

Michael L. Morgan. *Interim Judaism: Jewish Thought in a Century of Crisis.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001. Indes. \$37.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-21441-6.



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Michael Morgan has produced another fine book that is thoughtful, insightful, and well written. Morgan has edited *Classics of Moral and Political Theory*, *A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination*, *Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy*, and *Jewish thought of Emil Fackenheim*. Morgan has authored *Beyond Auschwitz: Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought in America*, *Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought: The Dialectics of Revelation and History*, and *Platonic Piety: Philosophy and Ritual in Fourth Century Athens*. With Paul Fransk he has translated and edited *Philosophical and theological writings: Franz Rosenzweig Translated*. Morgan has written the introduction for the Complete works: Spinoza Translated by Samuel Shirley. Morgan is the foremost expositor today, as well as good friend, of Emil Fackenheim. Morgan is Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Studies at Indiana University.

Morgan's current book grew out of three Samuel Goldenson Lectures, delivered at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati in April 1999.

In *Interim Judaism: Jewish Thought in a Century of Crisis*, Morgan addresses modern intellectual life in Europe, the role of the Holocaust for Jewish life and thought, the possibility of a renewal of Judaism in the modern world, how the historical political and

theological-messianic are related, the relevance of the messianic to the political, and modernist notions of older religious terms such as redemption, revelation, messianism, eternity, and secular time or history. In the book Morgan asks, "where do Jewish life and Jewish thought in America find themselves at the turn of the twenty-first century?" Morgan comments, "This question requires recovering the lessons of Jewish thought in the twentieth century as it sought to respond to the emergence of great urban industrial cultures in Europe at the turn of the century, the catastrophic war and its aftermath, the Holocaust, the Cold War, the establishment of the State of Israel and its embattled situation, and the conflicts in postwar American society" (p. xi). Morgan notes, "These chapters do not aim at a comprehensive examination of these responses; rather, they are a preliminary probing of the territory, performed with the hope of bringing attention to some highlights and sketching a trajectory for future work" (p. xi). To answer this question Morgan is required to return to modernist thought as it was manifest in the lives and works of European intellectuals before and after World War I. This is the world of Georg Simmel, Martin Buber, Georg Lukacs, Franz Kafka, Gershom Scholem, Karl Barth, Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, T.S. Eliot, and Franz Rosenzweig. In discoursing on these modernist thinkers and artists Morgan relates them to past philosophers such as Bergson, Isaiah Berlin,

Brentano, Dilthey, Foucault, Frege, Hegel, Heidegger, Hobbes, Husserl, James, Kant, Levinas, Nietzsche, Parmenides, Plato, Sartre, Socrates, Spinoza, Wittgenstein, and the current philosophical scene of such academic teachers of philosophy such as Jacques Derrida, Jürgen Habermas, Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum, Richard Rorty, Charles Taylor, etc. In illuminating the modernist period Morgan draws on the work of scholars such as Robert Alter, David Biale, Stanley Cavell, Saul Friedlander, Moshe Idel, Thomas Kuhn, Uriel Tal, Hayden White, etc. The one current philosopher given special attention is Emil Fackenheim, a personal friend and mentor of Morgan.

Morgan offers a prescription even in these uncertain times where Jews in America face the future, by writing, “Even if there is no consensus about what redemption calls for and what actions ought ultimately to achieve, still the need is there— to recover the Jewish past, to study its texts, to tell its stories, to reflect on its principles, and to engage actively in the work of the world. For today, that will have to be sufficient” (p. 118). The Judaism Morgan has in mind “is pragmatic, independent of theory, and interim” (p. 119). Morgan asserts that “this interim Judaism is a Judaism of ritual, educational, and moral activism, and it is also a Judaism of modest hope. But it is not a Judaism that stems from a comfortable theory about God, the Jewish people, Torah, or Israel” (p. 122). Morgan attempts to show “that it is a reasonable and cogent Judaism for us to have grasped at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. The important intellectual discussions and debates of the early part of this century in Europe, which we call modernist, marked a high point of theoretical reflection and innovation regarding the central religious ideas of revelation and redemption” (p. 123). Morgan tries to show how one might articulate these ideas and assess their strengths and weaknesses.

Structurally Morgan organizes his book in the following three main chapters, “The Problem of Objectivity Before and After Auschwitz,” “Revelation, Language, and the Search for Transcendence,” and “Messianism and Politics: Incremental Redemption”. The chapters are preceded by an introduction and followed by a conclusion titled, “Judaism Before Theory”. In the book Morgan focuses on three strands of the intellectual fabric of the modernist period. The three strands deal with are the problem of objectivity; the experience of the transcendent as a ground of objectivity; and the relationship between redemption and politics. In each chapter Morgan discusses “one of the strands as it developed in the

