

MICHAEL FAGENBLAT
Shalem College

THE THING THAT SCARES ME MOST:
HEIDEGGER'S ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE RETURN TO ZION

But the thing that scared me most was when my enemy came close
And I saw that his face looked just like mine.
— Bob Dylan, *John Brown*¹

God writes straight in crooked lines, according to an old proverb. Does that mean that without God we are destined for crooked lives? W.H. Auden thought that wasn't such a bad thing, for the modern age requires a New Great Commandment: "You shall love your crooked neighbor / With your crooked heart." But Martin Heidegger, the most important European philosopher of the twentieth century, doubted that one could make good of crookedness. He argued that without God we are abandoned entirely to being and beholden only to being. Our crooked lives aren't there to be made straight. To try to do so is to betray being, to project anthropological "values" onto being, and in this way to maintain an essentially theological worldview in which humanity plays the role of God. To approach the new epoch we must understand that it is not just God who is dead but also every conception of humanity in the image of God. To subordinate being to moral or political principles, no less than to religious faith, is to betray being and thus deceive ourselves about what we essentially are. For being does not give itself in accordance with reasons, rules or calculations; it does not lay claim in the form of principles, values or categorical imperatives. Being gives itself waywardly, wildly, groundlessly. And since being is wayward and errant, we too, if we are loyal to being, are fated to stray where being strays. Heidegger therefore proposed that our truth is errancy; the closer we attend being the more we stray, there where there are no principles to guide us. This would be one way of explaining Heidegger's involvement with the Nazi party: "great thoughts, great errors," as he put it.

THE "ABSOLUTELY UNBOUND": ON HEIDEGGER'S METAPHYSICAL ANTI-SEMITISM, OR "THE ROLE OF WORLD-JEWRY" IN "UPROOTING ALL BEINGS FROM BEING"

Heidegger's involvement in the Nazi party is hardly news, though the publication in March this year of the *Black Notebooks* (*Schwarzen Hefte*) has renewed debate.² The philosopher stipulated that the notebooks, which are

¹ I am indebted to Elliot Wolfson for putting the core of the point I wish to explore here in the words of Bob Dylan's *John Brown*; see <http://religiondispatches.org/what-does-heideggers-anti-semitism-mean-for-jewish-philosophy/>

² Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939-1941)*, *Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 96 (Frankfurt, Vittorio Klostermann, 2014). Subsequent references will be provided in the body of the text.

black-covered scholarly diaries he penned from 1931 to 1941, should be the final published volumes of the 102 tomes of his Complete Edition. Having whetted their appetites, some may even have been disappointed that among more than 1200 pages of the three volumes that comprise the *Black Notebooks* only a small number of passages, totaling approximately two pages, vilify Jews and the “Jewification” (*Verjudung*) of the world. This meager but potent kindling has been enough to spark another fire, leading to yet another round of denunciations and defenses, in Germany, above all in France, but also in America.³ There are, however, a couple of features which, if not quite novel, nevertheless stand out in the *Black Notebooks*.

The first concerns the populist, vulgar quality of Heidegger’s anti-Semitism, which resembles the platitudinous speech (*Gerede*) in which *das Man* inevitably indulges in everyday inauthentic existence.⁴ Admittedly, this was long ago known, at least since Karl Jaspers recalled Heidegger’s response to his dismissing *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as a forgery by remarking, “Nonetheless there is a dangerous international alliance of Jews.”⁵ The *Black Notebooks* confirm Heidegger’s folksy anti-Semitism, for example: “World Judaism, spurred further by emigrants that Germany let go, is ungraspable everywhere and even though its power is widespread it does not need to participate in military action, whereas we are left to sacrifice the best blood of the best of our people (GA 96, p.262).”

In Heidegger’s view Judaism is complicit with the cardinal sins of the modern era, “empty rationality and calculative efficiency”; it thereby only feigns to participate in “spirit” (“*Geist*”) whereas in fact World-Jewry is unable to access the decision-regions (*Entscheidungsbezirke*) belonging to “the grounding of the truth of Being” (GA 96, p. 46). The result of the Jewish calculative mentality is a dismal hypocrisy: although Jews have always lived on the basis of “the principle of race” they are vehemently opposed to the racial theories of Nazism. Heidegger’s anti-Semitism here reaches its nadir. The Jews are blamed for excelling in *Machenschaft*, the willful manipulation of being, which, he suggests, leads to racial breeding programs and eugenics. The Jewish “talent for calculation” is thus regarded as complicit with the root cause of the racial anti-Semitism besieging contemporary Jews (GA 96, p. 56).

³ In the American press, see for example the very different responses by Joshua Rothman, “Is Heidegger Contaminated by Nazism?” *New Yorker* April 28, 2014, at <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/is-heidegger-contaminated-by-nazism>; Richard Wolin, “National Socialism, World Jewry, and the History of Being: Heidegger’s Black Notebooks,” *Jewish Review of Books* Summer 2014, at <http://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/993/national-socialism-world-jewry-and-the-history-of-being-heideggers-black-notebooks/#comments>; Michael Marder, “A Fight for the Right to Read Heidegger,” *New York Times* Opinion Pages, The Stone, at http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/07/20/a-fight-for-the-right-to-read-heidegger/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0. If possible add to footnote: Gregory Fried, “The King is Dead: Heidegger’s “Black Notebooks,” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Sept. 13, 2104; Peter E. Gordon, “Heidegger in Black,” *New York Review of Books* October 9, 2014

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1962), Section 35. This point is emphasized by Ingo Faren in “A Philosophical Review of Heidegger’s *Black Notebooks*,” presentation delivered at the Heidegger Forschungsgruppe meeting in Messkirch in May 2014.

⁵ Karl Jaspers, *Philosophische Autobiographie* (Munich: Piper, 1977), 101; cited by Thomas Sheehan, “Everyone has to Tell the Truth’: Heidegger and the Jews,” *Continuum* I:1 (1990), 30-44, at 35.

The Jews promote *Machenschaft*, in which the concept of “life” is manipulated into “what one can breed, which is a type of calculation,” and therefore they themselves are to be blamed for the racialized thinking which they hypocritically denounce (GA 96, p. 56).⁶

And yet Heidegger unequivocally rejects the racialized thinking that results from the *Machenschaft* that overwhelms beings in the modern age. The Jews, he supposes, participate in the calculative rationality of modern metaphysics because they are alienated from their concrete historical existence, their decision-regions of Being—not because of some racial determination that breeds calculative thinking. The image of Jewish existence that Heidegger elliptically outlines in the *Black Notebooks* is of a vicious but also tragic circle: disconnected from the decision-regions grounded in Being’s specific modes of appearing—in particular, as I will suggest, a land and language of their own—the Jews have become exemplary, leading exponents of the empty rationality and calculative thinking that globalizes alienation in the modern age, including racialized ways of determining humanity. The Jews thus promote a type of thinking that determines the anti-Semitism they themselves endure.

