisions carry weight because of his representative function, and therefore do not depend on the personal charisma of the holder of the office.

This interest in the ability of true representation to maintain the *personality* of decision even beyond the charismatic stage of authority is repeated again in Schmitt's famous claim in *Political Theology:* "Sovereign is he who decides the state of exception."[35] Schmitt was keenly aware of the potential of religious faith to undermine such personal human sovereignty, however, and in his later years wrote of the need to "de-anarchize Christianity":

> The most important sentence of Hobbes remains: Jesus is the Christ. The power of such a sentence also works even if it is pushed to the margins of a conceptual system of an intellectual structure, even if it is apparently pushed outside the conceptual circle. This deportation is analogous to the domestication of Christ undertaken by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. Hobbes expresses and grounds scientifically what Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor does: to render harmless Christ's impact on the social-political realm; to de-anarchize Christianity while still leaving it with a certain legitimizing effect and in any case not to renounce it. A clever tactician renounces nothing unless it is totally useless. Christianity was not yet spent. We can thus ask ourselves: to whom is the Grand Inquisitor closer, the Roman church or Thomas Hobbes's sovereign? Reformation and Counter-Reformation revealed themselves as related in direction. Name me your enemy, and I will tell you who you are. Hobbes and the Roman church: the enemy is our own question as form.[36]

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34 Ibid., 65. Schmitt holds that "American financiers, industrial technicians, Marxist socialists, and anarchic-syndicalist revolutionaries unite" on this point, with the result that "The modern state seems to have actually become what Max Weber envisioned: a huge industrial plant."
35 Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 1.
36 Carl Schmitt, *Glossarium: Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947–1951*, ed. Eberhard Freiherr von Medern (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), 243. Cited in the combined translations of Raphael Gross, *Carl Schmitt and the Jews: The "Jewish Question," The Holocaust, and German Legal Theory*, trans. Joel Golb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 85–86, and Tracy B. Strong, "Carl Schmitt and Thomas Hobbes: Myth and Politics," in Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, trans. George D. Schwab and Erna Hilfstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), xxiv. Weber had also mentioned the Grand Inquisitor in "Politics as a Vocation," as a cogent analysis of the problems attending an ethics of conviction; see "Profession and Vocation of Politics," 14.

The claim here is that despite its ostensible reference to the Church in Dostoevsky's text, the Grand Inquisitor more closely resembles the modern state itself, as represented by Hobbes' Leviathan. Schmitt does Machiavelli one better here: lip service to the minimalist formula that "Jesus is the Christ" is sufficient to claim absolute divine authority for human sovereignty and to short-cut apocalyptic attempts to *de*-legitimize the state by means of theology. Furthermore, as Tracy Strong has pointed out, "the leviathan (as mortal God, hence as Christ/Messiah) *holds back* the kingdom of God on this earth or at least makes no move to bring it about. This is why this is political theology and not theological politics."[37] In one of his more overtly antisemitic moods, Schmitt claims that it was Spinoza, the first "liberal Jew," who undid the great serpent and "mortal god" Leviathan by denying it the right to the formula "Jesus is the Christ" in the name of religious freedom.[38]

Unlike the aristocratic reactionaries with whom he associated during the Weimar era, Schmitt presented himself as highly preoccupied with political legitimacy *per se* and not merely with the legitimacy of the new liberal-democratic Republic. For political theorists concerned with legitimacy, anarchism often plays a role analogous to that played by skepticism for philosophers concerned with the ultimate grounding of truth claims: it is like a boogeyman, lying in wait, suggesting by its very existence the possibility of the necessary failure of *all* projects of legitimation. Schmitt's student turned critic, Waldemar Gurian, sees Schmitt as always seeking a "highest instance of decision" that would bring an end to his "despair at an anarchy identified behind all its facades."[39] Indeed, Schmitt pays far more attention to anarchist thought than many of his contemporaries. Like Weber, he respects the anarchists' clear-cut opposition to his line of thinking, in a way that liberals do not. He describes the conflict between the optimistic anthropology he ascribes to anarchism and the pessimistic anthropology of the Counter-Revolution as "the clearest antithesis in the entire history of political ideas."[40] Schmitt's words about his hero Donoso Cortés could just as easily be applied to him: "[He] was contemptuous of the liberals while he re-

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37 "Carl Schmitt and Thomas Hobbes," xxv.

38 Schmitt, *Leviathan*, 57. This claim called forth a vigorous response from Leo Strauss, who insisted upon the wholly secular nature of the Hobbesian serpent-state, seeing Hobbes and Spinoza not as rivals but as collaborators in the construction of the modern secular polity. See Miguel Vatter, "Strauss and Schmitt as Readers of Hobbes and Spinoza: On the Relation between Political Theology and Liberalism," *New Centennial Review*, 2004, 4(3): 161–214.

39 Paul Müller [Waldemar Gurian], "Entscheidung und Ordnung: Zu den Schriften von Carl Schmitt," *Schweizerische Rundschau: Monatsschrift für Geistesleben und Kultur* 34 (1939): 566–76, 567–68. Cited in Gross, *Carl Schmitt and the Jews*, 92–3.

40 Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 55.

spected atheist-anarchist socialism as his deadly foe and endowed it with a dia-bolical stature."[41]

However, there is a strange duality to Schmitt's view of anarchism. On the one hand, he sees anarchism as atheistic and dependent upon a radically opti-mistic view of human nature as essentially good. He links it intimately to the pro-gressive secularization and rationalization of modernity and to the correspond-ing increase of technicity. In this sense, anarchism is aligned with liberalism and Marxism, the other secularizing and depoliticizing forces descended from the American and French revolutions. On the other hand, Schmitt's rhetorical pre-sentation of anarchism emphasizes its radicalism; the bloodlessness of the tech-nical society is balanced out by the "Scythian fury" of Bakunin, "the greatest an-archist of the nineteenth century," who "had to become in theory the theologian of the anti-theological and in practice the dictator of an anti-dictatorship."[42] In this sense, anarchists would be the very incarnation of the political, which Schmitt defines as "the most intense and extreme antagonism, [which] becomes that much more political the closer it approaches the most extreme point, that of the friend-enemy grouping."[43] Anarchists embody a fascinating paradox for Schmitt: by declaring war against the political, they instantiate the political.[44] As Strauss recognized, Schmitt does not see the anarchist ideal as utopian and admits that he does not know whether it can be realized. Rather, he simply abhors it. In it he recognizes a powerful enemy.[45]

Throughout his near-obsession with anarchism, Schmitt always figures it as atheistic and as committed to an irrevocably optimistic anthropology. Martin Buber's theopolitics, however, arguably represents a form of anarchism that lacks these qualities. Moreover, it shares Schmitt's concerns about the inhuman-ity of technicity and places equivalent emphasis on the necessity of decision. In *Kingship of God*, *Moses*, and *The Prophetic Faith*, as well as in a number of short-er essays and occasional writings on Zionism, Buber provides a detailed account of a "direct theocracy," what we might call an anarcho-theocracy, a theopolitical

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41 Ibid., 63. It is open to question whether Schmitt shares the position of Cortés in this section of *Political Theology*. I would argue that he does, despite ostensibly distancing himself.
42 Ibid., 50, 66. The use of this epithet for Bakunin is one hint that Schmitt does identify with Cortés, who also warned in an oxymoronic fashion about the dangers of "dictatorship of the dag-gers," meaning anarchists.
43 Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, 29. Thus, according to this definition, one cannot really be coherently anti-political, since the stronger one's enmity to politics, the more political one is.
44 Sorel is relevant here. See "Irrationalist Theories of the Direct Use of Force," *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 65–76.
45 Strauss, "Notes on *Concept of the Political*," 113.

situation in which the "dangerousness" of man figures centrally.[46] If there is one passage that condenses most of Buber's theopolitical thesis into a single statement, it is the beginning of Chapter Eight of *Kingship of God:*

> The covenant at Sinai signifies, according to its positive content, that the wandering tribes accept JHWH 'for ever and ever' as their King. According to its negative content it signifies that no man is to be called king of the sons of Israel. 'You shall be for Me a kingly domain', 'there was then in Jeshurun a King'; this is *exclusive* proclamation also with respect to a secular lordship: JHWH does not want, like the other kingly gods, to be sovereign and guarantor of a human monarch. He wants Himself to be the Leader and the Prince. The man to whom he addresses His will in order that he carry it out is not only to have his power in this connection alone; he can also exert no power beyond his limited task. Above all, since he rules not as a person acting in his own right, but as 'emissary' [*Entbotener*], he cannot transmit power. The real counterpart of direct theocracy is the *hereditary* kingship...There is in pre-kingly Israel no externality of ruler-ship; *for there is no political sphere except the theo-political*, and all sons of Israel are directly related (*kohanim* in the original sense) to JHWH, Who chooses and rejects, gives an order and withdraws it.[47]

In this single passage, we see diametrically opposite positions from each of Schmitt's mentioned so far: God is literally ruler, and not merely deployed by human authority as a legitimating metaphor; authority inheres in charisma, and does not outlast it in the form of any institutional office; representation is direct, rather than indirect. Schmitt had opposed the direct-democratic tendency that he saw informing all the forces descending from the French Revolution, in which representation is really no more than delegation, a task being handed out to a representative to be performed. This, however, is exactly the role of Buber's charismatic leader, who is given a task by God and retreats into the background once he carries it out. In this Buber was perhaps inspired by his friend Gustav Landauer, and the instance of the Bavarian Council Republic (the *Auftrag* is given to the *Volksbeauftragter*).

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46 The term "theo-political" makes its first appearance in *Kingship of God* in connection with a discussion of the J and E "sources" or redactional trends; Buber holds that the texts designated as J material originate among early circles of courtly compilers, "resolutely attentive to religious tradition, but in the treatment of contemporary or recent history prone to a profane-political tendency [*profane-politischen Tendenz*]," *Kingship of God,* 17. The E materials, on the other hand, originate among the circle of the *neviim*, the prophets. These stand in contrast to the J circle, as they are "independent of the court, supported by the people, less gifted in narration, but inspired in message, experiencing and portraying history as a theo-political occurrence [*die Geschichte als ein theopolitisches Geschehen*], contending for the interpenetration of religion and politics against every principle of partition which would place them in opposition." Ibid.
47 *Kingship of God*, 136 (emphasis in original).

Buber distinguishes between the "pre-state" [*vorstaatliche*] and the post-monarchical conceptions of divine kingship. Prior to the institution of a human monarchy, the divine *melekh* demands of His subjects total, unconditional devotion, of which the ritual symbol is sacrifice. With the founding of the monarchy, however, the divine demand is compromised by those of the human monarch, from tithes to service in war, and the result is a kind of secularization, a separation of the religious from the political.[48] God "is not content to be 'God' in the religious sense," to claim only inner devotion, but demands outer devotion as well, not just in ritual but in the full conduct of life, not just from the individual but from the people as a whole:

> The striving to have the entirety of its life constructed out of its relation to the divine can be actualized by a *people* in no other way than that, while it opens its political being and doing to the influence of this relationship, it thus does not fundamentally mark the limits of this influence in advance, but only in the course of realization experiences or rather endures these limits again and again....He will apportion to the one, for ever and ever chosen by Him, his tasks, but naked power without a situationally related task he does not wish to bestow. He makes known His will first of all as constitution—not constitution of cult and custom only, also of economy and society—He will proclaim it again and again to the changing generations, certainly but simply as reply to a question, institutionally through priestly mouth, above all, however, in the freedom of His surging spirit, through every one whom His spirit seizes. *The separation of religion and politics which stretches through history is here overcome [*aufgehoben*] in real paradox*. (119, emphasis in original).[49]

Buber's polemic here is directed against both kings and scholars—especially those who take the side of kings or who make it easier to do so. The warning against marking the limits of divine influence "in advance," along with the claim that God's will determines cult and custom as well as "economy and society" [*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, the title of Weber's magnum opus in sociology], strongly suggest that Weberian political realism cannot be reconciled with the faith of Israel. The position is radically illiberal, in that it excludes the pos-

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48 Buber thus has a low opinion of King Solomon. He sees a "syncretistic faithlessness" in the man who, "as hospitable as a Roman emperor, allotted holy high-places to the *melakhim* of the neighboring peoples." *Kingship of God*, 118. Buber reads Solomon's pious proclamation that one's "heart should be satisfied with YHVH" (I Kings 8:61) as a crafty retreat from the unconditional insistence on heart *and* soul *and* might (Deut. 6:5).

49 The term *aufheben*, often translated "overcome" or "sublate," is heavily freighted with Hegelian philosophical ballast, but Buber here places the "sublation" historically *prior* to the separation of church and state characteristic of the liberal order.

sibility of separate "spheres" for religion and for politics. The very idea of "religion" as a "sphere" unto itself is an impoverishment of divine rule.[50]

The tendency towards direct theocracy expresses itself in two ways. First in the community's choice of a charismatic leader, whom it recognizes as temporarily inhabited by the *charis* of divine spirit.[51] This is the case of Moses, Joshua, and the various *shoftim* in the Book of Judges. The second aspect of theocracy occurs between the death of one charismatic leader and the rise of another one. We might refer to this interregnum most appropriately as *anarcho*-theocracy. There is literally no (human) ruler in Israel and there are no corresponding institutions. The separate tribes tend to their own business, confident that YHVH still rules as King even when He declines to issue new orders. Internally, the people feel themselves to be under an invisible government; externally, there appears to be no government at all.

To explain the movement between these two stages, Buber turns to Weber's analysis of charisma and its "routinization" (he also borrows from Weber the concept of "hierocracy," rule by priests or some other religious caste claiming to speak for the divine, as a name for what is most commonly called "theocracy," in contrast to true, *direct* theocracy, which is the topic of *Kingship of God*).[52] The historical form of direct theocracy, according to Buber, is a charismatic leadership in which the recipient of the temporary *charis* is recognized to hold a commission to some limited and particular task (never to unlimited leadership). But what is *charis*, exactly? According to Buber, "there is here no charisma at rest, only a hovering one, no possession of spirit, only a 'spiriting', a coming and going of the *ruach*; no assurance of power, only the streams of an authority

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50 Ibid.,119 (emphasis in original). In this sense, Buber sees the moment of the institution of the monarchy not as a moment of increased "theocratization," as Weber had argued in *Ancient Judaism*, but in fact as a dramatic *secularization* of the theopolity. It is the moment in which the fearsome terror of war causes the people to lose faith in the task for which they were elected. Unlike Schmitt, who sees secularization as beginning in modernity with the seventeenth-century transformation of theological concepts into political concepts, Buber sees it as taking place in the ancient past, when the people of Israel first abandoned their true divine King for the comfort of human rule. And unlike Schmitt, who adopts Weber's view of rationalization/secularization as an irreversible process, Buber sees it as potentially reversible at any time, if the people simply heed the prophetic call to turn, to return.

51 The continual use of the Greek term *charis* here, rather than a Hebrew term, may be another indication of Weber's influence. *Charis* has connotations of gratuitousness, of free gift, comparable to the Hebrew *Chesed*.

52 Buber acknowledges that Weber's account of hierocracy in *Economy and Society* does not "touch upon our problem," but he appropriates the term anyway because it aids him in drawing the contrast to theocracy. *Kingship of God*, 215 n.15.

which presents itself and moves away....Authority is bound to the temporary proof of the charisma."[53]

Charisma is thus a fleeting, passing quality, even for the recognized charismatic, and it requires proof through deeds. But its very transience renders charisma supreme: "The *charis* accordingly stands superior to every enchantment [*Zauber*] as well as every law [*Gesetz*]."[54] Problems occur, however, with any effort "to exercise theopolitics even when it is a matter of letting the *charis* hold sway beyond the actual charisma,"[55] or in Weberian terms, to base an enduring institutional structure upon manifestations of *charis*. The most fundamental is the question of succession. A dying charismatic leader leaves the community with these options:

1) *Waiting* for a successor to have an epiphany and to demonstrate his or her qualifications (allowing an interregnum, potentially endangering the cohesion and continuity of the community);

2) *Securing* continuity by one of the following methods:
   i. The charismatic leader *himself* names and designates a successor;
   ii. Upon his death, the *followers* identify and acknowledge the qualified candidate;
   iii. The community recognizes the possibility of transmitting charisma through blood ties or ritual anointing and coronation [*Salbung und Krönung*] (a process that can lead to hierocracy).

Buber prefers the first option, waiting: "Certainly the faithful wait for the grace as that alone which they want to follow, and the most faithful of all profess to do it in order to have to follow no one."[56] He also claims, however, that the Bible itself favors the first option; according to Buber, the history of pre-state Israel knows only one instance of the transfer of charisma to a successor, namely the succession to Moses by Joshua.[57] That succession is unique, since Joshua dies without renewing the process, without establishing a succession principle, and without leaving any clues regarding the structure of permanent institutions.

The arrival at full anarcho-theocracy, however, and the open embrace of the interregnum on the part of its supporters, sharpens what Buber calls the "para-

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53 *Kingship of God*, 140.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 141.

56 Ibid., 149.

57 In a remarkable literary-critical footnote on this passage, Buber actually suggests an emendation of Numbers 27:18 – 21, the calling of Joshua, so as to eliminate all references to Eleazar the priest, references which are "to be dismissed as hierocratizing revision." Ibid., 215, n.21.

dox of theocracy." This paradox consists in the fact that "the highest commitment according to its nature knows no compulsion," that it applies in all its "existential depth" [*existentielle Tiefe*] on both individual and general levels. For the individual, it is possible at any time to "either strive toward a complete community out of free will [*Gemeinschaft aus Freiwilligkeit*], a divine kingdom, or, letting himself be covered by the vocation thereto, can degenerate to an indolent or brutalized subordination."[58] On a political level, the same principle confirms "the rightful possessor of the commission, the 'charismatic' man," in his authority, yet also sanctions the misappropriated and abused authority of pretenders and the empty license [*leere Herrschaftslosigkeit*] of those who indulge in "crass licentiousness and enmity not merely to order [*Ordnung*] but to organization [*Gestaltung*]."[59] Theocracy is thus "a strong bastion for the obedient, but also at the same time can be a shelter to the self-seeking behind which he exalts his lack of commitment as divine freedom.."[60] This double-tiered double bind produces an existence fraught with conflict:

> The result of this is that the truth of the principle must be fought for, fought for religio-politically. The venture of a radical theocracy must therefore lead to the bursting-forth of the opposition latent in every people. Those, however, who in this fight represent the case for divine rulership against that of 'history', experience therein the first shudder of eschatology. The full, paradoxical character of the human attitude of faith is only begun in the situation of the 'individual' [*Einzelnen*] with all its depths; it is developed only in the real relationship of this individual to a world which does not want to be God's, and to a God who does not want to compel the world to become His. The Sinai covenant is the first step visible to us on the path through the dark ravine between actualization and contradiction. In Israel it led from the divinely proud confidence of the early king-passages first of all to that first form of resignation with which our Book of Judges ends. [61]

However heightened and theologically-inflected this rhetoric may be, Buber intends to remain within the realm of historical description. The "first shudder of eschatology" occurs for the partisans of the kingship of God when they imagine a society in which all are reconciled to divine rule and no longer seek to usurp or undermine it; in other words, a sustainable anarcho-theocracy. Moreover, Buber believes that he is describing a general phenomenon of which the

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58 Ibid., 138.
59 Ibid., 149. Note that while Scheimann's translation has "anarchy" here, Buber actually uses *Herrschaftslosigkeit* to describe this negative condition, whereas elsewhere he uses *anarchische* to positively describe the characteristic psychological inclination to freedom of desert tribes. I have therefore substituted "license" for "anarchy."
60 *Kingship of God, 148*
61 Ibid., 139.

story of Israel as presented in the Bible is only one instance. Recognition of the paradox of theocracy leads to the breakout of conflict and opposition within *every* people, and within every people the two sides are the same: they "contend in the same name, and always without a clear issue [*Ausgang*] of the quarrel."[62] What Buber here counterposes to divine rulership and calls "history," he refers to elsewhere as *Realpolitik*, and what he calls *Realpolitik* is identifiable once again, still elsewhere, as political theology.[63]

Schmitt saw the decision on the state of emergency as the act that irrevocably locates sovereignty. Whoever decides that *this* is the moment that the laws are suspended reveals the ultimate dependence of law on his personal authority. Schmitt analogizes the state of exception to the miracle in theology, conceived as a radical interruption of the ordinary course of things. In Buber's picture, however, interruption occurs in the ordinary course of things itself. The injunction to *wait* reflects a very real dependence on God as the actual sovereign. The Philistines are attacking, and God's response—to empower a leader to organize resistance or to allow the attack to proceed—will decide whether a state of emergency really exists or not. The human desire to institute a monarchy for the purposes of defence *already reflects the decision*, having been made by the people, that a state of emergency in fact exists. They have mistaken the anarchy of interregnum, which is theocracy, for the anarchy of emergency, which is chaos. The people have usurped the sovereignty. Already in 1918, in "The Holy Way," which he dedicated to Gustav Landauer upon its publication a year later, Buber called this moment "the true turning point of Jewish history."[64]

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62 Ibid., 148. The form and nature of this conflict, however, can vary. For example, Buber contrasts the "spiritual" polemic of the anti-monarchical judges and prophets against their fellow Israelites with the "attitude of opposition, determined by religious commandment and urging on to the most gruesome massacres," assumed by the Kharijite sect of early Islam to the whole body of their co-religionists. Ibid., 159. Buber otherwise finds that the Kharijites mirror the anarcho-theocratic attitude found in Judges in almost every respect (except that "the Kharijites want to prevent anyone from ruling upon whom the Spirit does not rest; by Gideon's mouth, however, the person on whom the Spirit rests says that he does not want to rule." Ibid.,160."

63 "History" is a term with many valences in Buber; here, in quotation marks to show that it is being spoken by the opponents of anarcho-theocracy, it refers to the notion that the temporal realm of human activity is governed by the law of force and necessity. See "What Is to Be Done?" in *Pointing the Way*, and "The Question to the Single One" in *Between Man and Man*.

64 Buber, "The Holy Way: A Word to the Jews and the Nations," in *On Judaism*, ed. Nahum Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 117. This is a notable change from his earlier, more typically Zionist position that the turning point of Jewish history was the *loss* of the state.

Thus the contemporary proponents of *Realpolitik* and political theology can be considered analogous to those Israelites who misunderstand and abuse the anarcho-theocracy. And they have a similar program: the establishment of an authoritarian state. In times of peace, they may have little success, but in times of military crisis, they can capitalize on the people's fear and defeat the theopolitical faction, the one that urges the continual, faithful waiting on YHVH. They demand and are granted an enduring monarchy, with a standing army, like all the other nations have. Buber sees the influence of these ancient Israelite political theologians in everything from the redaction of the Book of Judges, wherein what were originally two competing polemics, an anti-monarchical and a pro-monarchical, become glued together in such a way that the book assumes a pro-monarchical bias, to the inception of messianism in Israel, when the eventual failure and loss of the monarchy give rise to the dream of its restoration:

> Then for the first time does the people rebel against the situation which the primitive-prophetic leaders tried, ever anew and ever alike in vain, to inflame with the theocratic will toward constitution. The idea of monarchic unification is born and rises against the representatives of the divine kingship. And the crisis between the two grows to one of the theocratic impulse itself, to the crisis out of which there emerges the human king of Israel, the follower of JHWH (12:14), as His 'anointed', *meshiach* JHWH, χριστὸς κυριου."[65]

The shift to Greek at the end of this passage is significant: the first "messiah" is none other than the human king of Israel, the institutional achievement of the political theologians. He stands behind all the subsequent messiahs, including "Christ the Lord." Like Schmitt, Buber here sees "messiah" as a category that belongs to the authoritarian state; like Dostoevsky, he pits it *against* God.

Ultimately, for Buber, political theology is a form of idolatry. In *Kingship of God* idolatry comes in two main forms. The first Buber calls *Baalization:* the tendency to associate YHVH, the mobile leader-god of the tribe, with the *baalim*, the stationary fertility gods of the land. In *The Prophetic Faith* (1950) Buber describes the way in which Elijah combats this tendency by demonstrating once and for all that YHVH is not only the God of the heavens but also of the earth, and that the people do not need to placate any other powers to achieve agricultural success. Far more insidious than Baalization, however, is the second idolatry, which Buber calls *Molechization.* The people understand that the king is responsible for the increase of the tribe's numbers and for its political success, and that the proper gratitude for this is the dedication of the first-born. YHVH, through the dramatic story of the *Akedah* and through the institution of the *semikha*,

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65 *Kingship of God,* 162.

both of which substitute an animal for a human sacrifice, indicates that he is willing to substitute the *intention* to sacrifice oneself and one's children for the sacrifice itself. Some, however, precisely out of their zeal to serve their King with the service they deem proper to him, make the mistake of going too far: they pass their children through fire.

While Buber actually shares Schmitt's worries about technicity and its attendant draining of the vitality from human life, he does not locate this danger in the increase of administration and the decrease of politics. He asserts rather the precise opposite: that the share of qualitative "humanity" in life increases as the share of "politics" decreases. "Politics," as an independent sphere with its own rules, is nothing but a rebellion against God and as such a denial of human nature; "there is no political realm outside the theopolitical." The creation of politics as a separate sphere can only occur as a result of a sophisticated version of Molechization. Of course the people still pay lip service to God; they say that the king is God's anointed and that his will is God's will. But when they sacrifice their children to form his fifties and his hundreds, when they allow him to set up altars to the gods of neighboring peoples, "the theocratic principle begins to lose its comprehensive power and to be limited to the merely-religious in order finally merely to provide the intangible shielding of autocracy, as in Egypt and Babylon."[66] In this sense, theopolitics declares political theology itself to be idolatry; anarcho-theocracy declares human authority itself to be usurpation.

An interesting result of these differences is their effect on Schmitt's criterion of the political, the notorious friend/enemy distinction. It cannot be said that Buber's picture of the ancient Israelite theopolity, and the implications he draws from it, are terribly pacific. In fact, they are radically tension-filled, far more than we might expect from a thinker so heavily associated with the idea of "dialogue." Buber sees a division not merely within the ancient Israelite theopolity, between the faithful theo-politicians and the idolatrous political theologians, but a division that continues throughout the whole history of Judaism, and in fact that breaks out within *every* people. But it would be impossible to make this conflict the criterion of a dedicated, independent "political sphere." Instead, this division, which Buber calls "the true front," divides every individual against himself and every people against itself, and the struggle on this front, which contra Schmitt and Weber can *never* become the defining principle of a violent conflict between distinct parties, is the only true theopolitical fight:

> So long as God contends against the idols there prevails for the people a clear demarcation: one's own and that which is alien stand in opposition to one another. It is a matter of with-

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66 *Kingship of God,* 91.

standing the allurements of the alien and to keep one's vows to one's own. But where God rises against the idolization of Himself the demarcation is clouded and complicated. No longer do two camps stretch out opposite to one another: here JHWH, there Astarte!, but on every little spot of ground the truth is mixed with the lie. The struggle of exclusiveness is directed toward unmixing, and this is a hard, an awesome work.[67]

Buber expressed this same sentiment three years earlier, in a eulogy for Landauer, when he wrote that "the true front runs through the heart of the soldier; the true front runs through the heart of the revolutionary." Here Buber, like Landauer himself, is more anarchistic even than most anarchists, denying them the battle against the State as an external force unless it begins with the battle against the State in ourselves. He seeks to disarm that State of one of its greatest weapons: the idolatrous language of religious legitimation, or political theology.

Conclusion: Is Theopolitics an Antipolitics?

Buber's theopolitics was refined and elaborated during the course of the 1920s, culminating in the publication of *Kingship of God* in 1932. This work was itself originally intended to be merely the first installment in a trilogy on *Das Kommende*, the Coming One of Israelite messianism, but the rise of the Nazis and the flight to Palestine interrupted Buber's work on this project, and parts of it appeared instead in Buber's separately-issued biblical works, including *Moses*, *The Prophetic Faith*, and *Two Types of Faith*. The 1920s were bookended for Buber by the murder of his friend Landauer on May 2, 1919 by reactionary *Freikorps* troops under contract from the SPD, and the publication of his aforementioned eulogy for his friend in 1929; in between, Buber taught at the *Lehrhaus*, published *I and Thou*, and embarked upon the new translation of the Bible with Rosenzweig. There is another figure on whom Buber reflects at the begin-

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67 Ibid., 112. More could be said about the role of violence in Buber's picture, since he presents military defense as a primary function of the ancient Israelite charismatic leader. Here, however, I can only refer to Buber's own mobilization of theopolitics in the service of a radical critique of mainstream Zionism, and also note this Buber-inspired remark of Martin Luther King Jr. in opposition to a conception of non-violence that, like Weber's, would exclude those committed to it even from strikes, boycotts, or other direct action: "I must confess that I am not afraid of the word 'tension.' I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive non-violent tension that is necessary for growth... Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue." King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Signet Classic, 2000), 67–68. Buber is referred to explicitly a few pages later.

ning and the end of the *next* decade: Mahatma Gandhi. If Landauer's anarchism raised the question of the borders of the political for Buber, Gandhi's work posed it in its truly theopolitical form, as a puzzle:

> So far as Gandhi acts politically, so far as he takes part in passing parliamentary resolutions, he does not introduce religion into politics, but allies his religion with the politics of others. He cannot wrestle uninterruptedly with the serpent; he must at time get along with it because he is directed to work in the kingdom of the serpent that he set out to destroy... The serpent is, indeed, not only powerful outside, but also within, in the souls of those who long for political success... There is no legitimately messianic, no legitimately messianically-intended, politics. But that does not imply that the political sphere may be excluded from the hallowing of all things. The political 'serpent' is not essentially evil, it is itself only misled; it, too, ultimately wants to be redeemed.[68]

This reflection, with its image of politics as a serpent (redolent of Schmitt's discussion of Leviathan), is echoed nine years later in Buber's famous letter to Gandhi: "You once said, Mahatma, that politics enmesh us nowadays as with serpent's coils from which there is no escape however hard one may try. You said you desired, therefore, to wrestle with the serpent. Here is the serpent in the fullness of its power! Jews and Arabs..."[69] The Zionist project served as Buber's arena for the contemporary conflict between theopolitics and political theology; Buber saw Gandhi react against the political-theological form of Zionism, and he attempted to enlist him in the service of the theopolitical form.

The eulogy for Landauer relates an anecdote that can serve as a microcosm for many of these points. "I was with [Landauer] and several other revolutionary leaders in a hall of the Diet building in Munich":

> The discussion was conducted for the most part between me and a Spartacus leader, who later became well known in the second communist revolutionary government in Munich that replaced the first, socialist government of Landauer and his comrades. The man walked with clanking spurs through the room; he had been a German officer in the war. I declined to do what many apparently had expected of me—to talk of the moral problem; but I set forth what I thought about the relation between end and means. I documented my view from historical and contemporary experience. The Spartacus leader did not go into that matter. He, too, sought to document his apology for the terror by examples. 'Dzertshinsky,' he said, 'the head of the Cheka, could sign a hundred death sentences a day, but with an entirely clean soul.' 'That is, in fact, just the worst of all,' I answered. 'This "clean" soul you do not allow any splashes of blood to fall on! It is not a question of "souls" but of re-

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68 Buber, "Gandhi, Politics, and Us," in *Pointing the Way*, 129, 137.
69 Buber, "Letter to Gandhi," in *Pointing the Way*, 145.

sponsibility.' My opponent regarded me with unperturbed superiority. Landauer, who sat next to me, laid his hand on mine. His whole arm trembled.[70]

The anecdote shows that Buber and his interlocutors distinguished between an abstract "moral problem" and the consummate political question of "the relationship between end and means." Weber, citing Trotsky approvingly, had defined violence as the means that defines the state and thereby the political itself; here, the Spartacist leader echoes this line.[71] Buber, by contrast, seems to be arguing something other than "what many apparently had expected" of him, namely that purity of means are required to guarantee purity of soul. Rather, he claims that a consonance of ends and means belongs, precisely, to the politics of *responsibility*. He is unable to convince his opponent of this claim; the last line indicates that the martyred Landauer at least shared his outlook, but it also links it to Landauer's fate.

The career of the Bavarian Revolution is defined by several stages: the presidency of Eisner ends in electoral defeat and assassination, following which a period of turbulence sees the establishment of not one but two "Bavarian Council Republics," the first of which is associated with Landauer and the anarchists, and the second with the Communists. The latter had a habit of treating the former as though they were political children, insufficiently grounded in the recognition of the necessity for violence and party leadership; they referred derisively to the "Bavarian Coffeehouse Republic."[72] Typical of this type of criticism is the claim that anarchists are too bohemian, which is to say that they mix up their aesthetics with their politics; they are unable to see and practice the pure politics. This judgment is echoed by a number of historians; Landauer himself is called "impractical" and "excessively romantic" even by proponents of revolutionary change, and "saintly, unpolitical, and inept" by its opponents.[73] Like

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70 Martin Buber, "Recollection of a Death," in *Pointing the Way*, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 119.

71 Buber does not identify this figure, but it is most likely Eugen Leviné (1883–1919), who served in the German army in World War 1, joined the KPD (the Communist Party of Germany), and is said to have ordered the shooting of hostages by the Red Guards towards the end of April 1919, when hostage-taking failed to prevent Friedrich Ebert from ordering the destruction of the Second Council Republic and the reinstatement of Johannes Hoffmann as Minister-President of Bavaria in May.

72 Gabriel Kuhn, "Introduction" to Erich Mühsam, *Liberating Society from the State and Other Writings: A Political Reader* (Oakland: PM Press, 2011), 20 n60.

73 "Impractical romantic anarchism," James Joll, *The Second International, 1889–1914* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 64; "excessively romantic," George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 363; "saintly,

Weber, these historians, even when they are unsympathetic to communism, are able to characterize the Communist revolutionaries as politically "realistic," because the Communists recognize the necessity of the state and of state violence. The anarchists, who deny this necessity, seem to come from an extra-political world, defined as aesthetic or religious. Some have taken this critique to heart, and taken up the epithet "antipolitical" as a badge of honor; a contemporary edition of Landauer includes two volumes called *Antipolitik*.[74]

What Buber's theopolitics claims is that these historians are unwittingly a party to the conflicts they attempt to objectively describe. In taking the side of "realism," in allowing politics its autonomy, they fall in with one of the oldest forms of idol-worship, and take the part of Messiah against God. This is by no means surprising, since the party of realism has almost always outnumbered the theopolitical faithful. It is even possible to be committed to realism in a romantic way, exalting one's own probity and willingness to make hard choices; Goethe himself exalted *Schwerer Dienste tägliche Bewahrung*, "daily achievement of difficult tasks," and a young romantic could make a slogan from these words as well as from any others of that poet.[75] One can do the same with Weber's "Politics means slow, strong drilling through hard boards."[76] What is necessary is to define the exact nature of what is being praised and what condemned, and this is what Buber and Schmitt are each attempting to do in their opposing ways.

Is theopolitics an antipolitics? Yes, if "politics" is an autonomous realm that prescribes itself its own laws. No, if one recalls with Walzer that "antipolitics is a kind of politics," in this case one oriented towards the realization on earth of the kingship of God in the form of a human community whose self-conception is that of God's subjects. In Buber's view this community—which is always emerging and never quite fully present in the world, though it *could be*—is called "Israel." It is, much like Augustine's city of God, not to be confused with any group of people that may call themselves by this name, and its work is always a theopolitical work. There is much more to be said about the role of this concept in Buber's understanding of biblical history, and his application of it to contemporary

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unpolitical, and inept," Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743 – 1933* (New York: Picador, 2002), 351.

74 Gustav Landauer, *Antipolitik. Ausgewählte Schriften, Band 3.1*, ed. Siegbert Wolf. Hessen: AV Verlag, 2010.

75 As indeed Buber himself did, proclaiming that "no revelation is needed other than this"; Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work: The Early Years, 1878 – 1923* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 20. The line occurs in the seventh stanza of Goethe's "The Testament of the Ancient Persian Faith", from the *West-östlicher Diwan*, where it is italicized.

76 "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," 369.

Zionist politics. But for now, this is where the discussion of Buber's relationship to the borders of the political may come to a close.

Ran HaCohen

Bubers schöpferischer Dialog mit einer chassidischen Legende

Martin Bubers Werk zum Chassidismus spielte eine entscheidende Rolle in der Gestaltung des Bildes dieser osteuropäischen religiösen Massenbewegung in der westlichen Gesellschaft, jüdisch wie nicht-jüdisch gleichermaßen. In einer großen Zahl von Werken, die Buber seit dem ersten Jahrzehnt des 20. Jahrhunderts veröffentlichte, und in welchen er sich immer weiter mit den stilistischen und theoretischen Fragen auseinandersetzte, die die Bearbeitung der chassidischen Stoffe benötigte,[1] „leistete Buber zweifellos einen entscheidenden Beitrag zum Bekanntheitsgrad der chassidischen Bewegung im Westen," wie G. Scholem bezeugte;[2] „Die Werke hinterließen bei den Lesern einen starken Eindruck, da sie ihnen ein bislang unbekanntes Gebiet erschlossen," schrieb Shmuel H. Bergmann.[3] Bubers Werk zum Chassidismus war das Thema mehrerer Diskussionen und Forschungen, deren Ansatz jedoch meistens philosophisch war.[4] Im Folgenden soll anhand einer chassidischen Legende die Art und Weise der Buberschen Bearbeitung prototypisch illustriert werden; auch wenn der Ansatz und die

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[1] Vgl. im Vorwort zu Martin Buber, *Die Erzählung der Chassidim* (Zürich: Manesse Verlag, 1949), 11 ff.

[2] Gerschom Scholem, „Peruscho schel Martin Buber la-chassidut" [Hebr.], in idem, *Dewarim bego* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1982), 361.

[3] Shmuel H. Bergmann im Eintrag „Buber," *Encyclopaedia Hebraica* [Hebr.] (Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Publishing Company, 1959), Bd. 7: 681.

[4] Gershom Scholem, „Martin Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism," *Commentary* 32 (1961): 305–16; Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, „Man's Relation to God and World in Buber's Rendering of the Hasidic Teaching," in Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman, eds., *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (La Salle: Open Court Publishers, 1967), 403–34; Steven D. Kepnes, „A Hermeneutic Approach to the Buber-Scholem Controversy," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 38 (1987): 81–98; Maurice Friedman, „Interpreting Hasidism: The Buber-Scholem Controversy," *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute*, Vol. 33 (1988), 449–67; Laurence J. Silberstein, „Modes of Discourse in Modern Judaism: The Buber-Scholem Debate Reconsidered," *Soundings* 71 (1988): 657–81; Moshe Idel, „Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem on Hasidism: A Critical Appraisal," in Ada Rapaport-Albert, ed., *Hasidism Reappraised* (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation, 1996), 389–403; Martin Buber, „Replies to My Critics," in Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman, eds., *The Philosophy of Martin Buber* (La Salle: Open Court Publishers, 1967), 731–41; Jon D. Levenson, „The Hermeneutical Defense of Buber's Hasidism: A Critique and Counterstatement," *Modern Judaism* 11 (1991): 299–320; Jerome Gellman, „Buber's Blunder: Buber's Replies to Scholem and Schatz-Uffenheimer", *Modern Judaism* 20 (2000): 20–40.

Methodologie hier eher literarisch sind, [5] soll auch die ideelle Dimension des Textes in den Vordergrund rücken.

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Die erste Bubersche Bearbeitung unserer Legende findet sich in seinem 1928 erschienenen Band *Die chassidischen Bücher* mit etwa 30 kurzen Geschichten über den wichtigen chassidischen Rabbi Jaakob Jizchak von Pžysha, den sogenannten „Heiligen Juden" oder „Jehudi" (1765–1813).[6] Der vollständige Text Bubers lautet wie folgt:

> Können und Wollen
> Über Land wandernd traf der Jehudi einst auf einen umgestürzten Heuwagen. „Hilf mir doch den Wagen aufzurichten!" rief ihm der Besitzer zu. Er versuchte es, aber es ging nicht vonstatten. „Ich kann nicht", versicherte er endlich. Der Bauer sah ihn streng an. „Du kannst", sagte er, „aber du willst nicht."
> Am Abend dieses Tags sprach der Jehudi zu seinen Schülern: „Heute ist es mir gesagt worden. Wir können den Namen Gottes aufrichten, aber wir wollen nicht."

Gemäß westlichen Konventionen gelesen, handelt es sich hier um eine Anekdote mit einer deutlich moralischen Dimension. Der Text weist eine Zweiteilung auf, die sich auch in den beiden Absätzen widerspiegelt. Zunächst wird die Szene mit dem Rabbi als Protagonisten und dem Bauern als Antagonisten aufgebaut; danach folgt zum Abschluss die Moral, die der Rabbi seinen Schülern mit auf den Weg gibt. Zeitlich werden die beiden Szenen durch einige Stunden („Am Abend dieses Tages") voneinander abgesetzt. Die Moral der Anekdote ist chassidisch-religiös

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5 Weitere literarische Einsichten bieten u. a. Dan Laor, „Agnon and Buber: the story of a friendship or, the rise and fall of the 'Corpus Hasidicum'", in: Paul Mendes-Flohr, *ed., Martin Buber, a Contemporary Perspective* (Jerusalem/Syracuse: The Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities/Syracuse University Press, 2002), 48–86; Baruch Kurzweil, „Gog u-Magog le-Martin Buber" [Hebr.], in idem, *Le-nokhach ha-mewukha ha-ruchanit schel dorenu* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1976), 69–76; Akiva Ernst Simon, „Martin Buber we-emunat jisra'el" [Hebr.], *Iyun* 9 (1958): 13–50; Martina Urban, „Retelling Biblical Mythos through the Hasidic Tale: Buber's 'Saul and David' and the Question of Leadership", *Modern Judaism* 24 (2004): 69–78; Shmuel Werses, „Hachassidut be-asspaqlarja beletristit: ijjunim be-Gog u-Magog shel Martin Buber" [Hebr.], in idem: *Mi-laschon el laschon* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1996), 168–207.
6 *Die chassidischen Bücher* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1928), 529. Unverändert wiederholt in *Hundert chassidische Geschichten* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), 21 und in *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* (Zürich: Manesse, 1949), 719, wie auch in der hebräischen Version des Letzteren, *Or Ha-Ganuz* (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1946). Allerdings fehlt sie im Kapitel über den „Heiligen Juden" im 1922 erschienenen *Der große Maggid und seine Nachfolge* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1922), 164–174; vermutlich lernte sie Buber erst nach 1922 kennen.

begründet – „den Namen Gottes aufrichten" ist im kabbalistischen Kontext als Bezeichnung für die Erlösung zu verstehen. Der Titel „Können und Wollen" deutet jedoch bereits an, dass hier auch eine allgemeinere Lehre abzulesen ist, die Bubers hauptsächlich nicht-chassidische, selbst nicht-jüdische Leserschaft ansprechen soll.

Wie stehen aber die beiden Teile der Anekdote nun zueinander? Konkreter gefragt: Wie lässt sich die moralische Botschaft im zweiten Teil aus dem ersten Abschnitt ziehen? Bei näherer Betrachtung taucht hier ein Problem auf. Nehmen wir zunächst tentativ an, dass der Rabbi eine statische Figur ist, deren Einstellung im Laufe des Erzählten unverändert bleibt. Wollte er also tatsächlich den Wagen aufrichten, konnte es aber nicht, so widerspräche die Anekdote ihrer eigenen Moral; denn diese soll ja gerade zeigen, dass das Können dem Wollen folgt, was in dieser Lesart nicht gegeben wäre. Dieser Interpretationsversuch scheitert also. Eine alternative Hypothese wäre, dass der Rabbi von vornherein den Wagen nicht aufrichten wollte, also nur so tat, als ob er es versuchte. Dieser Ansatz ist höchst unwahrscheinlich, würde er doch den Rabbi als unehrliche Figur darstellen und damit seiner Funktion als positivem Protagonisten entgegenstehen.