modernist period among Jewish intellectuals and others, some of whom were assimilated or alienated Jews, non-Jews, or wholly secular figures.” Morgan then turns to “the way in which that strand has manifested itself in American culture and intellectual life in the postwar period, after the Holocaust, and as the Holocaust became a part of American and Jewish self-awareness.” Morgan explores “how notions such as redemption and revelation can be recovered for Jewish life today.” Morgan concludes each chapter by suggesting “how, in our situation, we can recover the strand in question and hence the resources we have for weaving the fabric of contemporary Jewish life and thought in America.” The first strand “concerns the desire for objective standards for belief and practice and hence involves issues such as relativism and the rise of historicism.” The second strand “concerns the way we conceive of the human experience of the transcendent or divine.” This is the notion of revelation that Morgan places in the context of the debate between those who favored a conception of revelation as unmediated and direct and those who conceived it as mediated by language. The third strand “involves redemption and its relationship with everyday, historical life.” Morgan calls this “the problem of messianism and politics.” Morgan asserts that “the three strands” he traces “cooperate to form a common emerging pattern in the fabric of Jewish life.” That Jewish life is active and practical, variegated and diverse, and, interim and provisional “without a firm confidence that anything more secure is in the offing.” Morgan notes that Jews today are “at a moment of great uncertainty, lacking definitive answers; nonetheless we recognize the mandate to a committed Jewish life.” He argues that we must seek redemption, be receptive to the transcendent, and engage in a life of searching both for the past and for the future. This searching also involves “engaged waiting.” Morgan writes, “My proposal for contemporary Judaism in America, then, is a life of deliberation and action that is also a life of waiting, but the kind of waiting I have in mind is very distinctive” (p. 43). Morgan does not mean the kind of wasted estranged waiting characteristic of Kafka’s “Vor dem Gesetz.”^[1] The type of waiting Morgan has in mind is anticipated by Siegfried Kracauer in his essay “Those Who Wait.” Morgan notes that Kracauer’s “engaged waiting” is “rooted in life, in commitments and action, but it is also cautious, sober, realistic, and in its own way anticipatory” (p. 44). It is this kind of engaged waiting that Morgan proposes as a Jewish response to the crisis of objectivity today.

Some may be critical of Morgan in Interim Judaism for his emphasis on highlighting individuals born Jews

but whose association with the Jewish community is tenuous. However these criticisms are not justified. There is much to learn from the examples Morgan chooses such as that of Georg Simmel who was born of Jewish stock but brought up a Christian; Georg Lukacs who was born of Jewish parents but Judaism played no role for his family or for him and eventually the family converted to Christianity; and Jean Amery who was born a Jew but brought up as a Catholic, etc.

Morgan anticipates the question, "Why does he begin with the modernist phase? Why not return to the Enlightenment? Or to the seventeenth century? Or the medieval period? Or antiquity? To rabbinic Judaism and rabbinic texts or to the Bible?" Morgan admits all of this history is important and that "broad and abstract notions such as redemption can and should be recovered within a process of rethinking, clarifying, and debating the ways in which they were used and understood throughout Jewish intellectual life, from the Biblical period to our own." However Morgan is convinced that "with the rise of the new urban culture at the turn of the century in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Prague, Budapest, and London, some very important changes took place, both in how people lived and experienced their lives and in their modes of thinking." Morgan contends "that for an understanding of the ideas" he deals with in the book—redemption and revelation, eternity and history, messianism and politics—the developments of this modernist period are so creative, so influential, and so integral to our self understanding, that the most appropriate way to start to recover them is to begin in the modernist period and to work both forward, to our time, and eventually backward to earlier periods, earlier texts, and earlier worlds." Thus Morgan conceives of his book "as the beginning of a larger project, launched from the place where the most creative and compelling thinking occurred."

Further some critics may claim that at times Morgan states the obvious. For example, Morgan writes, "If there is one thing we know after the death camps, it is that all cruelty and certainly all genocidal extermination are wrong, no matter what, without qualification" (p. 28). This criticism that Morgan states the obvious is not justified for Morgan provides further analysis of the Holocaust that captures the complexity of such a catastrophe. Morgan amply demonstrates that he has thought long and hard about the moral questions that arise when confronting the Shoah. There is nothing overly simplistic or obvious in Morgan's thoughtful book.

While Morgan does cite traditional Talmudic views of

messianism by drawing on Levinas' citation of messianic texts in *Difficult Freedom* [2] some readers may have wished Morgan to go further by grounding Benjamin's thoughts on messianism in other traditional texts such as the conclusion of Rambam's *Sefer Sho'tim*. [3] It might have been interesting if Morgan had explored whether Benjamin's notions of messianism are influenced to a certain degree by Christian views on the subject as opposed to Jewish views. For example as Robert Chazan has shown the Barcelona disputation of 1263 between Ramban and Pablo Christiani thrashes out the different status of the messiah idea in Christianity and Judaism. To the Jews salvation was a social political concept involving the betterment of the whole human society versus the Christian notion of salvation as a matter of rescue of the individual soul from damnation. In Christianity human history did not necessarily enter into the concept of salvation. The function of the messiah was to rescue humanity from history. Pablo Christiani had argued that the great things wrought by the advent of the messiah had occurred not on the crude visible political stage but in the area of spirit. It might have been helpful to assess further Benjamin's relation to traditional Jewish views on messianism. Morgan begins this but further work may remain to be done. Likewise Morgan might have given more attention to comparing the notion that Jewish thought today is in a century of crisis with other crises throughout Jewish history as when Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi felt it necessary to write down the mishnah in 200 C.E. so that it not be lost or when Rambam felt it necessary to preserve secret teachings of *ma'aseh merkavah* and *ma'aseh bereshit* in the *Moreh Nevukhim* so that they not be lost as well. The prohibition against the writing down of oral traditions had to be violated in order to save the law in times of crisis. It might be asked, "How does the crisis of the twentieth century compare with the crises in other epochs of Jewish history?"