Thus the second prominent feature of the anti-Semitism of the *Black Notebooks*: Heidegger’s folk anti-Semitism is ensconced in a philosophical or meta-philosophical position. The Jews exhibit in an especially acute fashion the symptoms of deracinated rationalism (this is his folk anti-Semitism), but they are *not* the cause, nor even *a* cause, of it (that is a philosophical matter concerning the history of being). There is, in other words, a phenomenological or typological relation between the mentality of “World-Jewry” and modern western rationalism, but not an historical, causal or biological one. The root problems that besiege Being are Cartesianism (subjectivism), neo-Kantianism (liberalism and idealism), and scientism (reductionism, *Machenschaft* and technology). The Jews have adopted this faux-Geist for themselves and play a crucial, though by no means exclusive, role in globalizing it. Heidegger does not specify why, if it is not a matter of racial determination, the Jews in particular are afflicted with this calculative mentality. But in his 1933-34 lectures he suggests that “Semitic nomads” are constitutively unable to experience the essential rootedness of place.⁷ One can therefore conclude that Heidegger’s philosophical anti-Semitism, which is of more interest than his folk anti-Semitism, corresponds to a view of World-Jewry as lacking a land and language of its own, it being “nomadic,” which is to say “rootless” in the ramified philosophical sense Heidegger attributes to rootlessness.

In this way Heidegger’s anti-Semitism resembles conventional Nazi propaganda, indeed participates in it in his own way, and at the same time denies the racial categories that typically characterize Nazism. It is, as it were, a private, metaphysical anti-Semitism, not simply a vulgar, racial anti-Semitism. “World Jewry” is not a racial category but a “metaphysical” principle signifying the deracination and homogenization of Being in the modern world. “The question of the role of World-Jewry (*des Weltjudentums*) is not racial; it is rather the metaphysical question of the nature of a type of

⁶ A point also made by Faren (see note 4 above).

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Nature, History, State: 1933-34*, trans. and ed. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 56 and *passim*.

humanity (*Menschentümlichkeit*), the *absolutely unbound* (*schlechthin ungebunden*), that can assume the world-historical ‘task’ of uprooting (*Entwurzelung*) all beings from Being (GA 96, p. 243; cf. p 121).” World-Jewry stands for the metaphysical movement at work in the uprooting of the modern world. The Jews are not merely an uprooted people but the avant-garde of the uprooting of the world that characterizes the modern epoch. Lacking a land and a language of their own, the Jews peddle in formal calculative thinking that homogenizes Being by converting it into the global currencies of individualism, capitalism and technology wherein the concrete specificities of Being disappear. Contemporary political alternatives (both liberalism and communism) reduce humanity to a uniform standard, capitalist economies regard all things as worth only their abstract exchange value, and modern technology is based on replication and mass-production that erode the specificity of things. Uprootedness, for Heidegger, is at once the cause of a type of abstract, calculative thinking and a major source of modern nihilism in which Being (*Sein*) has been forgotten, authority and meaning have become flat, abstract and instrumental, and expediency governs our relations with everything. Even if it was Christian rationalists who set the metaphysics of uprootedness in motion, the *Black Notebooks* confirm that Heidegger thinks “World Judaism” plays an important role in globalizing it. In this way Heidegger associates his diagnosis of the generalized deracination and alienation of *Geist* that marks contemporary rationalism and *Machenschaft* with a process of “Jewification,” *Verjudung*, as he already called it in 1929.⁸

It would not be difficult to contest Heidegger’s view of “Weltjudentum” and its putative role in internationalizing the uprootedness of modern metaphysics. Nevertheless, the anti-Semitic passages make it clear that Heidegger folded anti-Semitism into his philosophy, satisfying the need of *das Man*—including *der Mann Heidegger selbst*—for ontic figures that historicize uprootedness, and thereby name the enemy, of Being. Though intellectually and morally appalling, this is quite different from proposing that Heidegger’s philosophy is *driven by*, or even *dependent on*, anti-Semitism. In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger’s idiosyncratic, ontological anti-Semitism appears as an effect of the *Seinsgeschichte*, of the history of Being as he construes it. “World-Jewry” is a placeholder, one that other figures can also fill in their own fashion (e.g. Cartesianism or neo-Kantianism). Indeed the philosophical dimension of Heidegger’s anti-Semitism is already glimpsed in *Being and Time* where, in the course of devastating critique of Kantian morality, its calculative rationalism is denounced as a type of “Pharisaism.”⁹ This “placeholder” view of Heidegger’s anti-Semitism is not cause for comfort, since it supposes that his thought demands the determination of some specific enemies of Being which must, in turn, be destroyed, whoever they are. That it reinforces vulgar, popular, Euro-Christian anti-Semitism

⁸ Heidegger warns against *Verjudung* “in the broad and narrow sense” in a letter accompanying a grant recommendation for Eduard Baumgarten, dated 2 October 1929. The text is presented by Ulrich Sieg, “Die Verjudung des deutschen Geistes”, *Die Zeit* 22 December 1989, at <http://www.zeit.de/1989/52/die-verjudung-des-deutschen-geistes>; a translation and discussion can be found in Sheehan (see note 6). By 1929, the derogatory term *Verjudung* (Jewify) was well established, as Steven Aschheim showed in “‘The Jew Within’: The Myth of Judaization in Germany,” in *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg (Boston: University Press of New England, 1985), 212–24.

⁹ *Being and Time*, Section 59.

from the novel point of view of the history of Being only adds to the worry. But at least it allows us to understand why Heidegger's anti-Semitism is at once philosophically significant and vulgar.