Der Leser ist daher gezwungen zu dem Schluss zu kommen, dass der Rabbi keine statische sondern vielmehr eine dynamische Figur ist, die im Laufe der Anekdote selbst etwas Neues erfährt, und sich infolgedessen wandelt. Dies entspräche auch Bubers dialogischer Philosophie. Das Wesen entsteht und formt sich erst durch die Begegnung, durch den Dialog mit dem Anderen: „Der Mensch wird am Du zum Ich."[7] Der modern-westliche Leser ahnt hier auch den romantischen Ansatz: Gerade die Begegnung mit dem „ungebildeten" und „naturnahen" Bauern verändert die Einstellung des buchgelehrten Rabbi. Um zu dieser Interpretation zu gelangen, muss der Leser jedoch die elliptisch wirkende Handlung gewissermaßen ergänzen. Er muss nämlich davon ausgehen, dass es letztendlich doch gelungen ist, den Heuwagen aufzurichten, und dass damit das Können tatsächlich dem Wollen gefolgt ist. Dies geht jedoch nicht direkt aus im Text hervor, sondern muss vielmehr – gemäß den kulturabhängigen Erwartungen und Schemata – ergänzt werden, die der Text beim modern-westlichen Leser aktiviert. Dementsprechend lässt sich auch die Beziehung zwischen Anekdote und Moral nachvollziehen: Erst durch den Vorwurf des Bauern wurde der Wille des Rabbi groß genug, um das mutmaßlich erfolgte Aufrichten des Wagens zu ermöglichen. Das Können folgt dem stärker gewordenen Willen. Diese Lehre überträgt der Rabbi nun

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7 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1936), 36.

im zweiten Teil der Geschichte auf den Namen Gottes und die Erlösung, indem er den Heuwagen allegorisch als den Namen Gottes auffasst.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Eine Weiterentwicklung erlebte diese Anekdote in Bubers 1940/41 auf Hebräisch und 1949 auf Deutsch erschienenem chassidischen Roman *Gog und Magog*.[8] Der Erzähler im folgenden Auszug ist der „Heilige Jude" selbst, eine Hauptfigur im Roman. Die Anekdote steht diesmal in einer Rahmenerzählung: Die Chassidim sitzen in Lublin um einen großen Tisch und jeder von ihnen muss eine Geschichte erzählen. Jaakob Jizchak – der „Heilige Jude" – erzählt sogar zwei:

> „Meine zweite Geschichte", sagte Jaakob Jizchak, „ist wohl noch kürzer und noch bündiger als die erste. Sie heißt: ›Wie ich bei einem Bauern in die Lehre ging‹. Als ich nämlich, nachdem ich Apta verlassen hatte, auf der Wanderschaft war, traf ich auf einen riesigen Heuwagen, der umgestürzt war und quer über die Straße lag. Der Bauer, der daneben stand, rief mir zu, ich möchte ihm den Wagen aufrichten helfen. Ich besah mir den: wohl, ich habe kräftige Arme, und auch der Bauer schien was zu vermögen, aber wie sollten zwei Männer die ungeheure Last heben? ›Ich kann nicht‹, sagte ich. Da schob jener mich an. ›Du kannst‹, rief er, ›aber du willst nicht‹. Das fuhr mir ins Herz. Bretter waren zur Hand, wir stemmten sie unter den Wagen, hebelten mit all unsrer Kraft, das Gefährt schwankte, hob sich, stand, wir luden das Heu wieder drauf, der Bauer strich den noch immer zitternden und keuchenden Ochsen über die Flanken, sie zogen an. ›Laß mich eine Weile mit dir hinterher gehen‹, sagte ich. ›Geh nur mit, Bruder‹, antwortete er. Wir gingen mitsammen. ›Ich möchte dich etwas fragen‹, sagte ich. ›Frag nur, Bruder‹, antwortete er. ›Wie kam dir in den Sinn‹, fragte ich ihn, ›daß ich nicht will?‹ ›Das kam mir in den Sinn‹, antwortete er, ›weil du gesagt hattest, du könntest nicht. Niemand weiß, ob er etwas kann, eh er's versucht hat‹. ›Aber wie kam dir in den Sinn‹, fragte ich weiter, ›daß ich kann?‹ ›Das‹, antwortete er, ›kam mir nur so in den Sinn.‹ ›Was heißt denn das, nur so?‹ fragte ich. ›Ach, Bruder‹, sagte er, ›was bist du für ein Presser! Nun gut, es kam mir in den Sinn, weil man dich mir in den Weg geschickt hat.‹ ›Meinst du etwa gar‹, fragte ich, ›dein Wagen sei gestürzt, damit ich dir helfen könne?‹ ›Was denn sonst, Bruder?‹ sagte er."[9]

Auffällig in dieser Bearbeitung ist die Verdichtung der Darstellung mittels ausführlicher Beschreibung von Gefühlen, Tatsachen und des inneren Dialogs des Rabbi – alles den Konventionen des modernen Romans entsprechend. Die zweiteilige Struktur bleibt hier zwar erhalten, wurde aber modifiziert: Die Protagonisten in der ersten Szene sind nachwievor der Bauer und der Rabbi, dieser spricht allerdings in dieser Geschichte nicht zu seinem Schüler, sondern zu seinen

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8 Außer der hebräischen und deutschen Versionen, die Buber selbst verfasste, wurde der Roman in viele Sprachen übersetzt, u. a. ins Englische (*For the Sake of Heaven*, 1945), Spanische, Niederländische, Italienische, Tschechische, Ungarische, Polnische und Japanische.

9 Martin Buber, *Gog und Magog* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1949), 47 f.

Freunden, mit denen er zusammen sitzt. Dieser Wechsel ist bezeichnend, da er den dialogischen Charakter des Textes stärkt, der in dieser Bearbeitung des Stoffes zentral ist. Die Hierarchie von Lehrer und Schülern wird durch die Gleichwertigkeit der Freunde ersetzt. Der dialogische Charakter der Begegnung zwischen Rabbi und Bauer wird wesentlich durch die ausführliche Konversation am Ende der Szene verdichtet. Auch der sehr verbindliche Charakter des Gesprächs, der durch das Duzen und durch die gegenseitige, sich viermal wiederholende Anrede „Bruder" betont wird, trägt zur Stärkung des dialogischen Charakters bei.

Die Geschichte, deren Handlung auf den ersten Blick unverändert bleibt, zeigt bei näherer Betrachtung eine Anpassung an die bereits in der ersten Bearbeitung vermuteten Erwartungen des modern-westlichen Lesers. Anders als in der zuvor untersuchten Anekdote, wo gar nicht erst der Versuch unternommen wird, den Wagen aufzurichten, kommt es in der zweiten Geschichte nach dem Vorwurf des Bauern tatsächlich zum Versuch, und erwartungsgemäß gelingt es auch, den Wagen wieder aufzurichten.

Was die Moral betrifft, so gibt es in dieser späteren Bearbeitung mehrere Ebenen. Zunächst gibt es eine allgemein-menschliche Moral, die bereits im Titel der ersten Version angedeutet wurde, diesmal aber eindringlicher in dem Satz „Niemand weiß, ob er etwas kann, eh er's versucht hat" zum Ausdruck gebracht wird. Darüber hinaus lässt sich auch eine mystische, neuromantische Dimension der Moral aus dieser zweiten Episode herauslesen: „›Meinst du etwa gar‹, fragte ich, ›dein Wagen sei gestürzt, damit ich dir helfen könne?‹ ›Was denn sonst, Bruder?‹ sagte er." Sie erinnert etwa an die bekannte Aussage Bubers, alle Reisen hätten eine heimliche Bestimmung, die der Reisende nicht ahnt. Zudem knüpft sie an das bekannte Motiv der Mystik an, es gäbe keine Willkürlichkeit, da alles, was auf der Welt passiere, einen – wenn auch verborgenen – Grund habe. Stärker noch als in der ersten Bearbeitung, wird hier die „Weisheit" der Figur des Bauern zugeschrieben. War es in der ersten Bearbeitung noch der Rabbi, der die Moral zog und seinem Schüler mit auf den Weg gab, so ist es hier der Bauer, der die Lehre aus der Geschichte artikuliert. Dies spiegelt sich auch im Titel wider, die der Erzähler der Geschichte selbst gibt, nämlich „Wie ich bei einem Bauern in die Lehre ging." Noch stärker wirkt der Titel, liest man diese Geschichte in ihrem Kontext; denn diese Anekdote folgt unmittelbar auf eine andere mit der Überschrift „Wie ich bei einem Schmied in die Lehre ging":[10] Beide Titel verweisen also auf die Bescheidenheit des gelehrten Rabbi, wie auch auf seine demütige Bereitschaft von jedem, auch von als einfach, ihm gesellschaftlich und intellektuell unterlegen geltenden Personen, zu lernen. Damit ist hier ein bekanntes Motiv aufgegriffen, das sich in

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10 Ebd., 45.

vielen literarischen Traditionen ausmachen lässt, nicht zuletzt im Talmud.[11] Die chassidisch-religiöse Moral fehlt übrigens auch in dieser Bearbeitung nicht. Sie wird aber erst ein paar Absätze später im Roman deutlich und kommt, ebenfalls dialogisch gestaltet, in der auf die Geschichte folgenden Diskussion unter den Freunden zum Ausdruck.[12]

Die Entwicklung zwischen den beiden Bearbeitungen Bubers – vom „Können und Wollen" in *Die chassidischen Bücher* zu „Wie ich bei einem Bauer in die Lehre ging" in *Gog und Magog* – kann zusammenfassend als Anpassung an eine moderne Leserschaft bezeichnet werden. Sie betrifft die „Lösung des Problems" auf der Handlungsebene, die in der ersten Bearbeitung erkennbar ist, indem der gescheiterte Versuch vor dem Vorwurf durch einen gelungenen Versuch nach dem Verwurf ersetzt wurde. Darüber hinaus wurde eine allgemein-menschliche Dimension der Moral hinzugefügt und das Dialogische stark erweitert. Protagonist und Antagonist wurden durch gleichwertige Gesprächspartner – den Rabbi einerseits und seine Freunde andererseits – ersetzt, womit das Autoritätsgefälle, das vor allem zwischen Rabbi und Bauer bestand, nivelliert wurde. Die eher elliptische Anekdote in der ersten Bearbeitung wurde in der zweiten gemäß bekannter literarischer Schemata und unter Einfluss der dialogischen Philosophie Bubers ergänzt, erweitert und grundlegend angepasst.

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Im Folgenden wollen wir die Vorlage zu Bubers Bearbeitungen, die chassidische Quelle selbst, genauer in den Blick nehmen. Es handelt sich um das 1914 (nur 14 Jahre vor der ersten Bearbeitung Bubers) in Petrikau erschienene *Sefer Sichot Chajim* von Chajim Me'ir Jechi'el von Moglince.[13] Die folgende Übertragung aus

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11 Vgl z. B. *Talmud Erubin* 53b: „R. Jehošúá b. Hananja sagte: Lebtags besiegte mich niemand als eine Frau, ein Knabe und ein Mädchen" usw. (Lazarus Goldschmidt, Übers., *Der Babylonische Talmud*, 3. Aufl. (Königstein i.T.: Jüdischer Verlag 1980), 2. Bd., 160.

12 „Es sei", erklärte Simon, „aber was hat deine zweite Geschichte mit Lublin zu tun?"
 Der „Jude" war mit einem Schlage, wie er damals beim Anblick des Rabbi errötet war, leichenblaß geworden. „Da redet ihr immerzu", sagte er, ohne aufzusehen, leise, aber so, daß es stärker zu hören war als ein lauter Ruf, „vom Exil der Schechina, da klagt ihr, daß sie in der Fremde umherirrt, erschöpft hinsinkt, am Boden liegt. Und das ist kein Gerede, es ist ganz wirklich so, ihr könnt ihr auf der Landstraße der Welt begegnen. Aber was tut ihr, wenn ihr ihr begegnet? Streckt ihr ihr die Hand entgegen? Helft ihr ihr vom Staub der Landstraße auf? Und wer sollte ihr aufhelfen, wenn nicht die Männer von Lublin?" Ebd., 49.

13 Chajim Me'ir Jechi'el, *Sefer Sichot Chajim* (Perikau 1914), 9. Am Schluss *Or Ha-Ganuz* – der hebräischen Ausgabe des *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim* – verzeichnete Buber die Quellen seiner Bearbeitungen.

dem Hebräischen bleibt dem Text möglichst wortwörtlich treu, die häufigen Ab-
kürzungen wurden allerdings aufgelöst.

> E[in] M[al] wanderte der H[eilige] Jude, [sein] A[ndenken] z[um Leben] i[m] J[enseits], mit
> seinen Schülern im Feld, und sie begegneten einem Unbeschnittenen, der einen Wagen Heu
> führte. Und der Wagen war umgestürzt. Der Unbeschnittene rief zum H[eiligen] Juden und
> seinen Schülern, [ihr] A[ndenken] z[um Leben] i[m] J[enseits], sie sollen ihm helfen, den
> Wagen aufzurichten und das Heu zu laden. Und sie gingen, um ihm das Heu laden zu helfen,
> konnten ihm mit ihrer Kraft aber nicht helfen. Der Unbeschnittene wurde auf sie zornig und
> sagte ihnen in polnischer Sprache, *„Mozesz ale nie chcesz"* [=„Du kannst es, willst aber
> nicht," polnisch], d. h., er war auf sie zornig, weil die das Heu hätten heben können, es aber
> nicht wollten. Darauf sagte der H[eilige] Jude zu seinen Schülern:

> „Ihr hört, was der Unbeschnittene sagt: Er sagt uns, dass wir den [Buchstaben] 'H' im Namen
> [Gottes] erheben können, dass wir es aber nicht wollen," s[o] w[eit seine] h[eiligen] W[orte].

Auffällig ist einmal die Mehrsprachigkeit, die in Bubers Bearbeitungen den lite-
rarischen Sprachkonventionen seiner Zeit vollständig zum Opfer fiel. Der Text ist
grundsätzlich Hebräisch, und zwar rabbinisches Hebräisch, mit geringer Beach-
tung der klassischen Grammatik, beinhaltet aber auch einen Satz auf Polnisch. Im
Hintergrund lässt sich auch noch das Jiddische hören, die Alltagssprache der
Chassidim, in welcher die Anekdote, sofern sie einer konkreten Wirklichkeit
entsprach, tatsächlich stattgefunden hat. Der jiddische Hintergrund ist unent-
behrlich zum Verstehen der Anekdote, denn sie beruht auf einem Wortspiel: „der
[Buchstabe] 'H' im Namen Gottes" [=JHVH, Jehova] – der hebräischen Name dieses
Buchstabens ist *Hey* – ist eine Anspielung auf das Heu, jiddisch *Hey*, das die
Chassidim heben sollten. Die Übertragung der Moral von dem Heuwagen auf Gott
beruht also in der Vorlage nicht auf einer Allegorie, wie in Bubers Bearbeitung,
sondern auf der Klangähnlichkeit zweier verschiedener Wörter auf Hebräisch und
Jiddisch.

Auf der Handlungsebene geht es in der Vorlage um den gescheiterten Versuch
zu helfen, und zwar vor dem Vorwurf des Bauern, genau wie in Bubers erster
Bearbeitung. Damit ist die „Richtung" von Bubers Bearbeitungen bestätigt: seine
zweite Bearbeitung ist von der Vorlage weiter entfernt als die erste. Ein weiterer
Unterschied zwischen der Vorlage und Bubers Bearbeitungen lässt sich in Hin-
blick auf die Akteure erkennen. In der Vorlage sind es „der Jude" und seine
Schüler, die zusammen spazieren gehen; bei Buber wandert „der Jude" allein.
Dieser Unterschied zwischen Vorlage und Bearbeitung ist bereits Bubers Schüler
und Freund, dem Philosophen und Pädagogen Ernst Simon (1899 – 1988), auf-
gefallen.[14] Simon wollte es als Betonung des Dialogischen verstehen: Die Ge-

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14 Simon, „Martin Buber ve'emunat yisra'el" (s. o., Anm. 5), 34.

genüberstellung von Rabbi und Bauer wirke stärker dialogisch als die einer ganzen chassidischen Schulklasse und der Figur eines Bauern. Auch die Dimension des Wunders komme besser zur Geltung, wenn die Szene nur aus Bauer und „dem Juden" besteht, als wenn eine Gruppe von Schülern involviert ist; denn das Aufrichten des Heuwagens – und damit die Macht des Willen – sei umso bemerkenswerter, je weniger Personen daran beteiligen sind. Auf diese letztere Aussage Simons wollen wir später noch zurückkommen. Vorerst ist zu bemerken, dass diese Modifikation der involvierten Akteure Buber dazu veranlasst hat, die Anekdote in zwei zeitlich (in den Bearbeitungen immer weiter voneinander) getrennte Szenen zu unterteilen. Da die Schüler aus literarischen Überlegungen im ersten Teil der Anekdote unpassend geworden waren, musste die zweite, spätere Szene „am Abend dieses Tages" fingiert werden, um Raum für die moralische Schlussfolgerung zu schaffen, die nun nicht mehr, wie in der Vorlage, bereits an Ort und Stelle, also beim Heuwagen im Feld, erfolgte.

Besonders auffällig ist für den „modernen" Leser zweifelsohne die mehrmals wiederholte Bezeichnung „Unbeschnittener" für den von Buber einfach als Bauer bezeichneten Antagonisten. Am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts, als Buber begann, seine Bearbeitung chassidischer Texte zu veröffentlichen, gab es durchaus jüdische Bauern, sowohl in Europa wie auch in Palästina; Bubers Bauer wird allerdings weder explizit als Jude noch als Nicht-Jude beschrieben, seine Gruppenidentität bleibt einfach dahingestellt, und ist im Text völlig irrelevant. Nicht so in der chassidischen Vorlage. Hier wurde die Bezeichnung „Unbeschnittener" – hebr. ʿ*arel*, eine eindeutig pejorative Bezeichnung mit Bezugnahme auf die Körperlichkeit, deutlich pejorativer als gängige wie *nochri*, *goj* oder *akum* – nicht weniger als vier Mal wiederholt. Außerdem geht aus dem Text hervor, dass der „Unbeschnittene" Polnisch spricht – eine weitere Bestätigung, in der Form des *telling*, seines „Unbeschnittenseins", was gleich darauf, als *showing*, durch seine Aussage auf Polnisch noch verstärkt wird. Darüber hinaus wird der „Unbeschnittene" als zornig dargestellt. Auch seine lakonischen Worte, die er an „den Juden" richtet, wirken misstrauisch und respektlos. Hier ist Bubers Anpassung am radikalsten: Im Sinne der „deutsch-jüdischen Symbiose," oder eines egalitären Humanismus im allgemeinen, wurde die feindliche Gegenüberstellung Jude-Unbeschnittener durch einen verbindlichen Dialog zwischen dem Rabbi und dem nicht explizit als Nicht-Jude bezeichneten Bauern ersetzt.

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Was ist aber der Sinn der chassidischen Anekdote in ihrem ursprünglichen Kontext? Warum wird das „Unbeschnittensein" des Antagonisten so sehr betont? Um dies besser zu verstehen – denn von unseren Erwartungen und Schemata als Leser müssen wir uns gerade verabschieden – wollen wir jetzt den tatsächlichen

Kontext der Vorlage heranziehen. Unmittelbar nach der bereits zitierten Vorlage steht der folgende Text, der mit einer deutlichen Leseanweisung beginnt:[15]

> Und eine Geschichte wie diese passierte a[uch] dem Sabba Kadischa aus Radoschitz, [sein] A[ndenken] z[um Leben] i[m] J[enseits]. E[in] M[al] am Markttag ging der h[eilige] R[abbi], um bei einem Unbeschnittenen einen Wagen Holz zu kaufen. Und der Unbeschnittene wollte für das Holz vier Gulden, und der h[eilige] R[abbi] wollte nicht mehr als drei Gulden ausgeben, und als sich der h[eilige] R[abbi] mit ihm nicht einigen konnte, kehrte er ihm den Rücken, und der Unbeschnittene rief ihm in polnischer Sprache nach, *„Poprawcie to kupicie"* [=„Verbesser, dann kaufe", polnisch], und der Radoschitzer verstand nicht, was er sagte, und fragte einen Juden, der dabei war, „was schreit der Unbeschnittene, was habe ich ihm angetan?", und derjenige Jude legte ihm aus, dass der Unbeschnittene ihm sagt, *„as er sol sech ferbesseren, wet er kennen koifen"* [„Wenn er sich verbessert, wird er kaufen können", jiddisch] und der Sabba Kadische hat d[arüber] gesagt: „selbst der Unbeschnittene sieht ein, *as ich badarf sech zu ferbeseren* [=“dass ich mich verbessern soll", jiddisch]", und sofort schloss er sich zu Hause ein und untersuchte seine Taten.

Die beiden aufeinanderfolgenden Anekdoten weisen auffällige Ähnlichkeit in Struktur, Handlung und Stil auf, die auch deren Verfasser bzw. Sammler nicht entging. In beiden geht es um eine Begegnung zwischen einem Rabbi und einem so genannten „Unbeschnittenen", eine Bezeichnung, die hier sogar sechsmal wiederholt wird. In beiden Texten ist der Nicht-Jude auf den Rabbi böse, spricht einen kurzen Satz auf Polnisch, und verschwindet dann. Darauf zieht der Rabbi eine chassidisch-religiöse Lehre mittels Dekontextualisierung der Worte seines Antagonisten. Diese Dekontextualisierung ist nicht als Missverständnis zu deuten; der Rabbi interpretiert die Worte des Nicht-Juden absichtlich außerhalb deren ursprünglichen Kontextes, der für den Rabbi keine Relevanz hat.

Die Bedeutung der beiden Anekdoten versteht sich aus der kabbalistischen Lehre der Funken.[16] Nach der lurianischen Kabbala waren bei der Schöpfung der Welt die göttlichen Funken in unreine Abgründe gefallen; es ist die Aufgabe der Gerechten, diese Funken aus dem Abgrund zu retten und einzusammeln, um dadurch die Erlösung der Welt zu beschleunigen. Um dieses Einsammeln der Funken geht es auch in den Anekdoten: Der Rabbi sammelt die heiligen Funken aus dem unreinen Abgrund. Je unreiner der Abgrund, desto größer ist auch das Verdienst des Rabbi. Deshalb muss die „Unreinheit" des Nicht-Juden möglichst betont werden, und es muss gerade ein „Unbeschnittener" sein – also weder Jude noch einfach ein Nicht-Jude – wie die Texte so oft wiederholen. Der Bauer bzw. der Marktverkäufer wird also als zorniger, frecher, ungebildeter und polnisch redender

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15 Jechi'el, *Sefer Sichot Chajim* [s.o. Anm. 13], 9 f.
16 Siehe Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 138 f.

„Unbeschnittener" beschrieben, um damit die Tiefe des Abgrundes und das Verdienst des Rabbi hervorzuheben.

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Diese aus der chassidischen Quelle selbst hervorgehende Interpretation ändert den Sinn der Heuwagen-Legende entscheidend. Demzufolge geht es in der Vorlage nämlich weder um „Können und Wollen" noch um „bei einem Bauern in die Lehre gehen". Vielmehr geht es um die Fähigkeit des Rabbi – mittels „schöpferischer" Ausdeutung – die göttlichen Funken aus dem unreinen Abgrund einzusammeln. Die beiden Figuren, Rabbi und Bauer, stehen nicht analog zueinander, sondern sind gerade als Antipoden angelegt, als heiliger Rabbi und unreiner Unbeschnittener. Sie sind in der Legende nicht gleich-, sondern einander gegenübergestellt, und diese Gegenüberstellung wird im Text möglichst zugespitzt. Nur der Rabbi kann die heiligen Funken einsammeln und die moralischen Schlüsse ziehen, keinesfalls aber der Unbeschnittene, wie in Bubers zweiter Bearbeitung. Auch von der Bescheidenheit und Lernbereitschaft des Rabbi kann in der ursprünglichen Legende keine Rede sein. Hier entsteht die Größe des Rabbi vielmehr aus der Geringschätzung des Nicht-Juden heraus. Es versteht sich nun, dass in dieser Urfassung der Geschichte ein Dialog zwischen dem Rabbi und dem so genannten Unbeschnittenen ausgeschlossen ist, da dieser dem Geist der ursprünglichen Legende völlig widerspräche.

Eine Frage, die offen bleibt, ist, ob der Heuwagen in der chassidischen Vorlage tatsächlich aufgerichtet wurde. Der Text äußert sich dazu nicht, man kann aber annehmen, dass es dazu nicht gekommen ist, so wie auch in der zweiten Legende das Holz nicht verkauft wurde. Auf jeden Fall ist diese Frage dem chassidischen Text völlig fremd. Es geht dem Text wohl nicht um den Wagen, sondern um das Heu; und auch nicht um das tatsächliche Heu, sondern um seine Umdeutung als Buchstaben des Namen Gottes. Das Verhältnis zum so genannten Unbeschnittenen ist keine Ich-Du-Beziehung, sondern eine Ich-Es-Beziehung. Er selbst, seine Probleme und seine Äußerungen dienen lediglich dazu, das Verdienst des Rabbi zu unterstreichen; darüber hinaus sind sie belanglos. Aufgrund der impliziten Annahme des Lesers, dass der Wagen doch aufgerichtet wurde (s.o.), wird die Macht der literarischen Konventionen und der Buberschen Bearbeitung sichtbar, die sogar einen einfühlsamen und hochgebildeten Leser wie Ernst Simon irrezuführen vermochten.

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Zusammenfassend kann man feststellen, dass Buber, wenn auch mittels sehr geringer Modifikationen im Text, den ursprünglichen Charakter der chassidischen Legende grundlegend verändert hat. In der ersten Bearbeitung genügte der Aus-

tausch des „Unbeschnittenen" durch die Figur des Bauern, um den Charakter des Erzählten wesentlich zu ändern. In der zweiten Bearbeitung wurde die Umgestaltung weitergeführt und zugespitzt, in eine Richtung allerdings, die bereits in der ersten Bearbeitung erkennbar war. So wurde die chassidische Legende, deren Lehre etwa folgender Maßen lautet: „Auch in den unreinsten Umgebungen, nämlich bei einem zornigen Nicht-Juden, weiß der Rabbi einen heiligen Funken zu finden," zu einer Anekdote mit universell-menschlicher Moral, mit dem Tenor: „Wo ein Wille ist, da ist auch ein Weg," oder „Von jedem, auch von einem einfachen Bauern, kann man etwas lernen."

Kann man also Buber eine Verzerrung, ja sogar Verfälschung des Chassidismus vorwerfen? Die Frage, inwiefern Bubers Darstellung des Chassidismus dem wirklichen Chassidismus treu ist, war bekanntermaßen das Thema einer hitzigen Diskussion zwischen Buber, seinen Anhängern und seinen Kritikern, mit Gerschom Scholem als dem Bekanntesten unter Letzteren.[17] Gerade die hier behandelte Legende kann die beiden Positionen verdeutlichen. Einerseits, wie bereits gesagt, ist Bubers Bearbeitung des chassidischen Stoffes alles andere als historistisch treu. Buber hat die Legende aus ihrem ursprünglichen Kontext herausgerissen und ihr seine eigene, ihr aber fremde Moral zugeschrieben. In dieser Hinsicht ist die historistische Kritik an Buber gerechtfertigt; man könnte fast von einer Vergegnung – wie Buber eine verfehlte Begegnung zu bezeichnen pflegte – sprechen, in welcher Buber den Quellen seine eigene Auffassung aufdrückte. Andererseits weist gerade dieser re-interpretative Vorgang die größte Ähnlichkeit mit dem chassidischen Text selbst auf, denn schließlich hat Buber den Text der Legende genauso behandelt, wie deren Protagonist – der „Heilige Jude" nämlich – mit der Aussage des Nicht-Juden im Text umging. In dieser Hinsicht ist Bubers Bearbeitung zwar nicht historistisch, jedoch dem Geist der Vorlage als lebendiger Tradition treu geblieben, wie Buber selbst zu seiner Verteidigung sagte. Es ging Buber nicht um eine historistische Wiedergabe seiner chassidischen Vorlage, sondern um einen Dialog mit ihr als lebendigem Wesen, um eine Begegnung im vollen Sinne, die etwas Neues schafft.

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17 Siehe oben, Anm. 4.

Irene Kajon

Religio Today: The Concept of Religion in Martin Buber's Thought

The aim of my contribution is to bring out the originality and contemporary relevance of Buber's concept of religion. First, I shall try to show how original this concept is compared with the meanings that have been given to the Latin term *religio* in the history of thought and culture. This term has been adopted by various European languages: in present usage, the German word *Religion*, English *religion*, French *religion*, Spanish *religión*, and Italian *religione* have the same meaning the Latin term *religio* had. Therefore, probing the denotations attributed to the original Latin term perforce entails pondering the phenomenon of religion in present day Europe and in all the societies influenced by European culture – from Western to Eastern countries. Second, I shall try to show how relevant Buber's concept of religion is for us, given the often unfortunate consequences *religio*, if characterized by violence and intolerance, has.

The following exposition is divided in three parts. In the first I shall focus on the various meanings *religio* had in the Roman and Christian world, and note the historical impact these conceptions of *religio* have had up to present-day society. In the second part of the paper, I shall consider the meaning that Buber gives the term "religion," with particular reference to *Ich und Du* (1923). Specifically, I will highlight his distinctive interpretation of religion as the only possible way out of the existential crisis of contemporary man. In the third part, I shall try to clarify briefly how through meditations on biblical and philosophical texts – which he published in the forties and fifties of the previous century – he sought to illuminate for his readers a means to re-appropriate religion.

The term *religio*:
Does it derive from *relegere* or *religare*?

In the Roman world it was Cicero (106 – 43 BCE) who provided an etymology of the word *religio* when he distinguishes it from *superstitio* (superstition). In his work *De natura deorum* he writes:

> Accipimus [...] deorum cupiditates, aegritudines, iracundias. [...] Cultus autem deorum est optimus idemque castissimus atque sanctissimus plenissimusque pietatis ut eos semper pura, integra, incorrupta et mente et voce veneremur. Non enim philosophi solum,

verum etiam maiores nostri superstitionem a religione separaverunt. Nam qui totos dies precabantur et immolabant ut sibi sui liberi superstites essent superstitiosi sunt appellati, quod nomen patuit postea latius. Qui autem omnia quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent diligenter retractarent et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo ut elegantes ex eligendo tamquam a diligendo diligentes, ex intellegendo intellegentes; his enim in verbis omnibus inest vis legendi eadem quae in religioso. Ita factum est in superstitioso et religioso alterum vitii nomen, alterum laudis.[1]

We receive [...] the desires, diseases and furies of the gods. [...] But the cult of the gods is excellent, absolutely pure and holy, and full of piety so that they are worshipped with both an uncorrupted mind and voice. Not only the philosophers, but our ancestors too separated superstition from religion. Those who offered prayers and sacrifices every day so that their children might survive them are called superstitious, a word [whose meaning] was extended afterwards, while those who diligently reconsidered and seemed to be going over and over again everything that concerned the cult of the gods, are called religious from *relegendo* (reread), just as they are called elegant from *eligendo* (elect) and diligent from *diligendo* (favour), and intelligent from *intellegendo* (understand); all these verbs have the same force as "re-read" in religious. In this way the superstitious and the religious acquired a name that was either reprehensible or praiseworthy.

Cicero ascribes to the word *religio* a meaning that corresponds exactly to the conception then current in ancient Rome regarding the proper attitude one was to assume towards the gods: those who follow scrupulously the ceremonies and practices established by tradition are deemed religious; those who love their children more than their parents, and so are incessantly introducing new forms of worship and prayer, almost as if they wanted to force the gods to protect and defend their progeny, even after their death, are superstitious. *Religio* in the Roman world is expressed through the link between past and present, and between the individual and the gods who dominate every particular aspect of life: *religio* consisted of liturgical and sacred practices in pre-determined times and places, either to be held in certain seasons of the year or on certain set occasions, or, in the case of events that were surprising or unexpected, of practices that could be introduced without breaking the rules that allow continuity between generations, however differently those rules might be applied.

In the Christian world it was the Church Father Lactantius (250–327) who in disputing Cicero's conception of *religio*, also dwelt on the term's etymology. In book four, "*De vera sapientia et religione*", of his work *Divinae Institutiones*, Lactantius, like Cicero, underlines the difference between *religio* and *superstitio:*

Quae cum ita se habeant, ut ostendimus, apparet nullam aliam spem vitae homini esse propositam, nisi ut abjectis vanitatibus et errore miserabili, Deum cognoscat et Deo serviat,

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1 Cicero, *De natura deorum*, II, 70–72.

nisi huic temporali renuntiet vitae, ac se rudimentis justitiae ad cultum verae religionis instituat. Hac enim conditione gignimur, ut generanti nos Deo justa et debita obsequia praebeamus; hunc solum noverimus, hunc sequamur. Hoc vinculo pietatis obstricti Deo et religati sumus; unde ipsa religio nomen accepit, non ut Cicero interpretatus est, a relegendo. [...] Haec interpretatio quam inepta sit, ex re ipsa licet noscere. [...] Si semel facere, optimum est, quanto magis saepius? [...] Quod argumentum etiam ex contrario valet: si enim totos dies precari et immolare criminis est; ergo et semel. [...] Nimirum religio veri cultus est, superstitio falsi. Et omnino quid colas interest, non quemadmodum colas, sed quid precere. [...] Superstitiosi ergo qui multos ac falsos deos colunt. Nos autem religiosi, qui uni et vero Deo supplicamus.[2]

Things being as we have shown, it is clear that human life is given no other hope than knowing God and serving God, once vanities and wretched error have been abandoned, renouncing this earthly life and dedicating oneself to the principles of justice governing the practice of the true religion. In fact we were created [literally, generated], so that we might offer the right and proper signs of submission to the God who has created [generated] us, that we might know Him only and follow Him only. With this bond of piety we are subjugated and bound to God; religion received its name from this and not, as Cicero interpreted it, from "re-read". [...] One can see from the thing itself how inappropriate this interpretation is. [...] If doing something once only is excellent, how much more so can it be to do it more often? [...] This argument also holds *ex contrario:* if it is a crime to pray and sacrifice every day, then it is to do so even once. [...] Of course, religion is the cult of the truth, and superstition the cult of the false. And only what you adore matters, not how you adore it, but what you pray. [...] So those who adore many false gods are superstitious, while we are religious because we pray to the one true God.

Lactantius, we may note, does not understand Cicero's thought regarding the opposition of *religio* and *superstitio:* he simply identifies *superstitio* with an excessive repetition of acts of worship rather than with an attitude of the soul regarding those actions which involve a rupture between fathers and sons, the past and the present, as mentioned above. Unlike Cicero, Lactantius does not regard conduct as fundamental to *religio*, but knowledge of the true God. The God that Lactantius appeals to is the God who enters into relation with the individual, withdraws him from the world, and ensures his salvation in eternal life. Religion owes its name not to the heart and mind going back over what has already been done, to *relegere*, but to being bound to a God who made himself known to men by coming into the world, to *religare*. What is essential to *religio* are truth as a state of things revealed to men, and the relation between man and God: this relation isolates man from the world, obliges him to go back inside himself, to find in his inner life the presence of a God who redeems him by suffering on his behalf on the cross and rising again to eternal life. *Religio* means

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2 Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, IV, 28.

the bond between God and man: God will save him if he believes in Him and follows His example.

In the history of European culture, these two contrasting meanings of the term *religio* – one current in the ancient world, the other affirmed at the time of the formation of Christian theology – have been interwoven and have given rise to various manifestations. Accordingly, *religio* became further enriched and took on new connotations. And this interweaving and enrichment took place despite the Church's conflict with paganism at the time of the decline of the Roman Empire. In order to appreciate how religious practice and profession of the truth of the kinship of man with God were equally celebrated and placed in close connection as two sides of the believer's life, one need but consider the fact that in many places the Church took over the pre-existing cult of the divinities worshipped, for instance, by the peoples residing on the borders of the Empire that it had converted, transforming it according to its own theological teachings. The intimate relation between religious practice and confession is also attested to by the fact that conscientious adherence to ceremonial and liturgical rules was conjoined in mediaeval Christian civilisation with the elaboration of the doctrines concerning the revelation, and by the fact that the link between man and God was not considered by Christianity in the modern age, particularly by Protestantism, as independent of the actions performed in the world.

But the history of *religio* is also a history riven by wars and tragic conflicts – a reality that raises until this very day unresolved problems, which are inherent in *religio* conceived in terms of these two meanings. In fact, *religio* as the reiteration of acts designed to praise the divinity or to pray for health and prosperity for oneself and those close to one – one's family, one's community, one's people – might be considered as the precursor of *religio* as a form of life characterizing a given group of human beings and setting them apart from other groups and incommensurable with them. And *religio* as the relation of man with a God who redeems man contingent on belief in His revelation, beyond the use of reason or attention towards human relations in this world, might be seen as the precursor of *religio* as the unshakable affirmation of a transcendent truth and its attendant criticism of a way of life inspired only by human experience. In the first case, there is the risk of religious pluralism without any possibility of communication between different religious communities, and the consequent engendering of self-enclosure, of a conservative posture bound by rules and regulations, wary of all that is new as posing a danger and menace. In the second case there is the risk of dogmatism and intolerance towards those who do not share the truth proclaimed by the religious authorities and institutions founded on revelation. While in the first case the human being runs the risk of being enchained to the conditions of one's birth, to the group he belongs to, and to col-

lective custom, at the loss of individual freedom, in the second case the human being runs the risk of being crushed by a truth that does not admit discussion and differences. Truth in this latter case is imposed on everybody: only by recognizing it, is redemption possible, and every other attitude towards God is judged false. *Religio*, then, whether it derives from *relegere* or from *religare*, contains elements that harbinger religious conflicts.

Of course, the path leading from Cicero and Lactantius to our era is a long one. But the ideas of *religio* that they sustain are not wholly innocent of the evils that *religio* produces in our age and our societies. On the other hand, contemporary philosophy that does not appeal to religion – either because of its sceptical, naturalistic or historicist tendencies, or because it has turned towards mysticism, in the wake of Nietzsche and the late Heidegger – does not seem able to offer an alternative to religion for those who want to affirm humanism or defend the dignity of man.[3]

Religion in "Ich und Du"

Throughout the various stages of Buber's work, the term "religion" has been inflected with distinctive meanings: it is never used in either the sense of a series of practices connected with a divine cult, or in the sense of a relation between man and a transcendent God, in the sense that crystallized in the early centuries of the Christian era. In the lecture entitled *Jüdische Religiosität*, given in Prague in 1913, later collected in *Vom Geist des Judentums* (1916), and then in *Reden über das Judentum* (1923),[4] Buber opposes *Religiosität* as a productive, creative force to *Religion* as a series of forms, ceremonies and doctrines originally instantiated by this force. While *Religion* in Judaism denotes a heritage handed down in a long tradition, the father who teaches his children about the God in whom they should believe, and inculcates obedience to ritual and liturgical precepts, *Religiosität* means the individual's choice and decision and the children setting themselves free to find their own path to the Absolute. Thus, this early text by Buber distinguishes *religio* in two different moments, one subjective or personal in character, full of vitality, and the other objective and stable: the first moment

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3 On the nihilistic trend in contemporary philosophy, elucidated – among others – by Karl Löwith, Leo Strauss, Emmanuel Levinas, and the necessity for contemporary thought to take up again Kant's program of the defence of human rights against empiricism on the one hand, and metaphysical dreams on the other, see Irene Kajon, *Contemporary Jewish Philosophy. An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006).

4 Martin Buber, *Vom Geist des Judentums* (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff, 1916); *Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt a. M.: Rütten & Loening, 1923); 2. ed. (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1932).

proves able to give new impulse to the second when this becomes only a sign without a signification. This revitalization of the objective structure of religion through a subjective moment is inspired by the dialectic between the "life" and the "forms" propounded by Georg Simmel, one of Buber's philosophy teachers in Berlin in 1898–99.[5] But it was only during World War One that Buber elaborated his idea of religion as the very reality of the relation (*Beziehung*) between I, Thou – whether belonging to the world of nature, plant or animal, or human being, or "spiritual entities," that is, works that have come to be through the creative human spirit – and the eternal Thou (God). Religion is the very fact of this relation, the lyrical-dramatic moment of human existence, the miraculous event that indicates to man his humanity, the most precious moment of his life.

In her book *Buber's Way to "I and Thou"*,[6] Rivka Horwitz analyzes Buber's lectures "*Religion als Gegenwart*" that he delivered at the behest of Rosenzweig at the "Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus" in Frankfurt from January to March 1922. She also examines the correspondence between Buber and Rosenzweig regarding the lecture. Horwitz's study reveals that in May 1922 Buber gave the title of *Ich und Du* to the text that emerged from these lessons. He had not yet given up, however, his original plan of writing a work in five volumes whose aim was to describe *Religion* or, more precisely, *Religiöses Leben*, and explore how it takes shape and the different forms it has in human existence. This plan came to naught. But *Ich und Du*, which was ready for the press in December 1922, still contains the signs of this broader project: the word *Religion* is precisely defined when its meaning in the text is differentiated from that of ordinary usage, formed through the predominant directions of the history of European culture.