In the first chapter, "The Problem of Objectivity Before and After Auschwitz," Morgan describes the permanent disorientation, psychological dislocation, and fragmentation of the twentieth century characterized by population explosion, urban growth, new technologies to which artists and philosophers sought to recover through the redemptive potential of art to recover some sense of wholeness. When describing Simmel's emphasis on the potential redemptive powers of art, Morgan writes, "Hence, insofar as the modern self longs, for wholeness and a recovery of this unity, insofar as it seeks to overcome this disintegration and fragmentation, it seeks modes of experience and activity that will do so, and it

finds them above all in art" (p. 7). Simmel felt that "it was through art that form could be brought to content in a unifying way." Although Morgan does not note it we also encounter this view of the redemptive power of art in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.^[4] Skeptics will argue that the reason art is deemed the locus of redemption is because religious meaning has been displaced by secular art by these very secular figures who have replaced religious redemption with secular humanistic redemption. With Morgan further notes, "For Simmel, the solution to the crisis of objectivity, orientation, and redemption from this alienation, if at all possible, rested in the life of the artist or the mystic, in separation from the pedestrian stultifying forms of bourgeois culture, and in the aspiration to a unity beyond all diversity and fragmentation" (p. 8). For Simmel "unity and wholeness are the goal of all art, to overcome the fragmentation of the self that exiled the soul from others, nature, and indeed from all authenticity and meaning" (p. 10). Morgan also notes that Lukacs early had been committed to "the efficacy of art in bringing wholeness to fragmented modern life, in bringing soul and form to life" (p. 9).

Morgan relates this striving for unity further in the work of Buber where "redemption takes the shape of unity, an ultimate unity of divine or transcendent status" (p. 12). Art and mystical experience are seen as the dominant means to a solution to worldly alienation by seeking a transcendent ground. Based on the work of Buber, Morgan offers a definitional description of mysticism as a search for unity by noting, "mysticism is an attempt to confront the bewildering commotion of everyday experience and to seek to transcend it through the self's merging with unconditional unity. In this way the mystic gains access to a wholly transcendent unity and through unconditional detachment from the world, achieves or attains that unity. Hence mystical experience essentially involves a dissolution of self and a transcendence of all the multiplicity that constitutes everyday experience and everyday language" (p. 12). Morgan further defines Buber's understanding of the mystical and ecstatic experience itself as "an aspiration to transcend the commotion of everyday life and its varied estrangements and divisions. In itself it is both access to unconditional unity and the attainment of a unity beyond articulation and expression" (p. 13). Buber articulated as a Jewish task the search for unity. Judaism is to "teach humanity what unity is and how it should be brought to Jewish life," "to show a way to realizing unity in history through the idea of one God, the advocacy of justice, the creation of genuine community, and the propagation of the messianic idea"

(p. 14). For Buber "the experience of undifferentiated and pure unity is not a goal; it is a moment of revelation" (p. 15). The experience of unity yields redemptive results. Morgan synthesizes disparate movements in a unity of relation when he further notes that "structurally we find something similar in other theological developments of the period such as the Christian theological movement associated with figures like Karl Barth, Friedrich Gogarten, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich (p. 16).

Morgan also characterizes modernity with a kind of malaise that is typical of Kafka's portrayal of man estranged from God. Morgan notes that in *Two Types of Faith* "Buber reads Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle* as similes of the contemporary situation. They portray man estranged from God, hopeless in his dealings with his own soul and with the world, his life meaningless and absurd. At one point, Buber says that Kafka's world is one in which God hides his face, a term he uses for a time of evil, or the 'eclipse of God' (p. 68)."^[5] The ambiguity characteristic of Kafka's texts is also characteristic of modernity. Some moderns have lost all sense of direction and purpose in life which is emblematic of the trait of what J.J. White calls "non-ending" in Kafka's unfinished narratives.^[6] For example K in the *Castle* wanders in a maze of eros, never being able to talk with his destination of meeting Klammer. The bureaucracy that surrounds Klammer is emblematic of the growth of large government bureaucracy in modernity. The hinderance that prevents K from reaching the *Castle* is the apparatus of the bureaucracy about which Kafka "had an incisive grasp."^[7] Benjamin understood this best when he wrote, "the world of offices and registries, of musty, shabby, dark rooms is Kafka's world."^[8] Morgan thus paints a modernity that is Kafkescue. Morgan takes the pulse of modernity and notes, "we live in a time of great uncertainty about what the divine and our relationship to it might be" (p. 81). This ambiguity is also characteristic of much of Kafka's texts.

As a meditation on the present situation of Jews and Judaism, Morgan concludes that despite the ambiguity characteristic of modernity "we can sense a mandate to bring Judaism to life, even without confidence about revelation and its role. What views like those of Buber, Rosenzweig, Scholem, Benjamin, and Kafka all share is the investment in a life of texts, rituals, and a life of 'hesitant openness'. Ours is a situation of risk and danger and hence is suited to no more certainty than this, to face the future with both anticipation and concern and yet with the hope that the Jewish people will survive. For some, that is the limit of their hope; for others, the

hope is greater still, to survive until the day when our relationship with 'our cruel and merciful God' is once again secure" (p. 82).[9] Morgan searches for a mandate that will give unity to a modernist world of fragmentation and returns to this theme when writing the following about Buber, "Buber proposed that Jewish destiny involves a striving for unity which aimed to realize unity in the world- for unity within individual man; for unity between divisions of the nation, and between nations; for unity between mankind and every living being; and for unity between God and the world" (p. 99).