"A PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION THAT IS PRECISELY OUR POSITION"

From the outset Heidegger was surrounded by a brilliant cadre of young, secular Jewish thinkers.¹⁰ But it was Franz Rosenzweig who was the first to note the elective affinity between Heidegger's thought and the experience of Jewish theology. In one of his last writings before premature death in 1929, Rosenzweig remarked on the "irony of intellectual history" in which Heidegger was emerging as the most passionate and articulate exponent of "a philosophical position [that is] precisely our position."¹¹ Like Rosenzweig's project of rendering a philosophical account of "irrational being," Heidegger's early thought provides an account of our concrete pre-rational access to being.¹² In 1942 Karl Löwith, who was among Heidegger's foremost students of Jewish descent, took up Rosenzweig's remark in order to examine "the striking similarity" between the Jewish thinker and his teacher, the latter of whom—by then there was no doubt—supported the Nazi party. Despite numerous shared concerns generated out of a common core conviction that philosophy should be grounded in the awareness of mortality as the individuating experience par excellence, Löwith concluded that Rosenzweig and Heidegger disagreed over the ultimate possibility of "eternal truth," which Heidegger's philosophy denies while Rosenzweig's theology defends.¹³ Peter Gordon, however, challenged Löwith's conclusion by showing how Rosenzweig is best read as a thinker of finitude, of "eternity without metaphysics" in which the desire for redemption is wholly temporalized in-the-world.¹⁴ *The Star of Redemption* overcomes the distinction between theology and philosophy, as Rosenzweig emphasized, by temporalizing eternity in the historical life of the people.

¹⁰ See Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) and Samuel Fleischaker, ed., *Heidegger's Jewish Followers: Essays on Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas, and Emmanuel Levinas* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008).

¹¹ Franz Rosenzweig, "Transposed Fronts," in *Philosophical and Theological Writings*, trans., ed., notes and commentaries by Paul W. Franks and Michael Morgan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2000), 150.

¹² Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William W. Hallo (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 19. The interest that Rosenzweig and Heidegger took in the philosophical status of putatively nonrational concrete experiences was characteristic of the period. It has remained a central concern of phenomenological research, for example in the work of Merleau-Ponty, Henry and Marion, and has recently resurfaced in analytic philosophy in debates regarding "non-conceptual content."

¹³ Karl Löwith, "M. Heidegger and F. Rosenzweig, or Temporality and Eternity," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 3:1 (1942), 53-77; see also the discussion by Franks and Morgan on pp. 140-45 of Rosenzweig's *Philosophical and Theological Writings* (note 11).

¹⁴ Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 189-205. Löwith briefly alludes to Kierkegaard's notion of the "eternal instant" in the concluding paragraph of his article, only to dismiss such an interpretation of Rosenzweig. Gordon shows how the temporalization of eternity works in Rosenzweig's thought in virtue of the historico-liturgical life of the people.

Following Rosenzweig, other Jewish theologians built on the common ground between Heidegger's philosophy and a phenomenological account of Jewish existence. A point Heidegger emphasized better than anyone before him was that one's "identity" is a matter of dynamic social, historical and pragmatic relations that exceed the scope of reflection, for they comprise the elemental conditions for all intelligible experience, "subjective" as much as "objective." Here, finally, was an "ontology" that made sense of *being Jewish*. Beneath the values of Enlightenment humanism, with its idea that people are equal by virtue of a rationality that transcends their worldly formations, Heidegger showed how our experience of the world and our capacity to understand ourselves is based on contingent, passive, murky and insurmountable conditions. In the course of his captivity as a French POW, Emmanuel Levinas began to adapt Heidegger's insight by wondering if one should think of passivity "starting from Dasein or from J[udaism]."¹⁵ This enabled Levinas to distinguish the passivity of thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) from that of creatureliness, election and filiation. With Levinas, then, in part precisely because of Heidegger's anti-Semitism, the affinity between Heidegger's account of passivity as *Geworfenheit* and Jewish passivity becomes the place of reckoning and distinction.¹⁶ But this *adaptation* is based on a fundamental *adoption* of Heidegger's ontological prioritization of 'we' over 'me', his anti-liberal, anti-individualistic account of the fundamental experience of being oneself.

Alexander Altmann (1906-1987), a pioneering Orthodox rabbi and phenomenologist who was to become one of the foremost American scholars of Jewish intellectual history, read Heidegger avidly in Berlin before being forced to flee in 1938. In an essay published in 1933 Altmann attempts to sketch "the meaning-structure of a Jewish theology that is to be fleshed out concretely," as if he too, like Levinas and Rosenzweig, wanted to specify the "existentialia" of Judaism, what *Being and Time* described as the "existence-structure" that "comes *before* any psychology or anthropology, and certainly before any biology."¹⁷ Altmann's answer is that "two phenomena, revelation and peoplehood," provide the irreducible elements of every Jewish theology. This argument was pitched against the characterization of Jewish faith promoted by his contemporary, Hans-Joachim Schoeps, who dismissed the Law on the grounds that no individual Jew could find the Law in his or her ownmost relation to God.¹⁸ Sympathetic to the project—inspired by the dialectical theology of Barth—of retrieving a theology of revelation from the clutches of historicism and legalism, Altmann nevertheless faulted Schoeps for being too individualistic and for too hastily dismissing the Law in his (too Protestant) quest for unmediated access to scriptural revelation.¹⁹ The

¹⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Carnets de captivité et autres inédits*, eds. Rodolphe Calin and Catherine Chalié. (Paris: Bernard Grasset/IMEC, 2009), 75.

¹⁶ See Emmanuel Levinas, "Being Jewish [1947]," trans. Mary Beth Mader, *Continental Philosophy Review* 40 (2006), 205-210.

¹⁷ Respectively, Alexander Altmann, "What is Jewish Theology? [1933]," in Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence: Theological Essays, 1930-1939*, ed. Alfred Ivry (Boston: Brandeis University Press, 1991), p. 42.; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 70-71 (H 44-45)

¹⁸ Hans-Joachim Schoeps, *Jüdischer Glaube in dieser Zeit: Prolegomena zur Grundlegung einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1932).