There are passages in *Ich und Du* in which the term "religion" appears in inverted commas. These passages do not present the author's concept of religion so much as that of some modern philosophers (Buber seems to be thinking particularly of Schleiermacher's *On Religion* and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, though he does not mention them) or the common way of considering religion. We find, for example, an appeal to the "*religiöse Situation*" of man in the third part of the book: here Buber discusses the "antinomy" and "paradox" of

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5 On Buber's education, cf. Maurice Friedman, Martin *Buber's Life and Work*, (New York: Dutton, 1981), vol. 1: "*The Early Years 1878–1923.*"Georg Simmel expounds his thought on the relation between the "life" and the "forms" in "Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur," in Simmel, *Philosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essais* (Leipzig: A. Kroner, 1911), 245–277.
6 Rivka Horwitz, *Buber's Way to "I and Thou": An Historical Analysis and the First Publication of Martin Buber's Lectures "Religion als Gegenwart"* (Heidelberg: Lothar Stiem, 1978). About Buber's path towards *Ich und Du*, cf. also Paul Mendes-Flohr, *Von der Mystik zum Dialog. Martin Bubers geistige Entwicklung bis hin zu "Ich und Du"* (Königstein i.T.: Jüdischer Verlag, 1979).

human existence that is both in time and in the eternal, in the finite and in the infinite, in necessity and in freedom, and cannot escape these contrasting realities, although one may try to reconcile them in thought.[7] Or we find an appeal to the "*religiöser Mensch*" when he recalls how religion is beyond the pure ethical moment, in a sphere in which man is alone before God in silence and detached from the world.[8] In other passages, however, it is the author himself who offers his meditation on *Religion* (this time without inverted commas) starting from the very event to which the *Religionen* allude and whose deeper sense he is seeking. In the final pages of *Ich und Du* Buber writes:

> Das ewige Du kann seinem Wesen nach nicht zum Es werden; weil es seinem Wesen nach nicht in Mass und Grenze, auch nicht in das Mass des Unermesslichen und die Grenze des Unbegrenzten gesetzt werden kann. [...] Und doch machen wir das ewige Du immer wieder zum Es, zum Etwas, machen Gott zum Ding – unserem Wesen nach. Nicht aus Willkür. [...] Das ausgesagte Wissen und das gesetzte tun der Religionen – woher kommen sie? [...] Die Erklärung hat zwei Schichten. Die äussere, psychische erkennen wir, wenn wir den Menschen für sich, von der Geschichte abgelöst betrachten; die innere, faktische, das Urphänomen der Religion, wenn wir ihn sodann in die Geschichte wiedereinstellen. Beide gehören zusammen.[9]

> The eternal *Thou* cannot by its very nature become *It*; for by virtue of its nature it cannot be established in measure and bounds, not even in the measure of the immeasurable, or the bounds of boundless being. [...] And yet in accordance with our nature we are continually making the eternal *Thou* into *It,* into some thing – making God into a thing. Not indeed out of arbitrary self-will. [...] What is the origin of the expressed knowledge and ordered action of the religions? [...] The explanation has two layers. We understand the outer psychical layer when we consider man in himself, separated from history, and the inner factual layer, the primal phenomenon of religion, when we replace him in history. These two layers belong together.[10]

Religion is constituted by continuous alternation of the relation between man and the eternal Thou and the human expression of that relation as an It: this latter It-expression necessarily grows out of the primal relation to the Eternal Thou, although it is unfaithful to the essence of religion and to our religious life. Religion refers to the human being who is both an individual, whose soul is before God, and a member of a community, which finds itself in a particular space and time. Thus religion embraces within itself both the relation between the I and the

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7 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, in Buber, *Werke* (München-Heidelberg: Kösel Verlag, 1962), vol. 1: 142– 43. Cf. Soeren Kierkegaard, *Frygt og Baeven* [Fear and Trembling], 1843.

8 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, 151. Cf. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Ueber Religion. Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* [*On Religion. Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*], 1799.

9 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, 154f.

10 Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 112f.

eternal Thou, and the I-Thou relation that takes place in the world and in history. Buber writes, completing his thought on religion as an elementary, primitive, spontaneous phenomenon of human life:

> In Wahrheit [...] kann die reine Beziehung zu raumzeitlicher Stetigkeit nur auferbaut werden, indem sie sich an der ganzen Materie des Lebens verleiblicht. Sie kann nicht bewahrt, nur be-währt, sie kann nur getan, nur in das Leben eingetan werden. [...] Die echte Bürgschaft der Dauer besteht darin, dass die reine Beziehung erfüllt werden kann im Du-werden der Wesen, in ihrer Erhebung zum Du, dass das heilige Grundwort sich in allen austönt. [...] Und so besteht die echte Bürgschaft der Raumstetigkeit darin, dass die Beziehungen der Menschen zu ihrem wahren Du, die Radien, die von all den Ichpunkten zur Mitte ausgehn, einen Kreis schaffen. Nicht die Pe-ripherie, nicht die Gemeinschaft ist das erste, sondern die Radien, die Gemeinsamkeit der Be-ziehung zur Mitte. Sie allein gewährleistet den echten Bestand der Gemeinde.[11]

> Actually [...] pure relation can only be raised to constancy in space and time by being em-bodied in the whole stuff of life. It cannot be preserved, but only proved true, only done, only done up into life. [...] The authentic assurance of constancy in space consists in the fact that pure relation can be fulfilled in the growth and rise of beings into *Thou*, the holy primary word makes itself heard in them all. [...] Thus, too, the authentic assurance of constancy in space consists in the fact that men's relations with their true *Thou*, the ra-dial lines that come from all the points of the *I* to the Centre, form a circle. It is not the pe-riphery, the community, that comes first, but the radii, the common quality of relation with the Centre. This alone guarantees the authentic existence of the community.[12]

In this way *religio* in *Ich und Du* appears as what really characterizes man: it is not a special sphere of life, but indicates the highest moment of life, that which allows all the other moments to take on meaning too. The I-Thou *Beziehung* (re-lation) is manifest in religion: and this concerns both the I-Thou relations of human beings with each other and with other vital finite beings, and the rela-tions between the I's and the eternal Thou – the former event not being separa-ble from the latter. Objectivity – the world of It – presupposes the kingdom of living, animated subjectivities because these alone are the knowing I's, and therefore give continuity to time and structure to space: what unites the subjec-tivities is not the Logos, but what Buber defines as "love" (*Liebe*) – not "senti-ment" (*Gefühl*), but "reality" (*Wirklichkeit*) – or as "spirit" (*Geist*). But "spirit" as it allows the "between" (*Zwischen*) to be established is not a mediating ele-ment that can be hypostatized or substantiated: "spirit" is effective only in its unifying function of different beings; it is a force that is not an independent being. Buber replaces the God or the All of Spinoza and his followers with a God who does not deny human freedom: initially freedom is obtained in the re-

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11 *Ich und Du,* 156.
12 *I and Thou*, 114f.

lation with the eternal Thou, as knowledge and love of Him, and then it is also manifest in free choice of individuals to pursue this relation. So human beings become what they are only through religion.

Subsequent to *Ich und Du*, in *Eclipse of God*, published in 1952,[13] Buber would reflect anew on religion as that primary dimension of human existence, which modern civilisation risks forgetting because it recognizes and gives importance only to the world of It: the religious dimension of existence needs to be urgently rediscovered in its authentic and original form, still present beneath the institutions created by religions, in society, in the world of economic relations, and in politics. This can be the only way to individual and collective redemption – to be found in both human resolve and divine grace. In his writings about *religio,* Buber thus embarked on a radically new path compared with those philosophers of religion who continued to follow the path forged in the history of European philosophical and theological thought.

Accessing Religion: The meditation on the biblical and philosophical texts in Buber's writings of the nineteen forties and fifties

But how, according to Buber, could there be a transition from a human condition now almost incapable of entering into a relation with God as the eternal Thou and with the other finite Thou's, to a human condition in which this relation will again take place in all aspects of life and in all its intensity? In some of his writings published in the 1940s and 1950s he indicates two paths that might allow man to become aware of religion as the realm of true, authentic human existence. In *Das Problem des Menschen*[14] he meditates on philosophy – a philosophy, however, that is not separated from the philosopher's subjectivity, that unifies the individual and the universal, and that bears in mind man's concrete, everyday existence, and the multiplicity of his rational and non-rational experiences. In this book Buber identifies the foundations of this kind of philosophy in Plato, Kant and Husserl. Pondering these philosophers' anthropological insights regarding the overarching question "What is Man?", we are made aware of man's simultaneous social essence and infinity, in spite of his living

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13 Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God: Studies in the Relation between Religion and Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952).

14 Martin Buber, *Das Problem des Menschen* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1947).

in the world bounded by time and space: religion and a religious life, as understood by Buber, could be renewed if we attune ourselves to the insights of these philosophers who, in the history of philosophical thought, point out the anteriority and superiority of ethical life – which allows human beings to arrive at the Absolute – with respect to theoretical knowledge and science. In *Zwei Glaubensweisen*[15] Buber appeals to the conception of faith informing both in the Old and the New Testament as a way to understand what religion truly is: faith is chiefly *emuna* (trust) for the Jewish people, that is to say it includes the elements of God's promises and commandments, the people's love of God, and the relationship between God and the people founded on a covenant; faith is above all *pistis* (knowledge) for the Christian community which affirms the truth manifest in Jesus Christ's Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection; however, both the Jewish people as the foundation or root, and the Christian community as the outgrowth or tree, share an attitude which allows them to attain a genuine religious life. Therefore, an attentive reading of their history, as narrated in Scripture, promises to point to a way out of the solitude and egotism in which human beings find themselves in contemporary society beholden, as it is, to secular philosophy and culture.

It is possible that Buber's interpretation of Husserl's philosophy in *Das Problem des Menschen* was significantly influenced by Hans Jonas's interpretation of Husserlian phenomenology in his commemorative article on Husserl's death.[16] Shortly after Buber settled in Jerusalem in March 1938, Jonas delivered a commemorative address at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in which he characterized Husserl's phenomenological method as underlining the role of the *Ego* in the constitution of being and as an agent of Reason's self-responsibility. Reason is, for Husserl, not an abstract faculty of producing ideas, but originates in the human heart, belongs to every individual, and embraces in itself the various ways of giving form to objects. Husserl, for Jonas, marks the consummation of a philosophical tradition which begins with Parmenides and Plato and continues with Descartes, Kant, Hegel; he is the most radical and rigorous thinker in this tradition because of his obedience to the ethical imperative of uninterrupted self-justification. Hence the originality and novelty of his teachings.

It is possible that Buber's interpretation of Jewish and Christian faith draws significantly on the conception of the dialectical relationship between Judaism and Christianity – "the fire and the rays" – that Rosenzweig expounded in *Der*

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15 Martin Buber, *Zwei Glaubensweisen* (Zürich: Manesse, 1950).

16 Hans Jonas, "Edmund Husserl and the Ontological Problem," *Moznaim*, 1938, VII, pp. 581–89 (Hebrew).

Stern der Erlösung (1921).[17] We know from Jonas himself that Buber was in close contact with him from 1938 onwards;[18] and Buber himself, in his biblical exegesis in *Zwei Glaubensweisen*, which takes up the main themes he had developed together with Rosenzweig in their joint reflection on the translation of the Hebrew Bible into German,[19] demonstrates an intimate knowledge of Rosenzweig's concept of the similarity-difference between Christianity and Judaism, presented in his *magnum opus*.[20]

Nevertheless, beyond Buber's relation with other Jewish philosophers, what is particularly important is to emphasize that regardless whether he appeals to philosophy or to biblical faith as paths which can give new life to religion, he never separates affective life from thought: true philosophers and true believers are engaged in reality with their total being. *Religio* itself involves receiving in love, feeling actively, and thinking. But, all in all, for Buber access to religion does not depend so much on the reading of books, however important and meaningful these can be. Life is much more instructive than books.[21] In order to reclaim religion as the ground of true existence, we must make an effort to work, to speak, to be in touch with other human beings in the name of the divine Thou, even if contemporary social conditions, given the primacy of the I-It relations, renders this effort difficult. Only the event of the "between" (*Zwischen*) can preserve our humanity. Indeed, for Buber *homo religiosus* coincides with *homo tout court*.

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17 Cf. Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921), part 3. Rosenzweig writes in a letter of January 4, 1922 to his wife Edith that he knows that Buber read the *Stern*, but was not as interested in the second part, dealing with the relationship between man and God, as one might expect. *Der Mensch und sein Werk. Gesammelte Schriften* (Haag/Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976–84), vol. 1.2. From Rosenzweig's letter to Eugen Rosenstock, letter dated August 28, 1924, ibid., we learn that Buber was interested in the third part.
18 Cf. Hans Jonas, *Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 2003), 441–42.
19 Cf. Martin Buber – Franz Rosenzweig, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin, 1936). Buber refers to this book when in *Zwei Glaubensweisen* he deals with the key words (*Motiv-Worte*) in the Bible, its ethical teachings, its representation of idolatry, and its concept of "spirit" (*ruach*).
20 Like Rosenzweig in *Der Stern der Erlösung*, part 3, Buber regards the center of Christianity to be the faith in Jesus Christ, which he deems essential to Christian evangelical mission, which implicitly posits that space and time are unredeemed, if not conquered by eternity. Buber attributes this conception of Christianity to Paul and promoting a species of Gnosticism. He further argues that the relation between the Jewish concept of divine love and the Greek concept of Logos in John's Gospel prepares the way to the negation of God's transcendence, the source of the neo-Gnosticism that afflicts the modern world. Cf. particularly, *Zwei Glaubensweisen*, preface, chapters 4, 13–16.
21 Cf. Martin Buber, *Autobiographische Fragmente, Anhang: III. Bücher und Menschen*, in *Martin Buber*, ed. Paul A. Schilpp and Maurice Friedman (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), 32–33.

Karl-Josef Kuschel
Martin Buber und das Christentum

Er gilt als der Dialogiker schlechthin, praktisch und theoretisch. *Das dialogische Prinzip*, so einer seiner Buch-Titel – es ist „sein" Prinzip, mit seinem Namen unverwechselbar verbunden. Mehr als andere Denker des 20. Jahrhunderts hat er „Dialog" geübt und theoretisch durchdacht, er, der jüdische Gelehrte, der – bei allen Anregungen von außen – aus nichts anderem denn aus den Quellen des Judentums heraus denken und glauben wollte. Was verstand er unter „Dialog"? Wie praktizierte er ihn in einer Welt, die für ihn, in Wien geboren, nun einmal vom Christentum geprägt ist? Viele haben ein harmonisierendes Bild von Bubers Beziehung zum Christentum im Kopf. Man erinnert sich gerne an ein Buber-Wort über Jesus, den er, Buber, stets als seinen „großen Bruder" empfunden habe, ein Wort, das umso schwerer zu wiegen scheint, als es 1950, nach der Shoa, geschrieben steht und zwar in seinem zusammenfassenden Werk *Zwei Glaubensweisen*. Aber Harmonie ist damit nicht gemeint. Überblickt man Bubers ganze Geschichte, erlebt man einen Mann, der sich *auch* entschieden abzugrenzen versteht von christlichen Bekenntnissen und deutsch-christlichen Zumutungen. Die Bekenntnisse betreffen Glaubensdifferenzen zwischen Juden und Christen, die Zumutungen Zugriffe auf die gesellschaftliche Stellung von Juden in der deutsch-christlichen Mehrheitsgesellschaft. Von *beidem* muss die Rede sein. Das eine ist vom anderen nicht zu trennen. Und wir müssen zuerst den Kämpfer Buber kennen lernen, der für eine eigenständige und authentische jüdische Identität streitet, bevor wir den Dialogiker wahrnehmen können.[1]

„Fremdandacht": Prägende frühe Erfahrungen mit Christen

Wie hat alles angefangen? Buber wird 1878 in Wien geboren, wächst aber ab dem Ater von 4 Jahren – die Eltern hatten sich getrennt – bei seinen Großeltern im galizischen Lemberg auf. Heute heißt der Ort Lwiw und ist in der Ukraine gelegen. Ein providentielles Ereignis nicht nur in biographischer, sondern auch in geistiger Hinsicht. Großvater Salomon Buber ist nicht nur ein erfolgreicher Kaufmann, sondern als

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1 Das hier in aller Knappheit behandelte Thema findet seine ausführliche Entfaltung bei: Karl-Josef Kuschel, Martin Buber - seine Herausforderung an das *Christentum*, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus 2015.

Privatgelehrter einer der wichtigsten Forscher und Sammler auf dem Gebiet der chassidischen Tradition des osteuropäischen Judentums. Sein Enkel Martin wird dieser Tradition wie kein anderer Anerkennung im Westen verschaffen.

Über Bubers Schulzeit in Lemberg wissen wir wenig. Umso kostbarer ein Dokument, das Buber 1960, fünf Jahre vor seinem Tod, selber preisgibt. Der damals 82-Jährige legt „autobiographische Fragmente" vor, darunter einen Text unter dem Titel „Die Schule". Ein bemerkenswertes Signal nach einem ereignisreichen Leben und jahrzehntelangen Bemühungen um einen Dialog mit Christen. Der Altgewordene will offenbar der Öffentlichkeit noch einmal signalisieren, wo er herkommt und welche Erstbegegnung mit der christlichen Welt sein Leben geprägt hat.

Die Szene spielt im *Kaiser-Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium zu Lemberg,* das Buber in den Jahren 1888 bis 1896 besucht. Die Unterrichtssprache ist Polnisch, sind doch die Mitschüler zum größten Teil Polen katholischer Konfession. Juden sind nur als kleine Minderheit präsent. Persönlich kommen die Schüler gut miteinander aus, aber beide Gemeinschaften wissen – so Buber – „fast nichts voneinander."

> Vor 8 Uhr morgens mussten alle Schüler versammelt sein. Um 8 Uhr ertönte das Klingelzeichen; einer der Lehrer trat ein und bestieg das Katheder, über dem an der Wand sich ein großes Kruzifix erhob. Im selben Augenblick standen alle Schüler in ihren Bänken auf. Der Lehrer und die polnischen Schüler bekreuzigten sich, er sprach die Dreifaltigkeitsformel und sie sprachen sie ihm nach, dann beteten sie laut mitsammen. Bis man sich wieder setzen durfte, standen wir Juden unbeweglich da, die Augen gesenkt.
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> Ich habe schon angedeutet, dass es in unserer Schule keinen spürbaren Judenhass gab; ich kann mich kaum an einen Lehrer erinnern, der nicht tolerant war oder doch als tolerant gelten wollte. Aber auf mich wirkte das pflichtmäßige tägliche Stehen im tönenden Raum der Fremdandacht schlimmer, als ein Akt der Unduldsamkeit hätte wirken können. Gezwungene Gäste; als Ding teilnehmen müssen an einem sakralen Vorgang, an dem kein Quentchen meiner Person teilnehmen konnte und wollte; und dies acht Jahre lang Morgen um Morgen: das hat sich der Lebenssubstanz des Knaben eingeprägt.
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> Es ist nie ein Versuch unternommen worden, einen von uns jüdischen Schülern zu bekehren; und doch wurzelt in den Erfahrungen jener Zeit mein Widerwille gegen alle Mission. Nicht bloß etwa gegen die christliche Judenmission, sondern gegen alles Missionieren unter Menschen, die einen eigenständigen Glauben haben. Vergebens hat noch Franz Rosenzweig mich für den Gedanken einer jüdischen Mission unter Nichtjuden zu gewinnen gesucht.[2]

Eine kleine Szene zwar, aber sie ist von geradezu obsessiver Mächtigkeit. Hier sich bekreuzigende katholisch-polnische Schüler; hier christliche Gebete mit der Dreifaltigkeitsformel, laut gesprochen, und ein übermächtig-großes Kruzifix, welches das Katheder des Lehrers ins geradezu Metaphysische steigert – und dort

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2 Martin Buber, *Begegnung. Autobiographische Fragmente* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1978), 20 f.

die jüdischen Schüler: stumm, unbeweglich, die Augen gesenkt. Szenisch-sym-bolisch-körperlich kann Ausgrenzung kaum intensiver, kaum bitterer erfahren werden. Es braucht in der Tat die direkte Diskriminierung nicht, keinen „spür-baren Judenhass," keine „Akte der Unduldsamkeit", um Erfahrungen mit der Welt des Christlichen traumatisch werden zu lassen. Juden sind unter Christen „ge-zwungene Gäste." Die jüdischen Schüler müssen einem religiösen Akt beiwohnen, ohne mit einem „Quentchen" ihrer Person teilnehmen zu können. Denn ihre Anwesenheit wird kalt ignoriert, als gäbe es sie nicht.

Acht Jahre lang erlebt Buber diese Szene, Morgen für Morgen, für die er das Wort „Fremdandacht" prägt. Eine bemerkenswerte Wortschöpfung. Sie bringt die Entfremdungsgeschichte zwischen Juden und Christen „vor Gott" plastisch ins Bild. Bubers Verhältnis zum Komplex „Christentum" als soziokultureller Größe ist mit dieser Erfahrung ein für allemal vorgeprägt. Sie hat sich in die „Lebenssub-stanz" des Knaben ebenso eingeprägt wie der Widerwille „gegen die christliche Judenmission," ja „gegen alles Missionieren unter Menschen" überhaupt, „die einen eigenständigen Glauben haben." Kein Zufall somit, dass der alt gewordene Martin Buber diese Szene ganz bewusst noch einmal der bleibenden Erinnerung überliefert. Und man versteht von daher auch das Zeugnis eines polnischen Mitschülers von Buber aus den Lemberger Jahren besser, von Witold O., der 1962 auf die Zusendung der „Autobiographischen Fragmente" Bubers in einem Brief festhält: „Das Christentum, in dem ich so tief verwurzelt war, Dir war es verhasst. Wie gut erinnere ich mich noch an Deinen Ausspruch: Schade um die schönen Glockenklänge für diese christliche Religion!"[3]

„Jüdische Renaissance": Konsequenzen für das Bild vom Christentum

Für die Jahre vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg zeichnen sich zwei gegenläufige Bewegungen in Bubers Entwicklung ab. Zum einen eignet er sich vor allem durch Universitäts-studien in europäischen Zentren wie Wien, Leipzig, Zürich und Berlin ein breites Wissen der europäisch-christlich geprägten Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte an, na-mentlich in Philosophie, Geschichte, Psychologie und Kunstgeschichte. Den „auto-biographischen Fragmenten" zufolge haben auf Buber vor allem Immanuel Kants „Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik" sowie Friedrich Nietzsches „Also sprach Zarathustra" nachhaltigen Eindruck gemacht. Insbesondere die Nietzsche-

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3 Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, hrsg. v. G. Schaeder (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1975), III: 551.

Lektüre „bemächtigt" sich seiner derart, dass Buber sich entschließt, den „Zarathustra" ins Polnische zu übersetzen, ein Plan, der über Anfänge nicht hinauskommt und schließlich fallen gelassen wird. Bezeichnend auch: Unter dem Stichwort „Wien" gibt es in den „Autobiographischen Fragmenten" Fingerzeige vor allem auf das „Burgtheater": auf die Welt der hier zu findenden Dramen, des „,richtig' gesprochenen Menschenworts", „der Fiktion aus Fiktion." All dies schlägt den jungen Buber in seinen Bann.

Sichtbarer Ausdruck dieser frühen Auseinandersetzung mit der europäisch-christlich geprägten Kultur ist Bubers 1904 an der Universität Wien in den Fächern Philosophie und Kunstgeschichte abgelegte Promotion. Die eingereichte Dissertation über zwei christliche Denker (Nikolaus von Kues und Jakob Böhme) trägt den Titel: „Beiträge zur Geschichte des Individuationsproblems." Vor allem aber seine seit 1904 erfolgenden *Studien zur Geschichte der Mystik* zeigen, wie breit Buber in dieser Zeit kultur- und religionsgeschichtlich orientiert ist. Das findet seinen besonderen Ausdruck in zwei Publikationen. 1909 erscheint eine Sammlung mystischer Texte unter dem Titel *Ekstatische Konfessionen*. Überraschend hat Buber hier nicht nur Zeugnisse klassischer europäisch-christlicher Mystik vom 12. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert aufgenommen, sondern auch Texte aus der Welt Indiens, Chinas und des Orients. Mehr noch: 1910 erscheint eine Sammlung von *Reden und Gleichnissen* des taoistischen Klassikers *Tschuang-Tse* (ca. 370 – ca. 300 v.Chr.). Buber präsentiert sie nicht aus dem chinesischen Original, entnimmt sie vielmehr einer englischen Ausgabe. Seine als Nachwort dem Buch mitgegebene Abhandlung „Die Lehre vom Tao" allerdings ist ein Meilenstein deutschsprachiger Taoismus-Rezeption.[4]

Zum anderen setzt bei Buber gleichzeitig vor dem ersten Weltkrieg eine neue Hinwendung zum Judentum ein. In der Zwischenzeit hatte der Wiener Publizist Theodor Herzl (1860 – 1904) seine programmatische Schrift *Der Judenstaat* (1896) erscheinen lassen und damit der Bewegung des Zionismus gewaltigen Auftrieb gegeben. Buber schließt sich bereits als Student in Leipzig 1898/99 der Bewegung des Zionismus an, ohne sich aber völlig mit dessen politischen Zielen zu identifizieren. Angesichts vielfacher geistiger Auszehrung jüdischer Identität liegt sein Schwerpunkt auf einer kulturellen Erneuerung. Die geistigen und ethischen Werte des jüdischen Volkes gilt es zu revitalisieren. Zionismus als Bewegung zur Gewinnung einer jüdischen Identität ja, aber Kulturzionismus, das ist Bubers Schwerpunkt von Anfang an. Dabei ist Buber nicht gegen die Schaffung einer Heimstadt des jüdischen Volkes in Palästina, worauf dem politischen Zionismus alles ankommt. Aber wenn schon soll dessen Ausstrahlung eine Renaissance des

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4 Martin Buber, *Werke* (Heidelberg/München: Verlag Lambert Schneider und Kösel-Verlag, 1962), Bd. 1 (*Schriften zur Philosophie*), 1021–1051.

jüdischen Geistes in der Diaspora befördern. Kulturzionismus geht es um „Gegenwartsarbeit": um die Stärkung des jüdischen Gemeinschaftsbewusstseins und die Förderung einer eigenständigen kulturellen Identität in Deutschland.

Der Anschluss an die zionistische Bewegung kommt für Buber einer „Befreiung" gleich, der Befreiung aus einem wurzellosen europäischen Intellektualismus, der über alles reden kann und sich an nichts bindet. Buber selber spricht in der Rückschau[5] von einer „Wiederherstellung des Zusammenhangs," von einer „erneuten Einwurzelung in die Gemeinschaft," von einer „rettenden Verbindung mit einem Volkstum." Keiner bedürfe all dessen so sehr, „wie der vom geistigen Suchen ergriffene, vom Intellekt in die Lüfte entführte Jüngling; unter den Jünglingen dieser Art und dieses Schicksals aber keiner so sehr wie der jüdische."[6] In der Tat ist insbesondere der Chassidismus eine der großen Entdeckungen Bubers im Prozess kulturzionistischer Erneuerung: eine mystisch-charismatische Frömmigkeitsbewegung im osteuropäischen Judentum seit dem 18. Jahrhundert. Hier glaubt er, die noch unverbrauchte geistige Kraft des Judentums gefunden zu haben. „Urjüdisches," wie er meinte, sei ihm in den Texten der chassidischen Meister aufgegangen, Urjüdisches, das „im Dunkel des Exils zu neubewusster Äußerung aufgeblüht" sei: die „Gottesebenbildlichkeit des Menschen als Tat, als Werden, als Aufgabe gefasst." „Urjüdisches," das für Buber zugleich „Urmenschliches" ist, „der Gehalt menschlichster Religiosität" schlechthin.[7] 1906 beginnt Buber mit einer ersten Publikation chassidischer Texte: *Die Geschichten des Rabbi Nachman*, gefolgt 1908 von *Die Legende des Baalschem*. Und mit diesen Texten „im Rücken" geht Buber nun auch in die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Komplex „Christentum." Sie haben sein Selbstbewusstsein als genuin *jüdischer* Denker in besonderer Weise gestärkt.

Erster Höhepunkt einer durch Buber nun programmatisch vollzogenen *Jüdischen Renaissance* sind die drei in Prag 1909 und 1910 gehaltenen „*Reden über das Judentum*."[8] Und wir registrieren: Die geistige Neubestimmung des Judentums ist bei Buber zugleich eine *Auseinandersetzung mit den Ursprüngen des Christentums*. Erstmals greifen wir in diesen Reden programmatische Äußerungen zum Urchristentum und zur Gestalt Jesu und zwar in scharfer Abgrenzung zu dem, was Buber schon hier und künftig pauschal „das Christentum" nennt. Er versteht

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5 Martin Buber, „Mein Weg zum Chassidismus" (1917), in: Buber, *Werke* (Heidelberg /München: Verlag Lambert Schneider und Kösel-Verlag, 1963), Bd. III (Schriften zum Chassidismus), 959 – 973.
6 Matin Buber, *Werke* III: 966.
7 Buber, „Mein Weg zum Chassidismus", 967 f.
8 Martin Buber, „Drei Reden über das Judentum", in: Martin Buber, *Frühe jüdische Schriften 1900 – 1922*, hrsg., eingeleitet und kommentiert von Barbara Schäfer. *Martin Buber Werkausgabe 3* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 2007), 219 – 256.

darunter einen von jüdischen Wurzelboden abgelösten, unter den Bedingungen der hellenistisch-römischen Kultur gewachsenen geschichtlichen Komplex. „Ur-Christentum" und die Gestalt Jesu aber werden von Buber jetzt und künftig ausschließlich von ihren *jüdischen* Voraussetzungen her verstanden. Ur-Christentum müsse eigentlich „Ur-Judentum" heißen, erklärt Buber in seiner dritten Prager Rede, denn es habe „mit dem Judentum weit mehr als mit dem zu schaffen, was man heute als Christentum" bezeichne.[9] Buber spitzt seine mittlerweile gewonnenen Einsichten in dieser Rede so zu:

> Was an den Anfängen des Christentums nicht eklektisch, was daran schöpferisch war, das war ganz und gar nichts anderes als Judentum. Es war jüdisches Land, in dem diese Geistesrevolution entbrannte; es waren uralte jüdische Lebensgemeinschaften, aus deren Schoße sie erwacht war; es waren jüdische Männer, die sie ins Land trugen; die, zu denen sie sprachen, waren – wie immer wieder verkündet wird – das jüdische Volk und kein anderes; und was sie verkündeten, war nichts anderes als die Erneuerung der Religiosität der Tat im Judentum. Erst im synkretistischen Christentum des Abendlandes ist der dem Okzidentalen vertraute *Glaube* zur Hauptsache geworden; im Mittelpunkt des Urchristentums steht *die Tat* [...] Und können wir nicht denen, die uns neuerdings eine ‚Fühlungnahme' mit dem Christentum anempfehlen, antworten: Was am Christentum schöpferisch ist, ist nicht Christentum, sondern Judentum, und damit *brauchen* wir nicht Fühlung zu nehmen, brauchen es nur in uns zu erkennen und in Besitz zu nehmen, denn wir tragen es unverlierbar in uns; was aber am Christentum nicht Judentum ist, das ist unschöpferisch, aus tausend Riten und Dogmen gemischt, – und damit – das sagen wir als Juden und als Menschen – *wollen* wir nicht Fühlung nehmen. Freilich dürfen wir dies nur antworten, wenn wir den abergläubischen Schrecken, den wir vor der nazarenischen Bewegung hegen, überwinden und sie dahin einstellen, wohin sie gehört: in die Geistesgeschichte des Judentums.[10]

„*Abergläubischer Schrecken vor der nazarenischen Bewegung*"! „*Nicht Fühlung nehmen*"! Die Sprache ist kämpferisch. Der frühe Buber setzt sie gezielt ein, und ihre psychologische Funktion ist offensichtlich. Vergessen wir nicht: Adressat der Reden ist ein jüdisches Publikum im Prozess des Ringens um eine eigene Identität. Wer wie Buber „Schrecken" beschwört, weiß um die Angst von Minderheitskulturen in Mehrheitsgesellschaften. Wer „das Christentum" zur „nazarenischen Bewegung" verkleinert, auf einen unschöpferischen, weil angeblich synkretistischen Mix aus „tausend Riten und Dogmen" reduziert und in seinen Ursprüngen „in die Geistesgeschichte des Judentums" verweist, der tut das, weil das Gegenüber von geschichtlicher Übermächtigkeit ist.

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9 Ebd., 247.
10 Ebd., 247, 248 f.

Bubers Bild von Jesus

Bubers Jesus-Bild muss vor dem Hintergrund dieser kulturgeschichtlich folgen-reichen Entwicklung gesehen werden. Schon 1914 formuliert er Einsichten und Überzeugungen[11], an denen er – bei allen Wandlungen in Ton und Stil – der Sache nach auch künftig festhalten wird:

(1) Das Urchristentum ist eine radikal*jüdische* Bewegung. Sie ist Buber wichtig, nicht weil, sondern obwohl sie im Christentum mündete, in einem Christentum, in dem „alle jüdischen Elemente nicht entfaltet, sondern entstellt" worden seien.

(2) Zu unterscheiden ist zwischen Jesus als glaubendem Menschen, als Subjekt seiner eigenen Religiosität, und Jesus als Objekt von Religiosität, als „Gegen-stand" des Glaubens. Jesu Religiosität ist für Buber tief geprägt vom Judentum seiner Zeit, so wie die des Sokrates vom Griechentum und die des Buddha vom Indertum. Insofern ist sie Juden tief vertraut. Die „Objektivierung" Jesu als Glaubensinhalt und -gegenstand dagegen bezeichnet Buber schon 1914 als für Juden als „auf immer unüberwindlich fern und fremd". Das lässt sich auf die Formel bringen: Ernstnehmen der Botschaft Jesus ja, ein Bekenntnis zu ihm als jüdischem Messias (griechisch: der Christus) oder Sohn Gottes – nein. Eine Christologie, sei sie paulinischer oder johanneischer Provenienz, bleibt Buber ein für allemal „fern und fremd."

(3) Die unüberwindliche Ferne und Fremdheit wird von Buber in dieser Zeit unmittelbar vor dem ersten Weltkrieg mit geradezu militärischen Bildern zum Ausdruck gebracht: kein „Frieden", kein „Waffenstillstand". Ein scharfer Ant-agonismus kommt herein zwischen „reinen und ganzen Juden" sowie der „welt-beherrschenden christlichen Kirche." Ein Antagonismus, der dadurch entsteht, dass Buber der Kirche die „Usurpation jüdischen Urbesitzes" vorwirft. Mit dem neu gewonnenen Selbstbewusstsein jüdischer Gläubigkeit hält er dem den „ewigen Anspruch" des Judentums entgegen, „die wahre Ekklesia, die Gemeinde Gottes zu sein."

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11 Martin Buber, „Eine Feststellung" (1914), in: Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum*, hrsg., einge-leitet und kommentiert von Karl-Josef Kuschel. *Martin Buber Werkausgabe* 9 (Gütersloh: Gü-terslohrer Verlaghaus, 2011), 76.

Deutschtum und Judentum – vereinbar?
Der „Fall Kittel"

Dieses demonstrative Selbstbewusstsein hat mit dem ständig neu geforderten Legitimationsnachweis jüdischer Denker angesichts einer christlichen Mehrheitskultur zu tun. Es ist ein „Schrei" nach Anerkennung, der freilich vielfach „ins Leere" geht, weil er von der Gegenseite überhört oder nicht ernst genommen wird. Jüdische Denker sind immer wieder neu gezwungen – so Christian Wiese in einer bedeutenden Untersuchung aus dem Jahre 1999 zu Recht – „gegen Vereinnahmung, missionarische Intentionen und exklusive Wahrheitsansprüche" ihr eigenes zu setzen."[12]

Mehr noch: Juden in Deutschland sind immer wieder neu lauernden Fragen ausgesetzt, ob sie sich als Juden wirklich dem deutschen Staat vollgültig zugehörig fühlen. Müssen Juden ihr Judentum nicht ablegen und sich zum Christentum bekehren, um gleichberechtigte deutsche Bürger zu sein? Buber muss noch gegen Ende des ersten Weltkriegs zu solchen Fragen Stellung nehmen – 100 Jahre Judenemanzipation in Deutschland zum Trotz.[13] Solch ständig lauerndes Misstrauen, solche Bekehrungserwartung und solcher Loyalitätsdruck machen die Stellung von Juden in Deutschland nach wie vor prekär.

Wie prekär, zeigt spätestens das Jahr 1933. In diesem Schicksalsjahr Deutschlands wird Buber durch einen protestantischen Theologen der Universität Tübingen in eine offene Auseinandersetzung gezogen.[14] Der Hintergrund: Der Tübinger evangelische Neutestamentler Gerhard Kittel (1888–1948), als Mitbegründer und Herausgeber eines großen wissenschaftlichen Grundlagenwerks (*Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament,* Bd. I 1933) eine anerkannte Autorität in seinem Fach, tritt im Juni 1933 mit einer Broschüre unter dem Titel „*Die Judenfrage"* an die Öffentlichkeit. Gerade als christlicher Theologe fühlt er sich berufen, in einer Frage der aktuellen deutschen Politik, in der „eine besonders große Unsicherheit und Hilflosigkeit" herrsche, Klarheit zu schaffen und Vorschläge zu unterbreiten, was mit „dem Judentum" zu geschehen habe. Ein maßloses Ansinnen im Ungeist politischer Verblendung. Immerhin hatten die Nazis und ihre Helfershelfer in Deutschland nach der „Machtergreifung" Adolf Hitlers Ende Januar 1933 bereits gegen jüdische Mitbürger zu wüten begonnen. Am 1. April 1933 war es erstmals zum Boykott jüdischer Geschäfte gekommen: ein erster,

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12 Christian Wiese, Wissenschaft des Judentums und protestantische Theologie in wilhelminischen Deutschland. *Ein Schrei ins Leere?* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 363.

13 Martin Buber, „*Der Preis"* (1917), in: Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum,* 77–83.

14 Martin Buber, „Offener Brief an Gerhard Kittel", in: Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum,* 169–174.

gezielter Akt öffentlichen Terrors gegen Mitbürger jüdischer Herkunft. Am 7. April war das „Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums" erlassen worden, und mit diesem Paragraphenwerk, das den berühmt-berüchtigten „Arierparagraphen" enthält (Juden sind vom aktiven Staatsdienst ausgeschlossen) hatte die systematische rechtliche Diskriminierung für Juden in Deutschland begonnen. Welche Art von „Klarheit" will Gerhard Kittel schaffen, um klarzustellen, was mit „dem" Judentum zu geschehen habe?

Gleich zu Beginn seiner Einleitung zählt dieser „christliche" Theologe in kältester Bürokratenprosa vier Optionen auf, wie man mit „dem Judentum" verfahren könne:

1) Man kann die Juden auszurotten versuchen (Pogrome);
2) man kann den jüdischen Staat in Palästina oder anderswo wiederherstellen und dort die Juden der Welt zu sammeln versuchen (Zionismus);
3) man kann das Judentum in den anderen Völkern aufgehen lassen (Assimilation);
4) man kann entschlossen und bewusst die geschichtliche Gegebenheit einer ‚Fremdlingschaft' unter den Völkern wahren[15],

Kittel argumentiert nun messerscharf und eiskalt für die vierte Option. Die ersten beiden hält er für politisch aussichtslos, die dritte für selbstwidersprüchlich; sie liefe auf eine Selbstaufgabe des Judentums hinaus. Die vierte Option dagegen hält Kittel für sachgemäß, weil sie dem Status entspreche, den Gott dem jüdischen Volk von jeher auferlegt habe. Das Judentum brauche als Religion (auf der Basis seines Religionsgesetzes) einen Sonderstatus innerhalb der Völkerwelt, meint Kittel. Es *müsse* sich abgrenzen und habe von daher notwendigerweise einen Fremdlingsstatus. Rechtliche Gleichstellung im bürgerlichen Sinn könne von daher nicht in Frage kommen. Judentum in der Völkerwelt könne es nur als *„Gastjudentum"* geben, und dies angeblich nach dem Selbstverständnis des Judentums selber:

> Dagegen hat das echte, fromme Judentum selbst zu allen Zeiten die klare Erkenntnis festgehalten, welcher Fluch die Assimilation ist. Eines der Grundgesetze, dass die *alttestamentlichen Propheten* nicht müde werden zu verkündigen, ist dieses: dass *Vermischung mit den anderen Völkern die schwerste Sünde für Israel* sei. Das Alte Testament bestraft diese Sünde mit *Ausrottung*. Dieser Kampf um die Reinheit Israels durchzieht das gesamte Alte Testament von der Zeit des Mose bis zur Zeit nach dem Exil. Der Bestand des Ghetto durch die Jahrhunderte hin war ja nicht nur durch den Zwang von außen gewährleistet, sondern auch durch den Willen von innen. Der fromme alte Ostjude verflucht noch heute seinen Sohn, wenn dieser in die Assimilation und in das Konnubium mit der Nichtjüdin geht. Das echte Judentum wusste zu allen Zeiten und weiß es auch heute noch: Volksvermischung und

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15 Gerhard Kittel, Die Judenfrage (Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 1933), 13.

Rassenvermischung heißt: sich selbst verlieren, heißt: Dekadenz. *Assimilisation ist Sünde und Übertretung eines von Gott in Volk und Völker gesetzten Willens.*[16]

Und weil dies für Kittel das Verständnis des Judentums selber ist, kann es deutsche Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens nicht geben. Der Jude, eben weil er Gast sei, müsse auf „jeden maßgebenden Einfluss verzichten," und zwar „in den Dingen, die deutsches Staats- und Volksleben, deutsche Kultur und deutsche Geistesbildung" beträfen.[17] Das gelte auch für die deutsche Literatur. Kittel wörtlich: „Ebenso muss gelten, dass der Angehörige des fremden Volkes in der deutschen Literatur nichts zu suchen hat."[18]

Vorgetragen war dies alles mit der Autorität eines christlichen Exegeten, der das Judentum noch besser zu kennen meint als Juden selber. Das ist provozierend genug. Für Buber aber musste es besonders provozierend erscheinen, dass Kittel ausgerechnet ihn, Buber, mit anderen Vertretern des zeitgenössischen Judentums als Bundesgenossen für sein Ansinnen glaubte beanspruchen zu können. Innerhalb der Judenschaft selber seien ja Bemühungen im Gange, meint Kittel, „in dem die Fremdlingschaft bejahenden Judentum eine lebendige Religion zu erwecken."[19] Bemühungen also, eine „Verflachung des Liberalismus" wie eine „Vertrocknung der Orthodoxie" zu überwinden". Und Kittel fügt hinzu: „Vielleicht ist in *Martin Buber* den Juden noch einmal ein Führer auf solchem Wege geschenkt, wenn er auch bisher stark mit dem zionistischen Ideal verbunden war. Seine Lebensarbeit um eine Erweckung der Religion der Väter und sein Ringen um die Seele seines Volkes kann und soll auch der Deutsche, und vollends der deutsche Christ, in Ehrfurcht und Achtung grüßen."[20]

Kittel schickt Buber seine Schrift am 13. Juni 1933 zu.[21] Buber antwortet mit einem „*Offenen Brief an Gerhard Kittel*"[22] und weist – im Ton auffallend sachlich und unpolemisch – Kittels Argumentation souverän zurück. Er muss denn auch angesichts der politischen Lage in Deutschland vorsichtiger sein als etwa Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), einem der großen Gelehrten des deutschsprachigen Judentums im 20. Jahrhundert, der schon 1923 nach Palästina eingewandert war und Bahnbrechendes zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung der jüdischen Mystik leisten wird. In einem persönlichen Brief an Buber aus Jerusalem (24. August 1933) kann

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16 Ebd., 36 f.