Morgan places writers, poets, and philosophers in the historical context of the modernist period with its general upheavals. Morgan delineates patterns and affinities between various intellectuals of the modernist period. For example Morgan relates T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" and Rainer Maria Rilke's "Duino Elegies" in which we find "a similar aspiration to unity, wholeness, and transcendence in a world destitute and deracinated" (p. 3). Morgan perceptively notes the influences of one thinker on another such as the influence of Georg Simmel on Buber; the influence of Bergson, Dostoyevsky, Josiah Royce, F. H. Bradley on T.S. Eliot; the influence of Rabbi Yehiel Jacob Weinberg on Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits; the influence of Paul Tillich on Richard Rubenstein; or, the influence of the intellectual friendship between Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem and in their linguistic conception of revelation [10] their reaction against and direct opposition to Buber and his disciples, and (p. 5) the influence of surrealist motifs, Marxism, the Kabbalah, and Jewish tradition on Benjamin's famous theses on the concept of history which he wrote in the final months of his life in 1940 as the theoretical presuppositions that supported his unfinished *Arcades* project.[11] Morgan also delves into the biographical data of various thinkers such as Georg Lukacs relationship with Irma Seidler who committed suicide and to whom Lukacs dedicated *Soul and Form*. Morgan is frequently noting affinities and correspondences between different intellectuals.

A repeated technique of Morgan is to introduce various thinkers under discussion with an excellent biographical sketch so as to give the reader a concrete historical context for the thinkers life and ideas. For example Buber is introduced by the following biographical sketch, "Once he completed his dissertation on the mystics Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Boehme in 1904, he immersed himself in Hasidic texts and in a wide variety of mystical testimonies; his retellings of the legends of the Baal Shem Tov and the tales of Nachman of Bratslav made him famous" (p. 11). Morgan notes that "Buber

was moved by his reading of Nietzsche, his sensitivity to Hasidism, and other mystical testimonies, and his voluntaristic understanding of a Jewish renewal that needed to replace formalism, law, and a sense of subordination with vitality and dynamism" (p. 52). The reader further learns of Buber's involvement with the young Zionists of the Bar Kochba Society such as Robert Welsch, Hugo Bergmann, Max Brod, and Hans Kohn. Further Morgan situates Buber in the context of Romanticism when he notes that he is "a heroic exemplar of an effort to excavate deep, neo-Romantic veins in Judaism as an alternative to bourgeois Jewish formality" (p. 11).[12] The importance of these biographical sketches is validated by Morgan's note for example that how Holocaust theologians Richard Rubenstein and Eliezer Berkovits "approaches the death camps and Nazi extermination is grounded in who they are and where each stands prior to his confrontations with Auschwitz" (p. 30). Thus the fact that Berkovits was influenced by Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg and was trained in rabbinic texts is an important factor in assessing his work. Likewise Morgan notes the influence of Paul Tillich at the Harvard Divinity School on Rubenstein. Morgan recognizes the influence of the biographical details of one's life on one's intellectual work and thus often introduces thinkers and artists by giving a biographical sketch and noting the intellectual influences on them.

Morgan traces the different developments of the modernist period and notes the emergence of trends, tendencies, and movements that characterize it. For example Morgan relates the outgrowth of movements and how they developed and evolved when he asserts that "post-modernism" and "multiculturalism" "are descendants of the earlier hermeneutical developments of the postwar existentialism that infused the undercurrent of despair in the fifties, percolated below the surface of the culture of affluence, and then exploded in postwar literature, the beat movement, and the revolutionary sixties" (p. 4). Morgan likewise sketches the trends of the sixties, seventies, eighties, and nineties in Jewish American life by writing, "This was the period of the emphasis on worship and the intimacy of small groups of the chavurah movement, which eventually even influenced synagogue life, of the flourishing of Jewish folk-rock liturgy, and of a return to ritual in Reform Judaism. It also was at the leading edge of a very selective Jewish politics with regard to Israel and a slow but sure effort to mitigate the importance of the memory of the Holocaust and to de-center the Holocaust in Jewish identity, one that has had to accommodate a boom in Holocaust publications and

even to the ritual incorporation of the Holocaust memory in liturgy. This renewal movement occurred simultaneously with and interacted with the rise of Jewish feminism; it also blossomed in the eighties and nineties, into the movement called Jewish spirituality, a Jewish version of the new age and metaphysics rage that has been very much a part of pop culture for the past decades" (p. 47). Morgan notes the other trends that emerged in Jewish thought in the seventies and eighties such as "revised naturalism, where the experience of the divine in prayer and other spiritual contexts is conceived in psychological terms. Another (trend) has been a renewed interest in Maimonides and medieval rationalism, a movement that amounts to a revised natural theology.[13] Finally, and perhaps most influentially, there has been a turn to textual study and to the interpretation of Bible, midrash, commentaries, Kabbalistic texts, and much else within the Jewish tradition" (p. 78). Sometimes Morgan's sketching of trends is sociological in nature as when Morgan further notes the historical developments of post-Holocaust Jewry in the United States when he writes, "Synagogues and Jewish community centers grew in size and membership. Jews imitated their Christian neighbors through congregational affiliation. Jewish country clubs were built, and Jews moved to the newly developing suburbs" (p. 119). Morgan notes that internal theological debate among intellectuals led to the creation of journals and magazines like *Commentary* and *Judaism* and involved many transplanted European intellectuals and rabbis among them Jacob Petuchowski, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Eliezer Berkovits, Emil Fackenheim, and Steven Schwarzschild, and a number of young American rabbis such as Lou Silberman, Samuel Karff, and Eugene Borowitz" (p. 120). Morgan surmises that "perhaps the most interesting theological debate in those years was between adherents of Mordecai Kaplan's Reconstructionist naturalism, with its emphasis on Judaism as a culture or civilization, Jewish peoplehood, ritual and myth as social and psychological strategies, and Jewish identity, and the nascent movement of existential Jewish theologians, with their appropriation of Buber and Rosenzweig and their emphasis on faith, revelation, covenant, mitzvot, and God" (p. 120).