¹⁹ Altmann's critique of Schoeps resembles the one levelled by Gershom Scholem, "Offener Brief an den Verfasser der Schrift *Jüdischer Glaube in dieser Zeit*," *Bayerische*

theological legitimacy of Jewish law, he argues, derives not directly from Scripture, nor from formal exegetical procedures, nor from a sacred institution such as the Church, nor from the purely local concerns of the community or synagogue. It is, rather, the fundamental element of peoplehood—"the whole people"—that authorizes the law: "the people, as the immediate correlational link to God, are the subject of [Jewish] theology."²⁰

Having grounded halakhic authority in the life of the people, Altmann explicitly invokes Heidegger's notions of "heritage" (*Erbe*) and "destiny" (*Schicksal*) as "decisive for an understanding of Jewish existence" for, unlike liberal Jewish dialectical theology, they embrace "what is Jewishly particular in the spiritual situation of the Jews" (54). Altmann too does not simply adopt Heidegger's concepts but adapts them to his critique of liberal Jewish dialectical theology. For the Jew, *heritage is revelation* (Torah) given to the people as a whole, and *destiny is providence*, manifest historically in the life of the people. But the Heideggerian breakthrough remains decisive: only through the specificities of Jewish heritage and destiny can one adduce the "tragic singularity" of Jewish existence.²¹ Within a few months of Altmann's deployment of Heidegger's concepts of destiny and heritage for an understanding of Jewish experience, Heidegger marshaled his philosophical position in support of Nazism: "the destiny of the nation in the midst of all the other peoples," he proclaimed in the *Rektoratsrede*, actualizes "the historical spiritual mission of the German people as a people that knows itself in its state."

Altmann, a devout and virtuous man, also favored the prospect of the destiny of the Jewish people actualizing itself in its state.²² At a time when Zionism was still marginal in most Modern Orthodox circles, Altmann lamented, in a clear phenomenological tone, how the condition of exile (*Golah*) renders Jewish theology "invisible" and thereby prevents it from attaining its "full reality in the world (112)." Only the return to Zion could be adequate to the "confrontation" between tradition and modernity, since it alone would allow the "organic reality of peoplehood in Palestine" to unfold (115). Altmann specifies three features of this organic reality: Hebrew language, the biblical landscape, and the fluidity of Jewish life "that cannot be mastered through dialectics." In calling for a relation between life and law that exceeds the reflective work of dialectics Altmann laid emphasis on "the *halakhah* [law] of collective decisions" (100). This position argues against formalistic methods of adjudicating Jewish law on the basis of exegetical principles and their procedural application by expert rabbis in favor of granting jurisprudential priority to the collective historical existence of the people that concretely animates and shapes the law. In this way Altmann's account of the ontological priority of peoplehood generates the very capacity that Heidegger found so utterly lacking in Judaism, namely, *access to the decision-regions* (*Entscheidungsbezirke*) from whence the truth of its being manifests. Moreover, as Altmann notes, this ontological priority of the

Israelitische Gemeindezeitung (15 August 1932), 241-44, *Rpt in* Gershom Scholem, *Briefe I, 1914-1947*, ed. Itta Shedletzky (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2000).

²⁰ Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, 47-48.

²¹ Cf. *Being and Time*, Section 74.

²² Paul Mendes-Flohr provides a beautiful and informative outline of Altmann's life and character in "Introduction: Theologian Before the Abyss," *The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, xiii-xlvii.

people, as the power that produces authority and decides upon the law, is also what makes revelation itself “essentially an ‘open system’,” to which the open-endedness of the Talmud corresponds as its proper “form and conception.”²³

Recall that for Heidegger, World-Jewry is cut off from the decision-regions of being because it is uprooted and nomadic, lacking a language and a land of its own and therefore flees into calculative modes of abstract thinking. By contrast, Altmann proposes that peoplehood provides Judaism with just such access. It is “authority-founding peoplehood” –and not formalistic (“Pharisaic”) exegesis, or reified dogma, or a mediating institution like the Church – which exercises “an actualistic-decisional function” (48). It is not the law, the legal authorities or the interpretive procedures that produce authority; rather, these can be “meaningful only on the basis of halakhically-thinking and authority-founding peoplehood. The halakhic atmosphere of this peoplehood produces the authority, and it receives, in return, the decision of authority, to which it bows as belonging to its essence.”²⁴ At the very time that Heidegger was musing about the uprootedness of World-Jewry, Altmann, inspired by Heidegger’s concrete hermeneutical ontology, was arguing that the potency of being a people-as-a-whole, of being rooted in each other and a shared heritage and destiny, allowed the Jews to reach into the decision-regions of their being in order to make visible their non-universal (theological) truth. And for this very reason Altmann advocated a return to Zion, to the land where the halakah of collective decisions could be made visible in the world so that Jewish truth or theology could attain “a reality in which ultimately language and spirit would coincide” (115). Altmann, a kindly man with immense compassion for his fellow Jews and all people created in the image of God, implies that authentic co-historicizing of Jewish existence in Zion is the only way for the Jewish people to access the decision-regions which manifest its theological truth and destiny.²⁵

²³ Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, 48. Rosenzweig’s account of anti-formalism in the life of Jewish law is similar; it too argues for the open-endedness of Jewish law, and lore, on account of the priority of the covenantal relation between the people and Torah over all other elements in Jewish theology. See especially Rosenzweig’s classical 1923 essay, “The Builders,” in *On Jewish Learning*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1965), 72-92, written in response to Martin Buber’s theological rejection of *halakhah*, and thus standing in a similar relation to Altmann’s defense of halakhah in response to Schoeps. Altmann prized Rosenzweig’s essay, which probably influenced his critique of Schoeps, whose position is comparable to Buber’s. It bears noting that the position defended by Rosenzweig and Altmann according to which halakhah is based on the life of the people rather than formal exegetical derivations, rulings from authoritative individuals or dogmatic theological principles has been substantiated by historians of halakhah in the decades since. For an overview see Lawrence Kaplan, “Kashrut and Kugel: Franz Rosenzweig’s ‘The Builders’,” *Jewish Review of Books* (Winter 2014), 41-43.

²⁴ Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, 48.

²⁵ More tempered than Heidegger, Altmann regarded the universalistic features of Jewish theology as valid and binding, even if they were derivative of the non-universality of Jewish theological existence. On my reading, Heidegger defends an analogous view in *Being and Time* with respect to the distinction between *Vorhandensein* and *Zuhandensein*. Altmann supports his case by alluding to the distinction between *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*, saying that Jewish “special theology (by which we understand the philosophical teaching about God, his nature and rule)” is *not* irreconcilable with “the universal ideas that are contained in Judaism” (49). For a later elaboration of one aspect of the universalism Altmann