17 Ebd., 42.

18 Ebd,, 44.

19 Ebd., 66 f.

20 Ebd., 67.

21 Buber, *Briefwechsel*. II: 486 f.

22 Buber, „Offener Brief an Gerhard Kittel".

Scholem seinen Gefühlen von „Ekel" und „Empörung" freien Lauf lassen kann. Kittels „Broschüre" sei unter allen „schmachvollen Dokumenten eines beflissenen Professorentums" gewiss „eines des schmachvollsten", schreibt Scholem: „Welche Verlogenheit, welch zynisches Spiel mit Gott und Religion."[23]

„Die Welt ist unerlöst": Ablehnung der Messianität Jesu

Wir müssen stets die prekäre Situation von Juden in Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts im Blick behalten, wenn wir Bubers Auseinandersetzung mit „dem Christentum" verstehen wollen. Biographisch ist dabei wichtig: Solange es die politischen Verhältnisse zulassen, versucht Buber auch nach 1933 noch, seine Stellung als Lehrer und Forscher in Nazi – Deutschland zu behaupten. 1938 muss auch er gehen. Er verlässt sein Haus in Heppenheim an der Bergstraße, in dem er 22 Jahre gelebt hatte und siedelt mit der Familie nach Jerusalem über. Umgekehrt aber gilt mit Buber jetzt *auch:* Jüdische Gelehrte stellen ganz neu mit eigenem argumentativen Gewicht „dem Christentum" ihrerseits die Legitimationsfrage – 2000 Jahre christlicher Dominanz hin oder her. Man mache sich klar: Indem Buber Jesus ganz für das Judentum reklamiert, entzieht er faktisch dem christlichen Glauben die Legitimationsbasis, sich auf *Jesus* als den Christus zu berufen. Kann man, wird später der evangelische Theologe Gerhard Ebeling in selbstkritischer Auseinandersetzung mit Buber fragen, „den christlichen Glauben radikaler in Frage stellen, als wenn man ihn im Namen Gottes um des Glaubens willen unter Berufung auf Jesus in Frage stellt?"[24]

Warum aber ist Buber in der Frage der Christologie, sprich: der *Messianität Jesu* so entschieden negativ? Weil aus seiner jüdischen Sicht das Erscheinen des Messias mit der Erlösung der Schöpfung zusammenfällt. Dies geht bereits aus einer Stellungnahme Bubers vom November 1917 hervor. Ein christlicher Gesprächspartner hatte behauptet, „nichts" stünde doch im Weg, Jesus als den Messias der Welt anzusehen, der „das geläuterte Judentum der aus ihrem Götzendienst zu befreienden Welt gebracht" habe. Buber hält dagegen:

> Wer ‚die Welt', richtiger einen Teil der Menschheit vom Götzendienst befreit, heiße er nun Jesus oder Buddha, Zarathustra oder Laotse, hat keinen Anspruch auf den Namen des ‚Messias der Welt'; der käme nur dem zu, der die Welt erlöste. Läuterung der Religiosität, Monotheisierung, Christianisierung, all das bedeutet nicht Erlösung der Menschheit. Erlö-

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23 Buber, *Briefwechsel*. II: 502.
24 Gerhard Ebeling, *Wort und Glaube* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967), III: 239.

sung – das ist eine Verwandlung des ganzen Lebens von Grund aus, des Lebens aller Einzelnen und aller Gemeinschaften. Die Welt ist unerlöst – fühlen Sie das nicht wie ich in jedem Blutstropfen?[25]

„Die Welt ist unerlöst, fühlen Sie das nicht in jedem Blutstropfen?" Das Pathos ist gewollt. Für einen Juden steht hier Entscheidendes auf dem Spiel. Und wie sehr sich dieses Pathos durchhalten kann, zeigt ein Buber-Text, der knapp 30 Jahre später entstand – nach der Schoah.[26] Ist sie nicht das grauenhafteste Zeichen für die Unerlöstheit der Welt? Nichts widerlegt doch christlich-messianische Ansprüche stärker als das, was Juden hier angetan wurde. In diesem kurzen Text aus dem Jahr 1945 zum Gedenken an den Schweizer evangelischen Theologen Leonhard Ragaz (1868 – 1945) hat Buber in einer wahrlich klassischen Weise noch einmal seinen Vorbehalt gegen jegliche Christologie angemeldet:

> Aber ich glaube ebenso fest daran, dass wir Jesus nie als gekommenen Messias anerkennen werden, weil dies dem innersten Sinn unserer messianischen Leidenschaft (…) widersprechen würde. In das mächtige Seil unseres Messiasglaubens, das, an einen Fels im Sinai geknüpft, sich bis zu einem noch unsichtbaren, aber in den Grund der Welt gerammten Pflocke spannt, ist kein Knoten geschlagen. Für unseren Blick geschieht Erlösung allezeit, für ihn ist keine geschehen. Am Schandpfahl der Menschheit stehend, gegeißelt und gefoltert, demonstrieren wir mit unserem blutigen Volksleib die Unerlöstheit der Welt.[27]

Von Zwiesprache und Begegnungen: „Ich und Du" (1923)

Mit dem Jahr 1923 wird vieles bei Buber anders. In diesem Jahr publiziert er ein Buch, das eine Schlüsselbedeutung in seinem Werk einnehmen wird: die Abhandlung zur Philosophie des Dialogs: „Ich und Du" (1923). Werk und Wirkung dieser Schrift sind zu komplex, um hier in Einzelheiten gehen zu können. Nur der Grundgedanke sei heraus gestellt. Programmatisch beginnt das Buch mit den Sätzen:

> Die Welt ist dem Menschen zwiefältig nach seiner zwiefältigen Haltung.
> Die Haltung des Menschen ist zwiefältig nach der Zwiefalt der Grundworte, die er sprechen kann.
> Die Grundworte sind nicht Einzelworte, sondern Wortpaare.
> Das eine Grundwort ist das Wortpaar Ich-Du.
> Das andere Grundwort ist das Wortpaar Ich-Es; wobei, ohne Änderung des Grundwortes, für

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25 Buber, *Briefwechsel*. I: 513.
26 Martin Buber, „Ragaz und ‚Israel'", in: Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum*, 187 – 191.
27 Ebd., 190.

Es auch eins der Worte Er und Sie eintreten kann.
Somit ist auch das Ich des Menschen zwiefältig.
Denn das Ich des Grundwortes Ich-Du ist ein andres als das des Grundwortes Ich-Es.[28]

Buber hat wie kaum ein anderer zuvor erkannt und in verdichteter Form zum Ausdruck gebracht, dass Menschsein sich in den beiden Wortpaaren Ich-Du und Ich-Es beschreiben lässt. Diese Struktur ist gewissermaßen „immer schon" gegeben. Sie ist nicht etwas, was Menschen nachträglich machen oder setzen. Sie ist in dem Moment gegeben, wo Menschen „Ich" sagen, sich als „Ich" erkennen. Denn ein Ich setzt immer ein Du voraus, ein Du immer ein Ich. Zugleich ist das Ich immer schon auf ein Es bezogen, „Es" im Sinne von Sachen, Gegenständen, Objekten wobei „Es" auch ein Er oder ein Sie meinen kann. „Er" und „Sie" im Sinne eines verobjektivierten personalen Gegenübers, das gerade kein Du ist.

Woraus folgt: Nicht das „Ich" für sich genommen interessiert Buber. Ihn interessiert das Mit-Sein, die Tatsache, dass das Ich stets nur Ich ist *im Verhältnis zu* einem Gegenüber. Nicht das An-sich-Sein, die Beziehung interessiert ihn, die Dynamik der Beziehung, die Wechselseitigkeit der Beziehung. Buber selber hat hier stets das Kernanliegen seines gesamten Lebenswerkes gesehen. In einer seiner „autobiographischen Fragmente" heißt es:

Soll ich einem Fragenden Auskunft geben, welches denn das in gedanklicher Sprache aussagbare Hauptergebnis meiner Erfahrungen und Betrachtungen sei, dann ist mir keine andere Erwiderung gegeben, als mich zu dem Fragenden und mich umfassenden Wissen zu bekennen: Mensch sein heißt, das gegenüber seiende Wesen sein. Die Einsicht in diesen schlichten Sachverhalt ist im Gang meines Lebens gewachsen. Wohl sind allerhand andere Sätze gleichen Subjekts und ähnlicher Konstruktion geäußert worden, und ich halte manche davon durchaus nicht für unrichtig; mein Wissen geht nur eben dahin, dass es dies ist, worauf es ankommt. In dem Satze ist der bestimmte Artikel voll betont. Alle Wesen in der Natur sind ja in ein Mit-Anderen-Sein gestellt, und in jedem Lebendigem tritt dies als Wahrnahme des Andern und Handlung am Andern ins Werk. Menscheneigentümlichkeit aber ist, dass einer je und je des Andern als dieses ihm gegenüber Bestehende inne werden kann, dem gegenüber er besteht.[29]

„Wahrnahme" des je Anderen aber geschieht durch Begegnungen. Und es gibt sie in Bubers Werk, solche Momente der Begegnung, solche Augenblicke der Zwiesprache mit dem „Du", die alles plötzlich verändern. In persönlichen Begegnungen mit einem „Du" ereignet sich für Buber Offenbarung. Nicht bloß am „Sinai", stets und immer sind in und durch Begegnungen „Offenbarungen" möglich. Einer dieser Momente in Bubers Leben ist unauslöschlich mit dem Na-

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28 Martin Buber, „Ich und Du," in: Buber, *Das dialogische Prinzip* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1962), 4. Aufl. 1979: 7.
29 Buber, *Begegnung*, 83.

men eines Freundes verbunden. Er heißt Florens Christian Rang (1864 – 1924), war einstmals evangelischer Pfarrer gewesen und arbeitet später als Jurist. Es ist Pfingsten 1914. Eine international zusammengesetzte Gruppe engagierter Zeitkritiker und Reformer trifft sich in Potsdam („Forte-Kreis"), um, wie Buber sich erinnert, im „unbestimmten Vorgefühl der Katastrophe einen Versuch zur Aufrichtung einer übernationalen Autorität vorzubereiten."[30] Im Verlauf der Aussprache trägt Rang Bedenken vor. Bei der Zusammensetzung der Gruppe seien „zu viele Juden genannt worden, so dass etliche Länder in ungehöriger Proportion durch die Juden vertreten" seien. Buber ist dieser Einwand nicht fremd, glaubt aber doch, als „hartnäckiger Jude" gegen diesen „Protest" protestieren zu müssen:

> Ich weiß nicht mehr, auf welchem Weg ich dabei auf Jesus zu sprechen kam und darauf, dass wir Juden ihn von innen her auf eine Weise kennten, eben in den Antrieben und Regungen seines Judenwesens, die den ihm untergebenen Völkern unzugänglich bleibe. ‚Auf eine Weise, die Ihnen unzugänglich bleibt' – so sprach ich den früheren Pfarrer [Rang] unmittelbar an. Er stand auf, auch ich stand, wir sahen einander ins Herz der Augen. ‚Es ist versunken', sagte er, und wir gaben einander vor allen den Bruderkuss. Die Erörterung der Lage zwischen Juden und Christen hatte sich in einen Bund zwischen dem Christen und dem Juden verwandelt; in dieser Wandlung erfüllte sich die Dialogik. Die Meinungen waren versunken, leibhaft geschah das Faktische.[31]

Eine autobiographische Schlüsselszene, die in ihrer Bedeutung derjenigen gleichkommt, von der wir ausgegangen sind: der „Fremdandacht" im Kaiser-Franz-Josephs-Gymnasium zu Lemberg. Machen wir uns die „Wandlung" bei Buber klar. Damals waren Juden „gezwungene Gäste" in einer christlich dominierten Anstalt, jetzt sind Juden Partner in einer internationalen Koalition von politisch-religiös Gleichgesinnten. Damals ein Dabeisein an einem „sakralen Vorgang" ohne ein „Quentchen" der eigenen Person, jetzt der Blick in das „Herz der Augen", der „Bruderkuss" mit einem Christen. Damals das Gefühl des Ausgeschlossenseins und der Teilnahmslosigkeit auf Seiten der Juden, jetzt ein „Bund zwischen dem Christen und dem Juden". Damals das Absolvieren eines pflichtmäßigen Rituals, jetzt die Wandlung zur „Dialogik". Damals die „Vergegnung", jetzt die „Begegnung".

Eine *zweite Szene* dieser Art ist in den „Autobiographischen Fragmenten" überliefert. Buber ist Anfang er 1920er Jahre eingeladen, in einer deutschen Universitätsstadt einen theologischen Vortrag zu halten. Während seines Aufenthaltes ist er zu Gast bei einem „edlen alten Denker" dieser Universität, einem Philosophen. Man kommt ins Gespräch. Wie er, Buber, es fertig brächte, will sein

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30 Martin Buber, „Zwiesprache," in: *Das dialogische Prinzip*, 145.
31 Ebd., 146.

Gastgeber wissen, so Mal um Mal „Gott" zu sagen. Dieses Wort sei doch „so missbraucht, so befleckt, so geschändet worden" wie kein anderes. Wie viel schuldloses Blut sei um dieses Wortes willen vergossen worden. Wie viel an Ungerechtigkeit begangen! Wenn er, der alte Mann, „Gott" höre, komme ihm das zuweilen wie eine Lästerung vor. Und Buber antwortet:

> ‚Ja', sagte ich etwa, ‚es ist das beladenste aller Menschenworte. Keines ist so besudelt, so zerfetzt worden. Gerade deshalb darf ich darauf nicht verzichten. Die Geschlechter der Menschen haben die Last ihres geängstigten Lebens auf dieses Wort gewälzt und es zu Boden gedrückt; es liegt im Staub und trägt ihrer aller Last. Die Geschlechter der Menschen mit ihren Religionsparteiungen haben das Wort zerrissen; sie haben dafür getötet und sind dafür gestorben; es trägt ihrer aller Fingerspur und ihrer aller Blut. Wo fände ich ein Wort, das ihm gliche, um das Höchste zu bezeichnen! Nähme ich den reinsten, funkelndsten Begriff aus der innersten Schatzkammer der Philosophen, ich könnte darin doch nur ein unverbindliches Gedankenbild einfangen, nicht aber die Gegenwart dessen, den ich meine, dessen, den die Geschlechter der Menschen mit ihrem ungeheuren Leben und Sterben verehrt und erniedrigt haben. Ihn meine ich ja, ihn, den die höllengepeinigten, himmelstürmenden Geschlechter der Menschen meinen. Gewiss, sie zeichnen Fratzen und schreiben ‚Gott' darunter; sie morden einander und sagen, ‚im Namen Gottes'. Aber wenn aller Wahn und Trug zerfällt, wenn sie ihm ge-genüberstehn im einsamsten Dunkel und nicht mehr ‚Er, er' sagen, sondern ‚Du, Du' seufzen, ‚Du' schreien, sie alle das Eine, und wenn sie dann hinzufügen ‚Gott', ist es nicht der wirkliche Gott, den sie alle anrufen, der Eine Lebendige, der Gott der Menschenkinder? Ist nicht er es, der sie *hört?* Der sie – erhört? Und ist nicht eben dadurch das Wort ‚Gott', das Wort des Anrufs, das zum *Namen* gewordene Wort, in allen Menschensprachen geweiht für alle Zeiten? Wir müssen die achten, die es verpönen, weil sie sich *gegen* das Unrecht und den Unfug auflehnen, die sich so gern auf die Ermächtigung durch ‚Gott' berufen; aber wir dürfen es nicht preisgeben. Wie gut lässt es sich verstehen, dass manche vorschlagen, eine Zeit über von den ‚letzten Dingen' zu schweigen, damit die missbrauchten Worte erlöst werden! Aber *so* sind sie nicht zu erlösen. Wir können das Wort ‚Gott' nicht reinwaschen, und wir können es nicht ganz machen; aber wir können es, befleckt und zerfetzt wie es ist, vom Boden erheben und aufrichten über einer Stunde großer Sorge.' Es war sehr hell geworden in der Stube. Das Licht floss nicht mehr, es war da. Der alte Mann stand auf, kam auf mich zu, legte mir die Hand auf die Schulter und sprach: ‚Wir wollen uns du sagen.' Das Gespräch war vollendet. Denn wo zwei wahrhaft beisammen sind, sind sie es im Namen Gottes. [32]

Dass Buber auch ein glänzender Erzähler ist, zeigt allein dieser Text. Souverän beherrscht er die narrative Dramaturgie, weiß Spannungsbögen zu setzen, Pointen einzubauen. Man beachte die inszenierten Momente von Körperlichkeit und Räumlichkeit, die dem Text einen wirksamen Abschluss geben. Am Ende der Zwiesprache ist das Zimmer „sehr hell geworden." Licht ist auf einmal „da," das uralte Symbol für Klarheit und Vernunft. Der Partner erhebt sich, tritt auf Buber zu, berührt ihn durch

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32 Buber, *Begegnung*, 68 – 70.

Auflegen seiner Hand auf die Schulter. Durch dialogischen Austausch ist jetzt eine tiefe, persönliche Beziehung von Mensch zu Mensch entstanden. „Begegnung" im besten Sinn des Wortes hat stattgefunden, der „Kairos" einer Zwiesprache. Kein Zufall somit, dass Buber dieses Ereignis mit einem „Bibelwort" überhöhen und so ins Grundsätzliche und Prinzipielle heben kann: „Denn wo zwei oder drei wahrhaft beisammen sind, sind sie es im Namen Gottes." Buber hat damit ein Jesus-Wort (Mt 18,20) gezielt „theozentrisch" und damit „gut jüdisch" für seine Zwecke umgeschrieben und damit am Ende des Textes dem so „beladenen" Wort Gott doch eine unverzichtbare Bedeutung wieder gegeben.

Was sind „echte Religionsgespräche"?

Wir halten fest: Mit diesen beiden autobiographischen Schlüsselszene hat Buber eine der Geburtsstunden dessen beschrieben, was man in seinem Sinne Begegnungen (statt Vergegnungen) nennen kann, besser: *Zwiesprache von Person zu Person*. Das ist wohl zu unterscheiden vom Streit um Glaubensinhalte. Beides wird künftig sein Verhältnis zu Christen als glaubenden Menschen bestimmen. Jetzt kann Buber wie nie zuvor sagen:

> Eine Zeit echter Religionsgespräche beginnt – nicht jener so benannten Scheingespräche, wo keiner seinen Partner in Wirklichkeit schaute und anrief, sondern echter Zwiesprache, von Gewissheit zu Gewissheit, aber auch von aufgeschlossner Person zu aufgeschlossner Person. Dann erst wird sich die echte Gemeinschaft weisen, nicht die eines angeblich in allen Religionen aufgefundenen gleichen Glaubensinhalts, sondern die der Situation, der Bangnis und der Erwartung.[33]

Was also sind *„echte Religionsgespräche"*? Buber unterscheidet im selben Zusammenhang „dreierlei Dialog":[34] „den *echten* – gleichviel, geredeten oder geschwiegenen -, wo jeder der Teilnehmer den oder die anderen in ihrem Dasein und Sosein wirklich meint und sich ihnen in der Intention zuwendet, dass lebendige Gegenseitigkeit sich zwischen ihm und ihnen stifte"; das ist das, was Buber die „echte Zwiesprache" von „aufgeschlossener Person zu aufgeschlossener Person" nennt. Stichwort: „lebendige Gegenseitigkeit". Dann den *technischen* Dialog, „der lediglich von der Notdurft der sachlichen Verständigung eingegeben ist;" und schließlich den *„dialogisch verkleideten Monolog"*, das also, was Buber mit „so benannten Scheingesprächen" bezeichnet.

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33 Buber, „Zwiesprache", 149.
34 Ebd., 166.

Alle diese Dialogformen hat Buber erlebt. Einer dieser Dialoge ist von besonderem Rang, nicht weil es hier um ein „echtes Religionsgespräch" gegangen wäre, sondern weil Buber selber nun einen Weg gefunden hat, als Jude das Glaubensgeheimnis von Christen anzuerkennen. Wir steuern auf den entscheidenden Punkt zu: Bubers Konzept einer Verhältnisbestimmung von Israel und Kirche, Judentum und Christentum.

Wechselseitige Anerkennung der „grundverschiedenen Gottesgeheimnisse"

Stuttgart: 14. Januar 1933. Nur wenige Tage vor der „Machtergreifung" Adolf Hitlers kommt Buber im Lehrhaus der Stadt noch einmal mit einem christlichen Theologen zu einem öffentlichen Gespräch zusammen. Es dürfte sich für lange Jahre „um das letzte Religionsgespräch zwischen einem jüdischen und einem christlichen Gelehrten in Deutschland" (P. von der Osten-Sacken) gehandelt haben. Der christliche Partner heißt Karl Ludwig Schmidt (1891–1956) und ist seit 1929 Professor für Neues Testament an der evangelisch-theologischen Fakultät der Universität Bonn. Vorbereitet und thematisch abgesprochen wird das Stuttgarter Gespräch durch brieflichen Austausch,[35] sowie einen Besuch Schmidts in Bubers Haus in Heppenheim auf der Reise von Bonn nach Stuttgart.[36] Die „lange Unterhaltung" in Bubers „Heim zu Heppenheim" sei für ihn ein „ordentliches Studium" gewesen, schreibt Schmidt am 28.1.1933 an Buber, bei dem er „viel gelernt" zu haben glaube. Und „im D-Zug, dann im Stuttgarter Hotel und schließlich bei der öffentlichen Auseinandersetzung" sei alles noch „viel intensiver" geworden.

Das 1926 gegründete *Stuttgarter Jüdische Lehrhaus* ist Buber wohl vertraut. Er hatte dessen Gründung unterstützt. Es ist das zweite „Lehrhaus" dieser Art in Deutschland nach dem 1920 von Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) gegründeten in Frankfurt. Buber hatte darüber hinaus in den folgenden Jahren das Stuttgarter Lehrhaus „zum Mittelpunkt des christlich-jüdischen Dialogs" gemacht, nachdem Versuche erfolglos geblieben waren, „eine Reihe interkonfessioneller Debatten im Lehrhaus in Frankfurt zu veranstalten."[37] Vier solcher jüdisch-christlichen Gespräche vor 1933 sind dokumentiert.[38] Nicht unerwähnt lassen will ich in diesem Zusammenhang, dass es seit Februar 2010 ein neues „Stuttgarter Lehrhaus" gibt und zwar in

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35 Buber, *Briefwechsel*, II: 460f.
36 Ebd., 461f.
37 Michael Brenner, *Jüdische Kultur in der Weimarer Republik* (München: C. H. Beck, 2000), 108.
38 Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum*, 369–371.

Form einer „Stiftung für interreligiösen Dialog". Entsprechend der veränderten Lage in Deutschland sind bei diesem Projekt nun auch Muslime beteiligt.

Am 14. Januar 1933 findet Bubers letztes Stuttgarter Lehrhaus-Gespräch statt, das mit Karl Ludwig Schmidt.[39] Ort: der Saal der Hochschule für Musik. Zeitgenössischen Berichten zufolge vor einem „großen Zuhörerkreis." Vom Veranstalter, dem Vorstand des Jüdischen Lehrhauses, war Schmidt um einen „streng sachlichen," d. h. nicht polemischen oder apologetischen Beitrag gebeten worden, und an diese Vorgabe hält er sich wörtlich: Sachlichkeit, verbunden mit Strenge. Denn Schmidt bewegt sich mit seinen Ausführungen ganz im Rahmen traditioneller christlicher Israel-Theologie: Enterbung und Ersetzung Israels durch die Kirche. Bei allem Respekt vor der Person Bubers als Denker, Mensch und Jude,[40] bei aller Bedeutung, die er Israel als „auserwähltem Volk Gottes" für die Kirche zuspricht und aller politischen Gegnerschaft zum Nationalsozialismus (Schmidt wird als Nazi-Gegner noch 1933 von seinem Bonner Lehrstuhl vertrieben und geht in die Schweiz), fühlt Schmidt sich als Christ von seinem Verständnis des Neuen Testamentes her gedrängt und verpflichtet, den „Anspruch" der christlichen Kirche, das neue, das „wahre" Israel zu sein, unzweideutig zu vertreten. Schon in seinem ersten Brief an Buber hatte Schmidt davon gesprochen, dass sein Beruf (als Theologe) getragen sei „von dem Amt der Kirche Jesu Christi." Und dieses „Amt" heißt für Schmidt: Auslegung der Schrift. Die ist nicht bloß für den professionellen Exegeten, verpflichtend, sondern für den Christen und Theologen schlechthin, „weil alle Theologie Exegese der Heiligen Schrift ist," meint Schmidt, „wobei sich Exegese und Dogmatik nur technisch unterscheiden". Der christliche Theologe tritt also Buber von Anfang als „Amtsperson" gegenüber, die – unbeschadet aller persönlichen Gefühle – in aller Sachlichkeit den „exklusiv kirchlichen Standpunkt" vertreten zu müssen glaubt.

Und das sieht so aus: Zwar gäbe es „Gemeinsamkeit zwischen Juden und Christen" in der „gemeinsamen Bemühung um Israel." Eine Kirche, die nichts wisse oder wissen wolle von Israel, sei eine „leere Hülse." Aber diese Gemeinsamkeit ist für Schmidt „nur eine vorläufige." Warum? „Die Kirche Jesu Christi eifert fort und fort um dieses Judentum; ihre Duldsamkeit ist ein hoffendes Warten, dass schließlich auch die Juden, ja gerade die Juden erkennen möchten, dass nur die Kirche des Messias Jesus von Nazareth das von Gott berufene Gottesvolk darstellt, dem die Juden einverleibt werden, wenn sie sich wirklich als Israel verstehen." „Nur die Kirche"! Denn: „Kirche," davon ist Schmidt überzeugt, „gibt

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39 Karl Ludwig Schmidt und Martin Buber, „Kirche, Staat, Volk, Judentum. Zwiegespräch im Jüdischen Lehrhaus in Stuttgart am 14. Januar 1933," in: Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum*, 145– 168.

40 Vgl. Schmidts ersten Briefe vom 11./12. 1.1933 in Buber, *Briefwechsel* II: 460 f

es nur in exklusivem Sinn. Der Satz aus dem christlich – kirchlichen Altertum: ,Extra ecclesiam nulla salus' ist nicht nur römisch-katholisch, sondern überhaupt katholisch und auch evangelisch."

Buber dagegen spricht zwar ebenfalls in aller Sachlichkeit von seinem Glauben als Jude, aber gerade nicht als Träger eines Amtes. Er fühlt sich „nicht berufen,"„für eine ,Synagoge' zu sprechen." Er war und ist kein Rabbiner, wird es nie werden, was ihm stets die Ablehnung durch Vertreter der jüdischen Orthodoxie eintrug. Und selbst mit dem Wort „Judentum" kann sich Buber nicht völlig identifizieren, denn er will als glaubender Mensch über nichts anderes nachdenken und sprechen als über *das Geheimnis Gottes mit „Israel."* Buber vertritt gerade keinen „Anspruch" des Juden oder „der Synagoge" an Christen oder die Kirche. Dabei kennt er die über Jahrhunderte tradierte Position des christlichen Exklusivismus und Antijudaismus zur Genüge. Die Kirche sehe Israel „als ein von Gott verworfenes Wesen", und diese Verworfenheit ergebe sich notwendigerweise aus dem „Anspruch der Kirche, das wahre Israel zu sein". Die „von Israel haben danach ihren Anspruch eingebüßt, weil sie Jesus nicht als den Messias erkannten."

Zugleich aber denkt Buber jetzt nicht mehr daran, auf den christlichen Exklusivismus mit einem jüdischen zu antworten. Wir erinnern uns an seine Äußerungen aus den Jahren vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Im Gegenteil: Bubers Antwort ist jetzt ein neues, zukunftsweisendes Gesprächsangebot. Zunächst räumt er ein, dass er als Jude „keine Möglichkeit" habe, „gegen dieses Wissen der Kirche um Israel etwas zu setzen". Gemeint ist: den Anspruch der Kirche, das „wahre Israel" zu sein, schlicht zu falsifizieren. Aber man kann als gläubiger Jude seinen eigenen Anspruch dagegen setzen, daneben stellen. Denn „Israel" ist für ihn „ein Einmaliges, Einziges, in keine Gattung Einzureihendes, nicht begrifflich Unterzubringendes." Und von diesem „Israel" wissen Juden und Christen „in grundverschiedener Weise," wie Buber meint. Von daher grenzt sich Buber einerseits von einem exklusiven christlichen Standpunkt ab, andererseits aber ersetzt er gerade nicht einen christlichen durch einen jüdischen Exklusivismus. Vielmehr vertritt Buber erstmals in dieser Form eine Theologie der *wechselseitigen Anerkennung der grundverschiedenen Gottesgeheimnisse von Israel und Kirche:*

> Aber wir Israel wissen um Israel von innen her, im Dunkel des von innen her Wissens, im Lichte des von innen her Wissens. Wir wissen um Israel anders. Wir wissen (hier kann ich nicht einmal mehr ,sehen' sagen, denn wir wissen es ja von innen her, und auch nicht mit dem ,Auge des Geistes', sondern lebensmäßig), dass wir, die wir gegen Gott tausendfach gesündigt haben, die wir tausendfach von Gott abgefallen sind, die wir diese Jahrtausende hindurch

diese Schickung Gottes über uns erfahren haben – die Strafe zu nennen zu leicht ist, es ist etwas Größeres als Strafe –, wir wissen, dass wir doch nicht verworfen sind.[41]

Der ungekündigte Bund Gottes mit Israel

„Nicht verworfen" heißt positiv: Der Bund Gottes mit Israel bleibt gegeben. Das ist das Entscheidende. Mag die Kirche Israel auch noch so sehr verworfen haben, mag Israel selber sich gegen Gott „tausendfach" versündigt haben, *Gottes* Berufung Israels als sein Volk ist unwiderrufen. Was umgekehrt heißt: Es gibt in der Geschichte ein bleibendes *Nebeneinander von Kirche und Israel im Gegenüber zu Gott.* Buber bringt jetzt die theologische Schlüsselkategorie ins Spiel, mit der dieses bleibende Gegenüber von Kirche und Israel beschrieben werden kann: wechselseitige Anerkennung des jeweils eigenen „Gottesgeheimnisses." Das theologische Zentrum Bubers zum Verhältnis Kirche – Israel ist jetzt und damit endgültig benannt:

> Ich sagte schon: Das Juden und Christen Verbindende bei alledem ist ihr gemeinsames Wissen um eine Einzigkeit, und von da aus können wir auch diesem in Tiefstem Trennenden gegenübertreten; jedes echte Heiligtum kann das Geheimnis eines anderen echten Heiligtums anerkennen. Das Geheimnis des anderen ist innen in ihm und kann nicht von außen her wahrgenommen werden. Kein Mensch außerhalb von Israel weiß um das Geheimnis Israels. Und kein Mensch außerhalb der Christenheit weiß um das Geheimnis der Christenheit. Aber nichtwissend können sie einander im Geheimnis anerkennen. Wie es möglich ist, dass es die Geheimnisse nebeneinander gibt, das ist Gottes Geheimnis. Wie es möglich ist, dass es eine Welt gibt als Haus, in dem diese Geheimnisse wohnen, ist Gottes Sache, denn die Welt ist ein Haus Gottes. Nicht indem wir uns jeder um seine Glaubenswirklichkeit drücken, nicht indem wir trotz der Verschiedenheit ein Miteinander erschleichen wollen, wohl aber indem wir unter Anerkennung der Grundverschiedenheit in rücksichtslosem Vertrauen einander mitteilen, was wir wissen von der Einheit dieses Hauses, von dem wir hoffen, dass wir uns einst ohne Scheidewände umgeben fühlen werden von seiner Einheit, dienen wir getrennt und doch miteinander, bis wir einst vereint werden in dem einen gemeinsamen Dienst, bis wir alle werden, wie es in dem jüdischen Gebet am Fest des Neuen Jahres heißt: ,ein einziger Bund, um Seinen Willen zu tun.'[42]

Die hier gewonnene Grundfigur der wechselseitigen Anerkennung des je verschiedenen Gottesgeheimnisses wird somit für Buber gesteuert von einer theologischen Axiomatik: Gottes Berufung Israels als sein Volk ist unwiderrufen; der Bund Gottes mit Israel ist ungekündigt. Das hebt ein Schlüsseldokument noch einmal heraus, das schon sprachlich-stilistisch zu den eindrücklichsten Zeug-

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41 Buber, „Kirche, Staat, Volk, Judentum," 159.
42 Ebd.

nissen Buberscher Prosa gehört: „Dom und Friedhof" (1934), ein Text, den Buber schon 1933 in das Gespräch mit Karl Ludwig Schmidt eingebracht hatte.

> Ich lebe nicht fern von der Stadt Worms, an die mich auch eine Tradition meiner Ahnen bindet; und ich fahre von Zeit zu Zeit hinüber. Wenn ich hinüber fahre, gehe ich immer zuerst zum Dom. Das ist eine sichtbar gewordene Harmonie der Glieder, eine Ganzheit, in der kein Teil aus der Vollkommenheit wankt. Ich umwandle schauend den Dom mit einer vollkommenen Freude.
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> Dann geh ich zum jüdischen Friedhof hinüber. Der besteht aus schiefen, zerspellten, formlosen, richtungslosen Steinen. Ich stelle mich darein, blicke von diesem Friedhofsgewirr zu der herrlichen Harmonie empor, und mir ist, als sähe ich von Israel zur Kirche auf. Da unten hat man nicht ein Quentchen Gestalt; man hat nur die Steine und die Asche unter den Steinen. Man hat die Asche, wenn sie sich auch noch so verflüchtigt hat. Man hat die Leiblichkeit der Menschen, die dazu geworden sind. Man hat sie. Ich habe sie. Ich habe sie nicht als Leiblichkeit im Raum dieses Planeten, aber als Leiblichkeit meiner eigenen Erinnerung bis in die Tiefe der Geschichte, bis an den Sinai hinein.
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> Ich habe da gestanden, war verbunden mit der Asche und quer durch sie mit den Urvätern. Das ist Erinnerung an das Geschehen mit Gott, die allen Juden gegeben ist. Davon kann mich die Vollkommenheit des christlichen Gottesraums nicht abbringen, nichts kann mich abbringen von der Gotteszeit Israels.
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> Ich habe da gestanden und habe alles selber erfahren, mir ist all der Tod widerfahren: all die Asche, die Zerspelltheit, all der lautlose Jammer ist mein; aber der Bund ist mir nicht aufgekündigt worden.
>
> Ich liege am Boden, hingestürzt wie diese Steine. Aber gekündigt ist mir nicht.
>
> Der Dom ist, wie er ist. Und der Friedhof ist, wie er ist. Aber gekündigt ist uns nicht worden.[43]

Der Text ist sowohl in seiner narrativen Dramaturgie wie in seiner inhaltlichen Substanz nicht nur ein Schlüsseltext Buberscher Schreib- und Wortkunst, sondern auch ein Schlüsseltext Buberscher Theologie und Spiritualität. Er ist kurz, aber höchst kunstvoll gestaltet. Dabei darf die kontrastive Gegenüberstellung von „Dom" und „Friedhof" nicht als „Kleinmachen" oder als falsche Schwäche des Judentums missverstanden werden. Im Gegenteil. Gerade weil Buber die jüdische Seite mit dem Bild vom „Friedhofsgewirr" so „bescheiden" hält, kann er seine dialektische Pointe umso wirkungsvoller ins Spiel bringen: Das, was menschlichgeschichtlich gesehen klein, gering, ja „aschig" aussieht, ist von Gott her groß. Und das, was äußerlich so „vollkommen" dasteht, muss sich vor Gott bescheiden. Das am Ende des Textes dreimal wiederholte „mir nicht gekündigt" bringt in Selbstbescheidung *und* Selbstbewusstsein Israels bleibende Erwählung durch Gott zum Ausdruck, aber auch die eigene Bindung an Israel.

„*Mir*" nicht gekündigt: diese Personalisierung ist entscheidend. Der Bund Gottes mit Israel ist auch für jeden Einzelnen verpflichtend. Er kann durch keine

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43 Buber, „Dom und Friedhof", in: Buber, *Schriften zum Christentum*, 175.

menschlichen Machenschaften gegen Israel einerseits und keine Versündigung Israels gegen Gott andererseits aufgehoben werden. Keine Macht der Welt und kein Missbrauch durch die Religionen vermögen Gottes Bindung an Israel zu annullieren: das ist Bubers bleibende sachliche und persönliche Überzeugung, die auch durch die Erfahrung der Schoah nicht erschüttert wird. Gekündigt werden könnte der Gottes-Bund nur von Gott selbst.

Umgekehrt aber lebt für Buber auch die christliche Kirche Seite an Seite mit Israel als eine in ihrer Andersheit gottgewollte Größe. Die Kirche hat ihr eigenes unverwechselbares Gottesgeheimnis. Buber bringt dies auf die prägnante Formel, mit der er nicht zufällig seinen Beitrag im Gespräch mit Karl Ludwig Schmidt enden lässt: „Der Christ braucht nicht durchs Judentum, der Jude nicht durchs Christentum zu gehen, um zu Gott zu kommen."[44] Beide, Juden wie Christen, wissen somit um ihr jeweiliges Gottesgeheimnis, ohne es miteinander teilen zu können. Warum aber das so ist, warum es dieses Nebeneinander der „Geheimnisse" gibt in der einen Welt als dem „Haus Gottes": das zu wissen, bleibt Menschen entzogen. Den Grund kennt Gott allein. Eine Einsicht, die Juden und Christen wechselseitig bescheiden machen könnte. Buber argumentiert auch hier wieder theozentrisch und zieht daraus Konsequenzen für die Verpflichtung von Juden und Christen auf Frieden und praktische Zusammenarbeit. Beide wissen sich hineingehalten in das Geheimnis Gottes, jetzt noch mit einer „Scheidewand" versehen, aber doch ausgestattet mit dem Wissen um die Einheit des Hauses Gottes und mit der Hoffnung, dass sie einst vereint sein werden in dem einen „gemeinsamen Dienst."

Das alles hat mit einem schiedlich-friedlichen Nebeneinander von Juden und Christen nichts zu tun. So wäre Buber gründlich missverstanden. Denn sein Text lässt nicht Unverbindlichkeit, sondern *Verpflichtung* für Juden und Christen erkennen, um die jeweils erkannte Wahrheit Gottes noch zu ringen. Ausdrücklich betont Buber, dass man sich als Jude oder Christ um seine je eigene „Glaubenswirklichkeit," d. h. um sein im Gewissen verpflichtendes Glaubenszeugnis, nicht „drücken" könne. Das je eigene Glaubenszeugnis wäre in „rückhaltlosem Vertrauen" einander „mitzuteilen." Das ist das Gegenteil von schulterklopfendem Einverstandensein mit der Andersheit des je Anderen, was nur ein Alibi lieferte für Passivität und Gleichgültigkeit. Verpflichtung auf Dialogizität verbindet sich bei Buber vielmehr mit dem Festhalten an einer theologischen Axiomatik.

Was folgt daraus? Religionsgespräche haben für Buber nicht das Ziel, „gleiche Glaubensinhalte" zu identifizieren mit dem Ziel, die Differenzen zwischen den Religionen zu überspielen oder zu bagatellisieren. Stattdessen stellt Buber seine

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44 Buber, „Kirche, Staat, Volk, Judentum," 168.

Arbeit in den Dienst einer Wiederbelebung der „gemeinsamen Urwahrheit", auf die Juden und Christen gleichermaßen verwiesen sind: das Geheimnis Israels als erwähltem Bundesvolk. Dieses Geheimnis aber hat man nicht ohne tiefe Vertrautheit mit der Ur-Kunde: der Hebräischen Bibel.

Bibelverdeutschung: Bubers Vermächtnis an Juden und Christen

Gemeint ist das Projekt einer „Verdeutschung der Schrift", an dem Buber 1925 zusammen mit Franz Rosenzweig zu arbeiten beginnt. Erst 1961 – vier Jahre vor seinem Tod – kann er das Werk vollenden, nicht zuletzt deshalb, weil sein Partner Rosenzweig 1929 im Alter von nur 42 Jahren gestorben war. Die gemeinsame Arbeit war bis zum 53. Kapitel des Buches Jesaja vorgedrungen. Was war und ist der Sinn dieses gewaltigen Unternehmens, das man ohne Übertreibung Bubers Vermächtnis an Juden und Christen bezeichnen kann?

Bei einer Hausfeier 1961 in Jerusalem „zum Abschluss" der Übertragungsarbeit gibt Buber noch einmal einen Hinweis.[45] Die Verdeutschung der Hebräischen Bibel hatte und hat einen doppelten Sinn. Zum einen sollte ein weitgehend assimiliertes deutschsprachigen Judentum, das keine Kenntnisse der Ursprache mehr besitzt, über das Deutsche an die ureigenen Quellen herangeführt werden. Buber-Rosenzweig wählen bewusst eine Sprachform, die das hebräische Original im Deutschen durchklingen lässt und so sprachlich-akustisch noch hörbar macht. Zum zweiten sollte der deutschen Christenheit ihr manchmal latenter, manchmal offener „Marcionitismus" ausgetrieben werden, um sie resistenter zu machen gegen die stets aufs Neue virulente Versuchung, das „Neue" Testament unter Abwertung oder gar Absehung vom „Alten" Testamentes stark zu machen. In seiner Ansprache bei der genannten Hausfeier zitiert Buber nicht zufällig einen Brief Franz Rosenzweigs an ihn vom 29. Juli 1925, dem Jahr ihres Arbeitsbeginns:

> Ist Ihnen eigentlich klar, dass heut der von den neuen Marcioniten theoretisch erstrebte Zustand praktisch schon da ist? Unter Bibel versteht heut der Christ nur das Neue Testament, etwa mit den Psalmen, von denen er dann noch meist meint sie gehörten nicht zum Alten Testament. Also werden wir missionieren.[46]

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45 Martin Buber, „Zum Abschluss," in: Buber, *Werke* (Heidelberg/München: Verlag Lambert Schneider und Kösel-Verlag, 1964), Bd. 2 (*Schriften zur Bibel*), 1175 – 82.
46 Buber, *Briefwechsel*, II: 232.

Die Anspielung auf „neue Marcioniten" bezieht sich auf eine Gestalt in der Geschichte der frühen Kirche, auf den aus Kleinasien stammenden Schiffsreeder Marcion (ca. 85 – 160 n. Chr.). Dieser hatte die normativen Schriften des Judentums (weil angeblich nur von einen zwar gerechten, aber auch unbarmherzig strafenden Schöpfer- und Richtergott zeugend) verworfen und nur Teile des Neuen Testamentes gelten lassen. Warum? Weil nur sie angeblich von einem lichten, guten, liebenden Erlösergott zeugen. Damit hatte Marcion einen verhängnisvollen Dualismus von Gesetz und Evangelium etabliert, schwerwiegender noch, damit hatte er Schöpfung und Erlösung auseinander gerissen.

Gegen Marcion, der nach einem Bruch mit der römischen Gemeinde 144 n. Chr. eine eigene, Jahrhunderte lang dann erfolg- und einflussreiche Kirche zu gründen versteht, trifft die frühe Kirche eine Entscheidung von epochaler Wirkung: Ein für allemal bleibt die Hebräische Bibel das Fundament zur Auslegung der Gottesbotschaft Jesu und zum Verständnis des Bekenntnisses zu Jesus als dem Christus. „Marcioniten" aber gibt es immer wieder in der Geschichte der Kirche, alte und neue. Gerade auch gegen sie ist das Projekt „Verdeutschung der Schrift" gerichtet. In einem weiteren von Buber zitierten Schreiben Rosenzweigs an einen Freund vom Dezember 1925 steht es noch deutlicher:

> Ich fürchte manchmal, die Deutschen werden diese allzu unchristliche Bibel nicht vertragen, und es wird die Übersetzung der heut ja von den neuen Marcioniden angestrebten Austreibung der Bibel aus der deutschen Kultur werden, wie Luthers die der Eroberung Deutschlands durch die Bibel war. Aber auch auf ein solches Golus Bowel [babylonisches Exil] könnte ja dann nach siebzig Jahren ein neuer Einzug folgen, und jedenfalls – das Ende ist nicht unsere Sache, aber der Anfang und das Anfangen.[47]

Buber kommentiert diese Briefstellen Rosenzweigs zum Abschluss seiner Ansprache 1961 mit der überraschenden Präzisierung seine Ablehnung von „Mission," von der wir zu Beginn so Entschiedenes im Zusammenhang mit der „Fremdandacht" im Gymnasium zu Lemberg gehört haben:

> Es sieht mir nicht danach aus, als ob Die Schrift siebzig Jahre zu warten hätte. Aber ‚missionieren' – ja, auf jeden Fall! Ich bin sonst ein radikaler Gegner alles Missionierens und habe auch Rosenzweig gründlich widersprochen, wenn er sich für eine jüdische Mission einsetzte. Aber diese Mission da lasse ich mir gefallen, der es nicht um Judentum und Christentum geht, sondern um die gemeinsame Urwahrheit, von deren Wiederbelebung beider Zukunft abhängt. Die Schrift ist am Missionieren. Und es gibt schon Zeichen dafür, dass ihr ein Gelingen beschieden ist.[48]

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47 Buber, „Zum Abschluss," 1182.
48 Ebd.