Similarly the method of noting developments is made when Morgan notes Kracauer's observation that films like Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935) "grew directly out of German film in the Weimar years" (p. 24). Kracauer's *Caligari to Hitler* deals with the way that German expressionist film and film of the Weimar period reflects the social and psychological realities of the period

and anticipates the Nazi use of film for propaganda purpose (p. 141).

Again we note Morgan's method to trace the evolution of works as responses to movements as when Morgan writes, "Kuhn was responding to a narrow conception of scientific investigation that emerged out of the school of Vienna's logical positivism. This conception defined scientific thinking in terms of strictly logical models of scientific inquiry and theory construction. In response, Kuhn claimed that a great deal of science is grounded in social and psychological factors and hence in the very particular historical character of society, communities of scientists, and the relevant culture" (p. 29).

In addition to tracing the trends and sketching how movements develop out of, and influence, one another Morgan also notes the evolution of individual modernist thinkers' own thought. For example, Morgan argues "Benjamin's early thoughts about language lead indirectly to his later thoughts about history, messianism, and redemption" (p. 76). Morgan identifies connections between different thinkers thought as when he writes, "There is a connection then, between Benjamin's and Scholem's conception of revelation and language on the one hand, and Benjamin's thoughts about historical materialism, history, and messianism, on the other. Scholem argued that revelation had to take the form of language to be apprehensible and fulfillable. Putting it in these terms, Benjamin shows how, through the examination of language, that fulfillment occurs. Morgan notes the similarities between Scholem and Benjamin when he writes, "both were opposed to the war; both had broken with Buber's intuitive, mystical style of Judaism; both had been active in the German youth movement and then left it" (p. 100). Such observations of similarities allow Morgan to draw lines between modernist thinkers.

Near the conclusion Morgan writes, "Moreover, no serious and responsible contemporary attempt to reflect on Jewish life in America can ignore the Holocaust, Nazi fascism, and all that has followed these events in American Judaism. Among the outcomes of the Holocaust for Jewish thought should be a dialectic of hope and despair, confidence and uncertainty" (p. 123).

Morgan adeptly notes Richard Rubenstein's rejection of viewing "the suffering and extermination of millions of Jews as part of God's plan and hence that somehow God is responsible and Hitler and his henchmen are God's implements" (p. 32). Rubenstein and other like-minded intellectuals reject all conceptions of the Holocaust as punishment.[14] For Rubenstein such an approach to the

Shoah is “repulsive” and “obscene.” Thus Rubenstein would reject the view that reform Judaism’s assimilationist stance was “the reason” God punished the Jews with the Holocaust and the Fuhrer was “the rod of God” just as Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E. and the Romans in 70 C.E. are sometimes viewed.

Morgan is sympathetic to Fackenheim’s anti-theodic response to the Holocaust. “Step by step, Fackenheim considers the agents, the crimes, and the victims, trying always to explain and understand what happened and why it happened, and in every case, no matter how careful our examination, how probing our analysis, the phenomena resist intellectual satisfaction” (p. 34). Theodicy is a term coined by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz to mean “justification of God.” Theodicy involves the attempt to justify, explain, or find acceptable meaning to relationship between God, evil, and suffering. Anti-theodicy is a neologism coined by Zachary Braiterman [15] which means refusing to justify, explain or accept that relationship. Fackenheim has suggested that attempts to explain the Holocaust in a sense are “blasphemous” in their attempt to construct a coherent theodicy.[16] Fackenheim writes, “The event therefore resists explanation- the historical kind that seeks causes, and the theological kind that seeks meaning and purpose. More precisely, the better the mind succeeds with the necessary task of explaining what can be explained, the more it is shattered by its ultimate failure.”[17] Fackenheim like Jacob Neusner who casts doubts on being able to construct a theodicy—a justification of God’s way in the aftermath of the Holocaust, suggests that the course needed after the Shoah is anti-theodicy.[18] However anti-theodicy for Fackenheim does not constitute atheism. Fackenheim refers to the Shoah as a Sinaitic revelation and affirms belief in God after the Holocaust. It is not God who perpetrated the Holocaust on Jews, but rather human beings in their human moral failings. Morgan returns to this anti-theodic theme in Fackenheim’s work when he comments further, “he (Fackenheim) argues that the Holocaust resists explanation, historical or theological; the event has no meaning or purpose. It fits no intellectual pattern; the responsible intellectual encounter with the death camps does not yield satisfaction, understanding, or what we might call ‘intellectual accommodation’” (p. 111).