As a young Orthodox rabbi enrolled at the University of Berlin, Altmann befriended another young rabbi, Joseph Soloveitchik, scion to an extraordinary dynasty of virtuoso Lithuanian rabbis, who would soon emigrate to the United States and become “the Rav” of Modern Orthodoxy, spearheading its remarkable renaissance in the second half of the twentieth century. Altmann and Soloveitchik were intimate companions, studying philosophy and discussing its relation to traditional Judaism on an almost daily basis. Soloveitchik, consistent with the “Brikser” method of talmudic study developed by his forebears, regards the halakhah as a system conducive to “objectification” and takes a critical stand against anti-rationalist interpretations of Jewish spirituality. In a footnote to *Halakhic Man*, his classic exposition of the role of halakhic consciousness in shaping Jewish self-understanding, written in Hebrew in 1944, Soloveitchik denounces “the self-evident falsity” of “the entire Romantic aspiration to escape from the domain of knowledge, the rebellion against the authority of objective, scientific cognition which has found its expression in...the phenomenological, existential and antiscientific school of Heidegger and his coterie, and from the midst of which there arose in various forms the sanctification of vitality and intuition” which “have brought complete chaos and human depravity to the world. And let the events of the present era be proof!”²⁶

Soloveitchik’s halakhic objectivism and his caution with respect to all things Romantic did not, however, inhibit his existential-theological desire for the *manifest* destiny of the Jewish people *in history*. Breaking from his esteemed family’s theological antipathy to political Zionism, Soloveitchik sided with the *Mizrachi* movement which accorded religious significance to the establishment of the State of Israel and became a leading, influential advocate of religious Zionism. Like Altmann, Soloveitchik’s account of the religious significance of Zionism recalls Heidegger’s discussion of the authentic co-historicizing of the people. In an address delivered on Israel’s Independence Day in 1956, Soloveitchik parsed the erotic language of the Song of Songs in terms of the Jewish people’s longing for its land and a state of its own. The salient distinction Soloveitchik develops is that between, on the one hand, “a covenant of fate” which binds “the people,” and “the covenant of destiny” which unites “the nation.”²⁷ Whereas fate, represented by the Holocaust and secular Zionism, was foisted on the people of Israel, destiny is a religious undertaking to appropriate the return to Zion by becoming a holy nation in its own land. Here, I think, we have an analogue to Heidegger’s distinction between the “inauthentic historicity” of a people determined by disparate events that befall them and the “destiny” of a people able to gather itself together by appropriating its spiritual heritage in order to manifest new possibilities for historically existing.²⁸ Though seemingly averse to some of Heidegger’s signature concepts, in respect of

found compatible with Jewish particularism, see Alexander Altmann, “‘Homo Imago Dei’ in Jewish and Christian Theology,” *The Journal of Religion* 48:3 (1968), 235-259. By contrast, from about 1929 Heidegger’s disdain for “derivative” realms of existence such as “objective knowledge,” “morality” and “culture” intensified severely.

²⁶ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man*, trans. Lawrence Kaplan (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1983), 141 [Hebrew original, 1944].

²⁷ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *The Rav Speaks: Five Addresses on Israel, History, and the Jewish People* (n.p.: Judaica Press, 2002).

²⁸ *Being and Time*, sections 74-75.

Soloveitchik's understanding of religious Zionism as the spiritual-historical destiny of the Jewish people, we find a Heideggerian tone.²⁹

Such a tone can be readily amplified if one sounds out a wider range of characteristic features of Heidegger's thought that a phenomenology of Judaism would have to include. A much larger and more complex project would be required to do this adequately. Here a sketch of the cardinal convergences will have to suffice. Leo Strauss, who studied with Heidegger in Germany, already identified "the Biblical elements in Heidegger's earlier thought" as the source of Heidegger's dissatisfaction with "the limitations of western rationalism" and admired how he deployed such biblical elements while rejecting dogmatic Christian accounts of eternal truths and divine morality.³⁰ There are indeed many biblical elements in Heidegger's thought, and not only in his earlier works. For example, Heidegger argued that time is not a homogenous sequence ofnows or a moving image of eternity but a concrete eruption of the future within the present that unsettles the past and thereby throws up unforeseeable possibilities, like a messianic event. As is well known today, Heidegger developed this account of temporality by way of a phenomenological interpretation of Pauline eschatology. The deformalization of time demanded by the turn toward "the How of grasping reality" was first exposed in Paul's witnessing of the waiting together for the *parousia*. But, as Heidegger noted, "The basic direction of eschatology is already late Judaic, the Christian consciousness [being] a peculiar transformation thereof" which, moreover, "was covered up in [later] Christianity."³¹ This "kairological" time became, in the course of the 1920's, the model for Heidegger's thinking of the concrete temporalization of being.

²⁹ It should be noted that Soloveitchik did not think the spiritual destiny of the Jewish people could *only* manifest in the form of a state founded on its ancient land. There is, he noted, "a third halakhic approach" between anti-Zionism and religious Zionism, one which is "positively inclined toward the State...but would not attach [to it] excessive value"; Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant, and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications*, ed. Nathaniel Helfgot (n.p.: Ktav, 2005), 163-64. Nevertheless, Soloveitchik argued that certain Jewish laws, most notably the commandment to settle the land, could only be fulfilled in the land of Israel, to which he added the conviction that such commandments necessitate Jewish sovereignty.

The question of a more detailed affinity between Heidegger and Soloveitchik requires further investigation. On the one hand Soloveitchik retains the halakhic objectivity of his Lithuanian tradition and is critical of Romantic and subjective forms of religiosity; yet on the other hand he invests halakhic Judaism with phenomenological-existential pathos that is inseparable from its collectivist-historical destiny. Dov Schwartz, *Religion or Halakhah: The Philosophy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), even suggests that "The concept of being in Heidegger's thought, for instance, is truly significant for R. Soloveitchik (178)." Here we can also note that Soloveitchik's student, the important Orthodox Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod, wrote "the first book-length study of Heidegger in English," *Kierkegaard and Heidegger: The Ontology of Existence* (New York: The Humanities Press, 1954). His mature theological work, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aaronson, 2000), is infused with Heidegger's influence. As late as 2010, following Emmanuel Faye's book, Wyschogrod defended the philosophical value of Heidegger's contribution; see "Heidegger's Tragedy," *First Things* April 2010 at <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2010/04/heideggers-tragedy>

³⁰ Leo Strauss, "An Introduction to Heideggerian Existentialism," *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 43-44.

³¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 73.