Die „gemeinsame Urwahrheit" freilegen, darum geht es Buber. Sie ist eine Herausforderung an beide: an Juden wie Christen.

Nur wenige sind ihm darin gefolgt, darunter ein christlicher Theologe, dessen ich hier besonders gedenken will: der schwäbische Pfarrer und Schriftsteller Albrecht Goes (1908 – 2000). Schon 1934 hatte er sich als 26jähriger Pfarrer einmal brieflich um Rat an Buber gewandt, nicht ahnend, dass ihm gut 20 Jahre später die Aufgabe zufallen würde, in geschichtlich außerordentlicher Stunde eine große Rede auf Buber zu halten: die Laudatio bei der Verleihung des Friedenspreises des Deutschen Buchhandels an Buber 1953. Theologisch als Christ durch das Grauen der Schoah sensibel geworden, hatte sich Goes dafür vor allem durch sein literarisches Werk nach 1945 „empfohlen." Insbesondere seine Erzählung „Begegnung in Ungarn" (1946) sowie „Unruhige Nacht" (1950) sind hier zu nennen. Nach der Paulskirchen-Rede werden noch wichtige Texte wie „Das Brandopfer" (1954) und „Das Löffelchen" (1965) folgen. Das Verhältnis Buber – Goes ist mit erhellenden Analysen und zahlreichen Dokumenten 2008 gründlich aufgearbeitet und dargestellt worden durch den Tübinger evangelischen Theologen Helmut Zwanger: „Albrecht Goes. Freund Martin Bubers und des Judentums. Eine Hommage". Für Goes war Bubers „theologisches Axiom" vom „ungekündigten Bund" Gottes mit Israel lebensentscheidend geworden. Entsprechend hatte ihn der tief verwurzelte Antijudaismus christlicher Theologie sowie das Versagen seiner Kirche gegenüber dem Judentum im Dritten Reich mit Scham und Trauer erfüllt. Daran hatte auch das nachmals viel zitierte „Stuttgarter Schuldbekenntnis" vom Oktober 1945 wenig geändert, da auch hier eine Benennung der Mitschuld von Kirche an den Verbrechen gegen das jüdische Volk völlig fehlte.

Am 27. September 1953 wird Buber in der Frankfurter Paulskirche der *Friedenspreis des deutschen Buchhandels* verliehen. Eine geschichtlich bedeutsame Stunde schon deshalb, weil Buber erst zum zweiten Mal nach seiner Vertreibung aus Deutschland und seiner erzwungenen Übersiedlung von Heppenheim nach Jerusalem (1938) wieder öffentlich in Deutschland redet. Seiner Dankesrede gibt Buber den Titel gibt: *Das echte Gespräch und die Möglichkeit des Friedens*." Sein Laudator Goes spricht über „Martin Buber, der Beistand" und grenzt „Beistand" ab vom „Diktator" einerseits und vom „Präzeptor" andererseits. „Beistand" sei einer, der uns begleite, meint Goes, „durch die unendliche Dauer des Augenblicks", der uns die Augen öffne für die „unermessliche Gnade des Augenblicks."[49] 1980 hält Goes eine Rede zur Eröffnung einer Buber-Ausstellung in Heilbronn und bestimmt mit Blick auf Buber noch einmal grundsätzlich das Verhältnis von Juden und

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[49] Zit. nach Helmut Zwanger, *Albrecht Goes. Freund Martin Bubers und des Judentums. Eine Hommage* (Tübingen: Klöper & Meyer, 2008), 63.

Christen nach der Schoah: „Ich will nur sagen: man soll ihn (Buber), der sich zuweilen einen ‚Erzjuden‘ genannt hat, nicht in einem christlichen Vorhof ansiedeln wollen; dort wollte er nie sein. Ich denke einen ungelehrten, ernsthaften Menschen, der Gesprächen in diesem Spannungsfeld zuhört, und dann einen Satz wie diesen versucht: es scheine ihm wichtig, dass der Christ, indem er hier zuhört, aufmerksamer auf sein Christsein achten lernt, und dass der Jude, indes er zuhört, aufmerksam sich neu auf sein Jude-sein besinnt. Ihm, der so spricht, würde ich sagen: ‚Sie haben Martin Buber an Ihrer Seite.‘“[50]

„Zu Gott demütig werden“: Bubers Grundhaltung zu den Religionen

„Nicht in einem christlichen Vorhof“. Buber entzieht sich solchen Vereinnahmungen, weil sein Denken Schablonen sprengt. Wir haben uns seinen Weg von der Konfrontation zum Dialog klar gemacht. Sein Werk dient nicht der Selbstbestätigung „des Judentums“ oder der Widerlegung „des Christentums,“ sondern einem Dritten: dem *Nachdenken über das Geheimnis Gottes mit seinem Volk und den Völkern, gegründet im Geheimnis Israels als dem Bundesvolk Abrahams.* Für Buber ist das eine Herausforderung an beide Seiten: an Juden wie Christen.

Und zur Illustration dieser Herausforderung gibt es keine eindrücklichere Geschichte als die, die man in Bubers Buch *Der Weg des Menschen nach der chassidischen Lehre* aus dem Jahr 1948 findet.[51] Diese Geschichte spielt in einem Gefängnis in St. Petersburg noch zur Zeit der Zarenherrschaft. Eingekerkert ist Rabbi Schnëur Salman, der Rabbiner von Reussen. Er war bei der Regierung verleumdet worden und sieht einem Verhör entgegen. Da kommt der Oberste der Gendarmerie in seine Zelle, und es entspannt sich ein „christlich-jüdischer Dialog“ der besonderen Art, denn der Wächter erweist sich als ein „nachdenklicher Mann.“ Er verwickelt den Gefangenen in ein Gespräch, denn beim Lesen der Bibel ist ihm ein Widerspruch aufgefallen. Jetzt möchte er den Rabbi „testen“: „Wie ist es zu verstehen,“ fragt er den Gefangenen, „dass Gott der Allwissende zu Adam spricht: ‚Wo bist du‘?“ Kann Gott etwas erfragen wollen, was er als „Allwissender“ eigentlich längst wissen müsste? Der Rabbi antwortet: „Glaubt Ihr daran, [...] dass die Schrift ewig ist und jede Zeit, jedes Geschlecht und jeder Mensch in ihr beschlossen sind?“ Als der Wächter die Frage bejaht, sagt der Rabbi: „Nun wohl, [...] in jeder Zeit ruft Gott jeden Menschen an: ‚Wo bist du in deiner Welt? So viele Jahre

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50 Zit. nach ebd., 92.
51 Martin Buber, *Werke* III: 713 – 738.

und Tage von den dir zugemessenen sind vergangen, wie weit bist du derweilen in deiner Welt gekommen?' So etwa spricht Gott: ‚Sechsundvierzig Jahre hast du gelebt, wo hältst du?'" Als der Oberste überraschend die Zahl seiner Lebensjahre nennen hört, legt er dem Rabbi die Hand auf die Schulter und ruft: „Bravo." Und sein Herz „flattert."[52]

Warum erzählt Buber diese Geschichte? Und warum erzählt er sie *so*? Ihm kommt es auf eine entscheidende Einsicht an. Die Frage des Obersten ist ja eine Art Fangfrage, gestellt in der Position des angeblich Überlegenen. Sie ist im Grunde, so Buber, „keine echte Frage, sondern nur eine Form der Kontroverse." Deshalb zielt die Antwort des Rabbi auf etwas ganz Anderes. Sie zielt darauf, den Fragenden aus der Rolle des Überlegenen zu holen und ihn zum Betroffenen zu machen. Zielt darauf, dass *der Fragende sich selber als „Adam" begreift*, an den Gott die entscheidende Frage richtet: „Wo bist *du*?" Nicht der angebliche Widerspruch Gottes steht zur Debatte, sondern der Standort des Fragenden. „Wo bist *du* in deiner Welt?" Und wenn Gott so fragt, will er, meint Buber, „vom Menschen nicht etwas erfahren, was er noch nicht weiß; er will im Menschen etwas bewirken, was eben nur durch eine solche Frage bewirkt wird, vorausgesetzt, dass sie den Menschen ins Herz trifft, dass der Mensch sich von ihr ins Herz treffen lässt."[53]

Die Pointe dieses Dialogs zwischen einem Juden und einem Christen läuft also auf die exemplarische Erkenntnis heraus: Alles kommt darauf an, ob Menschen sich *in der Begegnung* in Frage stellen, ob sie sich von Gott nach *ihrem* Ort befragen lassen. Die Begegnung zwischen Juden und Christen hört dann auf, zur Wahrheitsrechthaberei zu werden. Beide stellen sich unter die „Frage Gottes", eine Frage, die, so Buber, die Menschen „aufrühren" will. Eine Frage, die ihnen ihren „Verstecksapparat zerschlagen" und so zeigen will, wo der Mensch „hingeraten" ist.[54] Das Zusammenkommen von Jude und Christ wäre dann, wenn beide sich von Gott befragen ließen: „Wo bist du?", keine „Vergegnung", sondern eine echte „Begegnung".

Dass „Religionen" in ihrer institutionalisierten Form Menschen den Weg zu Gott verstellen können, davon war Buber in seinem Alter mehr denn je überzeugt. Sein *geistiges Vermächtnis* im Blick auf die Religionen der Welt (auf *alle* Religionen) hat er in einem kurzen Text niedergelegt, den er bescheiden „Fragmente über Offenbarung" nennt. Er erscheint in dem Sammelband „Nachlese"[55], dessen Veröffentlichung Buber nicht mehr erlebt, da er am 13. Juni 1965 in Jerusalem verstirbt. Fahnenkorrekturen kann er noch vornehmen. Der kurze, aber dicht

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52 Martin Buber, „Der Weg des Menschen nach der chassidschen Lehre," in Ebd., 715.

53 Ebd., 716.

54 Ebd., 717.

55 Martin Buber, „Fragmente über Offenbarung," in: Buber, *Nachlese* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1966), 107–112.

geschriebene Text ist sein Vermächtnis am Ende eines langen Lebens. Und dieses sein Vermächtnis ist auch heute noch herausfordernd genug:

> Die geschichtlichen Religionen haben die Tendenz, Selbstzweck zu werden und sich gleichsam an Gottes Stelle zu setzen, und in der Tat ist nichts so geeignet, dem Menschen das Angesicht Gottes zu verdecken, wie eine Religion. Die Religionen müssen zu Gott und zu seinem Willen demütig werden; jede muss erkennen, dass sie nur eine der Gestalten ist, in denen sich die menschliche Verarbeitung der göttlichen Botschaft darstellt, – dass sie kein Monopol auf Gott hat; jede muss darauf verzichten, das Haus Gottes auf Erden zu sein, und sich damit begnügen, ein Haus der Menschen zu sein, die in der gleichen Absicht Gott zugewandt sind, ein Haus mit Fenstern; jede muss ihre falsche exklusive Haltung aufgeben und die rechte annehmen. Und noch etwas ist not: die Religionen müssen mit aller Kraft darauf horchen, was Gottes Wille für diese Stunde ist, sie müssen von der Offenbarung aus die aktuellen Probleme zu bewältigen suchen, die der Widerspruch zwischen dem Willen Gottes und der gegenwärtigen Wirklichkeit der Welt ihnen stellt. Dann werden sie, wie in der gemeinsamen Erwartung der Erlösung, so in der Sorge um die noch unerlöste Welt von heute verbunden sein.[56]

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56 Ebd., 111 f.

Yoram Bilu
Dialogic Anthropology

Introduction

For Buber, the attitude of dialogue creates the sphere of authentic existence. "The individual is a fact of existence insofar as he steps into a living relationship with other individuals."[1] Buber's idea, that the self is actually a social or interpersonal self, seems to resonate with linguistic perspectives, according to which dialogue is a more fundamental form of speech than monologue, and language "lies on the borderline between oneself and the other."[2] In the same vein, it might be argued that culture – of which language is arguably the most significant component – is located in the interstices between people. Indeed, even without embracing Buber's ideas as a vantage point, it seems safe to argue that for anthropology, the discipline that studies human culture, the centrality of dialogue is self-evident. Communicating with the other, making sense of and giving voice to the other's rich subjectivity, adopting "the native's point of view," without "going native"[3]– all these are the *sine qua non* of ethnography. Still, as elaborated below, the centrality of dialogue in anthropology, strongly present in the ethnographic *process* (fieldwork), has often been much less visible in the ethnographic *outcome* (text).

Dialogic anthropology contends, more explicitly, that the ethnographic endeavor is just a metonym of culture-making in general. According to Tedlock and Mannheim,[4] whose work provides the conceptual framework for this essay, cultures are continuously produced, reproduced and revised in dialogues among their members. Cultural events are the scenes where shared culture emerges from interactions. Once culture is seen as arising from dialogical ground, then ethnography itself is revealed as an emergent cultural (or intercultural) phenomenon, produced, reproduced and revised in dialogues between field-workers and natives. In what follows, I will keep the analytic distinction be-

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1 Martin Buber, *The Way of Response* Edited by N. N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 113.

2 M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 293.

3 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

4 Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim, eds., *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

tween ethnography and culture. First, following Tedlock and Mannheim,[5] I will critically discuss the place allotted to dialogue in ethnographic works. Second, resorting to my own fieldwork, I will highlight some intriguing aspects of the dialogic nature of culture as reflected in the vicissitudes of an Israeli shrine which I studied in the 1980s.[6]

The predicament of dialogue in anthropology

According to dialogic anthropology, ethnography should acknowledge more explicitly the dialogic nature of its own production. This claim is in concert with many other critical voices in current anthropology, propelled by "the crisis of representation,"[7] and augmented by the epistemological melancholia that plagued the discipline in the postmodern era.[8] Against the positivistic, self-assured stance of classical anthropology, postmodern anthropology has been informed by a social reality in which the boundaries between ethnographer and informant were systematically eroded, and with it the authority of the ethnographic text. In fact, some of the discontent uttered by dialogic anthropologists gave also rise to the genre of experimental ethnographies[9] that evolved as a reaction to the unwarranted "ethnographic realism" of classical anthropology. Recent ethnographies in this genre do seek to retain some of the dialogic exchange between researcher and native, and with it some of the "noise" that is embedded in the particular fieldwork context.

Insofar as fieldwork alone is concerned, the importance of dialogue was recognized in anthropology long time ago. To grasp the native's point of view the ethnographer had to immerse himself or herself in native subjectivity. Ideally, this could generate an interpersonal ambiance conducive to the creation of I-Thou relationship, in the Buberian sense. But the writing of ethnography in

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5 Ibid.

6 See Yoram Bilu, *The Saints' Impresarios: Dreamers, Healers, and Holy Men in Israel's Urban Periphery* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 2005) [Hebrew]; idem., "Dreamers in Paradise: The Worship of Prophet Elijah in Beit She'an, Israel," *ARAM* 20 (2008): 43–57.

7 James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and the Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1986); James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988); George E. Marcus and Michael J. Fischer, *Anthropology as a Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

8 Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987).

9 George E. Marcus and Dick Cushman, "Ethnographies as Texts." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 25–69.

mainstream anthropology has ordinarily constituted an ascendance to objectivity. The self-interpreting moves of the natives were not part of the ethnography even though they were essential for its construction, and the beliefs and behaviors of the researcher were not inscribed in the same critical place as those by the persons under study. Following the intellectual impact of Clifford Geertz and the interpretive school in anthropology,[10] the natives have been cast in the role of producers of texts, while the interpretation of these texts was reserved for the writers of ethnography. From a critical dialogical perspective, the objectified ethnographic text is often an authoritative monologue. It often adopts the voice of a third person omniscient narrator that reduces the voices of the others into a few understandable "native terms." To take just one striking example, in Levi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*,[11] the reigning classic among anthropological memoirs, not a single Brazilian utters as much as one complete sentence, not even with the aid of an interpreter.[12]

The issue of anonymity ("disguising" the natives' identities), the deliberate use of selective quoting in the service of lending support to the ethnographer's hypotheses, and the elimination of the first-person voice, and often the very person, of the fieldworker – all these are examples of taking a "scientific distance" from the natives and of flattening the dialogue with them in ethnographies. In Buber's terms the potential I–Thou relationship is thus reduced into I–It.

Under the spell of the crisis of representation, the once-romantic encounter between researcher and native in ethnographic classics has been harshly criticized, among other things, as emblematic of I–It relations (without using these terms explicitly). I will illustrate this type of criticism by an example from Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture*,[13] the paradigmatic volume of the hyper-reflexive, postmodern anthropology of the 1980s and 1990s. In this volume Renato Rosaldo compares a historical classic, *Montaillou* by Ladourie[14] – himself a historian with ethnographic sensibilities – with an ethnographic classic, Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer.[15] Intriguingly, Rosaldo does not compare the eminent anthropologist with the historian but rather with Inquisitor Jacque

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10 Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*; Lawrence Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

11 Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Russell (New York: Atheneum, 1973).

12 Dennis Tedlock, "Interpretation, Participation, and the Role of Narrative in Dialogic Anthropology." *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*, D. Tedlock and B. Mannheim, eds. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 264.

13 Marcus and Cussman [see fn. 7].

14 Le Roi Emmanuel Ladourie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village: 1294 – 1324* (London: Scholar Press, 1978).

15 E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940).

Fournieu, the chief interrogator of the heretic inhabitants of Montaillou. In both cases, so the argument goes, the authors entirely ignore the critical context of control and oppression originating in British colonialism and the church respectively. Working under the auspices of this oppressive power (perhaps unwittingly), the ethnographer's dialogic encounter with the natives is reduced into misguided I–It relationship. Such arguments – again without referring explicitly to Buber – have been culminated in the generalized assertion that the making of anthropology as a modern discipline could not be separated from the historical advent of Western imperialism and colonialism.[16] But even without resorting to sweeping generalizations, it is safe to assume that even ethnographies attuned to the dialogic nature of fieldwork usually ignore the asymmetric nature of the encounter and the complexities of power relationships that enshroud it. In a postcolonial, self-doubting anthropology, no one can be immune of the blame of objectifying or reducing the natives. Ironically, Vincent Crapanzano, who in *Writing Culture*[17] did not spare his criticism for Clifford Geertz for under-representing the natives in "Deep Play,"[18] was unflatteringly compared by Dennis Tedlock with conquistador Hernan Cortes. In *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan*,[19] Crapanzano depicted his relationship with one native, Tuhami, in all its richness and complexity; but at the same time he left another native, the translator, entirely transparent, as did Cortes in his memoires of the conquest of Mexico.

The pessimistically radical notions of certain brands of postmodern, postcolonial anthropology with its epistemological cultural relativism – amounting to the immanent unknowablility of the Other – have been shunned by scientifically inclined anthropologists as self-failing and self-destructive. Ironically, Buber might have joined this criticism, given his firm belief in the possibility of finding paths to the heart of the other. But he would have certainly supported the erosion of boundaries between ethnographer and native that has been growing in more recent ethnographies. Along with the dialogic turn in anthropology, came the sensibility that the native as an object of analysis may become an analyzing subject and a critical reader of the ethnography of which he or she have been the protagonists. The dialogical reverberations of the ethnographic texts in

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16 Talal Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (New York: Humanities Books, 1973).

17 Vincent Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

18 Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in idem, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 412–453.

19 Vincent Crapanzano, *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980).

the lives and social worlds of people is a fascinating domain, which is beyond the scope of this essay.[20]

Dreams and the dialogic nature of culture: fieldwork example

In 1979, an Israeli man of Moroccan background in his late 30s named Yaish O'hana, a leader of a cleaning team in the Beit-She'an municipality, announced that he had discovered the Gate of Paradise in the backyard of his house. The announcement was informed by a Talmudic tradition which deemed Beit She'an in the Jordan Valley as the privileged entrance (Babylonian Talmud, *Eruvin* 19 A). Still, coupling the enchanted Garden with a peripheral working-class development town, and grounding it in an unassuming plebian house appeared ambitious at best. Elijah the Prophet, the protagonist of Yaish's visitational dreams which precipitated the discovery, was declared the patron of the site. Yaish's dreams having inspired the new holy place, also ignited a chain reaction of dreams in the local community. A vibrant community of dreamers (for which I coined the term *oneirocommunity*);[21] sprouted up around the Gate of Paradise, with an intense, open-ended dream-based dialogue as its interactive matrix. This dream discourse provided the dreamers with rich and engaging subjective experiences associated with saint and site. The community enjoyed a charismatic, though short-lived, period, in which men and women exchanged dreams and other experiences in an enthusiastic and joyful atmosphere of solidarity and mutual care. To illustrate the character of the dream culture that emerged around the Gate of Paradise, Yaish's initiatory dream sequence, and two other dream reports of activists in the local community are presented in the appendix with short exegeses. The four dreams were taken from a corpus of 150 dream reports I collected in Beit She'an in the1980s.

Dreams might represent a challenge to Buberian theory. On the one hand, psychologists have noted that dream-work is essentially based on encouraging a dream dialogue between ego and the unconscious or between different

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20 See Yoram Bilu, *Without Bounds: The Life and Death of Rabbi Ya'aqov Wazana* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 153–167; Margaret B Blackman, ed., "The Afterlife of the Life History." *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 2 (1) (1992); and Caroline Brettel, *When They Read What We Write* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1993).
21 See Yoram Bilu, "Oneirobiography and Oneirocommunity in Saint Worship in Israel: A Two-Tier Model for Dream-Inspired Religious Revivals." *Dreaming* 10/2 (2000): 85–101.

dream figures that represent distinct aspects of the psyche or constitute "sub-personalities."[22] But for Buber dialogue is not intra-psychic but rather situated in the realm of the inter-human. In modern psychology, dreams are conceptualized not as they are experienced, i.e., intensely cinematic virtual reality, but as subjective experiences and an endogenous creation of the person's own psyche. For example, if during therapy a person reports that he or she was pursued by a tiger in a dream, a common psychodynamic interpretation would be that the tiger symbolically stands for the dreamer's aggressive side. Some therapists (following Jung's Analytic Psychology or Perls' Gestalt Psychology) may resort to active imagery techniques, encouraging the dreamer to stop running away and face the tiger asking literally or symbolically, "What do you want?" It is possible then that the tiger might be transformed into something else, less frightening and more accessible. In fact, the Senoi (or Semai), an aboriginal group in Malaysia, have developed an elaborate system of dream confrontation, based on establishing rapport with dream beings, which could arguably sublimate and "domesticate" the dream plot and message.[23] Notwithstanding the controversy over the authenticity of Senoy lucid dreaming,[24] its rationale is based on the transformative power of a genuine dialogue. As long as the tiger is frightening – as long as it is "it," it will continue to pursue us, until we take it into account as a Thou. But does Buber really allow that genuine dialogue is possible intra-psychically? Does it not contradict the basic assumption that I–Thou relation resides in the inter-personal (inter-subjective) domain?

From an anthropological perspective, this challenge could be answered by problematizing the very relevance of a psychodynamic language to Buberian thinking about dreams. Let us consider the dreams in case. These dreams are dialogical in two respects. First, designated in scholarly discourse visitational dreams[25] because the dreamer is visited by otherworldly beings, the dreams are epistemologically located on a cosmological rather than psychological plane. The dreams constitute charismatic experiences, during which the dreamer enters the sacred realm of the Garden of Eden and establishes a dialogue with a transcendent power in the figure of Elijah the prophet. Moreover, Buber asserts

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22 Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. and ed., James Strachey (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1954); Carl Gustav Jung, *Dreams*, trans. and ed., R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

23 K. R. Stewart, "Dream Theory in Malaya." *Complex* 6 (1951): 21–33.

24 G. William Domhoff, *The Mystique of Dreams: A Search for Utopia Through Senoi Dream Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Stephen LaBerge, Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990).

25 Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha*.

that the divine is a phenomenological constant in the world, manifested in a multiplicity of signs. Yet people usually are not ready, open, or amenable to these omens. "Each of us is encased in an armor whose task is to ward off signs... and from generation to generation we perfect the defense apparatus."[26] The dreamers of Beit She'an appear ready to encounter the holy; they engage in a dialogue with the transcendent power that frequent their dreams; and they do it directly, despite their plebeian background, without the mediation of the religious authorities, and often against their will. I believe that Buber would have nodded in approval over this kind of liaison with the divine, based on the prophetic, inherently dialogic experience of visitational dreams.

Second, and more importantly perhaps, the community of dreamers under discussion cultivated a dialogic genre which is ordinarily absent from modern public life. Related to the fact that visitational dreams are epistemologically grounded in a cosmological rather than psychological ground, they are also situated in a social milieu that allows for culturally enjoined frames of disclosure and dream-telling. Unlike the modern psychological view of dreaming as emblematic of private, subjective, and largely ineffable experiences, here the dreams unabashedly went public. What had started as a representation of experience, *of* the world, has become a cultural thing *in* the world. The dreams were told and retold, mainly during visits to the shrines, whether on annual celebrations (*hillulot*) or on other occasions. This resonates with Jung's word: "In the deepest sense, we all dream not out of ourselves but out of what lies between us and the other."[27] The gay and festive atmosphere that pervaded the dream-telling settings, resonate with anthropologist Victor Turner's notion of communitas, and liminality. Turnerian anthropology is dialogic to the core. Generally speaking, it might be argued that dialogue is typically liminal, involving betwixt and between. It is also liminal in the sense that it produces a semi-private space and time shared by interlocutors to the partial exclusion of the rest of the world. More to the point, according to Turner, "the bonds of communitas are anti-structural in the sense that they are undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, extant, non-rational (but not irrational), existential, I–Thou (in Feuerbach's and Buber's sense) relationships... Communitas is spontaneous, immediate, concrete – it is not shaped by norms, it is not institutionalized, it is not abstract."[28] In another place Turner defines communitas as "a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of struc-

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26 Buber, *The Way of Response*, 119.

27 Jung, *Dreams,* 173.

28 Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 274.

tural attributes..."[29] In yet another place it is "a direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human beings."[30] While Turner's conception of pilgrimage as the event where "the other become a brother" is certainly idealized, it can still be argued that the climate of saint worship and pilgrimage does foster a dialogic exchange with the transformative quality of I–Thou.

In conclusion, I would like to dwell on three notions that are pertinent to the essence of dialogic anthropology and that can be highlighted in the case under study. First, dialogic anthropology is strongly associated with the notion of *emergence:* the social and cultural world is not something independent from historical instances of native discourse but is made and remade precisely in such instances. Buber viewed man as world-maker through dialogue. Dialogic anthropology seeks to engage native speakers in their active "world-making" role. In the case under study, the authority and legitimacy of Yaish's revelation was communally validated through the dream dialogue that ensued. Moreover, the notions of site and saint were created anew with each dream and were negotiated and shaped in the course of the exchange between the dreamers. Note that in the dream appendix, Yaish's revelation was reproduced in the dreams of the two other dreamers, Meir and Rachel. Each has created his or her own version of Paradise based on his or her particular life experiences.

Second, dialogic anthropology is linked to the notion of *performance:* verbal meaning is an emergent property of performance, conceived as a fully engaged social event and constructed jointly through the actions of all the participants in the event. Thus dialogic anthropology is about language, discourse, and dialogue as world making. Dialogue, like other social events, requires the tacit collusion of all the participants who implicitly agree that they are interpreting events within the same framework. These requirements were satisfied in the Gate of Paradise, because visitational dreams functioned as "swing concepts,"[31] bridging mental, intra-psychic processes and collective, interpersonal and intersubjective ones. This bridging function carries us to the third notion, that of *personal symbols.*

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29 Ibid., 202.

30 Ibid., 49.

31 Waud H. Kracke, "Reflections on the Savage Self: Interpretation, Empathy, Anthropology," in *The Making of Psychological Anthropology* II, eds., M. M. Suarez-Orosco, G. Spindler, and L. Spindler (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 195–222.

Following anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere,[32] a personal symbol is viewed as located in between the private and the public, amalgamating individual experiences and cultural symbols. The emergence of the community of believers in Beit She'an, based on a rich dream-based dialogue, was made possible because the visitational dreams were not idiosyncratically construed. Rather, they stemmed from an established tradition of dreaming that relied on a widely shared vocabulary of cultural symbols. The authority of visitational dreams, their power to bind people to the shrine and to each other, and to constitute a meaningful dialogue between them, was predicated on this shared vocabulary, in which saint and site were the major cultural idioms. As the dream reports in the appendix indicate, the dreamers employed the idioms of Elijah and Paradise in their dreams to articulate and cope with a wide variety of individual experiences. While offering this "therapeutic" function, which in itself was likely to enhance the attraction of the shrine for the dreamers, dreams of Elijah and paradise also served as corroborative evidence for the validity of Yaish's revelation underlying it and for engaging it on a truly dialogic level (the admixture of the private and the public). In their dreams, Meir, Rachel and other dreamers revived and relived Yaish's revelation, discovering anew their own version of Paradise.

A Caveat

The notion of communitas is commonly viewed as an idealized articulation of the spirit of saints' pilgrimages since it has not been confirmed whenever put to empirical test.[33] The sense of comradeship and solidarity in Beit She'an community of dreamers was not an exception. The Gate of Paradise did not last more than two decades, despite the glamour of visitational dreams. Without going into the reasons for its downfall, we should ask how realistic are Buber's ideas regarding the establishment and, more challengingly, of the maintenance of I – Though relationships in our world? Note that visitational dreams played a decisive role in the exciting charismatic phase of the foundation of the shrine, but

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32 Gannanath Obeyesekere, *Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981); G. Obeyesekere, *The Work of Culture*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

33 Yoram Bilu, "The Inner Limits of Communitas: A Covert Dimension of Pilgrimage Behavior." *Ethos* 16/3 (1988): 302–325; John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, "Introduction." Eade and Sallnow, eds., *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge,1991) pp. 1–29.

their effects proved to be short-lived. To sustain the initial enthusiasm (which the dreams reflected and further enhanced), to lengthen the "shelf life" of the shrine by institutionalizing the charismatic phase of the revelation (again, evident in the "dream epidemic" that swept the community), a critical set of prosaic preconditions had to be fulfilled. A new shrine cannot make itself a name without a basic infrastructure to properly absorb the visitors and an effective promotion campaign to attract people to the new shrine. All this involves resources and political sophistication that dream dialogue alone cannot provide, even when it is supposedly stemming from the noble ground of communitas and I – Though relationships.

Appendix

1. Yaish: Announcement to the Public

I, O'hana Yaish who lives in Beit Shean, Neighborhood D, 210/2, have been privileged by the Lord to see wonders. In my first dream a *tsaddiq* revealed himself to me and told me to dig in the yard behind my house. I started digging and suddenly a gate was disclosed to me. I entered through the gate, and marvelous things were revealed to my eyes. I saw a pool with fresh water and a lot of plants around it. I kept on going and saw a splendid, bountiful garden, and rabbis walking around the garden, enjoying the brightness of the place. One of the rabbis turned to me and told me that I must take good care of the place because it is holy. He also told me to inform anyone who would like to come to the place that first he must cleanse himself.

I didn't pay attention to the dream even though it came back every day on that week. But then, on the second week, I was bothered again (by another dream). I dreamed that I was standing between two cypress trees in the yard of my house and I heard a voice calling to me in these words: Listen, listen, listen. Three times the voice was heard. I stood there trembling from head to toe, and the voice continued, telling me that the place were I stood was holy and I must maintain its holiness.

And again on the third week, on Sabbath eve, I went to the synagogue to pray. After the prayer I came back home, did the *kiddush*, and sat down to eat. After dinner I went out to the yard, and suddenly a gate was revealed to me in the same place, and I saw light burning in the entrance. And again I heard the same voice calling me in the same words: Listen, listen, listen. And this time it was a reality, not a dream. And I was told that this was the gate of Paradise. And I was asked to build an iron gate and to clean the place, and to

put it in order. I was also asked to announce in all the synagogues and to inform the public at large that those who would like to frequent the place must first cut their fingernails and purify themselves and make repentance.

Then my wife had a dream in which I came to her and told her that we have to prepare a *seudah* (festive meal) and call it after Elijah the Prophet.

<u>Exegesis</u>: The announcement, written down and promulgated to the inhabitants of Beit She'an, describes the entire set of experiences, most of them dream revelations, which led Ya'ish to locate the Gate of Paradise in his back yard. The events described in the announcement took place over three weeks in the month of Elul, during which Ya'ish gradually came to realize the identity of the holy site. The opening dream, which recurred and troubled Ya'ish for a week, was visually the most rich. The dreamer's naivety—which probably enhanced his credibility—was augmented by his stubborn refusal to engage the nocturnal message he received. Furthermore, he failed to identify the *tsaddiq* who offered the revelation and identified the site (Bilu & Abramovitch 1985)—even though typological and traditional images of the Garden of Eden pervade the dream. The Announcement hinted at the site's identity by using expressions like "a wonderful garden" and "I must maintain its holiness (cf. Genesis 2:15)." This emphasis on the dreamer's passivity, which presented him as an instrument that conveyed messages from authoritative beings and voices, reinforced the claim to a revelation from an outside source. Nevertheless, the Announcement included some active descriptions ("I started digging"; "I entered"; "I kept on going"), which underlined the personal and spontaneous nature of the inspiration and which foreshadow the initiative and activity involved in establishing the site—beginning with writing the announcement.

After the first dream, Ya'ish did not again go through the Gate of Paradise. In other words, the dream was, for him, a miraculous initiation dream, a one-time event. Instead, he received oral messages that highlighted the site's holiness, until it was finally identified. These messages, each with a ceremonial opening, echoed classic biblical revelations, beginning with Jacob's dream (which also centered on a wondrous gate— "the gate of heaven," Gen. 28:17), through Moses at the burning bush, to Samuel's initiation dream at Shilo. The link to these two latter events can be seen in the phonetic similarity between the Hebrew word for "listen," *tishma*, and God's address to these prophets by their names, "*Moshe, Moshe*" (Ex. 3:4) and "*Shmuel, Shmuel*" (I Sam. 3:10). The link to the episode of the burning bush can also be seen in the similarity of the injunctions: "the place where I stood is a holy place," the voices told Ya'ish; like the admonition to Moses in Exodus 3:5: "the place where you stand is holy ground."

The revelatory sequence reached its apex at the end of the third week, when the identity of the place was conveyed to Ya'ish directly. The fact that this peak experience took place in waking reality granted it additional authority. Note the timing of the revelation—a Sabbath eve at the end of Elul, the month of penitence that leads to the High Holidays. This, together with the activities that preceded the revelation—evening prayer in the synagogue, the *Kiddush* ritual, and Sabbath meal—converged to produce an apposite backdrop for the revelation. The revelation occurred at an intersection of sacred time, sacred space, and appropriate ritual activity (Eliade 1959).

2. Meir's Dream

I am walking near Kittan (a local textile factory) juncture, on the old road to Beit-She'an. There was some sort of hut, and I saw someone there, looking like a religious kibbutz member, with *kova tembel* on his head (a typical Israeli hat, one of the Israel's national symbols in its first years). He was sitting there, and I saw myself as if I were going to work (in Kittan). He says to me: "Shalom Meir, how are you?" and I reply: "Shalom, what are you doing here?" And he points at this house (Yaish's), toward the *wadi*, indicating that they are working there with compressors, digging some sort of a stream. I ask him why, and he says to me: "Look, the stream as it exists today, the rain always blocks it. The passage they dig, it's in the direction of this (Yaish's) house." And I ask him: "What happened?" And he says: "Look, here it always overflows; that is, it disrupts the traffic and all this. So we would like to dig a stream here." And he shows me how they work.

Suddenly I meet another person, and he also asks me how I am. And the place is full of trees; really, trees all over, and people are coming out of the place, old-timers, like Yemenite Jews. And a young man was standing there, like I told you before, a kibbutz member with *kova tembel*. And I ask him: "Who are these people?" And he replies: "This is an old *moshav* (a semi-cooperative village), and in the morning every one is going on his work." And I see them, one with a basket, another with a bicycle, etc. I asked him: Can I see this?" And he says: "Sure." I entered that place and, instead of seeing some sort of a *moshav*, I saw something like his (Yaish's) house.

And I see something like a hospital, a Sick-Fund clinic, girls with white gowns, all this. And I see a man sitting there, with three bottles of wine near him, and inside the bottles there are mirtles. I ask him: "Tell me, are these mirtles? I would like to ask you a question." And this is what I asked him: "Why doesn't every plant succeed?" He replied: "Look, this is a secret I can't divulge."

And I see the people, like sick people, sitting there, as in a Sick-fund clinic. And he tells them to take some arak from the bottles, as if they threw away (the pills) ...As if they took some pills or something, and now they don't take these pills anymore. And he gives them some arak to drink, this is their medicine. And I ask them: "Well, how do you feel?" And they say: "All the pain that we had – with the stuff he has given us, it's O. K., it's passes away."

And I go on and I see a third man, and I ask him: "What do you plant here?" And he says, "Look mister, here, near the entrance to Beit-She'an, we already planted something one year ago, but the inhabitants spoiled what we had planted. Then I say: "You should blame no one. You informed us neither by letters nor through the Ministry of Religion or the local municipality." Then he says: "You'll receive a letter and then you'll know." That's what he said to me.

Exegesis: In contrast with Ya'ish's dreams, which take place in a contextual vacuum, Meir's dream involved places and characters from Beit She'an and its environs—the Kitan junction (the location of the factory where Meir worked), a man from a religious kibbutz (of which there are several just south of Beit She'an (, an old Yemenite *moshav*, a clinic, and of course Ya'ish's home, where the dreamer was headed. The diversion of the creek towards the house signaled the identity of the site—Genesis 2:10 states that "a river went out of Eden to water the garden." The creek supplied the water for the sapling to grow, the sapling symbolizing the shrine. In the prosaic municipal context in which the dreamer lived, the new road, meant to enable easy, unobstructed access by car to the holy site, signified a wish that word of the site spread and that it become more popular. The excavation work itself may have signified laying the foundations and the development of infrastructure for construction on the site, and perhaps also unearthing the opening (in the dream, the "crossing"), the heart of the site. (Meir was in fact a vocal supporter of a proposal to conduct archaeological excavations at the site.) The figures he met indicated that, for Meir, the way to the Gate of Paradise, which ended in a development town inhabited mostly by North African Jews, began in a religious (Ashkenazi) kibbutz and went through an old Yemenite *moshav*. This is more than a hint of the expansiveness of Meir's vision, which addressed the shrine's social significance (an element completely lacking in Ya'ish's revelation dreams). Indeed, in his subsequent dreams, the Gate of Paradise took on the character of an all-Israeli shrine, which drew large crowds that included familiar Israeli figures of the 1980s such as Prime Minister Menachem Begin, President Yitzhak Navon, and Israel's Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef.

The identification of the site's vicinity as a tree-lined *moshav* may have derived from the appearance of Ya'ish's street, which was lined by one-story houses surrounded by trees and shrubs. At the same time, it could refer to the tradition-

al pastoral image of the Garden of Eden and its residents (in which case "old" may refer to *tsaddiqim*). The dream transition from Ya'ish's home to the adjacent medical clinic probably derives from the functional similarity between the two institutions, which were competing centers of healing, but it also derived from the physical proximity between them in waking reality. Beyond the presentation of the shrine as a place of healing, the conjunction between the two made it possible to display the superiority of the traditional over the modern system: the *araq* and myrtle replaced the pills as the preferred medicine.

The optimism that the dream projected was accompanied by apprehension and uncertainty about the realization of the vision, summed up in the key question, "why doesn't every planting succeed?" The question's importance was prefigured in its formal prelude: "'I want to ask a question.' This is what I asked," as it was in the mystery surrounding the reply. The answer came from a third person, who appeared in the dream soon before its end. He said that the sapling—the holy site—had already been planted a year before at the entrance to Beit She'an (Ya'ish lived close to the town's western entrance), but that the inhabitants "ruined it" (were not worthy?). Meir's attempts to validate the revelation, which in the real world led him to take upon himself to apply to well-known rabbis and to suggest archaeological excavations at the site, are expressed here in his longing for a concrete sign that the sapling had taken root. The references to the town council and the Ministry of Religion as "addressees" in the matter suggest these institutions' reluctance to recognize the shrine in the absence of corroboration other than the dreams. The promise, at the end of a dream, that a letter would arrive probably referred to the Announcement to the Public that Ya'ish disseminated throughout Beit She'an; indeed, Meir's dream may well have catalyzed it.

From the perspective of the dream as a whole, it looks as if the three figures that guided Meir along his way to the shrine all represent the site's patron, Elijah the Prophet. In Jewish folklore, Elijah often appears incognito, in the guise of a variety of characters. This can explain his manifestation as a religious kibbutznik in a cloth cap. The fact that the first two figures greeted the dreamer is of great significance in this context, because encounters with Elijah in which he greets those who encounter him on the road are considered to be of greater value than those in which there is no verbal interaction with him.

In conclusion, clearly Meir's vision placed Ya'ish's revelation experience centrally on the plane of community and the collective. It imbued the revelation with meaning deriving from its local context in Beit She'an. The dream displayed the huge importance Meir ascribed to the site as a center of healing and renewal, as well as his intense hope to play a central role in its development and promotion.

3. Rachel's Dream

I dreamed that I go to Yaish's house and I stand before the gate there. I knock on the door and a tiny old man with a hat comes out. I ask him: 'Where is Yaish?' He says: 'Yaish isn't here, I replace him, I take care of the house. What do you want?' I say: 'I came because I don't feel well, I have problems with my pregnancy, give me some <u>arak</u> from the place.' Then he asks me: 'Did you take a (ritual) bath?' And I know that only tomorrow I should take the bath (indicating the regaining of purity after the menstrual period). I say: 'No, only tomorrow I go.' He says: No! I don't agree, no one will enter this place without taking the ritual bath.' I say to him: 'But Yaish, whenever I ask him, says that I don't have to take the bath if I am clean.' He says, waving his hand: 'No, you are not allowed to enter! and Yaish should know that from this day on no woman would enter this place without taking the ritual bath first.' I said O. K. He didn't let me in. He stood with me at the entrance. Then he says: 'Wait here, I'll bring you something.' He gave me a glass of <u>arak</u> and an orange, and I went home.

And my mother – I lost her when I was 14. And then I see her waiting for me at home. She says: 'Where have you been? How come you've disappeared. I have been waiting for you for so long.' I told her: 'Mother, we have a place, what shall I say, in that house every wish is granted. She said: 'Come on, take me there, to that place. I took her there. And I saw her standing, holding a baby and feeding him with milk.