Morgan in interpreting Fackenheim asserts that after Auschwitz, “all our concepts, our categories, and our understanding must be rethought, and hence, in principle, all must undergo revision and change, and will again and again” (p. 36). This remark has a resonance with Adorno who writes, “After Auschwitz there is no word

tinged from on high not even a theological one, that has any right unless it underwent a transformation.”[19]

Morgan asserts that “essential to Nazism was the murderous assault on humanity and human dignity” (p. 36). This remark reveals the influence of Fackenheim who has argued that the Nazis attempted the eradication of the divine image in the human being. Fackenheim writes, the Nazis “sought to destroy the reality of the divine image so systematically as to make its rejection of the knowability of it into a self fulfilling prophecy.” As David Patterson observes this has far-reaching theological consequences: “Thus Fackenheim insists, A Jew cannot take upon himself the age-old task of testifying to the divine image without believing his own testimony. In our time however, he cannot authentically believe in this testimony without exposing himself both to the fact that the image of God was destroyed, and to the fact that the unsurpassable attempt to destroy it was successfully resisted, supremely so, by the survivor. Hence the wish to bear witness turns into a commandment, the commandment to restore the divine image to the limits of his power (Jewish Return into History, (p. 251).”[20] That the divine image was destroyed by the Nazis Fackenheim further reminds us when he writes, “In manufacturing the Muselmaenner- walking corpses, the Auschwitz criminals destroyed the divine image in their victims. In consequence a new necessity has arisen for the ethics of Judaism in our time. What has broken must be mended. Even for a Jew who cannot believe in God it is necessary to act as though man were made in His image.” [21] In the Rabbinic tradition Judaism has traditionally attributed to be being in the image of God, the perfect balance between intellectual [22] and moral virtue so that knowledge is in equilibrium with deeds of loving kindness. [23] Catherine Chalié in her article, “Après la catastrophe: La pensée d’Emil Fackenheim” equates Fackenheim’s assertion that the Nazis destroyed the divine image in man with the Nazis destruction of the humanity of the Jews when she writes, “Car La Catastrophe a tenté de détruire, sans toujours y réussir l’image divine en chacune des ses victimes, c’est à dire, selon le judaïsme, l’humanité même de l’homme.” [24]

Morgan seems to be in agreement with Zionists and many post-Holocaust theologians “who claim that any authentic response to the Holocaust must involve a commitment to Israel’s survival that is in its own way messianic” (p. 109). This is Fackenheim’s position, which Louis Greenspan has written about in his book, Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought. The call for solidarity with Israel in Fackenheim’s thought

is a constant and made real by his own act of aliyah to choose to live in the German Colony in Jerusalem. Morgan writes, "Among Jewish theologians, Emil Fackenheim has labored to clarify the religious and the secular dimensions of the Zionist project in a post-Holocaust world. For Fackenheim, Jewish life requires of itself a return into history, and that return is exemplified importantly by the creation, defense, and development of the state of Israel" (p. 110). For Fackenheim "every authentic response to the Holocaust—religious or secularist, Jewish and non-Jewish is a commitment to the autonomy and security of the state of Israel" (p. 111). We now turn to the key place of Fackenheim in Morgan's excellent book.

Emil Fackenheim attains a special position in Morgan's book. For example Morgan writes, "Perhaps the best place to see both poles of this crisis, both sides of this paradox, is in Emil Fackenheim's *To Mend the World*. Fackenheim is one of the most articulate and philosophically serious of the 'new' Jewish theologians, the existential theologians, of the postwar period" (p. 33). Morgan views *To Mend the World* as the "high point of three decades of books and essays that attempt to clarify what a post-Holocaust Jewish life and thought might be" (p. 34). Morgan again lauds Fackenheim when Morgan writes, "Perhaps the best representative of postwar Jewish existentialism is Emil Fackenheim, the foremost neo-Buberian of the period" (p. 77).

Morgan notes that Fackenheim tries to show that the only kind of authentic response to the Shoah is "to resist and oppose it" (p. 34), and this honest opposition involves taking Judaism and the God of Judaism seriously (p. 36). Fackenheim in *To Mend the World* writes, "The truth is that to grasp the Holocaust whole of horror is not to comprehend or transcend it, but rather to say no to it, or resist it" (p. 239). Morgan notes that in *To Mend the World* Fackenheim asserts that there is an imperative to resist Nazi purposes and to oppose the legacy of inhumanity and evil. According to Morgan, "Only one thing will do, the actuality of resistance to Nazi atrocity in the event itself, performed consciously and with a reflective sense that the resistance is in response to a command of some sort" (p. 36). Morgan also emphasized the place of resistance in Fackenheim's thought in *Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought* where he writes, "He [Fackenheim] chose to stay with the event, to think it through, first describing resistance within it and then justifying that resistance, as manifest in the resistor's own self-awareness, by means of a philosophical movement through the levels of criminality responsible for the event and the objects of that resistance. The re-

sult of this movement of thought is that while thought never understands or comprehends the evil, it can confront it— but only as a whole of horror and with a surprised horror. And when it does so, as the final result of a dialectical movement, thought, recognizes that there is no understanding of the evil more epistemologically ultimate than that of the resisters themselves. Furthermore, since their recognition did not remain reflective but rather led to action, to resistance, so must ours." [25] Shapiro also emphasizes the importance of resistance in Fackenheim's thought when she writes, "Fackenheim occasions this reorientation by founding future thought, in part on the astonishing testimony of physical and spiritual resistance to the Nazis within the Holocaust itself. Examples of such resistance cited, described, and documented by Fackenheim are the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the continued praying and maintaining of the mitzvot by the Buchenwald Hasidim (even though they considered the Holocaust an historical and theological novum), and the paradigmatic resistance of Pelagia Lewinska, a Polish noblewoman who, in Auschwitz, recognized the total and deadly logic of that world and who in response, felt under orders to live and so resist." [26]