Leora Batnitzky noted that Heidegger's notion that "Being reveals itself in language" is one which "Jewish philosophers would define as fundamentally 'Jewish'."³² She suggests that modern Jewish thinkers such as Rosenzweig, Buber, Heschel, Levinas and Derrida develop philosophies of language that share distinctive features with Heidegger's position and at the same time distinguish them from the traditional philosophical account of language as a way of representing the world. For Heidegger, words are not instrumental signs that transparently designate things but are themselves things (as in the biblical *devarim*), presences that reveal being. One begins to understand why Elliot Wolfson has made extensive use of Heidegger in his research into Kabbalistic language.³³ Heidegger's subordination of the correspondence theory of truth to the "unveiling" of an event that reveals Being in its concealment is a complex and even obscure notion, but its echoing of biblical and kabbalistic notions, perhaps through the mediation of Schelling, is clear enough. Likewise Heidegger maintained, as does traditional Jewish thought, that thinking is saturated with interpretation and therefore conceived philosophy as an endless series of commentaries that forget, restore and unfold an original truth, as does the Jewish tradition of commentary. In his later works he proposed that thinking is not foremost logic and representation but thanking and memory, as Jewish prayer emphasizes. Heidegger also described poetry's capacity to disclose the call of being in a way that clearly recalls prophetic testimonies to the word of God, like the way Rashi, arguable the most normative of Jewish exegetical authorities, describes prophecy as "God speaking with Godself" while the prophet "listens" (Num. 7:89 *ad. loc.*). Finally, mention can be made of the metaphilosophical imperative of a new thinking that is neither Western nor Eastern but something at once originary and yet still unthought. A similar charge to perpetually distinguish itself from the Occident as much as from the Orient determines much Jewish thought, which it likewise discharges by returning to the revelation (Torah) that remains to be revealed.

Heidegger, of course, denied that his thought was influenced by the Jewish tradition. He claimed instead that he was inspired by the "unthought" of the pre-Socratic Greek tradition. More plausibly, it is the German Romantic tradition, especially Hölderlin and Schelling, which inspired many of his departures from the modern philosophical tradition. In any case, I do not mean to insinuate Jewish influence as much as to call attention to a meaningful confluence between Heidegger's thought and salient structures

³² Leora Batnitzky, "Revelation, Language, and Commentary," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Thought*, eds. Michael I. Morgan and Peter E. Gordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 302-303

³³ In the interview cited in note 1 Wolfson refers to a forthcoming book he is writing on Heidegger and the Kabbalah. In "Scepticism and the Philosopher's Keeping Faith," *Jewish Philosophy for the Twenty First Century: Personal Reflections*, eds. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Aaron W. Hughes (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 481-515, Wolfson comments on a range of themes and strategies that he, Heidegger and kabbalistic hermeneutics share, esp. at 500-509. See also Elliot R. Wolfson, *Giving Beyond the Gift: Apophasis and Overcoming Theomania* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), especially ch. 6 but *passim*; idem, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005); idem, "Revealing and Re/veiling Menahem Mendel Schneerson's Messianic Secret," *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 26 (2012), 25-96, esp. 35-45; idem, "Nihilating Nonground and the temporal Sway of Becoming: Kabbalistically Envisaging Nothing Beyond Nothing," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 17:3 (2012), 31-45, esp. 40-41.

of Jewish thought, which, as we saw, Jewish theologians and scholars of Jewish thought have also noted. Indeed as Marlène Zarader has compellingly argued, at almost every point that Heidegger turns away from Western metaphysics and epistemology he pivots on the Hebraic heritage, even as he himself never thought this through.³⁴ And while Zarader was right to expose and analyze this “unthought debt” in Heidegger’s thinking, the task today is to follow this Möbius strip in the reverse direction, tracing not only the “Hebraic” elements in Heidegger’s thought but the becoming-Heideggerian of prominent strands of modern Jewish.

The wide-ranging points of convergence enumerated above all gather under the most momentous biblical element in Heidegger’s thought, the way being “calls,” “addresses,” and demands a “response.” John Caputo summarizes the point:

The task of thought [for Heidegger] is to answer and respond to being’s address, to hear the call and be responsive and responsible, to let being be, to let it come to words in language. This language is not our own but being’s own *Sprache*, even as history is not precisely human history, but being’s own history, for being would be our own even as we would be being’s own people.... This discourse is borrowed from the biblical tradition of a salvation history, from the religions of the Book, which are set in motion by the Shema, the sacred command or call—“Hear, O Israel, the Lord Thy God is One” (Deut. 6:4)—a command that defines and identifies a sacred people: one God, one people, one place. Heidegger uses the structure of this call-and-response to frame his reading of the texts of Greek philosophers who have not the slightest idea of a history of salvation.³⁵

When, in 1933 in Berlin, in an essay called “What is Jewish Theology?,” Alexander Altmann suggested that “the existential moments, adduced by Heidegger, of ‘heritage’ (*Erbe*) and ‘destiny’ (*Schicksal*) could prove to be decisive for an understanding of Jewish existence,” he qualified his comment by noting that “these structures, however, are not quite adequate for the singular phenomenon of Jewish existence if they are understood as purely immanent entities.” He then continued:

Rather, in the Jewish case these concepts [of heritage and destiny] display a very conscious turning toward the transcendent moment of divine revelation. It is characteristic of the Jewish people that they are conscious of their heritage, as well as of their destiny, believing that they are always being addressed anew by God in the course of history. Israel stands anew time and again before the ineradicable givenness of its spiritual heritage which it must somehow

³⁴ Marlène Zarader, *The Unthought Debt: Heidegger and the Hebraic Heritage*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006). For an elaboration of the sketch given above of salient distinguishing features shared by Heidegger and traditional Jewish thought, see Zarader’s stimulating book.

³⁵ John Caputo, “People of God, People of Being: The Theological Presuppositions of Heidegger’s Path of Thought,” in *Appropriating Heidegger*, eds. James E. Falconer and Mark A. Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 88.

master and satisfactorily incorporate. It is the actuality of the 'Here O Israel'.³⁶

It is as if Altmann understood how Heidegger's concepts could be modified, or perhaps simply followed, if "transcendence" could somehow be understood as being *of* the world, in order to illuminate Jewish self-understanding. If so, the accumulation of Judaeo-Heideggerianisms could gather its manifestations only in one place on earth. "The irony is," Caputo notes, that when Heidegger performs his comprehensive refashioning of biblical salvation history in terms of the history of being, "he seems to land, alas (for him), back in the holy land, back on Hebrew soil, maybe somewhere on the West Bank, reproducing the dynamics of the Shema, of calling and responding, around which the Jewish history of salvation is structured."³⁷

The "irony of intellectual history" first discerned by Rosenzweig thus assumes a foreboding pertinence, uncovering not only the unthought Judaic elements of Heidegger's thought but also the unthought "Heideggerianism" of much Judaic thought. I stress, again, that in neither case, from neither end of the Möbius strip, is it a matter of "influence," even though there are, here and there, clear points of contact and doubtless other subterranean crossings that are often difficult to document.