<u>Exegesis</u>: The dream is divided into two separate but thematically related parts. As in most of her dream visits to the site, here too Rachel arrived as a supplicant, with an actual life problem, related to her pregnancy. She met the gatekeeper of the site, apparently a representation of Elijah, and asked him for a remedy, some *araq* from the place. The *tsaddiq*'s refusal to let her in because she had not immersed herself may have indicated a sense of guilt concerning her level of religious observance. Following her marriage Rachel moved away from religion, but after a while she repented and adopted a more religious lifestyle, to her husband's chagrin. The emergence of the Gate of Paradise in her neighborhood, and Ya'ish's explicit demand that she become fully observant, reinforced her existing tendency towards religiosity, and served as a major source of support for her in her contention with her husband. In the end, her husband accepted the religious lifestyle that Rachel instituted in their home. It may be that the episode in the dream had to do with this increased observance. The story also contained a reproach to Ya'ish for not enforcing more strictly the demand that female visitors be ritually pure. The bitter pill of being refused entry was ameliorated by the fact that Rachel became a mediator between the *tsaddiq* and Ya'ish. Her status and close relationship with the *tsaddiq* is indicated by the *araq* and orange she re-

ceives—another expression of oral nourishment, and an assurance that her difficult pregnancy, the reason for her visit to the site, would end well. (This may reflect the popular belief that a pregnant woman should be given everything she craves—see Bab. Talmud Yoma 72a.)

The second part of the dream was brief but striking, because Rachel met her late mother. Her mother's words, "Where did you vanish, my sweet? I've been waiting for you for so long," seem to be manifestly a projection of Rachel's sense of loss—her mother left her when she was young and needed her most. The dynamic connection between this reunification with her mother and the Gate of Paradise became concrete when the two of them visited the site together. The moving conclusion displayed an explicit oral wish. The baby may have represented the dreamer returning to her mother's bosom (and milk), thus receiving compensation for her painful loss. Or maybe it was an infant her mother never saw in life—the baby born to Rachel, healthy and whole, after her visit to the site. Either way, it is clear that, for Rachel, the shrine was a kind of protective mother surrogate.

The dream's two parts have clear parallels. In both, the dreamer faces parental figures—the *tsaddiq*, a classic father figure, and her mother. In both, these figures appear as nurturers and nourishers and, in both, the sustenance that the figures grant is directed at the baby's health, before or after his birth.

Andreas Kraft
Jüdische Identität im Liminalen und das dialogische Prinzip bei Martin Buber

Einleitung

Wir leben in Zeiten, in denen die Frage nach den Möglichkeiten und Formen von Dialog von besonderer sozialer Dringlichkeit zu sein scheint. Der vorliegende Beitrag möchte versuchen, durchaus kritisch die Frage zu stellen ob und wie Bubers Modell des Dialogs hier nutzbar gemacht werden kann. Der kritische Blick wird dabei über einen vermeintlichen Umweg erreicht: In einem ersten Schritt möchte ich den Einfluss aufzeigen, den Martin Buber auf die Theorien des Ethnologen Victor Turner hatte. Mit den Einsichten Victor Turners in die Funktion von Passageriten möchte ich dann – in einem zweiten Schritt – zur Person und Werk Martin Bubers zurückkehren und ein Problem thematisieren, dass sich dort ergibt, wo geglaubt wird, dass Gesellschaft durch die Verwirklichung einer durch Dialog getragenen Gemeinschaft abgelöst werden kann.

Die Communitas im Werk Victor Turners

Das Leben und die biologische Entwicklung führen das Individuum durch verschiedene Phasen des Wandels, die auf sozialer Ebene einen Wechsel der Gruppenzugehörigkeit nach sich ziehen. Geburt, der Eintritt in das Erwachsenenleben, Heirat und Tod sind Phasen, in denen ein Individuum von einer Gruppenzugehörigkeit zu einer anderen wechseln muss, ohne dass dieser Prozess die stabilen statischen Gruppengrenzen auflösen darf. Der Anthropologe Van Gennep erkannte in seinem berühmten Buch „Les rites de passage"[1] in den sogenannten Übergangsriten ein Verfahren, das jene stabilitätsgefährdende Dynamik, die im Wechsel liegt, so kanalisiert, dass die soziale Ordnung nicht in Frage gestellt wird.

   Am Beispiel der räumlichen Übergänge arbeitet er ein dreistufiges Model der Übergangsriten heraus: nach einer Trennungsphase, in der das Individuum sich vom eigenen Territorium löst, tritt es in einer sakralen Schwellenphase in einen Bereich der Undefiniertheit und Neutralität ein, der dann zugunsten einer An-

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[1] Zitiert nach Arnold van Gennep, *Übergangsriten*. (Les rites de passage). Aus dem Französischen von Klaus Schomburg und Sylvia M. Schomburg-Scherff (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 1999).

gliederungsphase an ein neues Territorium wieder verlassen wird. „Jeder, der sich von der einen Sphäre in die andere begibt, befindet sich eine Zeitlang sowohl räumlich als auch magisch-religiös in einer besonderen Situation: er schwebt zwischen zwei Welten. Diese Situation bezeichne ich als Schwellenphase."[2] Turner knüpft direkt an van Gennep und dessen Untersuchungen zum Übergangritus an und widmet sich besonders der mittleren Phase, also jene des Übergangs, die er als liminal bezeichnet.

Die Initianden unterliegen in dieser liminalen Phase einem „Nivellierungs"-Prozess, an dessen Ende sie nur noch mit „Zeichen ihres liminalen Nicht-Status" markiert sind.[3] Sie verlieren den Namen, sie werden anonymisiert bezüglich der Kleidung oder auch des Geschlechts und fallen damit aus dem hierarchisch gegliederten System politischer, rechtlicher und wirtschaftlicher Positionen heraus. Damit besitzt das Schwellenwesen „keinen Status, kein Eigentum, keine Insignien, keine weltliche Kleidung, also keinerlei Dinge (...), die auf einen Rang, eine Rolle oder Position im Verwandtschaftsystem verweisen."[4] In jener Phase der Loslösung aus den Verbindlichkeiten der normalen Realität wird der Initiand in magische und künstlerische Verfahren eingewiesen, die ihm Elemente einer Ordnung an die Hand geben, mit denen er in spielerischer Weise neue Kombinationen erproben kann, ohne dass dies zu einer Gefahr für die außerrituelle Gesellschaft werden könnte. „Mit anderen Worten, in der Liminalität ‚spielen' die Menschen mit den Elementen des Vertrauten und verfremden sie. Und aus den unvorhergesehenen Kombinationen vertrauter Elemente entsteht Neues."[5]

Für jenen Bereich, in dem Strukturelemente der nicht-liminalen Sphäre einer spielerischen Neukombination unterworfen werden, führt Turner den Begriff Antistruktur ein. Brian Sutton-Smith hat das dahinterstehende Konzept übernommen, doch dafür einen anderen Begriff, den des „protostrukturellen Systems", vorgeschlagen. Die Liminalität ist als protostrukturelles System hier „gleichsam das Samenbeet kultureller Kreativität."[6] In der Liminalität werden nun Erfahrungen von Gemeinschaft gemacht, die auf die umliegende soziale Struktur innovativ wirken können.

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2 Van Gennep, *Übergangsriten*, 29.
3 Victor Turner; „Das Liminale und das Liminoide in Spiel, 'Fluß' und Ritual. Ein Essay zur vergleichenden Symbologie," in: ders.; *Vom Ritual zum Theater. Der Ernst des menschlichen Spiels* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1989), 38.
4 Victor Turner, *Das Ritual. Struktur und Anti-Struktur* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 1989), 95.
5 Turner; „Das Liminale", 40.
6 Ibid., 41.

Neben dem Liminalen führt Turner einen weiteren Begriff ein: die *Communitas*. Sie ist in der liminalen Sphäre die genuine Form der zwischenmenschlichen Begegnung.

Den Begriff leitet er von Martin Bubers Terminus der Gemeinschaft ab, den er als Sozialwissenschaftler nicht voll anerkennen mag, aber auf den er als „einen begabten einheimischen Informanten"[7] zurückgreift. Buber selbst bezieht sich auf Ferdinand Tönnies, von dem die Dichotomie von Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft stammt,[8] aber auch auf Max Weber und dessen Unterscheidung von Vergemeinschaftung und Vergesellschaftung: Als Vergemeinschaftung bezeichnet Weber jene soziale Beziehung, die auf „subjektiv *gefühlter* (affektueller oder traditioneller) *Zusammengehörigkeit* der Beteiligten beruht".[9] „Vergemeinschaftung kann auf jeder Art von affektueller oder emotionaler oder aber traditioneller Grundlage beruhen: eine pneumatische Brüdergemeinde, eine erotische Beziehung, ein Pietätsverhältnis, eine ‚nationale' Gemeinschaft, eine kameradschaftlich zusammenhaltende Truppe."[10] Demgegenüber beruht die Vergesellschaftung „auf rational (wert- oder zweckrational) motivierten Interessen*ausgleich* oder ebenso motivierter Interessen*verbindung*."[11]

Buber stellt nun fest, daß Webers These, die Gemeinschaft würde über das Band der geteilten Emotionen sich bilden, nicht genüge[12] und führt das Beispiel eine Gruppe von Menschen an, die aufgrund einer leidenschaftlichen Unzufriedenheit gegenüber den Zuständen sich in einem revolutionären „Verein" zusammenschließen: „Es kann sein, daß eine Gemeinschaft aus ihm (dem Verein; A. K.) wird, aber dadurch, daß er die Gefühle der zusammengeschlossenen Personen zusammengelegt hat, dadurch ist zwischen diesen Personen Gemeinschaft noch lange nicht entstanden."[13] Buber sieht in der Gemeinschaft eben nicht nur einen „Gefühlsverband" sondern eine „Lebensverband."[14] Ein solcher Lebensverband beruht nicht auf einem Zusammenschluss aufgrund partieller Gemein-

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7 Turner, *Ritual*, 124.

8 Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979).

9 Max Weber; „Soziologische Grundbegriffe," in ders., *Methodologische Schriften* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer 1968), 321.

10 Ibid., 322.

11 Ibid., 321.

12 Martin Buber; „Wie kann Gemeinschaft werden?". In: ders., *Pfade in Utopia. Über Gemeinschaft und deren Verwirklichung*. 3. Auflage (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1985), 281 f .; siehe auch den Aufsatz gleichen Titels: Martin Buber; „Wie kann Gemeinschaft werden?," in ders. *Der Jude und sein Judentum. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden*. 2. durchges. Aufl. (Köln: J. Melzer, 1993), 352.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

samkeiten, wie Emotionen oder – im Falle der Gesellschaft – Interessen, sondern hier schließen sich Menschen in ihrer Ganzheit zusammen zu einer Gruppe, die mit der „ganzen Existenz bejaht, bewährt, gelebt" wird.[15]

Die Gesellschaft ist dagegen für Buber ein mechanischer Typ des Zusammenlebens, eine „geordnete Getrenntheit, äußerlich zusammengehalten durch Zwang, Vertrag, Konvention, öffentliche Meinung"[16], die sich aus der ursprünglichen Form des organischen Zusammenlebens, der Gemeinschaft entwickelt hat.

> Die Gemeinschaft ist Ausdruck und Ausbildung des Ursprünglichen, die Totalität des Menschen vertretenden, naturhaft einheitlichen, bildungsgetragenen Willens, die Gesellschaft des differenzierten, vom abgelösten Denken erzeugten, aus der Totalität gebrochenen, vorteilssüchtigen.[17]

Während somit bei Max Weber Vergemeinschaftung und Vergesellschaftung als zwei mögliche Formen der sozialen Gruppenbildung mehr oder minder wertfrei nebeneinander stehen, hebt Buber auf eine deutliche Wertung und Hierarchisierung ab: die Gemeinschaft ist hier eine ‚natürliche', dem Menschen eigentlich angemessenste Form des Zusammenlebens, die von denen in der modernen, industriellen Gesellschaft herrschenden Bedingungen massiv bedroht wird.

Auf diese Vorstellung der Gemeinschaft als genuin menschliche Begegnung, die nur jenseits der Überformungen durch die Gesellschaft möglich ist, greift Turner zurück, wenn er mit dem Begriff der Communitas die Erfahrung des Kollektivs im Liminalen beschreibt: Communitas tritt nur dort auf, „wo Sozialstruktur nicht ist."[18] Es ergeben sich somit zwei Modelle von Sozialbeziehungen:

> Das erste Modell stellt Gesellschaft als strukturiertes, differenziertes und oft hierarchisch gegliedertes System politischer, rechtlicher und wirtschaftlicher Positionen mit vielen Arten der Bewertung dar, die die Menschen im Sinne eines ‚mehr' oder ‚weniger' trennen. Das zweite Modell, das in der Schwellenphase deutlich erkennbar wird, ist das der Gesellschaft als unstrukturierte oder rudimentär strukturierte und relativ undifferenzierte Gemeinschaft, Communitas, oder auch als Gemeinschaft Gleicher, die sich gemeinsam der allgemeinen Autorität der rituellen Ältesten unterwerfen.[19]

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15 Ibid., 353.
16 Martin Buber; „Gemeinschaft". In: ders., *Pfade in Utopia. Über Gemeinschaft und deren Verwirklichung*. 3, erheblich erweiterte Neuausgabe (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1985), 264.
17 Ibid., 263.
18 Turner, *Ritual*, 124. Zur Communitas siehe auch Victor Turner; „Variationds on a Theme of Liminality," in: ders., *Blazing the Trail. Way Marks in the Exploration of Symbols*, ed., Edith Turner (Tucson & London: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 58 – 61.
19 Turner, *Ritual*, 96.

In der Communitas erleben sich die Individuen in einer Einheit, die alle Menschen jenseits der Hierarchien vereint. Zentral für die Begegnung der Individuen in der Communitas ist, so Turner, der Dialog im Sinne Bubers: im Liminalen entsteht im Dialog ein wahres Ich-Du Verhältnis des „Zwischenmenschlichen"[20], bei dem sich zwei Individuen als ganze und konkrete Menschen begegnen. „Nur wenn ich mit einem Anderen wesentlich zu tun bekomme, so also, daß er gar nicht mehr ein Phänomen meines Ich, dafür aber mein Du ist, nur dann erfahre ich die Wirklichkeit des Mit-einem-redens – in der unverbrüchlichen Echtheit der Gegenseitigkeit".[21]

Das dialogische Prinzip, das darauf abzielt, im Gegenüber ein wesenhaftes Du zu erfahren, ist also der Versuch, eine Kommunikation jenseits der sozialen Überformungen, der politischen Zwänge, der Ideologien und Dogmen zu ermöglichen. In diesem Dialog soll der Mensch für einen Augenblick aus der Gesellschaft sich befreien und in eine Gemeinschaft eintreten. In dieser Begegnung entsteht ein „wesenhaftes Wir"[22], das im Zentrum der Communitaserfahrung steht.

Als ein Bereich des von strukturellen Zwängen befreiten menschlichen Zusammenlebens ist die *Communitas* für Turner auch ein Ort, an dem besonders Utopien der Gesellschaft sich entwickeln können, die auf das Zusammenleben der Individuen abzielen. Die *Communitas* entwickelt hier ein regeneratives Potential, das auf die Gesellschaft wirkt und diese auf jene idealen Grundlagen menschlichen Zusammenlebens immer wieder zurückverweist, die in der Strukturierung gesellschaftlichen Lebens verlorengehen. „Keine Gesellschaft kann ohne diese Dialektik auskommen."[23]

Martin Buber mit Victor Turner gelesen

Ich möchte mich mit dem Konzept von Communitas als Form der dialogischen Begegnung von Menschen jenseits einer Überformung durch soziale und politische Strukturen und Hierarchien nun Bubers Leben und Werk zuwenden. Die Frage nach Identität und Gemeinschaft ist eines der zentralen Themen mit denen sich Buber ein Leben lang beschäftigt hat. Von Interesse ist nun, wie bei dem oben skizzierten Verständnis von Gemeinschaft, das alle äußeren sozial-hierarchischen Eigenschaften hinter sich lassen will, Identität überhaupt möglich ist. Um Bubers Antwort auf diese Frage zu zeigen, muss ich kurz zurück in seine vor-dialogische

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20 Ibid., 132.
21 Martin Buber, *Das Dialogische Prinzip*. 8. Aufl. (Gerlingen: Lambert Schneider, 1997), 216, von Turner zitiert in *Ritual*, 133.
22 Turner, „Das Liminale", 72.
23 Turner, *Ritual*, 126.

Zeit gehen, hier besonders auf die Prager Reden, die 1909 und 1910 entstanden sind und die eine große Wirkung auf das postassimilatorische Judentum hatten.

Buber formuliert hier programmatisch eine notwendige Besinnung auf das Urjudentum. Damit meint er aber nicht einfach ein Wiederaufgreifen alter Traditionen, sondern vielmehr ein Besinnen auf ein „unterirdisches Judentum,"[24] das über all die Jahrhunderte des Exils und der damit verbundenen Entfremdung der Juden von ihren Quellen weiter einen Traditionsfaden aufrechterhielt, an den man nun anknüpfen soll. Dabei sind die Blutsbande von entscheidender Bedeutung, denn diese gewährleisten, dass jeder einzelne Jude, und sei er noch so sehr von den Bedingungen der Exilheimat in seiner jüdischen Identität überformt, wieder mit seiner Existenz an diese Tradition anknüpfen kann. Zugleich macht Buber aber auch deutlich, dass er jegliche Religionsgesetze und Riten, die sonst die Tradition ausmachen und damit identitätsstabilisierend sind, zurückweist: für Buber hat die Rabbinische Tradition vielmehr ebenso entfremdend von den wahren Quellen des Judentums gewirkt, wie die Assimilation.

Bubers kritisches Verhältnis zur rabbinischen Tradition läßt sich besonders dann klar fassen, wenn man Tradition als „Sonderfall von Kommunikation" versteht, „bei der Nachrichten nicht wechselseitig und horizontal, ausgetauscht, sondern vertikal entlang einer Generationslinie weitergegeben werden."[25] Entscheidend bei diesem Begriff von Tradition als Kommunikation sind die Strategien und interpretativen Verfahren, die notwendig sind, um die zu kommunizierende Information über die Zeit und Generationen hinweg gesichert transportieren zu können. Bubers gespannte Haltung gegenüber der jüdischen Tradition kann nun hier als eine Kritik an den Autoritäten verstanden werden, die eben jene Sicherung des Traditionsstroms durch Kanonisierung und Auslegung übernehmen.

Bubers Traditions-Kritik setzt genau an dem Übergang von Prophetie zum Rabbinertum an: Hier konstatiert Buber einen Konflikt zwischen Religion und Religiosität[26], der nicht nur im Judentum zu beobachten ist: die Religiosität, die als Gefühl, als Verlangen und Willen ein „wahrhaft Zeugendes" ist, droht zur Religion, d.h. eine Sammlung von statischen Regeln und Bräuchen zu petrifizieren und dadurch das Lebendige im Glauben zu ersticken. Wenn Buber bezüglich der jüdischen Religion behauptet, sie sei ein „offizielles Scheinjudentum" bei dem es um die „Knechtung der Religiosität" gehe, so gehören diese scharfen Worte „in die

24 Martin Buber, „Jüdische Religiosität," in: ders., *Der Jude und sein Judentum. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden*. 2. durchges. Aufl. (Gerlingen: Lambert Schneider, 1993), 69.
25 Aleida Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition. Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer* (Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 1999), 64.
26 Siehe hierzu besonders in Bubers Aufsatz „Jüdische Religiosität," in: ders., *Der Jude und sein Judentum. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden*, 64 f.

Sturm- und Drang-Phase des jugendlichen Revolutionärs,"[27] wie Dafna Mach richtig erkennt. Auch wenn er später diese Dichotomie nicht mehr so radikal formuliert, so bleibt doch die These eines problematischen Verhältnisses von Glauben und Glaubensregel bestimmend für Bubers weiteres Denken. Seine Religionskritik, in der sich seine „völlig mangelnde Beziehung zum Kult"[28] ausdrückt, ist hier deutlich als *Traditions*kritik erkennbar.

Als Beispiel möchte ich hier nun kurz auf den Text „Jüdisch Leben," einen Dialog verweisen, den Buber 1918 verfaßte: in einem Gespräch versucht ein als „Führer" bezeichneter Lehrer einem „Knaben" zu erschließen, was es bedeutet, jüdisch zu leben. Der „Führer" bestimmt nun das, was „jüdisch leben" ist im Vergleich zum „deutsch leben": „deutsch leben, das heißt nichts anderes, als wahrhaft und vollkommen in deutscher Gemeinschaft, in Gemeinschaft mit den Deutschen aller Zeiten und mit den Deutschen über den Zeiten leben, mit den Menschen, Toten, Lebenden und Ungeborenen, und durch sie mit der ewigen Idee."[29]

Jüdisch Leben ist nun genauso durch das Zusammenleben in jüdischer Gemeinschaft bestimmt, die nun aber im eigenen Seelenleben wiedergefunden werden muss: es geht für den Juden darum, die Stimme im Blut wiederzufinden, denn so kann in Gemeinschaft mit den Juden der Vergangenheit und Zukunft leben. Der Talmud als eben jener Text, der gerade für die Sicherung des jüdischen Lebens durch die Traditionsvermittlung über die Jahrhunderte hinweg verantwortlich war, findet hier in diesem Buberschen Modell nicht einmal Erwähnung. Der Lehrer ist hier keine Autorität, die die Gesetzte vermittelt, sondern nur ein Helfer, der dem Einzelnen auf seinem individuellen Weg Hilfestellung leistet. Dass dies den Einzelnen oft jenseits der klaren Gesetze auch in eine Orientierungslosigkeit entlässt, haben Anhänger Bubers kritisiert:

> Aber vom Lehrer erwarten wir, daß er Anweisungen dafür gibt, wie wir den Weg gehen sollen. (...) Buber zeigt uns das Ziel, er zeigt uns in seinen dialogischen Schriften die großen Gefahren der Entpersönlichung unseres Lebens und des Verschwindens des echten Gesprächs, und doch vermissen wir oft die führende Hand.[30]

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27 Dafna Mach, „Erneuerung des Judentums," in: Werner Licharz, Heinz Schmidt (Hg.), *Martin Buber. Internationales Symposium zum 20. Todestag*. Bd. 1. Dialogik und Dialektik. Arnoldshainer Texte; Bd. 57 (Frankfurt a.M.: Haag und Herschen Verlag, 1989), 187.

28 Mach, „Erneuerung," 194.

29 Martin Buber, „Jüdisch Leben," in: ders., *Der Jude und sein Judentum. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden*. 2. durchges. Aufl. (Gerlingen: Lambert Schneider, 1993), 679.

30 Hugo Bergmann, „Martin Buber und die Mystik," in: Paul Arthur Schilpp u. Maurice Friedman (Hg.), *Martin Buber* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), 271 f.

Bubers Entgegnung auf diesen Vorwurf macht deutlich, wie wichtig ihm die Selbstbestimmtheit des Einzelnen auf seinem Weg zum Judentum ist:

> Freunde und Gegner halten mir vor, daß ich weder einen überlieferten Zusammenhang von Gesetzen und Vorschriften als absolut gültig anerkenne, noch aber auch ein eigenes System der Ethik zu bieten habe. In der Tat, das Manko besteht: und es ist mit der Ganzheit meiner Erkenntnis so eng verbunden, daß eine Ausfüllung undenkbar ist. Wenn ich eine versuche, würde ich damit den Kern meiner Anschauung verletzen.
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> ‚Vom Lehrer' sagte ein Freund, ‚erwarten wir, daß er Anweisungen dafür gibt, wie wir den Weg gehen sollen.' Ich trete eben dieser Erwartung entgegen. Die Richtung soll man vom Lehrer empfangen, nicht aber die Weise, in der man dieser Richtung zustreben soll: dies muß jeder selber entdecken und erwerben, jeder die seine, in einer Arbeit, die das beste Vermögen einer Seele anfordert, ihm aber auch einen Schatz schenken wird, der für ein Dasein hinreicht. Soll ihm dieses große Werk abgenommen werden? Oder mute ich etwa dem Einzelnen zuviel zu? Wie denn als durch solche Zumutung können wir erfahren, wieviel der Einzelne vermag?[31]

An dieser Stelle wird deutlich, wie sehr Bubers Rückbesinnung auf jüdische Wurzeln zugleich die Selbstbestimmtheit des Individuums in der Moderne zu verteidigen sucht. Für Buber ist der Glaube an die Freiheit des Individuums nicht ohne Weiteres mit der Autorität jener Dritten zu vereinbaren, die über Jahrhunderte hinweg versuchten, die ursprüngliche religiöse Erfahrung durch verschiedenste Abschottungen und Einfassungen institutionell zu schützen.

Gerade in dieser Zurückweisung der Autorität der Tradition lag wohl eine Stärke des Buberschen Verständnisses von jüdischer Identität: mit diesem Judentum, das den Ritus und das jüdische Gesetzt marginalisierte, konnten sich eben jene bürgerlichen, post-assimilatorischen Studenten, die den Kontakt mit dem Judentum verloren hatten, wieder identifizieren. In seiner Halacha-Kritik ist Buber eben auch ein typischer Vertreter des emanzipierten Bürgertums und als solcher konnte er in seinen Texten ein neues, annehmbares Identifikationsangebot machen. Michael Weinrich sieht in Bubers Schriften ein Ringen um eine Erneuerung des Judentums, das den Arbeiten Schleiermachers zum Christentum nicht unähnlich ist: bei beiden geht es darum, den Glauben an die Moderne und das veränderte Selbstverständnis des Individuums anzupassen: „die rückhaltlose Betonung der individuellen Freiheit und die damit begründete Souveränität gegenüber allen Traditionen"[32] macht eine Neubestimmung der Religion nötig. Zugleich ist dies auch bei Buber ein Versuch, das

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31 Martin Buber; „Antwort," in: Paul Arthur Schilpp u. Maurice Friedman (Hg.), *Martin Buber*, 615.

32 Michael Weinrich; „Zwischen den Welten. Martin Buber – eine deutsch-jüdische Symbiose?" in: Werner Licharz (Hg.), *Martin Bubers Erbe für unsere Zeit*. Bd. 1: Ein Textbuch anläßlich des 20. Todestages Martin Bubers. Einführungs- und Begleitband zum internationalen Buber-Symposium 1985. Arnoldshainer Texte, Bd. 31 (Frankfurt a. M. : Haag und Herschen Verlag, 1985), 113.

Judentum und dessen zeitlose Substanz zu retten, ohne dabei sich weder der Geschichtlichkeit mit ihrem ewigen Wandel noch der Tradition als das vermeintlich Unflexible und Unzeitgemäße auszuliefern. Ähnlich wie Overbeck und Kierkegaard, die durch eine existentielle Neudeutung jenes vermeintlich von seinen Quellen abgeschnittene Christentum revitalisieren wollten, setzt Buber also genaugenommen auf Existenz statt Tradition.[33]

An dieser Frage nach jüdischer Identität, die Buber formuliert, möchte ich nun ein Problem skizzieren, das sich dann eventuell ergibt, wenn Identität aus dem dialogischen Verständnis von Gemeinschaft heraus entwickelt werden soll. Bei Buber ist die jüdische Identitätszuordnung weitgehend von Ritus und Gesetz befreit. Ein Mangel an verbindlichen Glaubensregeln führt bei einer anarchistisch zu nennenden Religiosität leicht zu einem „Mangel an Identifikation."[34] Dies erklärt warum bald von Bubers Schülern in der Kibbuz-Bewegung in moderater Form ein Brauchtum wieder eingeführt wurde. Buber selbst vertraute ganz auf eine genuin jüdische Gemeinschafts-Erfahrung, die alle einte, doch diese Erfahrung scheint es nicht im ,luftleeren Raum' jenseits von normativen Setzungen zu geben. Es bedarf wohl gewisser Gerüste von Ritus und Gesetz, um eine gemeinsame Erfahrung, die identitätsstiftend sein kann, zu ermöglichen: ohne solche Gerüste wird es damit auch für manchen problematisch, sich noch als Jude zu bestimmen und zu erleben. In letzter Konsequenz kann man darum auch die Religiosität, die Buber sein Leben lang verfolgte, als eine beschreiben, die letztendlich zwischen den Religionen beweglich bleibt: dies machte unter anderem seine „Lehre" so problematisch für das Judentum. Der biographische Buber befand sich sein Leben lang in einer Wanderschaft zwischen den Religionen und Kulturen, die dazu führte, daß er in keiner ganz zu Hause war, so Michael Weinrich.[35] Eben diese Existenz zwischen den Kulturen findet sich in seinem Denken wieder und ist maßgeblich für die traditionsablehnende Haltung mitverantwortlich.

Das Problem, das ich hier in Bubers antitraditionalistischem Denken zwischen Gemeinschaftserfahrung und religiöser Identitätsbildung skizziert habe, tritt auch dort auf, wo es um säkulare Identitätsbildung, etwa eine politische Identität geht. Eine Gemeinschaft, die im Moment der dialogischen Begegnung sich konstituiert, streift einen Großteil jener Strukturen ab, die gerade für die Identitätsbildung verantwortlich sind. Diese Vorstellung jüdischer Identität, die

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33 Assmann, *Zeit und Tradition*, 145 ff.

34 Pnina Navé-Levinson, „Martin Buber und das jüdische Selbstverständnis," In: *Symposium* 1: 223.

35 Weinrich, *Zwischen den Welten*, 118. Er spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von einer „Ökomenizität," und er verheimlicht nicht, dass er aus einer deutschen Post-Holocaust Position argumentiert. Für ihn als Theologe ist und bleibt Buber eine ökomenische Brücke.

Buber in seinem Werk formuliert und die er lebte, möchte ich nun als liminal bezeichnen. Es ist eine Identität, die mit dem Begriff der „heiligen Unsicherheit" beschrieben werden kann. Weinrich[36] berichtet von einem Gespräch zwischen Ernst Simon und Buber, in dem deutlich wird, dass Buber in Gesetz und Ritus eben nicht das Vertrauen findet, wie Simon. Er schreibt:

> Ein anderes Mal erzählte ich ihm von meiner persönlichen Erfahrung mit der jüdischen Lebensform. Bei aller objektiven Gefahr ihrer Versteinerung und der nicht selten auftretenden Gefahr von Zwangsneurosen sei sie mir doch zu einer täglichen Gelegenheit geworden, Gott zu dienen, auf die ich mein Vertrauen setze. ‚Genau dieses Vertrauen fehlt mir', war Bubers Antwort.[37]

Weinrich führt ein weiteres Zitat Bubers an: „ich besitze keine Sicherung gegen die Notwendigkeit, in Furcht und Zittern zu leben; ich habe nichts als die Gewißheit, daß wir an der Offenbarung teilhaben."[38] Maurice Friedman hat den „schmalen Grat,"[39] auf dem sich Buber in seinem Schaffen und mit seiner Existenz bewegt, als eines der zentralen Aspekte seines Denkens bestimmt. Jener schmale Grat ist „eine Metapher für die menschliche Existenz selbst: eine Existenz, in der man mit unsicheren Schritt geht, stets in der Gefahr, in die Abgründe zur Rechten oder zur Linken zu fallen."[40] Dieser Existenz ist eine Unsicherheit eigen, die zu einer heiligen wird, wenn man sich selbst dem Drängen verweigert, durch verbindliche Regeln und Normen aus der Angst zu stehlen, die sich angesichts einer Realität einstellt, auf die es keine einfachen Antworten gibt und in der vielleicht sogar Gott verschwunden zu sein scheint:

> The defensive man becomes literally rigid with fear. He sets between himself and the world a rigid religious dogma, a rigid system of philosophy, a rigid political belief and commitment to a group, and a rigid wall of personal values and habits. The open man, on the other hand, accepts his fear and relaxes to it. He substitutes the realism of despair, if need be, for the tension of hysteria. He meets every new situation with quiet and sureness out of the depths of his being, yet he meets it with the fear and trembling of one who has no ready-made answer to life.[41]

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36 Weinrich, *Zwischen den Welten.*
37 Simon nach Weinrich, 109.
38 Buber nach Weinrich, 110.
39 Hierzu besonders Maurice S. Friedman, *Martin Buber. The Life of Dialogue* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956), 3 – 11. Aber auch die Biographie Maurice Friedman, *Begegnung auf dem schmalen Grat. Martin Buber – ein Leben* (Münster: Agenda Verlag, 1999).
40 Ibid., 74.
41 Friedman, *Life as Dialogue*, 136.

Dies Leben in einer heiligen Unsicherheit ist als eine liminale Existenz beschreibbar, in der alles flüssig gehalten wird jenseits von vermeintlich rigid-fixierten Ordnungssystemen wie religiösen Dogmen, philosophischen Systemen oder persönlichen Werten und Gewohnheiten.

Resümee

Das dialogische Prinzip, das darauf abzielt, im Gegenüber ein wesenhaftes Du zu erfahren, ist der Versuch, eine Kommunikation jenseits der sozialen Überformungen, der politischen Zwänge, der Ideologien und Dogmen zu ermöglichen. In diesem Dialog soll der Mensch für einen Augenblick aus der Gesellschaft sich befreien und in eine Gemeinschaft eintreten.

Der Glaube, man könne Gesellschaft ganz durch Gemeinschaft ersetzen, ist wohl eine unrealistische Utopie so wie m. E. auch die Vorstellung einer als liminal zu bezeichnenden kollektiven jüdischen Identität. Für den Einzelnen, wie für Buber selbst, scheint dieser Weg einer liminalen Identität gangbar, doch wenn man die Kritik der Anhänger Bubers in Betracht zieht erscheint es fraglich, ob ein Kollektiv sich in seiner Identität zur Gänze über einen dialogischen Moment der Gemeinschaft auf Dauer stabilisieren kann. Die Gesellschaft mit all ihren negativen Seiten, die Buber und andere erkannten, scheint uns eben auch ein Korsett zu sein, das unser Leben – trotz der Gefahr von Entfremdung und Entmenschlichung – stabilisiert.

Dies bedeutet aber nicht, das wir akzeptieren müssen, dass der Dialog im Sinne Bubers und die mit ihm sich einstellende Gemeinschaft von Menschen, nur von zeit zu zeit sich quasi zufällig in unserer Gesellschaft als etwas ereignet, dass uns an das Wesen des Menschen ermahnt. Den Schluss, den man aus den Arbeiten Victor Turners vielleicht ziehen kann, ist, dass man – anstelle der utopischen Umwandlung von Gesellschaft in Gemeinschaft – besser in der Gesellschaft gezielt Orte und Momente der gemeinschaftlichen Begegnung einrichtet, also liminale Sphären, in denen, jenseits von politischen Kalkül und sozialem Zweckdenken, ein Dialog etwa zwischen verfeindeten Parteien möglich ist. Manch einen Psychologen wird eine solche Idee nicht überraschen: in therapeutischen Zusammenhängen ist es längst ein Allgemeinplatz, dass der, der im Dialog mit dem Patienten etwas bewegen will, für den Moment des Dialogs eine besondere gesicherte Sphäre schaffen muss.

Turners Arbeiten haben zudem gezeigt, dass diese liminalen Sphären, in denen die allgemein geltende soziale Ordnung aufgelöst wird, auch Räume der Kreativität sein können. In ihnen können Individuen mit den Elementen und Zeichen, die aus den gesellschaftlich geltenden sozialen Strukturen freigesetzt

sind, in experimenteller Weise neue Modelle ausprobieren. Im protostrukturellen System der liminalen Sphäre, in denen die Menschen sich im Dialog im Sinne Bubers begegnen, kann so eine Gesellschaft unter gesicherten Bedingungen mit besseren Alternativen des Zusammenlebens experimentieren. Diese liminalen Orte eines Dialogs sind dann in der Lage, innovative Impulse zu erzeugen, die auf die Gesellschaft zurückwirken und so deren Wandel vorantreiben können. Dies ist wohl eine Möglichkeit, wie Bubers Modell des Dialogs auch im 21. Jahrhundert vielleicht helfen kann, soziale Krisen zu bewältigen.

Henry Abramovitch

The Influence of Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue on Psychotherapy: His Lasting Contribution

> "I am most I when I am you."
> Paul Celan.

Introduction

I would like to begin this chapter with a cognitive exercise of what Carl Gustav Jung calls an active imagination:

> Imagine you are going to your doctor. You have a secret: You were sexually abused as a child. You are afraid that that strange feeling in your body is cancer. It is the anniversary of your father's death and you are afraid that you, too, will now die. You are anxious, uncertain whether to speak. Now imagine that the doctor hears the question you did not ask and helps you speak about what you have told no one ever before. This healer of bodies and souls listens and makes you feel understood, calmed and reassured...that you are no longer alone with this secret.

This imaginative exercise illustrates what Buber calls "healing through meeting".

Martin Buber had a lifelong concern with mental health and healing and his lasting impact on psychotherapy continues "unto this very day."[1] He did three semesters of psychiatric training under some of the foremost figures of his time, Wilhelm Wundt in Germany and Eugen Bleuler in Zurich, who was Jung's teacher and colleague. He maintained important dialogues with many major figures including Freud whom he invited to contribute to a series he was editing. He wanted to write a devastating critique of classical psychoanalysis which he felt was a perversely I-It infected enterprise, based on the inaccessibility of the analyst which blocked any real encounter. The psychoanalyst's use of transference interpretations and the "scientific" desire to investigate the unconscious prevented meeting the person who is suffering. Lou Andreas-Salome persuaded Buber from publishing it. One wonders

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1 For overview of Buber's contribution to psychotherapy, see Judith Buber Agassi, *Martin Buber on Psychology and Psychotherapy: Essays, Letters and Dialogues* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999).

if his style would have mirrored the prosaic I-It style of contemporary case reports rather than the poetry of the actual therapeutic moment.

He had a long and ambivalent relationship with Carl Jung, and his wife, the analyst Emma Jung who heard Buber speak on various occasions. In 1923, Buber spoke to the Jung Club, Zurich on the topic, "On psychologizing the world" and again at the Eranos Conference in 1934 on the theme of "to heal the 'between." One of Buber's most powerful lines is, "A soul is never sick alone, but there is always a betweenness also, a situation between it and another existing human being."[2] Likewise, genuine healing in this view can never come from self-help books. Just as one cannot mourn alone, so one cannot heal the primary world by oneself. Buber, like Freud, corresponded with Emma Jung. Later, Jung and Buber had a very public and nasty quarrel on the nature of God and religion in the public press. But that controversy aside, Buber and Jung share much more in common than Buber and Freud, or Buber and the Freudians.[3] Similar to Buber, Jung affirmed the possibility of dialogical meeting between therapist and patient, and accordingly considered how the analyst could be influenced by the therapeutic encounter as well as the patient. In his notion of the *temenos*, the Self, *the mandala*, dream work, Jung recognized the spiritual aspect of psychotherapeutic work. For Freud, religion was a childish illusion; for Jung and Buber, Freud was spiritually repressed.

One of the most fruitful connections Buber had was with Carl Rodgers, the founder of Client-Centered Psychotherapy. Buber and Rodger, in 1957, had a public encounter, now truthfully re-transcribed with commentary on both transcription/communication dynamics and content/process. This unique night of dialogue directly influenced both of their work. "[I]n his famous postscript to *I and Thou* written only months after his dialogue with Rogers, Buber wrote: "But again the specific 'healing' relation would come to an end the moment the patient thought of, and succeeded in, practicing 'inclusion' and experiencing the events from the doctor's pole as well."[4] The Buber-Rogers dialogue also played a crucial role on the impact on Rogers's thinking as he himself described

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2 Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958)142.

3 See Barbara Stevens, "The Martin Buber-Carl Jung Disputations: Protecting the Sacred in the Battle for the Boundaries of Analytical Psychology." *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 46 (2001): 455 – 91; Arie Sborowtz, "Beziehung und Bestimmung. Die Lehren von Martin Buber und C. G. Jung in ihrem Vehaltnäs zueinaner," *Psyche* Bd. 11 (1955): 9 ff.; Hans Trueb, Han. *Heilung aus der Begegnung: eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Psychologie C. G. Jungs*, ed., Ernst Michel and Arie Sborowitz; Vorwort, Martin Buber (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1952).

4 Rob Anderson and Kenneth N. Cissna, *The Martin Buber-Carl Rodgers Dialogue: A New Transcript with Commentary* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), 39; Buber, *I and Thou*, 133.

seventeen years later: "This recognition of the significance of what Buber terms the I-Thou relationship is the reason why, in client-centered therapy, there has come to be a greater use of the self of the therapist, of the therapist's feeling, greater stress on genuineness, but all of this without imposing the views, values, or interpretations of the therapist on the client."[5]

The genuineness of the exchange between Buber and Rogers was manifest in that it transcended any preconceptions, as revealed in the following famous extract of that exchange:

Buber: ...But you cannot change a given situation. There is something objectively real that confronts you. Not only he confronts you, the person, but just the situation. You cannot change it.

Rodgers: Well now, now I'm wondering uh who is Martin Buber, you or me, because what I feel –

Buber: Heh, heh, heh. [audience joins laughter]

Rodgers: Because

Buber: I'm, I'm not, I'm not, eh, so to say "Martin Buber"...

Rodgers: In that sense, I'm not "Carl Rodgers" [Buber: I'm not – either [Laughter].[6]

Buber maintained a long correspondence and friendship with the existential psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger, who is considered a founding figure in the development of humanistic and transpersonal psychotherapy. Buber, also, had a profound influence on Hans Trueb, who he wooed away from Jung (who apparently never forgave Trueb to whom he had sent his wife for treatment). Trueb became a close friend of Buber from the middle 1920s onwards and under Buber's influence he increasingly detached himself from Jung and developed the psychotherapeutic method of "psychosynthesis," a term later popularized by Roberto Assigioli. His last work, *Healing through Meeting*, published posthumously in 1952 included a preface, by Buber.[7] Buber's approach to psychotherapy is most succinctly summed up in that phrase, *Healing through Meeting*. In his preface, Buber writes:

> ...[T]he psychotherapist, whose task is to be the watcher and healer of sick souls, again and again confronts the naked abyss of man, man's abysmal liability...The psychotherapist

5 Carl Rogers, "Remarks on the future of client-centered therapy," in *Innovations in Client-Centered Therapy*, ed. D. A. Wexler and L. N. Rice (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), 11.

6 Anderson and Cissna, *The Martin Buber-Carl Rodgers Dialogue*, 4.

7 Nahum Glatzer and Paul Mendes-Flohr, *The Letters of Martin Buber: A Life of Dialogue* (New York: Schocken Books,1991) , 688 – 9.

meets the situation...as a mere person equipped only with the tradition of science and the theory of his school. It is understandable enough that he strives to objectivize the abyss that approaches him and to convert the raging 'nothing-else-than-process' into a thing that can, in some degree, be handled...The abyss does not call to his confidently functioning security of action, but to the abyss, that is to the self of the doctor, that selfhood that is hidden under the structures erected through training and practice, that is itself encompassed by chaos, itself familiar with demons, but is graced with the humble power of wrestling and overcoming, and is thus ready to wrestle and overcome ever anew; Through his hearing of this call there erupts in the most exposed of the intellectual professions the crisis of its paradox. The psychotherapist, just when and because he is a doctor, will return from the crisis to his habitual method, but as a changed person in a changed situation. He returns to it as one to whom the necessity of genuine personal meetings in the abyss of human existence between the one in need of help and the helper has been revealed. He returns to a modified method in which, on the basis of the experiences gained in such meetings, the unexpected, which contradicts the prevailing theories and demands his ever-renewed personal involvement, also finds its place.[8]

Buber's notion of *Healing through Meeting* has been discovered and rediscovered by each generation of therapists in turn. Buber anticipates the groundbreaking work of Harold F. Searles, "The patient as therapist to his analyst";[9] the "now" moment described by Daniel Stern;[10] and the work of Owen Renik.[11] His idea dovetails with Jung's idea of the uniqueness of every genuine therapeutic encounter, when *this* patient has come to *this* therapist, to *this wounded healer*, to heal in the analyst who can then heal the "between" and allow a deeper healing to take place for both. Michael Balint, the Hungarian psychoanalyst who fled to England taught GPs to do psychotherapy in ten minutes, and crystallized his approach in the maxim, "The doctor is his best pill." He also developed a method, today, called "Balint groups" in which physicians discuss their most difficult cases in an atmosphere of dialogue, relation and I-Thou.[12] All of these and more are spiritual disciples of Martin Buber.