Morgan does not focus on the form of this resistance in Christian responses to the Holocaust in Fackenheim's thought as described by Gregory Baum. [27] Rather Morgan cites Fackenheim's formulation of the 614th commandment (not to give Hitler any posthumous victories) as a way of resisting the evil of the Holocaust. [28] Morgan recognizes the limits of this formulation, which was not without its critics, but affirms "the gist of it" which "remained as the sense of necessary opposition that theological and philosophical thought realizes as one outcome of its attempt to understand and cope with the horrors of Auschwitz" (p. 35). [29]

Fackenheim is central to Morgan's work for "If we return once more to the impact of the Holocaust, we find Emil Fackenheim. While he conceives of revelation as a direct encounter between the divine and the human, Fackenheim takes the religious responsibility of contemporary Jews, in the shadow of catastrophe, to be this: to recover the texts, rituals, and fullness of traditional Jewish life, in part as an obligation to keep Judaism and the Jewish people alive and in part as an obligation to keep open the possibility of reestablishing the divine-human relationship in a world where it has been severely challenged and where it has eroded. In short, for Fackenheim, revelation today, like redemption, can be an aspiration and, at least for some, a hope. Both divine Presence and human receptivity are uncertain, fraught with

doubt, and at best the objects of hope. Many find even this much openness and receptivity to be too much to seek and too much to hope for. Indeed, even Fackenheim now wonders whether his conviction, argued in the central chapter of *To Mend the World*, that resistance and recovery are possible as well as necessary is not too optimistic or at least too facile a dismissal of a foreboding alternative view, that the *Muselmänner*—the living dead who populated the death camps is the paradigm of a genuine response to Auschwitz” (p. 81).^[30] Because Fackenheim recognizes the bringing into existence of der *Muselman* as beyond the limit situation, beyond all former conceptions of how to inflict evil on innocent human beings, Fackenheim alerts us to a new *terra ethica* that comes into being with Auschwitz. While the term *Muselman*, had different equivalents at Majdanek (donkeys), Dachau (cretins), Stutthof (cripples), Mauthausen (swimmers), Neuengamme (camels), Buchenwald (tired sheikhs), and Ravensbrück (*Muselweiber* or trinkets) the unique degradation of the human being to a disposable part in the camp machine, something to be thrown away when worn out, treated worse than a thing, for Fackenheim signals radical evil.^[31] The radical evil of der *Muselman* is that he is treated worse than even the worst of economic employer/worker situations, because his situation is not just slave labor, where the laborer is an investment. *Die Muselmaenner* was not even given the dignity of a slave investment, for *die Muselmaenner* was replaced on a regular basis with new arrivals of surplus labor of Jews transported in cattle cars, only for the new arrivals to be worked to death and replaced by still more shipments of “human material” In *Survival in Auschwitz* Levi writes, “If I could enclose all the evil of our time in one image, I would choose this image which is familiar to me: an emaciated man, with head dropped and shoulders curved, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of thought is to be seen.”^[32] Fackenheim cites this quotation from Levi as a signature piece for his essay, “Concerning Post-Holocaust Christianity,” in *To Mend The World*. In some sense it is a further jibe at Arendt’s articulation of “the banality of evil” as a form of thoughtlessness.^[33] Levi’s emphasis that on the face of the *Muselman* and in his eyes there is no trace of thought to be seen, in part takes Arendt’s location of the banality of evil as a form of thoughtlessness to the extreme of radical evil. For the thoughtlessness that Levi is speaking of is not of some well fed, well-rested, contented bureaucratic desk murderer whose largest worry is how to overcome boredom, but rather the thoughtlessness that Levi describes is a thoughtlessness induced by physical torture, degradation, and deprivation.

Morgan elaborates on the significance of Fackenheim when he remarks, “In Fackenheim, then, as in Rosenzweig and in Scholem, Jewish life is grounded in obligation and is directed to the texts, commentaries, rituals, and ‘mending of the world’ that were in the past and once more in our day are the substance of Jewish existence” (p. 81).

In conclusion Morgan’s excellent, well written, insightful book is bound to be a thought provoking read for many. Morgan masterfully sketches trends and developments from the modernist intellectual culture in pre-World War I Europe to those more recent developments in post-Holocaust American Jewry to this very day. Morgan’s analysis of key figures such as Rosenzweig, Buber, Benjamin, Scholem, Kafka, Rubenstein, Berkovits, Fackenheim, and many others is brilliant and engaging. The key place Fackenheim enjoys in this book documents Morgan’s own status as the foremost expositor of this important Jewish philosopher, who not only may be regarded as one of the most important Hegelian and Kantian scholars of the century, but serves as an important voice in Jewish thought to the present day. Morgan recognizes the key place Fackenheim holds in underscoring the unique significance of the Holocaust in history and as a philosophic light on old Jewish concepts such as redemption and revelation. Morgan’s method involves in part to make correspondences, demarcate affinities between thinkers, and to place thinkers, trends, and movements in their historical context. Morgan’s book will be a delight to many who will find its conclusions stimulating and its content worth thinking about. This book is recommended for those interested in modernist culture, modern Jewish philosophy, post-Holocaust Jewry, Holocaust theology, historians of ideas, cultural historians, and those interested in Jewish intellectual culture since World War I up until the present day.