PATHMARKS

The most telling example today, at once the most revealing of the becoming-Heideggerian of Jewish thought and the most hitherto concealed, is without question that of the place of being. In the 1930's, while penning the *Black Notebooks* and tarnishing the Jews as metaphysically uprooted, Heidegger lectured extensively on the "Heimat" or homeland of being. It is important to note how and why Heidegger distinguished his position from that of the National Socialists, for whom the homeland is the native geographical place of the Aryan race, even as he sympathized with them in crucial respects. For Heidegger, the National Socialists are too "ontic" or "thingy" in their conception of place; they mistake the homeland for a region on the globe where the nation is located. But the homeland is not a location on the globe. It is, rather, a place where the nearness to being happens. Just as the National Socialist conception of race is too ontic and essentializing in its biological determination of the people, so too it misconceives the homeland as a spatial thing. In both cases, National Socialism is right to contest the abstract liberal conceptions of people and place, for a people and a place are not abstract, universal or homogeneous; they are specific, dynamic, historical ways of being. But in both cases National Socialism falls into a type of ontological idolatry by mistaking the phenomena of people and place for particular beings—the Aryan race or the Fatherland—rather than ways of dwelling in nearness to being.³⁸

Heidegger was both critical and supportive of National Socialism. He was critical of it because he regarded Nazi ideology as a type of ontological

³⁶ Altmann, *The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, 54-55.

³⁷ John Caputo, "People of God, People of Being," 94.

³⁸ For an elaboration of these distinctions, see James Phillips, *Heidegger's Volk: Between National Socialism and Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

idolatry which confuses the with-world of the Volk and our being emplaced with ontic things. And despite this ideological vulgarity he was supportive of Nazism because he sympathized with its attempt to replace the abstractions of liberalism and humanism with concrete, historical phenomena—specifically those of the German people, its language, spirit, destiny and homeland—through which being reveals and speaks *itself*. To extend the analogy to idolatry: it is as if Heidegger thought that the Nazi Party was worshiping *the right God*—a concrete experience of Being—but *in the wrong way*, whereas liberals, humanists, cosmopolitans, Bolsheviks and above all “uprooted World Jewry” have, to use Jeremiah’s terminology, exchanged Being for vain emptiness and its Glory for futility (Jer. 2:11). Their notion of place amounts to a homogenous conception of space; their notion of being-together amounts to the sum of individuals regarded in their abstract universality; as such they do not even concern themselves with these beings in their being, having exchanged Being for vain abstractions and its fundamental attunements for futile calculations. If the Nazis were idolatrous in their vulgar, ontic way, Heidegger thought, at least they were failing with respect to Being itself, rather than empty abstractions.

As a philosophical critic of National Socialism, Heidegger argued that the homeland is a place where one can draw near to the unrepresentability of being but never attain it. In other words, for Heidegger the homeland is always a promised land, not a land that can be acquired. The place in which we dwell concretely is not a site that can be occupied. It is for similar reasons that Rosenzweig rejected Zionism. As he wrote:

this [Jewish] people has a land of its own only in that it has a land it yearns for—a holy land. And so even when it has a home, this people, in recurrent contrast to all other peoples on earth, is not allowed full possession of that home. It is only a ‘stranger and sojourner’. God tells it: ‘The land is mine’. The holiness of the land removed it from the people’s spontaneous reach while it could still reach out for it. This holiness increases the longing for what is lost, to infinity, and so the people can never be entirely at home in any other land.³⁹

Like Rosenzweig, but with the advantage of grim hindsight, Levinas understood the idolatrous temptations of place and accordingly rallied for a conception of Judaism whose roots reach deeper than the land, breaking up the attachment to place by responding to the displaced, “the widow, the orphan and the stranger.” In 1961, following the launch of the first man into space, Levinas wrote a short essay called “Heidegger, Gagarin and Us.” Whereas Heidegger saw the world as being devoured and disoriented by technology, in which everything was being manipulated, Gagarin exposed another face to technology. For Levinas, Gagarin’s hour in space symbolizes the human capacity to free ourselves from our attachments to place. In opposition to Heidegger’s argument for the primordially of the sense of place and enrootedness, Levinas argued that we can and should liberate our regard for the human from precisely such a conception. The attachment to place “is the very splitting of humanity into natives and strangers” and as such is “the source of all cruelty.” For this reason, Levinas continued,

³⁹ Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 300.

“technology is less dangerous than the spirits of Place,” for it “does away with the privileges of this enrootedness.”⁴⁰ Sarah Hammerschlag calls this Levinas’s “ethics of uprootedness,” which goes some way to explaining the slow and initially hostile reception of Levinas in Israel. Contra Heidegger, and contra theologies of Jewish enrootedness in the land, Levinas affirmed the genius of Diaspora. “Judaism has always been free with regard to place,” he said, “The Bible knows only a Holy Land, a fabulous land that spews forth the unjust, a land in which one does not put down roots without certain conditions.”⁴¹ Such is Levinas’s deep ambivalence to Zionism, at once commitment to the historical “ethical destiny” of the Jewish people and at the same time deeply suspicious of its territorialization, and *both* for Heideggerian reasons.

But other no less influential strands of modern Jewish thought have taken the opposite route. In the course of their “reterritorialization” on the ancient, holy land, they display further signs of the becoming-Heideggerian of prominent representatives of modern Jewish thought. This is especially the case since the mid-1970’s, when a distinction emerged between *religious Zionism* and the *theology of Zionism*. The former, as we saw in the case of Soloveitchik, avers the religious significance of settling the land within a theological program that seeks to actualize the objectivity of halakhic reality as a whole, a task in which settling the land plays only a minor role.⁴² By contrast, for *theologies of Zionism*, as exemplified by the Gush Emunim (Faithful Bloc) movement that arose in the mid-1970’s, the act of settling the land attains a status as elementary or ‘existential’ as that of revelation (Torah) and peoplehood, thus becoming a determinative element for all other doctrines and values. Indeed such theologies of Zionism arose on the basis of a similar critique of “World-Judaism” to the one Heidegger levels, namely, that its uprootedness had fostered inauthentic ways of being (theologically) Jewish and that only by rerooting Jewish theological existence can Judaism attain its proper, ultimately messianic, destiny. As one enthusiast from the formative years in the mid-1970’s put it, “One cannot rest content with studying Talmud; one must go out onto the land. There, especially there, religious consciousness will be revealed, holiness will be unveiled. There, no less than in a *yeshiva*, one finds Jewish truth.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seán Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 233.