In 1957, Buber traveled from Jerusalem to Washinton, D. C. to deliver the Fourth William Allison White Lectures at the Washington School of Psychiatry. These talks were published in the journal *Psychiatry* founded by Harry Stack Sul-

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8 Buber-Agassi, *Martin Buber on Psychology and Psychotherapy,* 17–19.

9 Harold F. Searles, "The patient as therapist to his analyst" in *Tactics and Techniques in Psychoanalytic Therapy,* ed., P. L. Giovacchini. (New York: Jason Aronson, 1975), 95–151.

10 Daniel Stern, *The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life* (New York: Norton, 2003).

11 Owen Renik, "Subjectivity and unconsciousness," *Journal of Analytical Psychology,* 45 (2000): 3–20.

12 For more on Balint, the man and his ideas, see Harold Stewart, *Michael Balint: Object Relations, Pure and Applied* (London: Routledge, 2003).

livan and collected into the volume *The Knowledge of Man: A Philosophy of the Interhuman.*[13] This lovely volume consists of seven essays and an inaccurate version of the Dialogue between Martin Buber and Carl R. Rogers. The essays are entitled: "Distance and Relation"; "Elements of the Interhuman"; "What is Common to All"; "The Word that is Spoken"; "Guilt and Guilt Feelings" and "Man and his Image-Work." The most influential pieces are the one of 'Distance and Relation' and 'Guilt Guilt Feelings' which will be discussed below. Maurice Friedman's seminal *The Healing Dialogue in Psychotherapy*[14] argues that Buber's influence can be seen in virtually every school of psychotherapy: Freudian, Jungian, Interpersonal, Object-Relations, Self-Psychology, Existential therapy, Gestalt and especially Family therapy. One school of family therapy, Contextual Family Therapy, is explicitly based on Buber's ideas. The founders of Contextual therapy, Ivan Boszormenyani-Nagy and Barbara Krasner clearly place their ideas as deriving from Buber's:

> Buber first formulated the principles of therapy on the level of caring and just human relationships [...]. He made a decisive distinction between healing through efforts at integrity in relationship and technical, often implicitly dehumanizing attempts at symptom change. In all likelihood, he contributed more to building the foundations of accountable human relating than any other thinker of our time. He sensitively defined the profound human issues of relationship and interpersonal suffering and witnessed to the proposition that, in the spirit of a responsible I-Thou dialogue, the self can gain merited reward. History will probably recognize Buber as a giant of twentieth century thought...for us, his passion for realized justice in the human order has direct and immediate implications for a world in danger of abandoning its children.[15]

Even more recent exciting, new developments within contemporary psychoanalysis such as Relational Psychoanalysis; Intersubjective Psychoanalysis and Dialogical Psychotherapy are very Buberian, even if it seems at times that the recognition of Buber remains in their collective unconscious. Buber's ideas have been applied to work in many diverse settings and populations such as prisons and prisoners,[16] patients and doctors,[17] social work and pastoral counseling,[18]

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13 Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man: A Philosophy of the Interhuman,* ed. and introd. by Maurice Friedman (New York: NY, Harper Torchbooks, 1965).
14 Maurice Friedman, *The Healing Dialogue in Psychotherapy* (London and New York: Jason Aronson, 1985).
15 Ivan Boszormenyi and Barbara Krasner, *Between Give and Take: A Clinical Guide to Contextual Therapy* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1986), 28.
16 E. T. and H. H. Mason, "Buber Behind Bars," *Journal of the Canadian Psychiatric Association* 13, (1968): 67–74.

therapeutic communities,[19] dream work,[20] ecological psychotherapy[21] and much more besides. His clear influence can also be seen in the works of Alfred Adler,[22] Otto Rank,[23] Donald W. Winnicott,[24] R. D. Laing[25] and Leslie Farber.[26] It was Buber's insight that dialogue and authentic encounter are at the heart of psychotherapy rather than insight and interpretation.

The main texts touching on psychotherapy are first and foremost Buber's outstanding and innovative collection of autobiographical fragments, *Meetings*.[27] In the first story, he tells of how he understood from a playmate that his mother, who abandoned him at age three for a career in the theatre, would never return. Based on that formative experience, he coined a new word, *Vegegnung,* a mis-meeting or mis-encounter 'to designate the failure of a real meeting between men'. When he saw his mother again for the first time in thirty years, he looked into her beautiful blue eyes and saw once more the word, *Vegegnung*. He ends the story with a confession that is both simple and true, "I suspect that all that I have learned about genuine meeting in the course of my life had its origin

17 Henry Abramovitch and Eliezer Schwartz, "The Three Stages of Medical Dialogue," *Theoretical Medicine* 17, (1996): 175 – 87.

18 Robert L. Katz, "Martin Buber and Psychotherapy," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46, (1976): 413 – 31.

19 Tamar Kron, "The "We" in Martin Buber's Dialogical Philosophy and its Implication for Group Therapy and the Therapeutic Community," *International Journal of Therapeutic Communities* 11, (1990): 13 – 20.; Tamar Kron and Rafi Yungman "Intimacy and Distance in Staff Group Relationship," *International Journal of Therapeutic Communities* 5, (1984): 99 – 109.

20 Tamar Kron, "The Dialogical Dimension of Therapists' Dreams about their Patients," *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Subjects* 28, (1991): 1 – 12.

21 J. Willi, *Ecological Psychotherapy* (Seattle, WA: Hogrefer & Huber, 1999).

22 M. J. Skellin, "A Comparative Study of Adler and Buber: From Cooperation to Contact." *Journal of Individual Psychology* 56 (2000): 2 – 19.

23 Friedman, *The Healing Dialogue in Psychotherapy.*

24 Ernst Ticho, "Donald Winnicott, Martin Buber and the Theory of Interpersonal Relationships." *Psychiatry* 37, (1974): 240 – 253; Charles Brice, "Pathological Models of Interhuman Relating and Therapeutic Dialogue between Buber's Existential Relation Theory and Object Relations Theory," *Psychiatry* 37, (1984): 109 – 123.

25 R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness.* (London: Penguin Books, 1965); R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience, and the Bird of Paradise* (London: Penguin, 1967); R. D. Laing, *The Self and Others* (London: Tavistock, 1971).

26 Leslie Farber, *The Ways of the Will: Essays Towards a Psychology and Psychopathology of Will* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

27 For an insightful discussion of these stories, see Steven Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogue of Hermaneutics and Narrative Theology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

in that hour on the balcony."[28] In another story, "Languages", he writes how via private, imaginative play (he was a precocious only child), he anticipated the key issue in the cross cultural encounter: "I devised for myself two-language conversations between a German and a Frenchman, later between a Hebrew and an ancient Roman and came ever again, half in play and yet at times with beating heart to feel the tension between what was heard by the one and what was heard by the other, from his thinking in another language."[29] The important contemporary initiative to train interpreters as "culture brokers" derives no less from this insight as from clinical anthropology.

One of the defining aspects of psychotherapy (and ethnography) is that it involves intense personal interaction, followed by long periods of reflection on what has taken place. In the model that I developed with my medical colleague, Professor Eliezer Schwartz, medical and psychotherapeutic dialogue must move from an initial I-Thou to a subsequent I-It and back to a renewed I-Thou but one containing within the fruit and pit of the I-It wisdom.[30] Personal encounters go wrong when the self-reflection occurs at the expense of real meeting. In the fragment, "The Horse", Buber describes just such a mistimed moment:

> When I was eleven years of age, spending the summer on my grandparent's estate, I used, as often as I could do it unobserved, to steal into the stable and gently stroke the neck of my darling, a broad dapple-gray horse. It was not a casual delight but a great, certainly friendly, but also deeply stirring happening. If I am to explain it now...I must say that what I experienced was the Other, the immense otherness of the Other...But once – I did not know what came over the child, at any rate it was childlike enough – it struck me about the stroking, what fun it gave me, and suddenly I became conscious of my hand. The game went on as before, but something had changed, it was no longer the same thing. And the next day, after giving him a rich feed, when I stroked my friend's head he did not raise his head. A few years later, when I thought back to the incident, I no longer supposed that the animal had noticed my defection. But at the time I considered myself judged.[31]

Buber's well known collection of Hasidic stories also touches on many therapeutic issues. Buber implicitly showed how stories were vehicles for healing and this approach is itself the basis of narrative therapy of both Milton Erickson[32] and Mi-

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28 Martin Buber, *Meetings* edited and with an introduction and bibliography by Maurice Friedman (LaSalle, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1973), 19.
29 Buber, *Meeting*, 21.
30 Abramovitch and Schwartz, "Stages of Dialogue," 175–187.
31 Buber, *Meeting*, 26–7.
32 Sidney Rosen, *My Voice Will Go With You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson* (New York: Norton, 1982).

chael White.[33] Even Freud, himself, confessed to using Hasidic stories in his treatments. Jung, for his part, describes a case in which a young woman came to him but who turned out to be the daughter of a famous Rebbe. Jung felt that his path lay in reconnecting with this tradition. The story of Reb Zusya, coming to heaven and being asked not why he was not Moses but why he was not Zusya, is a succinct statement of the moral imperative for individuation. Rabbi Nachman's story of the Prince who thought he was a turkey, in particular, reflects key dilemmas in the therapeutic task. In this story, a wandering "therapist" comes to cure a "psychotic prince" who believes himself to be a turkey and lives, naked, underneath the royal tables, pecking at scraps. Rather than challenge this delusion, the healer strips and descends under the table and likewise pecks at fallen scraps. After a long while, the prince asks the healer what he is doing to which the healer replies that he is a turkey. The surprised prince replies that he, too, is a turkey and they continue their foraging. Finally, the healer tells the prince, "You can still be a turkey and wear pants." The prince expresses shock but does agree to wear pants and then a shirt and so gradually returns to the tables of King and human society. This story metaphorically describes aspects of the therapeutic task: the need to enter into the inner world of psychotic patients in order to bring them back from their private, inaccessible world; how the therapist must give up his persona in order to be effective "under the table", in the realm of the unconscious; or indeed that much of the master-therapists actions when seen from the outside appear crazy.

Here I would like to give a personal example.[34] A woman came to me for psychological counseling, sent by her former teacher following the death of her only daughter in a traffic accident. When the woman arrived, it turned out that this was only the last in a series of catastrophes. She had been born in Berlin but the family fled to Prague, losing all. She managed to escape to Palestine just before the war. Her mother and younger brother, left behind, were murdered at Auschwitz. Her beloved, remaining brother was killed in an industrial accident on his kibbutz. Her first husband died a lingering and excruciating death from motor neuron disease. In hard times, she sought financial help from her father and was brutally rejected by him, after being told that she was not his biological child, but the love child of his wife's adulterous union. Her second husband divorced her and returned to his country of origin. Then, her daughter, who she loved, her only one, was killed in a meaningless accident, a truck crushing

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33 Michael White, *Maps of Narrative Practice* (New York: Norton, 2007).

34 For a fuller discussion of this case, see Henry Abramovitch, "Temenos Regained: Reflections on the Absence of the Analyst," J*ournal of Analytical Psychology,* 47 (2002): 583 – 97.

her as she wheeled around on her Vespa to recover her scarf that had blown off. The police made sure to tell her, it was her daughter's fault. Therapists are often able to deal calmly with horrendous stories we hear because we have heard worse. Here was a case in which I had not heard worse, someone who had lost her entire family time after time. I felt that she had come to **me** and I must accept her. Gradually a bond of trust was formed between us. I mourned with her the death of her daughter and the long list of losses that preceded it. Our dialogue was to be interrupted when I was set to leave on a three and a half month sabbatical. When I informed her long in advance, she said that all our work was now being destroyed, that I would never come back.

At that time, in my analyst group, the Bitter Lemon, I heard of the case in which both analyst and patient agreed that when the analyst was away, that the patient could come and sit in the empty office. I thought, "Yes. How can I suggest this bizarre idea?" Synchronistically, at the next session, she asked, "Who will look after your plants when you are away?" I asked her if she wanted to water them and she happily agreed. When I left I gave her keys to my office and she came regularly to water my plants and sit quietly as if in church, meeting my absent presence and perhaps the Eternal Thou. Had I heard of another therapist handing over the keys of his office to a patient in his absence, I would have considered the therapist "crazy". Yet, this unusual arrangement sustained our dialogue. It helped ease her anguish of our time apart. One further note which sadly puts Berlin in a bad light. As a result of our work, she decided to return to Prague and Berlin and revisit her homes. In Prague, she was received warmly; in Berlin, the frightened occupant slammed the door in her face: I-Thou versus I-It.

Buber also received young people in his home at set times, for something akin to a therapy session. In "A Conversion", he wrote something of the essence of the psychotherapeutic enterprise whose task is to hear the question, which is not asked:

> What happened was no more than that one forenoon, after a morning of "religious" enthusiasm, I had a visit from an unknown young man, without being there in spirit. I certainly did not fail to let the meeting be friendly, I did not treat him any more remissly than all his contemporaries who were in the habit of seeking me out about this time of day as an oracle that is ready to listen to reason. I conversed attentively and openly with him –only I omitted to guess the questions which he did not put. Later, not long after, I learned from one of his friends – he himself was no longer alive – the essential content of these questions; I learned that he had come to me not casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but for a decision. He had come to me; he had come in this hour.[35]

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35 Buber, *Meetings*, 45f.

Buber clearly seems to indicate that the young man had come to him concerning a decision to commit suicide. Research has shown that this is indeed a common situation in which individuals who are about to commit suicide see doctors, teachers, friends and family who fail to hear the unasked question. In one dramatic, suicide prevention commercial shown on Israeli television, a young man goes through his entire day, ringing a large bell no one hears. Nevertheless, biographers have revealed that the man's decision was not suicide, but concerned whether he should return to the front in WWI. In the end, the man did rejoin his unit and was killed shortly afterwards. This fact, however, does not reduce Buber's collusion in the death. In Buber's own mind, the encounter became a *Vergegnung*, "the failure of a real meeting between men."

This story illuminates the heart of psychotherapy as essentially an I-Thou process, in which a unique individual comes to a unique therapist 'not casually, but borne by destiny'. Buber understood that encounters such as he had with young men seeking him out at a fixed time of day could be and in many cases, were therapeutic. Buber did not exactly treat him as an "It" but not fully as a "Thou". In *I and Thou*, Buber dichotomizes, "To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude...the *I* of man is also twofold. For the *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* is a different I from that of the primary word *I-It*."[36] In practice, there are probably gradations in the degree of I-Thou-ness (or indeed I-It-ness), just as psychotherapists learn from their failures, not from their successes. Buber then goes on to ask a most daring paradoxical question: "What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man?" and to which he gives an even more profound answer, "Surely a presence by means of which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning." Note Buber does **not** say words by which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning. Words will not work and certainly not be believed. But "presence" is an existential stance that conveys all, in a silence worthy of Buber's fellow Viennese, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Or as the great Jewish-American master of the spiritual in abstract expression, Mark Rothko said, "Silence is so precise."

Buber never founded a school of psychotherapy and it is likely he would deny he engaged in psychotherapy at all. But Carl Rodgers for his part took on many aspects of this attitude and developed it into what became known as the client-center approach in which the presence was one of unconditional positive regard, the attitude of a loving mother to a beloved child. In his essay, "Distance and Relation", Buber argues, "Man wishes to be confirmed in his being by man, and wishes to have a presence in the being of the other. The human person

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36 Buber, *I and Thou*, 3.

needs conformation because man as man needs it." He concludes the essay, "It is from one man to another that the heavenly bread of self-being is passed."[37]

Buber's story also raises the issue of guilt and specifically guilt in the therapist. In one of his lectures to Sullivan's institute, he made a fundamental distinction between actual guilt as opposed to guilty feelings. Reacting against to the psychoanalytic tendency to absolve patients of all their guilty feelings, Buber felt that such healers were making a serious moral error. Guilty feelings, the neurotic guilt of childish thoughts truly needed cleansing, but actual guilt required illumination. In one Jewish tradition, Cain the first murderer calls out not " My punishment is too great" but "My sin is too great to be borne!" [38] (The ambiguity in the original Hebrew revolves around the double meaning of *"avoni,"* which means both punishment for sin, and sin itself). In the latter version, Cain's cry is one of deep and painful insight. As another sibling noted upon the death of her brother when asked "Were you close?" responded, "Yes, but I did not know it." Only now, under God's questioning and punishing, does he come to realize the enormity of his deed. In the Qur'an, he realizes the impact of his act when he sees a raven burying his brother:

> Then God sent a raven, which scratched the ground
> in order to show him how to hide the nakedness of his brother.
> "Alas, the woe" said he, "that I could not be even like the raven and hide the nakedness of my brother,"
> *[...] Whosoever kills a human being...*
> *it shall be like killing all humanity;*
> And whosoever saves a life,
> Saves the entire human race.[39]

This moment of realization is what Martin Buber called, the "illumination of guilt", the necessary first stage in coming to terms with real guilt. Cain's punishment of never being able to rest in peace forces him to continue delving into his guilt. This second of Buber's stage is persevering in the knowledge of the guilt, leading to sincere regret is reflected in a Midrash describing how Cain wandered the world everywhere rejected, till finally he slapped himself on the head and returned to the presence of his Lord. For Buber, however, "returning", as repentance is called in the Hebrew tradition, is not enough. Buber emphasized a third stage in which the guilty party must enact a "*tikkun*" or "repair" of the guilt, at

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37 Buber, *Knowledge of Man*, 16.

38 Genesis 4:13.

39 Qur'an, Sura 5:31–2; translation by Ahmed Ali, *The Holy Qur'an* (Elmhurst, NY,: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 2005)

the place in which the human order was injured. Robert Jay Lifton developed Buber's ideas into a more clinical form. He distinguished "static guilt "(a deadening immobilization of the self), which can be either self-lacerating ("...self condemnation in which unchanging imagery of unmitigated evil prevents actual "knowledge" of guilt and results instead in what resembles a continuous killing of self") or "numbed guilt" in which guilt is avoided by "freezing" of the self and a numbing of experience in general; as opposed to "animating" guilt which is energizing and transformative toward a goal of renewal and change.[40]

Can a killer, like Cain, ever achieve such a *tikkun?* Is not a dead brother 'like water spilled on the ground that can never be gathered up again'?[41] A thief can restore his loot; a slanderer may make a tearful, public apology. What can a murderer do? Buber, nevertheless, suggested that 'the wounds of the order-of-being can be healed in infinitely many other places than those at which they were inflicted'. This goal of *tikkun* as a prime goal of therapy has been one of Buber's most poignant contributions to the fundamental project of psychotherapy and the human condition of healing.

Critique

The strength of Buber's emphasis on the eternal presence of genuine dialogue is also its weakness. The lack of technique may allow therapy to flounder. At the extreme, the emphasis on presence, confirmation, imaging the real, I-Thou, deny or work against, the very idea that psychotherapists require rigorous training with its necessary dose of I-It. The encounter, the very healing through meeting, is susceptible to misuse and exploitation by a narcissistic therapist who justifies his abuse in terms of his own truth which is imposed on the patient in a form of psychic rape. In a similar manner, Buber was naively unaware of the impact of psychotherapist's own projections onto the patient and lacked any idea of how to deal with such a situation. Many of great theoreticians of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung, Melanie Klein, Michael Fordham, Jacques Lacan, Erich Neumann and James Hillman seem much more interested in theory than in people. Inadvertently, they established a tradition in which religious devotion to one's school of thought and mentor became paramount. At times, it appeared that true encounters with patients were sacrificed at the altar of theory. Buber, like most great theoreticians failed to live up to the high demands of his theory,

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40 Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 139.
41 II Samuel 14:14.

as the oral tradition of *Buber-meysehs* clearly illustrates. He was, however, a wounded-healer who explored the depths of his own wound and helped solve for us all what he could not solve for himself alone.

Buber once said that he had no new doctrine to teach but compared his efforts to taking someone to the window and pointing outside, or pointing to what was forgotten. In an era of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), evidence based medicine, time-limited psychotherapy, and managed care, Buber's message is more timely than ever. We must all follow him again and again to the window and look outside to the magic we once knew, but have forgotten.

Alan J. Flashman

Almost Buber: Martin Buber's Complex Influence on Family Therapy

In 1923 when Martin Buber's *Ich und Du*[1] first appeared, Freud's psychoanalytic thinking had just entered its final phase of restructuring. While many if not all of Freud's cases involved complex and troubled family relations, no one at the time entertained the notion that these relations could be altered directly in a therapeutic fashion. Freud himself had pronounced, "Families, I don't know what to do with them."

It took another three or four decades and another world war before mental health professionals began to approach Freud's ironic and frustrated question–"what to do with families?" – in a systematic and practical manner. Buber's dialogical thinking has passed in and out of the Family Therapy movement. I will demonstrate here first the central theoretical place that Buber's thought could occupy in formulating the core of family therapy. Second, I will outline important crossroads at which the emergent theory of family therapy stood face to face with Buber's approach. Third, I will offer some reflections on how the manner in which Buber did and did not influence family therapy sheds light both on family therapy and on Buber's thought.

Differentiation and Dialogue

One of the founders of the Family Therapy Movement in the United States was a psychiatrist named Murray Bowen who worked at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. Bowen was nearly unique in suggesting to family therapists that they engage in therapy with their own families, as he himself did and reported[2]. Over four decades Bowen elaborated a theory for family therapy which has become quite central in North American family therapy, partially due to the sheer mass of Bowen's many trainees now in practice[3] . Bowen defined his cen-

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1 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1983 [1923]), and Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970).

2 Murray Bowen, *Family Theory in Clinical Practice* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978).

3 Peter Titelman, ed., *The Therapist's Own Family* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1987). See Alan Flashman, "Review" of *101 More Interventions in Family Therapy* by Thorana Nelson and Terry Trepperin (New York: Haworth, 1998), *Society and Welfare* 20(2000): 4 (Hebrew).

tral theoretical concept as "differentiation of the self in the [family] system." Using an analogy from the biological science of embryology (since well before Freud, psychology has been both enriched and sometimes muddled by the importation of concepts from the physical sciences), Bowen tried to define a scale of the health not of individuals but of the quality of their relationships. Bowen used the term "differentiation" in two ways. First and more readily appreciated, he suggested that higher level differentiation is characterized by the ability to separate thinking from emotion and engage each of these spheres of human experience more or less independently. In the more central and enigmatic way, Bowen tried to delineate the ability of each individual to maintain his own "self" integrity while also maintaining significant emotional ties with other similarly differentiated individuals in the family. It is to this second level that I now turn.

Bowen attempted to operationalize his concept of differentiation by describing three elements of praxis by which a level of differentiation could be determined. The first two elements of this praxis achieved clear conceptual definition in his work; the third element of praxis is clearly described in his work but left without conceptual clarity.

The first two elements of praxis are "I-position" and "triangles." Bowen suggested that in families with a higher level of differentiation, individual *commence* communication with each other speaking each from an "I-position." Here we have an analogy imported from classical ballet. "First position, second position," and here "I-Position." Bowen meant that each individual begins to communicate by expressing in a relatively full and authentic manner his own experiential world, his needs and desires. These are expressed in an atmosphere of openness to a similar expression from the side of his partner in communication. In low differentiation, individuals limit the fullness of expression of themselves or of their partner. Rather, an individual may attempt to placate his partner by expressing only what the partner finds easy to hear. Alternatively, the individual may force his wishes upon his partner, without willingness to entertain the difference in experience or desires coming from his partner.

A somewhat stylized illustration may help concretize this point. Take for example a fourteen year old girl and her mother. The girl wants to stay out until 4:00 AM on a Saturday night, while mother agrees only to 2:00. The girl's "I-position" amounts to her explanation that she needs to stay later in order to gain acceptance with the "cool" girls in her crowd, something she has been working on for a year and something her mother does not oppose in principle. The mother's "I-position" amounts to her expression of her personal trouble in tolerating her anxieties regarding her daughter's safety as the night deepens. Each takes responsibility for her own experience and desires, and each takes an interest

and listens to the world of the other. A conversation has begun. At a lower level of differentiation, the girl may relinquish her social needs in order to placate her mother, or force her will without listening. Or the mother may swallow her anxieties without honestly talking with her daughter about her difficulties, or force her will without listening to the girl's social situation. There has been no place for two "I-positions" to commence genuine communication.

Bowen's second concept, one he shares with most family theorists, is that of triangles. Two people enlist a third rather than engage in dyadic communication. In our example, perhaps the mother would say, "Your father will need the emergency room for the chest pains you will cause him after 2:00." Or the girl might say, "And my father agrees with me that you are too anxious." Differentiation is lower when dyads communicate through a third. Differentiation is higher when dyads maintain their communication directly. Since families and systems are not solely dyadic, this would involve the robust existence of communication in all three dyads of a central triangle, but one at a time. In other words, in higher level differentiation the girl and her mother, after completing their dyadic communication, will continue each in a separate dyad with father. This should not be seen too concretely. Often the three may be talking all together, but within this logistical framework there is room for each dyad to communicate directly.

Here the reader may be puzzled. If two individuals begin communication from "I-positions" and refrain from triangulation, what exactly do they do next? This question brings us to the third part of Bowen's praxis, which he demonstrated but failed to conceptualize. In my teaching for the past twenty years, I have been referring to this praxis as "mutual creation". I am now pleased to adopt Daniel Stern's recent coinage, "co-creation."[4]

To continue with our example, the girl suggests that she call her mother every hour. Mother says that her anxieties become unbearable after twenty minutes. The girl says she cannot embarrass herself by calling her mother so frequently. But she suggests that she could feign a call to a fictitious 17 year old cousin who is at an even "cooler" party, and when she speaks this fictive cousin's name into her phone after dialing her mother, the mother will know from this code that she is alive and well. Mother wants time to consider this proposal. "Co-creation" here has meant that both girl and mother have grown a bit via their face to face honest communication, and their relationship has grown as well. Such "co-creation" constitutes the essential moments of growth in families.

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4 Daniel Stern, *The Present Moment* (New York: Norton, 2004).

The following scheme (a metaphoric importation from enzymatic activity in biochemistry) will illustrate this co-creative process, especially if the reader will imagine the two arrows becoming complete from left to right simultaneously:

I   **I+**

Thou   **Thou+**
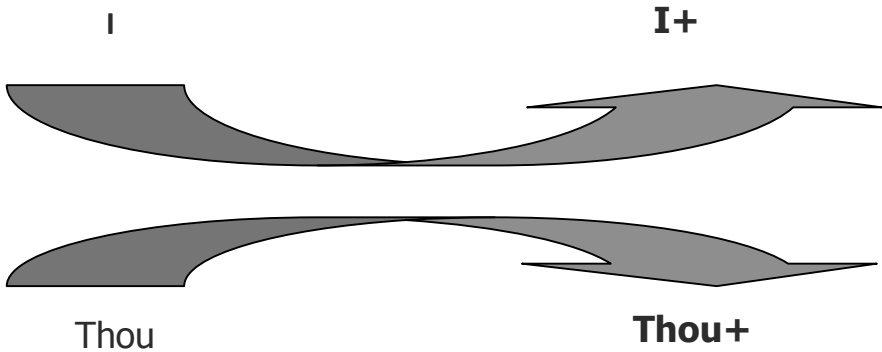
It is interesting to note how this "co-creation" is implicit in Bowen's praxis but did not reach conceptualization. Bowen reported in 1967 in a Family Research Conference how he created a "tempest in a teapot" within the family in which he was raised – he himself was more than 50 years of age at the time – in order to make room for "I-positions" without triangles. He then describes in wonderful emotional depth the new conversations that took place. For example, he found a new closeness with his father and was able to "talk about the full range of important subjects without avoidance or defensiveness, and we developed a far better relationship than we had ever had. This experience brought a new awareness that I simply did not know what constitutes a really solid person-to-person relationship. ...I believe that I had done something to change my relationship with my father, which in turn changed his relationship to all he contacted"[5]. These are the sorts of relational innovations that I refer to as "co-creations." I believe that Bowen practitioners would recognize these unconceptualized experiences as central to Bowen's practice.

I wish to add a personal note here. When I first began to teach Bowen's theory in a systematic way, I needed to conceptualize the co-creation in his practice in order to explain differentiation fully to my students. At that time I became aware that this "co-creation" was uncannily familiar to me, but not from the family therapy literature. I then browsed my shelves and rediscovered Buber's *I and Thou*. Since then, I have always taught selections from Buber's work together

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5 Murray Bowen, *Family Theory*, 517.

with Bowen's. For twenty-five years my students have learned with me that families with higher levels of differentiation are families that create moments of "I-Thou" relating, within which people grow and change face to face. I would add here that I have consistently been impressed that the sometimes strident, technical or gaming tone of family therapy students becomes softer, more rounded, more humane, after working through and assimilating Buber's concept of dialogue.

The following artistic illustration has often helped students to visualize the I-Thou and I-It moments. The two pictures show two positions of the kinetic sculpture *Multiform* by the French-Israeli sculptor Jonathan Darmon.[6] I-Thou involves a direct second person address, I-It a third-person relationship. These plastic figures often help students of family therapy to imagine real turning to and from direct meetings.

Three Near Misses

Buber then would seem to have exercised a significant influence on family therapy theory and practice. Three pieces of historical contact between Buber and the emerging field of family therapy indeed point to Buber's seminal role.

The first historical fact was Buber's delivery of the William Alanson White Memorial Lectures Washington School of Psychiatry in 1956. The Washington School was famous for developing the "interpersonal school of psychiatry" whose foremost proponent and founder was Harry Stack Sullivan. The following account of Buber's acceptance of the invitation is instructive:

> The most remarkable event at that time was the visit of Martin Buber, who in 1957 delivered
> the fourth William Alanson White Memorial Lectures and also gave a series of evening sem-

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6 Jonathan Darmon, *Multiform* (1995), photographs by Alan Flashman.

inars to especially interested faculty members... I was delegated to call upon him. It was an experience I shall never forget. It made me somewhat uneasy to be calling a "holy man" (as I thought of Martin Buber) on the telephone, but I did. I was to meet him in an apartment house with a large private foyer or waiting room, where I waited for an uneasy five or ten minutes. Buber was a short man, no taller than I was, with extraordinarily alive brown eyes and a white Santa Claus beard. He greeted me without any social smile whatsoever. He merely looked at me very intensely, and my uneasiness dropped away completely. I think I have rarely felt so much at ease, so much myself. Still without any social smile, he said, "Come over here in the light where I can see you better." And so I did, without any self-consciousness. One of the first things he said was: "When one is 80 years old, one has to choose carefully which places one will go to. There isn't SO much time left. I want to come to the Washington School of Psychiatry because I think it is one of the few places which keep the questions open." I recall that he elaborated on this, indicating he meant that there was a spirit of inquiry, not dogmatism, at the School. I have never forgotten the phrase "keep the questions open" and I think the School has never been paid a greater compliment.[7]

What is most significant for this discussion is the fact that many of the graduates of the interpersonal school, both at the Washington School and at the William Alanson White Institute in New York City were responsible for the development of group and family therapies in the 1950s, at first together, as interpersonal practices, and later as separate disciplines. Many of these founders of family therapy would have been avidly following the White Lectures, and the innovative journal *Psychiatry* published by the Washington School, in which three of Buber's papers were published. The three, "Distance and Relation," "Guilt and Guilt Feelings," and "Elements of the Interhuman," were soon collected by the omnipresent Maurice Friedman into a popular volume, *The Knowledge of Man.*[8] Prominent among those founders of family therapy who would have been exposed to Buber's work was Don Jackson, who studied with Sullivan before becoming a collaborator with Gregory Bateson in developing cybernetic systems theory.

The second historical fact involves Gregory Bateson himself. Bateson, an anthropologist, biologist and innovative cybernetic thinker was the undisputed high priest of family systems theory in the United States from the 1950s to his death in 1987. Bateson collected his essays on cybernetics into his challenging *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* in 1972. This work makes reference to Buber's I-Thou relationship as one that could evolve between an individual and his community or ecosphere.[9]

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7 Margaret Rioch, "Fifty Years at the Washington School of Psychiatry", *Psychiatry* 49 (1986):11 from http://www.wspdc.org/Rioch_history.pdf

8 Martin Buber, *The Knowledge of Man*, ed. Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

9 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), 446.

Bateson makes a cameo appearance in the third historical fact. By 1982 family therapy was more than two decades into its development, and had separated from group therapy with the creation of its flagship journal *Family Process,* created by Don Jackson together with Donald Bloch and Jay Haley. Time was ripe for a transparent discourse over the essence of this now middle-aged field, and the March, 1982 issue of *Family Process* published what was to become famous as the "great epistemological debate." Two of the four major papers in this debate make reference to Buber, and here full quotations are in order.

Bradford Keeney and Douglas Sprenkle's lead paper, "Ecosystem epistemology: critical implications for the aesthetics and pragmatics of family therapy" saw Buber as the Nestor defining two main approaches:

> It might be argued that therapists can be differentiated on the basis of their commitment to aesthetics or pragmatics. Those who exclusively practice (and teach and evaluate) particular sets of skills and techniques as the royal road to therapeutic change would then be characterized as pragmatics "technicians." Such therapists occasionally imply that therapy is analogous to fixing a car or repairing a broken chair, and sometimes suggest that any focus on "the personal life of the therapist" is a distraction. They may even harshly criticize training contexts that spend time on the "personal growth" of the therapist. For technicians, their work is a craft involving useful skill- a representation of an "I-it" operation: "I will cure it."
>
> On the other hand, art, rooted more in aesthetics than pragmatics, is an "I-Thou" operation in which training and practice of therapy focuses on one's own character building. The skill is secondary and incidental to growth of self, as opposed to the technician's focus on acquisition of tolls and skill, with the self remaining the same. Paraphrasing Bateson, art can be ecologically defined as the problem of judging the ecological implications of a course of action as it becomes incorporated and assimilated into the total context. Thus, for an artist, the ecological implications of a course of action that arise from the practice of a skill have importance only in terms of its ecological function in the larger contexts of which the action is a part- its effects on one's character and social context, as well as planet. "We" are affirmed through our relations of "I-Thou."[10]

Lawrence Allman's paper, "The aesthetic preference: overcoming the pragmatic error," gave Buber a different and even greater weight:

> Aesthetic meanings come to us as therapists through our own intuitively sensed processes within the dialectic of what Martin Buber called the "I-Thou" relationship. Gregory Bateson was fond of the expression 'It Takes Two to Know One,' which embodies his fundamental belief that only through a lovingly playful sense of connectedness with others can we come to know ourselves as part of the aesthetic unity of the collective mind system. With the in-

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10 Bradford Keeney and Douglas Sprenkle, "Ecosystemic Epistemology: Critical Implications for the Aesthetics and Pragmatics of Family Therapy," *Family Process* 21(1982):1–20.

creasing trend in family therapy to view family systems as "things" determined solely by structures and in need of mechanistic realignment, we are in danger of removing ourselves as therapists from our families and subsequently removing ourselves from ourselves.[11]

Looking back on these two papers, we can note that they take two different approaches to Buber. Keeney and Sprenkle suggest that proper family therapy may involve "I-Thou" relationships ("aesthetics") or "I-It" relationships – the more "pragmatic" practical manipulation of activities. Allman, however, saw Buber as essential to family therapy generally in order to preserve a humane and respectful practice. The two papers share one decisive and surprising detail. While both quote Buber's "I-Thou" concept, neither cite *I and Thou* (nor any other work of Buber's for that matter) in their references. It would seem that at least in the United States Buber's thought had become ultra-condensed into iconic "I-Thou" and "I-It." Since these icons appear uprooted from their original literary context and not replanted into some explanatory matrix of meaning, for example the matrix of differentiation that I put forth above, it is doubtful whether readers of *Family Process* or family theoreticians could do very much with these terms.

Co-creational Reflections

That is what I propose to attempt now: to do something with Buberian concepts and family therapy theory. By reflecting upon a certain tension between the two, I hope to use each to shed further light on the other. Let me begin with Buber. One of Walter Kaufmann's chief criticisms of *Ich und Du* was that he saw Buber's thinking as too dichotomous. Kaufmann expressed this in the Prologue[12] to his translation of *Ich und Du* and later expanded the criticism to a central characterization of Buber among the "dichotomizing" thinkers whose works and lives were investigated in his monumental *Discovery of Mind*.[13] Kaufmann seems to have taken quite literally the emotional, poetic, metaphorical statements in *Ich und Du* that suggest that I-Thou moments are absolute and complete, and that anything short of the ultimate meeting is doomed to the unredeemed experienc-

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11 Lawrence Allman, "The Aesthetic Preference: Overcoming the Pragmatic Error," *Family Process* 21 (1982): 43–56.

12 Walter Kaufman, "*I and Thou:* A Prologue", in Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970).

13 Walter Kaufman, *Discovering the Mind*, *Vol. 2*. (New Brunswick (USA): Transaction Publishers, 1993).

ing and using of the I-It. I suggest here that while this objection is plausible, it is unnecessary, ungenerous, and unproductive. There are statements in Buber's later writings[14] that suggest that Buber understood very well that there could and must exist a grey area, a range within which I-Thou moments could be more or less complete. What is more important, I think, is the fact that one loses nothing from the precision or power of *Ich und Du* by seeing this range of relative completeness as present, even if Buber did little to emphasize it. Thinkers who make enormous efforts to see something in a new light are not necessarily best defined by what they saw only dimly. I think of this range of relativity as just beyond Buber's reach, but as the next point on the vector he describes. I am proposing to add the next point as part of a continuation of Buber's conceptual path, with gratitude.

I would then add one further additional point on this vector. Once we have a relative range of completeness of I-Thou moments, we are able to pass this range through time and create a *developmental* spectrum for the growth of I-Thou moments. I would propose that such growth in the sphere of I-Thou could provide a way of conceptualizing the emotional growth within relationships, of the relationships themselves. In a relationship that is growing, I-Thou moments that take place become increasingly full and complete.

I see such developments as crucial to family growth. If we return to our adolescent girl and her mother, the moment of "co-creation" we imagined above could be seen as one point upon a vector in which daughter and mother increase the fullness of the I-Thou moments between them, as they each bring a relatively more complete I ("I-position") to their confrontation. In the clinical setting, this often finds expression in my urging family members to say to each other *one more thing* that they have never taken the risk to say. Not every last thing – only a black and white I-Thou model would require this – but something more, that makes this meeting *relatively more complete.* Clinically, a significant I-Thou moment is one of growth, co-creation, in which this moment has achieved fuller presence of the two parties than previous moments.

At this point I import a notion from Gregory Bateson in order to expand the picture. Bateson, in his challenging *Mind and Nature* was concerned with cybernetic processes, and noted (after Mittelstaedt) that there are two "*sorts* of methods for perfecting an adaptive act"[15]. Bateson gave the example of regulating the temperature in a room by two different processes, one like calibration, which responds to the *results* of a change we have tried to make, and the other called

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14 Martin Buber, *Knowledge,* 75, 85.

15 Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1979), 211.

"feedback" which denotes the *intention* that informs our actions. Bateson pointed out that calibration, by including results of all previous attempts, may be seen as a higher level of logical type. Bateson's singular contribution here was to realize that these different sorts of activities do not only oscillate, but inform each other. He proposed the accompanying scheme to demonstrate his point. At the lowest level, the thermostat will turn the heating element on or off depending upon the reading of the thermostat (i.e., "oscillating temperatures"). However, the thermostat itself was set (i.e., "biased") by the householder according to how he has felt the temperature (hence, a calibration). The bias itself is the result of the thermostat on the householder's skin (i.e., "too cold or too hot"), which is set by experiences of the householder with cold and heat, ("personal threshold"), etc. Bateson even suggested an evolutionary advantage to alternation between two processes, to protect each process from moving two levels of logical type at a time.
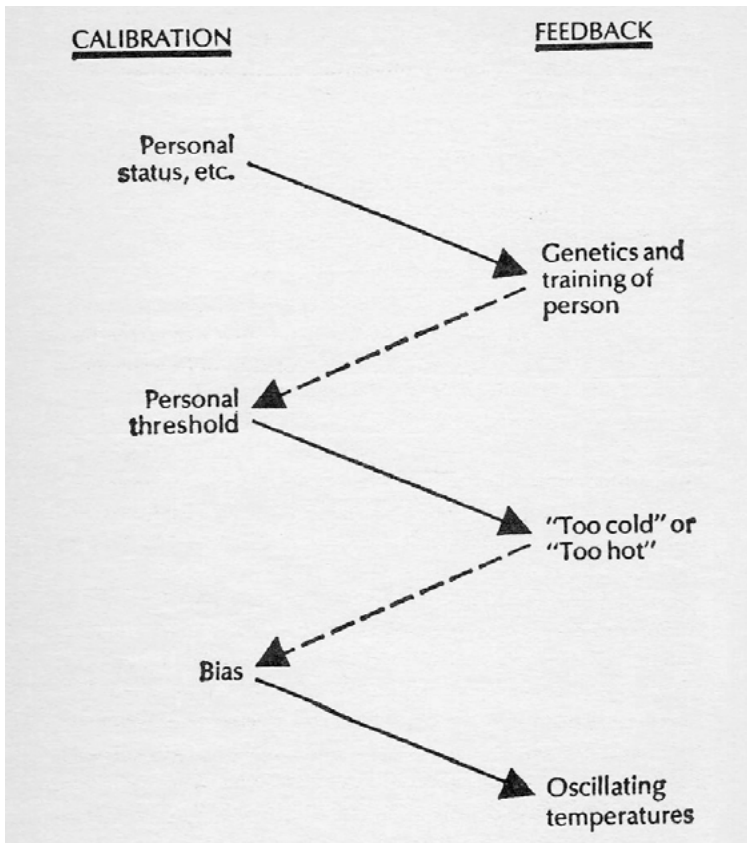
This would seem like pretty heady stuff from the depths of the *Eswelt*. However, Buber left us in *Ich und Du* the enigmatic picture of oscillation between the I-Thou and the I-It modes of relating, without indicating the manner in which this oscillation between the two poles affects the poles themselves. If we take the flat line of oscillation between the two poles and *pull it up accordion-like through time, and through the range of increasing completeness of the I-Thou moments*, we could place the seemingly flat oscillation into a developmental spiral, which borrowing from Bateson, would look like this:
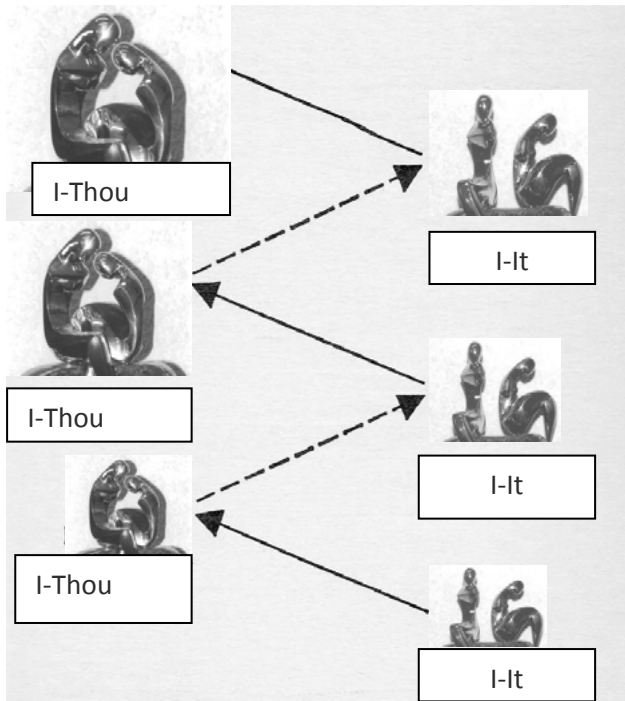
In order to make fuller sense of this scheme, I will introduce one more set of concepts, which I find crucial in the teaching of just this point. The very same Daniel Stern of "co-creation" composed a highly influential work summarizing two decades of research in infant development called *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*[16]. There Stern proposed two major stages in the way the infant makes use of the "I" of the mother. During most of the first year, the mother serves as a "regulating selfobject". In this term Stern defined more precisely one developmental

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16 Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

aspect of the "selfobject" earlier elaborated by Heinz Kohut[17]. Kohut's "selfobject" means quite simply the way one person makes use of the presence of the other in order to maintain the coherence of his own self. Stern's regulating selfobject mother was used by the infant to maintain (and nurture) his own self, by getting fed, comforted, or stimulated. At this stage the baby has relatively little interest in the mother as a subject, what it is like for her to comfort him. He just makes use of what he needs. Towards the end of the first year and through the second year, Stern suggested that now mother becomes an "intersubjective selfobject". By this he meant that mother contributes the fact of her own subjectivity to the baby's ability to emerge as a subject himself. The baby now prefers to see through mother's eyes rather than solely to make use of her ministrations. Mother allows the baby to participate in appreciating her own subjectivity, and this allows the baby to appreciate and create his or her own subjectivity. The "self" or "subject" is created through meetings with other subjects.