⁴¹ Sarah Hammerschlag, *The Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁴² Thus leading rabbinic representatives of this strand of Modern Orthodoxy such as Rav Lichtenstein have ruled that Jewish law permits leaving or withdrawing from sacred land under certain (e.g. political) circumstances.

⁴³ Gideon Aran, *Kookism: The Roots of Gush Emunim, Jewish Settler’s Sub-Culture, Zionist Theology, Contemporary Messianism* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2013), 369. The citation comes from an anonymous participant in the Gush Emunim (Faithful Bloc) movement that arose in the mid-1970’s, following the Yom Kippur War (1973), as documented by the Israeli sociologist Gideon Aran. I have deliberately chosen an anecdotal citation to underscore that the affinity between the Gush Emunim theology of Zionism and Heidegger’s ontology of place requires further investigation. My hypothesis is that one can build on the structural or formal proximity between Heidegger’s thought and Jewish theology that was first established, in ad hoc fashion, in the Diaspora by authors directly associated with Heidegger (Rosenzweig, Altmann, Levinas, Soloveitchik, Wyschogrod, Wolfson). On the basis of this affinity between Heidegger and a compelling way of construing characteristic features of orthodox Jewish theology one can then examine the further becoming-Heideggerian

Admittedly, the critique of Diaspora Judaism as spiritually emasculated on account of its uprootedness is a stock charge going back to earlier, *secular* Zionism. Neither Heidegger nor Gush Emunim invented it. The point, however, is that both Heidegger and Gush Emunim give this critique a metaphysical construal (ontological or theological) that places it within the *Seinsgeschichte* or *Heilsgeschichte*. This changes everything. For now Jewish uprootedness is symptomatic of the evils of the epoch, and overcoming uprootedness becomes the very way of restoring access to the Place.

The cumulative evidence of a nexus between 'Jewish' and 'Heideggerian' thought is consecrated by recalling that the originary, primordial ecstasies of Time as Being and of Being as Time was already "concretized" or, if you prefer, *incarnate* in the very Name of God, whose YHWH encodes the temporalities of past (*hyh*), present (*hwh*) and future (*yhyh*).⁴⁴ To this, as we have seen, other prominent elements of a phenomenology that gathers around this sacred, crossed-out name accrue: the ontological priority of 'we' over 'me' and of pre-reflective practice over formalizable law; the co-historicizing of authentic destiny actualized by appropriating a heritage in a novel historical context; the non-instrumental and non-representative presence of words that bear traces of the sacred name; the prophetic character of poetic thinking; the interpretative tasks of thinking in relation to an originary truth that is still unfolding; a view of truth as a disclosive event that conceals itself; and a sacred history that works its way through and the same time distinguishes itself from philosophy and religion, Occidentalism and Orientalism.

The elective affinity of a reciprocally unthought debt linking Heidegger and Jewish thought comes to a head in the presencing of the unique name to the elect people in its proper Place. A call issued in the sacred Hebrew language, the originary Torah that is still revealing itself, addressed to a chosen people now returned to their promised land. One call, one people, one place.⁴⁵ Heidegger's path, like the path of certain theologies of Zion, gathers a unique people to dwell in a unique land, letting the sacred language speak in nearness to the manifestations or revelations of God/Being-as-time. One should not make one's work too easy by casting Heidegger's thought as wholly anti-Semitic, as if Heidegger did not also pioneer a critique of ontic idolatries such as biologism and territorialism. It turns out, rather, that his thought *cleaves*, by an abyss of a hair's breadth, into a critique of National Socialism, racism and territorialism and an embracing of views that collaborate with them. His thought is contaminated by the impossibility of this cleaving becoming a rigid, secure separation, just as theological faith can

of orthodox Jewish theology in the course of its reterritorialization on the sacred land, figured as an essential, constitutive element of dwelling in proximity to God.

⁴⁴ On the incarnationalism of the Hebrew Bible see Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁵ I am here following the Möbius strip which spans the distance between Heidegger and Judaism in the reverse direction to Caputo and Zarader. Here is Caputo's formulation of Heidegger's "unthought debt" to the Jews, as Zarader called it: "The call was issued in a rival sacred language, not Hebrew but Greek, which left behind its sacred texts whose depths can be endlessly plumbed. The call was addressed to a rival chosen people, not the Jews but the Greeks and their spiritual heirs, the Germans, in a rival new Jerusalem, not Israel but the Third Reich, with a rival prophet, not Hosea but – if truth be told and with all due modesty! – Heidegger. One call, one people, one place."

never be permanently secure or immunized against idolatry. Those forms of contemporary Jewish theology which follow Heidegger's path, even without knowing it—just as Heidegger's path winds its way through Jewish thought, without him suspecting it—find themselves today in this very abyss internal to one of the greatest philosophies of the age.

Heidegger is probably the most important European philosopher of the past hundred years; his posterity is assured and he cannot be simply dismissed as an anti-Semite. He is also the philosopher who, despite himself and despite the glory of Judaism, offers the best relief for a philosophical articulation of much of what is profound, compelling and distinctive in the experience of Jewish theology. The "scandal" of Heidegger's anti-Semitism, based as it is on his view of World-Judaism's metaphysical uprootedness, calls not for facile outrage at his "unforgivable" errors but for a confrontation with the abyss internal to Jewish thought. The enrooting of Jewish theology in a holy land is the "great thought" in which we Jews stray today.

MICHAEL FAGENBLAT is Senior Research Fellow at Shalem College, Jerusalem, and Adjunct Senior Lecturer at Monash University, where he taught between 2003-2010 before returning to Jerusalem. He has also taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at Al Quds Bard Honors College, Abu Dis. He is the author of *A Covenant of Creatures: Levinas's Philosophy of Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), which was short listed for the Goldstein-Goren Award for Best Book in Jewish Thought, 2010-2012. His numerous articles in phenomenology, Jewish thought and political theology can be accessed through academia.edu. He is currently completing a critical guide and introduction on Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* for Edinburgh University Press and the editing of a volume on *Negative Theology as Jewish Modernity*. This article modifies and significantly expands on an article published in Hebrew in *Ha'aretz, Culture & Literature* section, 31 May 2014.

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