Buber first entered my teaching of family theory at the juncture between differentiation and the inter-subjective, and it is exactly that juncture that I wish to employ in order to describe the schema traced above. Families with "low differentiation" are not failures who don't perform "co-creations" as expected. They are rather busy doing something else that comes first. Families of low differentiation are busy with protective and regulating functions that come first[18]. These regulations inform the *Eswelt* in which people use each other to protect the integrity of their family unit. However, caught *only* in regulating and protecting, they find it impossible to grow. Growth of individuals takes place through intersubjective moments of "co-creation" in which each individual grows, the relationship grows, and the family grows. As family members emerge from regulation and become less frightened, they take the risk of a relatively more complete meeting viz. the "I-Thou" intersubjective moment. As change is created, there is an enormous need to re-equilibrate and re-regulate the growing family. During this period relationships return to regulation, in order to protect the new growth. This would appear like a new I-It period, although a higher level of differentiation than the previous level. Once safely regulated, and perhaps developmentally challenged by changes inside or outside the family, family members

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17 Heinz Kohut, *The Anaylsis of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971), and Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977).
18 See Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2001).

will seek another "I-Thou" intersubjective co-creation[19]. The next "I-Thou" would be one that now allows for a deeper and more complete meeting and a co-creation of relatively more complete dimensions. The family will then enter a regulatory phase to readapt to this now higher level of differentiation.

We would now be in a position to expand Bateson's speculation about the evolutionary necessity of oscillation between processes of different logical type. I would add to Buber's "wholeness" of the I-Thou the notion of *a rise in level of generalization of the relationship*. The I-Thou includes all I-It relations and in addition adds a new dimension to each "I." Therefore it could be conceptualized as at a higher level of logical type. The new dimensions of each "I" need protection from further change until they can be re-regulated into the matrix of other relationships, or perhaps allow other "I-Thou" meetings with other significant others. This post-creation re-regulating includes the new co-creation as well as all the other processes of relations and reality, and is thus of higher logical type. Once the regulation is adequate, a new, still higher logical type co-creation will be possible, and so on. One could say with Bateson that if the I-Thou creations outstripped the ability for regulating and incorporating changes, the changes would be either too unstable or too frighteningly distant from context, and the result would be a total inhibition of the co-creative process.

In this way, family therapy practice would always be challenged to create a regulation that enables growth towards an intersubjective I-Thou meeting of co-creation and increasing differentiation. However, often families would need to be helped to complete a re-regulation from the previous co-creation before they can risk the next I-Thou. In family theory, the regulating was referred to as "first-order change" while the co-creations were called "second-order change."[20]

These I-Thou moments are moments neither of luxury nor of superfluity. They are moments deeply necessary for relationships to be able to grow, and thus for all the individuals in the family to be able to grow. A family in which the risk of the inter-subjective is too unsafe is a family which suffers from its inability to be safe enough to take the risks of growth. This family therapist would need to spend no little effort helping families to become safely regulated, as a means to the ends of meeting the challenge of co-creations. Family therapy practice would need to alternate between the practice of regulation and the practice of the intersubjective, between one I-It" and the next possible "I-Thou." As the

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19 Alan Flashman, "Adolescents and Families," *Therapeutic Communication with Adolescents* (Hebrew) eds., Alan Flashman and Hanna Avnet (Jerusalem: Israel Ministry of Welfare, 2007), 143 – 178.
20 Lynn Hoffman, *Foundations of Family Therapy* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

level of differentiation increases, Buber's principle of dialogue could be seen as anything but incidental to such a process.

Obstacles to a Buberian Family Therapy

In this final section I offer some thoughts regarding the difficulty with which family therapy today appreciates Buber's fundamental relevance to its theory and practice. I see the main obstacles in four realms: the needs of clients, the experience of the therapist, the relinquishment of control, and the tendency to dichotomize.

Families who begin therapy with a lower level of differentiation require a great deal of attention to safe regulation. The intersubjective moments may seem so distant and threatening as to escape the notice of the therapist, especially where many emergency protecting maneuvers are required. I find that family therapists in the public sector, especially in areas of child protection or high conflict (i.e., low differentiation) divorce, find the Buberian formulations irrelevant or annoying. I would put it this way: It is hard enough laboring in the *Eswelt*, without being reminded about what is beyond it.

The second obstacle involves the experience of the family therapist. The notion of creating moments of I-Thou in therapy is easier to conceptualize than to practice. When two family members become ready for an intersubjective co-creation, many therapists feel that their presence in the therapy room is an intrusion. The therapist may feel the need to leave the family alone. Indeed, some therapists, including myself, will on occasion leave a therapy room so as not to distract from co-creation. However, there is a second aspect to this intimacy that is emerging in family therapy. I find that some therapists experience an overwhelming personal loneliness in the presence of family members' creating I-Thou moments. The intimacy of the clients engenders on the part of the therapist a desire for such co-creation for herself or himself. If such moments are too few and far between for the therapist personally, he or she may find it too difficult to bear their emergence between family members.

Family therapy has deep roots in the theory and practice of social control. Much of the social motivation and financial support for family therapy in the United States came from the post-World War Two failure to control two main social problems, mental illness and delinquency. The American theory was that the problem belonged to the family, and the goal was to create a fully definable operational goal of eradicating deviance by effecting family change. Buber's I-Thou cannot be operationalized, defined or controlled. It is nothing if it is not a theory

of liberation, perhaps co-liberation. Family therapy that seeks to control behavior will always be uncomfortable with its own relegation to the *Eswelt*.

In turning to the tendency to dichotomization I hope to suggest some constructive response to all these obstacles. The fact that Buber's *Ich und Du* was relegated to the dichotomizers by Kaufmann is instructive. Kaufmann's magisterial overview of the *Discovery of Mind*[21] saw Germany's great thinkers divided between those who were limited in their own self understanding and therefore caught in defining how the world *should be* according to dichotomous categories (Kant was the first example) and those whose self-understanding allowed them to appreciate the world *as it is*, without dichotomous categories (Goethe especially). It is perfectly obvious that we have here a dichotomizing war against those who dichotomize. I bring this example to demonstrate how difficult it can be to apprehend and consider two different processes without falling into overly dichotomizing errors. In family therapy as well, there has been a tendency to see Buberian thinking as one part of a dichotomy. We saw this is Keeney and Spenkle's paper, dividing pragmatists from aestheticians. Mona deKoven Fishbane has written a fine survey of the Buberians in family therapy, especially Ivan Boroszormenyi- Nagy and James Framo.[22] It is all too easy to split Buber between the *Eswelt* types and the *Ich-Du* heroes, something Buber recognizes as a likely error already in *Ich und Du*.[23] This split creates a formidable obstacle to incorporating Buber's full message into family therapy as a whole. The "Buberians" claim priority of the intersubjective, which is only part of the whole picture, leaving the "pragmatists" who are often struggling with regulatory functions to defend themselves "against" Buber(ians) rather than appreciate what they have to learn from Buber.

So I propose a different discourse in family therapy itself that I would sketch by the now familiar scheme:

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21 Walter Kaufmann, *The Discovery of the Mind, Vols 1,2,3*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991–1993).

22 Mona DeKoven Fishbane, "I, Thou, and We: A Dialogical Approach to Couples Therapy", *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 24 (1998):41–58.

23 Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, 78–9, and Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Walter Kaufmann 114.
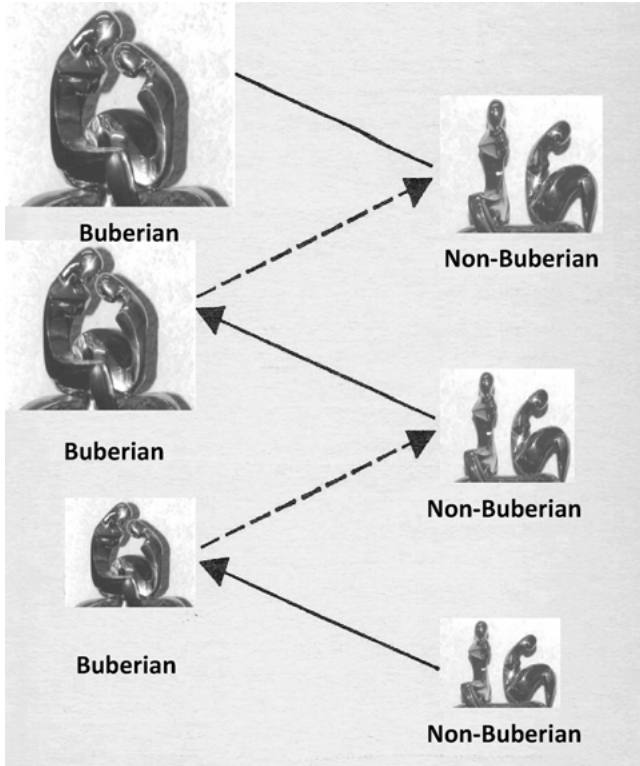
In words, I think that an honest discussion between "Buberians" and "non-Buberians" would have much in common with moves from regulation to intersubjectivity in an ascending level of differentiation that would enrich the entire field. I think that Family Therapy as a discipline by necessity meets both I-It and I-Thou moments and that it might be better to define the discipline as learning how the different moments can be understood and enlisted in enhancing one another. Perhaps Buber would have called this "keeping the questions open."

Aleida Assmann
Dialogic Memory

Memory is double edged. It can both serve as medium for reconciliation, peace making and coexistence on the one hand and for rekindling conflicts by refueling hatred and revenge on the other. Whether it moves in one or the other direction is, of course, a matter of the social and political framework within which it operates. If we are interested in the positive potential of memory for mutual understanding and peace building, we therefore need to understand better the frameworks that determine the benign or malign quality of memory. This essay argues that memory has a transformative power that can help to improve hitherto divisive social and political relationships. In order to know more about the cultural frameworks of memories, I will look at external and internal factors that change memory and finally inspect more closely the shift from old to new policies of remembering which draw on the dialogic quality of memory in situations of political and social change.

From the modernist frame to the memory frame

The idea that memory has transformative power is a rather new one and was developed only during the last thirty years or so. This shift in our thinking became manifest in a new term that has surfaced in German discourse in the 1990s and has since become part and parcel of the trite stock of official and public rhetoric, namely: *Erinnerungskultur* (memory culture). We have developed the great hope that memory can be conducive to changing human minds, hearts and habits and even whole societies and states in the process of overcoming a traumatic history of violence. Many people assume today that traumatic violence can be overcome by negotiating mutual strategies of memory and visions of the past. All over the world, the transformative power of memory is invoked to diffuse the pernicious fuel of violence. It is implemented after periods of autocratic and genocidal violence (the Holocaust, Latin American dictatorships, South African Apartheid, the Balkan War) as well as in response to the lasting impact of older genocides and crimes against humanity (such as European colonialism and slavery).

But is this assumption really true? What has made us so optimistic? What is our hope grounded on, or are we driven by an illusion? Let me start with a scholar who does not share this view. Historian Christian Meier has expressed his dissent in his book on "Das Gebot zu vergessen und die Unabweisbarkeit des Erinnerns", in which he argues for forgetting rather than remembering as a

transformative power that leads to overcoming a pernicious past and to opening a new page of history.[1]

Meier argues as a historian, drawing attention to the policy of forgetting as an age-old strategy for containing the explosive force of conflictive memories. His examples are not only distant in time such as the Greek polis after the Peleponnesian War, or the peace treaty of Münster-Osnabrück 1648 after another civil war which contains the formula: "*perpetua oblivio et amnestia.*"[2] This policy which goes hand in hand with a blanket amnesty in order to end mutual hatred and to achieve a new social integration of formerly opposed parties is not a thing of the past. Even after 1945 it was widely used as a political resource. It is true that the International Court at Nuremberg had of course dispensed transitional justice by indicting major Nazi functionaries for the newly defined "crime against humanity." This, however, was an act of purging rather than remembering the past. In postwar Germany, the public sphere and that of official diplomacy remained largely shaped by what was called "a pact of silence."[3] The term comes from Hermann Lübbe who in 1983 made the point that maintaining silence was a necessary pragmatic strategy adopted in postwar Germany (and supported by the allies) to facilitate the economic and political reconstruction of the state and the integration of society. Forgetting, or the pact of silence, also became a strategy of European politics during the period of the Cold War in which much had to be forgotten in order to consolidate the new Western military alliance against that of the Communist block.[4] As an example, let me refer to a speech that Winston Churchill gave in Zürich in 1946 in which he demanded an end to "the process of reckoning," declaring:

> We must all turn our backs upon the horrors of the past. We must look to the future. We cannot afford to drag forward across the years that are to come the hatreds and revenges

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[1] Christian Meier, *Das Gebot zu vergessen und die Unabweisbarkeit des Erinnerns. Vom öffentlichen Umgang mit schlimmer Vergangenheit* (the obligation to forget and the necessity of remembering) (München: Beck. 2010).

[2] The peace treaty (*Instrumentum Pacis Osnabrugensis* of 24th October 1648) contains the following article: "Both sides grant each other a perpetual forgetting and amnesty [*perpetua oblivion et amnestia*] concerning every aggressive act committed in any place in any way by both parties here and there since the beginning of the war." Arno Buschmann, *Kaiser und Reich. Verfassungsgeschichte des Heiligen Römischen Reiches Deutscher Nation vom Beginn des 12. Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahre 1806 in Dokumenten* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgsellschaft, 1994), 17.

[3] The term was employed in 1983 in a retrospective description by Hermann Lübbe ("*kollektives Beschweigen*"). See Aleida Assmann, Ute Frevert, *Geschichtsvergessenheit, Geschichtsversessenheit. Vom Umgang mit deutschen Vergangenheiten nach 1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999), 76–78.

[4] Tony Judt, Postwar. *A History of Europe Since 1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005).

that have sprung from the injuries of the past. If Europe is to be saved from infinite misery, and indeed from final doom, there must be an act of faith in the European family and an act of oblivion against all the crimes and follies of the past.[5]

Within the cultural framework of the 1940s to 1960s, forgetting was considered as a means to dissolve the divisive negative emotions of the past. As resentment and hatred are supported, continued and refueled through memory, it was assumed that forgetting rather than remembering could help to overcome a violent past and open up a new future.

There are, however, two contrary ways of looking at forgetting: it can be seen as a positive resource for leaving a troubled past behind and creating the potential for a new future, or it can be considered as a form of suppression and continuation of violence. Whether it is remembering or forgetting that is credited with a transformative power depends on larger cultural frameworks and values that change over time. Moving from forgetting to remembering implied what I would like to call the shift from a *modernist* to a *moralist* perspective. The modernist spirit of innovation and orientation towards the future is based on a positive notion of temporal ruptures that contain the possibility of leaving the past behind. The moralistic or therapeutic perspective, on the other hand, prescribes a reengagement with a traumatic past in order to work through and overcome it. During the last three decades, the general modernist trust in the automatic regenerative power of the future that had been a central value of modernism shared by European countries in both East and West has been eroded. In its stead, a new concern with the abiding impact of violent pasts has entered our thinking, feeling and acting not only in Europe but in many other parts of the world as well. This is what I mean when I speak of a shift of attitude from the "modernist frame" to the "memory frame."

External and internal factors of change

There are various external and internal factors that can promote the transformative power of memory. Let me start with some external factors. Personal memory remains restricted, constrained and devalued if it is deliberately cut off from historical sources. The closing or opening of *historical archives* is therefore an important transformative factor. If sources are made publicly accessible and are

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5 Randolph S. Churchill, ed., *The Sinews of Peace. Post-War Speeches by Winston S. Churchill* (London: Cassell: 1948), 200. (I wish to thank Marco Duranti for drawing my attention to this speech.)

recognized in a public discourse, this can have a profound effect on a national memory. After the end of the Cold War, for instance, the opening of Eastern European archives changed considerably the prevailing national maps of memory. As the scope and complexity of Holocaust memory expanded, it challenged some of the firmly established positive national self-images. New documents about Vichy and the history of anti-Semitism in East Germany put an end to the self-image of France or the German Democratic Republic as pure resisters; after the scandal around Waldheim and the book about Jedwabne, Austria and Poland were no longer able to claim an exclusive status of victim, and even the seemingly neutral Swiss was confronted with its own 'sites of memory' in the form of their banks and borders. As new evidence documenting collaboration or indifference towards this crime against humanity ushered in heated debates, the clear and simple structure of dominant national narratives had to become more complex and inclusive. As long as archives remain closed, political power exerts control over memory and the national self-image.

Another external factor is the impact of *media*. Books or films – if they are able to inspire empathy and are well timed – can stimulate public debates and change the social climate of discussion. An example for a powerful media intervention into German memory was the American television series Holocaust, which was televised in Germany in 1979. It is now generally agreed that this series managed to do what public Holocaust education had hitherto not been able to do: to tap the emotions of a wide range of the population and to open up the blocked channels of empathy for Jewish victims. While many critics denigrated the quality of the series as a trivial product of American mass culture, historians such as Saul Friedlander and sociologists like Nathan Sznaider and Daniel Levy have emphasized the transformative power of this tele event. I once talked to a person who told me that his parents had forbidden him to watch the series, which, of course, made his interest in this topic all the more ardent.

This brings me to a third factor that is of paramount importance for the transformation of memory. With this factor we are moving from external to internal influences. Memory exists not only in the shape of eternal media, archives and monuments, but also as embodied memory that is communicated between three to four *generations* living together and interacting in a synchronic relationship. According to sociologists who have investigated this field, each generation is shaped by its decisive lifetime experiences, which influence its thinking and feeling. Values, affections, loyalties and a specific weight of the past colors their consciousness, their mind set and emotions. This generational memory is not only transmitted from generation to generation but also periodically challenged, questioned and refuted by the younger. In this way, generational memories are exposed to continuous conflict and contestation within the society.

The intergenerational dynamics is a central factor in changing the course of memory. A common and even normative pattern in Western cultures is the revolt of sons and daughters against the hegemony of their parents. The young protestors are allowed and expected to deviate from and break with prevailing traditions and values. In Germany, this generational tension, which is built into the dynamics of Western Culture, was reinforced by the 68-generation's desire to break with their parents continuous and silent loyalties with the Nazi period. In their revolt, they enacted a violent cultural break in which they cut themselves off from the contaminated legacy of the past. The sociologist Rainer Mario Lepsius has coined the term 'externalization' which can be applied to this desire to break away and start anew. Twenty years later, when the 68ers had become themselves fathers and mothers, they changed this attitude considerably towards what Lepsius would call 'internalization'. It took the form of reconnecting with the family and working through the national past in a more empathetic and self-critical way, reflecting on their own place in the generational chain.

The generational change can be of great importance for the introduction of a new perspective in national memory. One example is the famous speech of West German president Richard von Weizsäcker in 1985 in which he taught the Germans to think of May 8, 1945 no longer in terms of defeat and occupation but rather in terms of liberation. He gave this speech at a moment when the number was dwindling of those who belonged to the generation that had actually experienced a defeat by being captured and sent into shorter or longer terms of imprisonment. The younger generations, on the other hand, had grown up in a democracy that had become an integral part of Western Europe in which the spirit of liberation had spilled across national borders.

The crucial importance of generations as carriers of memory can also be seen in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. In Spain there was indeed a "pact of silence," or forgetfulness, which, however, did not come about immediately at the end of the civil war (1936–39), but was postponed for almost four decades until Franco's dictatorship ended with his death in 1975. The pact of silence in 1977 was intended to underpin the transition (*transición*) from autocracy to democracy. This transition has been characterized as "the birth of democracy out of the spirit of dictatorship"[19] All political crimes prior to 1977 were granted an amnesty by the unwritten law of silence. The option of forgetting was in accord at the time with a widespread consensus in society. Nearly forty years after the end of the civil war, the Spanish were prepared to let the problems of the past be past, so as not to endanger their fragile democracy.[20] It was the second generation after the Civil war that bypassed issues related to guilt or mourning in the interests of consolidating a common future. Starting in the mid 1990s and culminating in the years after the turn of the century, the layers of silence enshrouding

the violent past became increasingly porous; Republican counter-memory began rediscovering the hidden past through an exhumation project, skeleton by skeleton. This new memory impulse originated in the third generation, which went looking for the bodies of their lost grandparents and found them distributed throughout the country. What their parents had chosen not to do – to act on behalf of the first generation of victims – the grandchildren took up as their specific generational project of identifying Franco's dead, working as self-declared advocates of historical memory with the help of archaeologists, anthropologists and geneticists. The pact of silence, which the second generation had endorsed, enabled a transition to democracy, but it did not dissolve the traumatic legacy of violence. Instead, it consolidated a deep division within society, materially preserved in the earth and in family memories.

In 2007, nearly seventy years after the end of the civil war and three decades after the second generation's pact of silence, another shift in the Spanish policy of forgetting occurred. Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero, himself the grandson of a Republican grandfather who was murdered and whose body disappeared, rescinded the amnesty law after thirty years which amounts to the time span of a generation. He passed the "Law of Historical Remembrance" (*Ley de Memoria Histórica*) in parliament, which condemned the fascist dictatorship for the first time, assuring its victims of recognition and restitution. Zapatero not only conceded here to the internal pressure of Republican family memories, he was also responding to changes in the general political climate of remembrance which favored recalling the crimes of states and dictatorships even after such an extended period of time. In a landscape saturated with Franquist symbols, the hidden and hitherto neglected sites where the victims were unceremoniously disposed have become the most significant *lieux de mémoire* for Republicans.[27] The need for recognition which is felt by family members and their descendants encompasses the rehabilitation and propitiation of the dead. Within the time span of communicative memory, it is obviously the task of the third generation to mourn and to bury the dead, performing this last ritual duty of commemoration for their grandparents. The act of recovering and laying to rest the hidden and forgotten dead refers us to an important transformative power or memory that is rooted in the cultural dimension of religion and ritual.

From monologic to dialogic memory policies

From these personal and private acts of ritual remembrance let me come back to the public and political context and discuss in more detail the paradigmatic shift from *forgetting* to *remembering* in terms of new memory policies that we have

seen emerging. Before addressing these new policies, let me first say a few words about the old one, which – alas – is still thriving and continues to be in active use. Edward Said characterized this traditional memory policy succinctly when he wrote: "Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority."[6] In this context of power and politics, he added, the past has always been "something to be used, misused and exploited."[7] Such transformation of history into memory is based on two important dimensions: political myths and national *lieux de mémoire*. Said defined myth in this context as the "power of narrative history to mobilize people around a common goal."[8] He argued that in a world of decreasing efficacy of religious, familial, and dynastic bonds [...] people now look to this refashioned memory, especially in its collective forms, to give themselves a coherent identity, a national narrative, a place in the world."[9]

Lieux de mémoire are more diverse than political myths; it is their function to provide the nation with a sense of its distinct identity, rooting it in symbolic time and space, emotionally charged common references and shared cultural practices. Pierre Nora's concept is today also undergoing changes that reflect a shift from monologic to more complex memory constructs. Nora's inventory of common historical and cultural references reflected a strong French cult of the national. In the meantime, his concept has been widely imitated but also transformed with each new context in which it was applied. In addition to many national variations,[10] new transnational models are currently being explored and tested, such as Heinz Duchardt's European *lieux de mémoire* or Robert Traba's and Hans Henning Hahn's impressive collaboration project on German and Polish memory sites.[11] The new projects are often less normative and self-affirming and more self-reflexive and critical, including also traumatic and contested sites. Nora's holistic and homogeneous notion of the nation has also been exchanged for a new emphasis on different social milieus and ethnic experiences. This open and inclusive approach is of special significance at a time when nation

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6 Edward W. Said, "Invention, Memory, and Place." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 26/No.2 (Winter 2000), 176.

7 Ibid., 179.

8 Ibid., 184.

9 Ibid., 179.

10 Denmark 1991/92; Netherlands 1993; Italy 1987/88; Austria 2000, Germany 2001, and Luxemburg 2007. Georg Kreis, "Pierre Nora besser verstehen – und kritisieren," in *Historie. Jahrbuch des Zentrums für* Historische *Forschung. Forschung Berlin der Polinischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.* Nr. 2 (2008/2009):103 – 117.

11 Hans Henning Hahn, Robert Traba, Deutsch-Polnische Erinnerungsorte (Paderborn: Schöningh 2011).

states are undergoing a structural change and reconfiguring their memories to make room for the experience of migrant minorities. The lasting success of Nora's concept seems to lie in its great flexibility and adaptability. Its updated versions are doing much more justice to the diversity of social and regional groups and counter-memories, pointing even to gaps of oblivion –what is chosen not to be remembered.

As Said emphasized, there is a direct connection between historical memory and nation building. The power of such a memory lies not in an event but in the effective narrative rendering of the event, which aims at creating a distinct profile and positive self-image "as part of trying to gain independence. To become a nation in the formal sense of the word, a people must make itself into something more than a collection of tribes, or political organizations."[12] Said wrote this from the point of view of the Palestinians and their "inability to produce a convincing narrative story with a beginning, middle and end"[13] and who as a consequence, according to him, have remained "scattered and politically ineffective victims of Zionism."[14]

In the old framework, national memories were mainly constructed around heroic actions and heroic suffering. They are highly selective and composed in such a way that they are identity-enhancing and self-celebrating. National memories are self-serving and therein closely aligned with political myths, which Peter Sloterdijk has appropriately termed modes of "self-hypnosis." With respect to traumatic events, these myths provide effective protection shields against those events that a nation prefers to forget. When facing negative events in the past, there are only three dignified roles for the national collective to assume: that of the victor who has overcome the evil, that of the resistor who has heroically fought the evil and that of the victim who has passively suffered the evil. Everything else lies outside the scope of these memory perspectives and is conveniently forgotten.

The new memory policy that I am dealing with in this paper differs from the old one not in abolishing national memory but in rethinking and reconfiguring it along different lines. The new memory policy has undergone a shift from a monologic to a more dialogic structure. It no longer evolves exclusively around a heroic self-image but also acknowledges historical violence, suffering and trauma within a new framework of moral and historical accountability. It was the cumulative process of the returning Holocaust memory in the 1980s that laid the

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12 Ibid., 184.
13 Ibid., 185.
14 Ibid.

ground for a profound cultural change in sensibility, which in many places of the world also triggered new approaches to dealing with other historic traumas. Against this background of a new transnational awareness of the suffering of victims, forgetting was no longer considered as an acceptable policy for overcoming atrocities of the past. Remembering became a universal ethical and political claim when dealing with the dictatorships in South America, the South-African regime of apartheid, colonial history or the crime of slavery. In most of these cases, references and metaphorical allusions were made to the newly established memory icon of the Holocaust. In all of these cases, remembering rather than forgetting is chosen for its transformative power and implemented as a therapeutic tool to cleanse, to purge, to heal, to reconcile in the process of transforming a state or reintegrating a society.

Reconciliation is often proverbially connected to the two verbs 'forgive and forget'. In these new cases, however, this is no longer the case. In the new policy, forgiving is no longer connected to forgetting but to remembering. Remembering here means recognition of the victims' memories. It is more and more agreed that without a clear facing and working through the atrocities of the past from the point of view of those who suffered, the process of social and political transformation cannot begin. This transformative power of memory plays a crucial role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) that were invented in South America when countries such as Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil transitioned from military dictatorships to democracy in the 1980s and 1990s. In this process, it was the ethical concept of human rights that supported the demands to investigate a hidden past and restore it to social memory. By enforcing the moral human rights paradigm, new political and extremely influential concepts were coined such as 'human rights violations' and 'state terrorism'. This led to the establishment of investigative commissions, which became the antecedent of later Truth commissions. The aim of TRCs is first and foremost a pragmatic one: they are designed as instruments for "mastering" (rather than memorializing) the past.[15] They emphasize the transformative value of truth and stress the importance of acts of remembrance. "'Remember, so as not to repeat' (emerged) as a message and as a cultural imperative."[16] The new human rights framework

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15 See Pierre Hazan, "Das neue Mantra der Gerechtigkeit," in: *Überblick. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Entwicklungspolitik*. The edition of May 2007 is dedicated to the problem of re-establishing justice after armed conflicts.

16 Elizabeth Jelin, "Memories of State Violence: The Past in the Present", Gladstein Lecture, delivered at the Human Rights Institute, University of Connecticut March 28, 2006, p. 5; see also Elizabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

replaced the older frameworks within which power struggles had been constructed in terms of ideologies, class struggles, national revolutions or other political antagonisms. By resorting to the universal value of bodily integrity and human rights, the new terminology depoliticized the conflict and led to the elaboration of memory policies.[17] In the new framework of a human rights agenda and a new memory culture, other forms of state violence could be addressed such as racial and gender discrimination, repression and the rights of indigenous people. When decades and sometimes centuries after a traumatic past justice in the full sense is no longer possible, memory was discovered as an important symbolic resource to retrospectively acknowledge these crimes against humanity. What the transnational movement of abolition was for the nineteenth century, the new transnational concept of victimhood is for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The important change is, however, that now the victims speak for themselves and claim their memories in a globalized public arena. The dissemination of their voices and their public visibility and audibility has created a new "world ethos" that makes it increasingly difficult for state authorities to continue a repressive policy of forgetting and silence.

We have learned in the meantime that a new beginning can no longer be forged on a *tabula rasa*. The road from authoritarian to civil societies leads through the needle's ear of facing, remembering and coming to terms with a burdened past. This insight pushed the shift from the modernist frame to the memory frame that occurred in the last decades of the twentieth century. It was accompanied with a return of the old memory policy, but it also brought with it a shift from monologic to dialogic memory constructs. Dialogic memory transcends the old policy by integrating two or more perspectives on a common legacy of traumatic violence. Two countries engage in a dialogic memory if they face a shared history of mutual violence by mutually acknowledging their own guilt and empathy with the suffering they have inflicted on others.

It is true that what I call 'dialogic memory' is not yet backed up by a consolidated consensus but is still most conspicuous in its absence. It has, for instance, become especially manifest in the relations between Russia and Eastern European nations. While Russian memory is today centered around the great patriotic war and Stalin is celebrated as the national hero, the nations that broke away from Soviet power maintain a strikingly different memory of Stalin that has to do with deportations, forced labor and mass-killings. The triumphalist memory of Russia and the traumatic memory of Eastern European nations clash at the internal borders of Europe and fuel continuous irritations and conflicts. "With

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17 Jelin, "Memories of State Violence", 6.

respect to its memories," writes Janusz Reiter, previous Polish ambassador in Germany: "the European Union remains a split continent. After its extension, the line that separated the European Union from other countries now runs right through it." It must be emphasized, however, that the European Union creates a challenge to the solipsistic constructions of national memory and provides an ideal framework for mutual observations, interactions and thus for dialogic remembering. As we all know, the European Union is itself the consequence of a traumatic legacy of an entangled history of unprecedented violence. If it is to develop further from an economic and political network to a community of shared values, the entangled histories will have to be transformed into sharable memories. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Buchenwald, the former prisoner of the concentration camp and late writer Jorge Semprún said: One of the most effective possibilities to forge a common future for the European Union is "to share our past, our remembrance, our hitherto divided memories". And he added that the Eastern extension of the European Union can only work "once we will be able to share our memories, including those of the countries of the other Europe, the Europe that was caught up in Soviet totalitarianism."[18]

There are dark incidents that are well known to historians and emphatically commemorated by the traumatized country but utterly forgotten by the nation that was immediately responsible for the suffering. While in the mean time the Germans have learned a lot about the Holocaust, younger generations today know next to nothing about the legacy of the Second World War and the atrocities committed by Germans against, for instance, their Polish and Russian neighbors. The Warsaw uprising, a seminal event commemorated in Poland, is unknown to Germans because it is fully eclipsed by the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Germans have rightly reclaimed the area bombing of Dresden for their national memory, but they have totally forgotten a key event of Russian memory, namely the Leningrad Blockade (1941–44) by the German Wehrmacht, through which 700,000 Russians were starved to death.[19] This event has never entered German national memory due to a lack of interest, empathy and external pressure.

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18 Jorge Semprún, "Nobody will be able any more to say: this is how it was!," in: *Die Zeit*, 14. April 2005 (Trans. A. A.).

19 To quote from a recent historical account: "The siege of Leningrad was "an integral part of the unprecedented German war of extermination against the civilian population of the Soviet Union. [...] Considering the number of victims and the permanence of the terror, it was the greatest catastrophe that hit a city during the Second World War. The city was cut off from the outside world for almost 900 days from September 7th to 27th January 1944". Jörg Ganzenmüller, *Das belagerte Leningrad 1941–1944. Die Stadt in den Strategien von Angreifern und Verteidigern* (Pa-

Within the new memory frame, there are promising beginnings between teachers and historians of neighboring countries working on shared textbooks and mutual perceptions. Dialogic memory has a special relevance for Europe; it could produce a new type of nation state that is not exclusively grounded in pride but also accepts its dark legacies, thus ending a destructive history of violence by including the victims of this violence into one's own memory. Only such an inclusive memory, which is based on the moral standard of accountability and human rights, can credibly back up the protection of human rights in the present and support the values of a civil society in the future.

Dialogic memory, of course, can be extended also to other regions of the world. My last example is the conflict between Israeli and Palestinians. National memory does not only crystallize in narratives, but also around places. Sites of antagonistic and violent history are always over-determined and become contested spaces for which new narratives have yet to be created. Said had suggested that the Palestinians fell short in the process of national integration through mythmaking which deprived them of mobilizing symbols and rendered them helpless victims of Zionism. How could memory in this case unfold its transformative power? The Israeli writer Amos Oz has no hope whatsoever in such a power. He once remarked: "If I had a say in the peace talks—no matter where, in Wye, Oslo or where ever—I would instruct the sound technicians to turn off the microphones as soon as one of the negotiating parties starts talking about the past. They are paid for finding solutions for the present and the future".[20] Oz obviously argues from the point of view of the modernist frame which neatly separates the future from the past. In a conversation at Konstanz, Avishai Margalit made a similar point to me on a more pragmatic level. He summed up the problem in the formula: "No introduction of memory before the consolidation of political structures!"[21] Obviously both Oz and Margalit have little regard for the transformative power of memory. There is, however, an Israeli NGO which is built on exactly this hope in the transformative power of memory. It is called *Zachrot*, which is the female form of the Hebrew "*Zachor*," meaning Remember! This imperative is a central obligation in the Hebrew Bible and the key to Jewish tradition and identity. The female analogy of this emphatic word was created as the

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derborn: Schoeningh, 2005), 20. See also Peter Jahn, "27 Millionen", in: Die *Zeit*, Nr. 25 vom 14. Juni 2007.

20 Amos Oz, "Israelis und Araber: Der Heilungsprozeß", in: *Trialog der Kulturen im Zeitalter der Globalisierung,* Sinclair-Haus Gespräche, 11.Gespräch 5.–8. December 1998, Herbert Quandt-Stiftung, Bad Homburg v.d.Höhe, 82–89, 83.

21 Conversation with Avishai Margalit in the Inselhotel, Konstanz in November 2006, where he gave the opening lecture at a conference on "Civil Wars".

name of a group of Israelis who take remembering out of a religious context and place it in a political context. Their goal is to construct a more inclusive memory on the basis of a dialogic remembering that includes into Israeli memory of the Holocaust the Palestinian memory of the *Nakba,* a term for the traumatic expulsion from their homes during the war of independence in 1948. In contrast to Oz and Margalit, the group that calls itself *Zachot* considers this dialogic and inclusive memory an important basis for a civil society and a common future with Palestinians. This is how they summarize their position on the internet:

> *Zochrot* works to make the history of the *Nakba* accessible to the Israeli public so as to engage Jews and Palestinians in an open recounting of our painful common history. We hope that by bringing the *Nakba* into Hebrew, the language spoken by the Jewish majority in Israel, we can make a qualitative change in the political discourse of this region. Acknowledging the past is the first step in taking responsibility for its consequences. This must include equal rights for all the peoples of this land, including the right of Palestinians to return to their homes.[22]

Conclusion

Memories, to sum up, *are dynamic and thus transformed over time.* What is being remembered of the past is largely dependent on the cultural frames, moral sensibilities and demands of the present. In retrospect, we can identify a shift from the modernist frame to the memory frame, which occurred in the late twentieth century. During the Cold War, the memory of the Second World War was very different from what it is today; the Holocaust has moved from the periphery to the center of West European memory only during the last two decades, but also other historic traumas went through shorter or longer periods of latency before they became the object of remembering and commemoration. While the old heroic and monologic memory policy continues to be in use, it is now also challenged in a new transnational if not global arena where they coexist in a web of mutual reactions, observations, imitations, competitions and other forms of interaction.

During the last decades, *the theory and use of memory have acquired a new meaning* when it became obvious that memory can be both a force for refueling hatred and violence and thus maintaining and hardening divisions, as well as a therapy for integration. Depending on the use and quality of memory, the former fronts of violent conflict can be preserved or overcome. Although history has occurred and is irreversible, our knowledge and evaluation of the events can be

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22 http://www.nakbainhebrew.org/index.php?lang=english (March 20, 2007).

transformed in hindsight, if we reassess it in the light of retrospective knowledge and values.

Remembering trauma evolves between the extremes of keeping the wound open (or "preservation of the past") and looking for closure (or "mastering the past"). But we should not forget that *remembering takes place simultaneously on the separate but interrelated levels of individuals, families, society and the state.* Its transformative power works in different ways on the psychological, moral, political and – last but not least – on the religious level when it comes to the proper burying as a prerequisite for the memory of the dead. It is precisely this cultural and religious duty of laying the dead to rest that is so shockingly disrupted after periods of excessive violence. In the case of millions of Jewish victims, there are no graves because their bodies were gassed, burnt and dissolved into air. For this reason this wound cannot be closed. At other places the victims were "disappeared" or shot and hid in anonymous mass graves. Some of these, relating to the Spanish civil war, are being reopened only now after seventy-five years.[23] While the politicians and the society have still not found a consensus for introducing these victims into a shared or sharable memory, it is up to individual family members to recover their dead and to perform these last acts of reverence.

Let me close with a final question. In an essay with the title "Nightmares or Daydreams?" Konrad Jarausch looks back at sixty-five years of European memory. He sees a strong preponderance of negative memories, what he misses are positive values: "The impressive catalogue of human rights included in the document has therefore derived its significance more from a general realization of past evils that needed to be avoided than from a specific delineation of common values that would bind the community together in the present. This failure is regrettable, because it tends to lock thinking about Europe into a negative mode. Europe has become a kind of insurance policy against the repetition of prior problems rather than a positive goal, based upon a shared vision for the future."[24]

In his assessment of European memories, Jarausch uses two categorical distinctions. The first is the neat divide between past and future that resonates with the modernist frame of thinking. As I tried to show, this simple binary has been

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23 Paul Ingendaay, "Der Bürgerkrieg ist immer noch nicht vorbei." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 276, November 25th 2008, p. 40.
24 Konrad H. Jarausch, "Nightmares or Daydreams? A Postscript on the Europeanisation of Memories", in: *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politcs of Remembrance,* hg. von Malgorzata Pakier und Bo Strath, (Oxford und New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 309–320; 314 (trans. A. A.).

replaced in the memory frame by a more complex interaction: in order to move forward, we have to make a detour via the past. The second distinction is the opposition between negative lessons and positive values. As I hope to have shown, this neat distinction does not work in the case of recent European history where the positive values of human rights, recognition of suffering, respect for the other and historical accountability were distilled from negative lessons. Since the Europeans gained these values in the course of their history, remembering this history including its errors, violence and immeasurable crimes, is their way to adopt and ascertain these values. This new form of remembering deviates strikingly from the old (and I would even say: default) monologic mode that focuses exclusively on national heroism and national suffering by embracing also one's own guilt and the suffering of the others. It is this twist that transforms a negative history into a positive memory built on values that open up a new common future. I would like to claim that the specific European heritage lies in this civil transformation of its own violent history into transnational orientations and new connecting bonds. I follow Adam Michnik who has succinctly defined this European heritage: "The European Union emerged out of the negation of totalitarian dictatorships which were full of atrocities and barbarism. The European values are humanism and tolerance, equal dignity for all citizens, freedom of the individual, solidarity with the weak and political pluralism. It is this testimony and value system that Europe can bring to the world".[25]

For my generation the unexpectedly long peaceful phase in Europe comes as an unexpected and – especially from the point of view of Germans – an utterly undeserved gift. I am deeply grateful to the Europeans for transforming the nightmare of their history into a vision which they now have the potential to make real. The history they look back on is a particularly heavy burden and a great challenge to commemoration. This is true, above all, of the trauma of the Holocaust, which has created a national, European and trans-European memory. As appreciation of the value of human dignity was won from the most extreme destruction of that human dignity, the positive significance of this value remains linked to its negative genesis.[26] The same applies to war and post-war traumas, for the joint remembrance of a violent history is the most effective way of overcoming the conditions that made it possible in the first place. Historical violence has driven the nations of Europe apart, dialogic

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25 Adam Michnik, "A European Russia or a Russian Europe", *Baltic Worlds*, IV:1 März 2011 (Södertörn University, Stockholm), 4 – 6, 6.

26 Cf. Hans Joas, "*Gewalt und Menschenwürde. Wie aus Erfahrungen Rechte werden,*" in idem, *Die Sakaralität der Person. Eine neue genealogie der Menschenrechte* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2011).

forms of remembering can – in spite of lingering tensions and invisible barriers – bring them closer together. The shared house of Europe gains in stability in proportion to the commitment that Europeans display in becoming inhabitants of their shared history.

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