Notes

[1]. Kafka writes, “Vor dem Gesetz steht ein Türhüter. Zu diesem Türhüter kommt ein Mann vom Lande und bittet um Eintritt in das Gesetz. Aber der Türhüter sagt, dass er ihm jetzt den Eintritt nicht gewahren könne. Der Mann überlegt und fragt dann, ob er also später werden eintreten dürfen. ‘Es ist möglich, sagt der Türhüter, jetzt aber nicht. Da das Tor zum Gesetz offensteht wie immer und der Türhüter beiseite tritt, buckt sich der Mann, um durch das Tor in das Innere zu sehen. Als der Türhüter das merkt, lacht er und sagt: ‘Wenn es dich so lockt, versuche es doch trotz meines Verbotes hineinzugehen. Merke aber: Ich bin mächtig. Und ich bin nur der un-

terste Turhuter. Von Saal zu Saal stehen aber Turhuter, einer mächtiger als der andere. Schon den Anblick des dritten kann nicht einmal ich mehr ertragen.' Solche Schwierigkeiten hat der Mann vom Lande nicht erwartet; das Gesetz soll doch jedem und immer zugänglich sein, denkt er, aber als er jetzt den Turhuter in seinem Pelzmantel genauer ansieht, seine grosse Spitznase, den langen, dunnen, schwarzen tatarischen Bart, entschliesst er sich, doch lieber zu warten, bis er die Erlaubnis zum Eintritt bekommt. Der Turhuter gibt ihm einen Schemel und lässt ihn seitwärts von der Tur sich niedersetzen. Dort sitzt er Tage und Jahre. Er macht viele Versuche, eingelassen zu werden, und ermüdet den Turhuter durch seine Bitten. Der Turhuter stellt öfters kleine Verhore mit ihm an, fragt ihn über seine Heimat aus und nach vielem anderen, es sind aber teilnahmslose Fragen, wie sie grosse Herren stellen, und zum Schlusse sagt er ihm immer wieder, dass er ihn noch nicht einlassen könne. See Jacques Derrida, "Devant la Loi," in *Kafka and the Contemporary Critical Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 128-150. When Morgan notes that Scholem treats Kafka as a neo-Kabbalist, giving new readings of revelation" (p. 67) we cannot help asking if Scholem would view the gatekeeper of "Vor Dem Gesetz" as analogous to mystical descriptions of various angels as archons of differing rank, who guard the heavenly halls of the seven heavens?

[2]. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press), pp. 59-96; These passages draw on Sanhedrin 97a-99a.

[3]. Rambam is very sober in regards to his view of the following conditions to be met in the messianic age: no war, no famine, the lamb (Jews) will not be persecuted by the wolves (other nations), the Temple will be rebuilt with a re-instituted Levitical priesthood, blessings will be abundant, comforts within the reach of all, and the one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord. Hence Israelites will be very wise, they will know things that are now concealed and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the utmost of the human mind, as it is written, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9). With regards to the building of the Beit HaMikdash Rambam writes, "King Messiah will arise and restore the kingdom of David to its former state and original sovereignty. He will rebuild the sanctuary and gather the dispersed of Israel. All the ancient laws will be reinstituted in his days; sacrifices will again be offered" (chapter 11).

[4]. For Nietzsche art is a saving sorceress (heilkundige Zauberin). Nietzsche asserts that art is a metaphysical supplement that makes life bearable. Nietzsche writes, "wenn anders die Kunst nicht nur Nachahmung der Naturwirklichkeit, sondern gerade ein metaphysisches Supplement der Naturwirklichkeit ist, zu deren Überwindung neben sie gestellt" (*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, (Stuttgart: Alfred Kroner Verlag, 1976), p. 186. Nietzsche recognizes that we need art, the beautiful illusion, the redeeming untruth, the bewitching lie, to endure the false, cruel, contradictory, the meaninglessness of the real. For Nietzsche art is the affirmation that counters Schopenhauerian pessimism. For Nietzsche art has the task to save (erlösen) the eye from gazing into the horrors of the night, and to deliver the subject by the healing balm of shining from the spasms of the agitations of the will. Underlying Nietzsche's thinking that "nur als ein ästhetisches Phaenomen das Dasein und die Welt gerechtfertigt erscheint" is the assumption that we have a necessary need for illusion because reality is too terrifying. Nietzsche views the Greek religion as the apex of the power of the artistic impulse when he writes, "Der Grieche kannte und empfand die Schrecken und Entsetzlichkeiten des Daseins: um überhaupt leben zu können, musste er vor sie hin die glänzende Traumgeburt der Olympischen stellen" (p. 58). The whole pantheon of the Greek deities was the Greek's answer to the terror and horror of existence. Nietzsche urges one to make one's life a work of art. Nietzsche is against the degeneration of art whereby the journalist triumphs over the professor in all matters pertaining to culture. Nietzsche writes, "Es gibt keine andere Kunstperiode, in der sich die sogenannte Bildung und die eigentliche Kunst so befremdet und abgeneigt gegenübergestanden hatten, als wir das in der Gegenwart mit Augen sehen" (163). Nietzsche is against art reduced to "a pleasant sideline" when he writes, "Vielleicht aber wird es fuer eben dieselben überhaupt anstoessig sein, ein aesthetische Problem so Ernst genommen zu sehn, falls sie naemlich in der Kunst nicht mehr als ein lustige Nebenbei, als ein auch wohl zu missendes Schellenglinkel zum Ernst des Daseins zu erkennen imstande sind: als ob niemand wusste, was es bei dieser Gegenüberstellung mit einem solchen Ernste des Daseins auf sich habe" (p. 16). Nietzsche asserts that science needs art when he writes, "Wenn er hier zu seinem Schrecken sieht, wie die Logik sich an diesen Grenzen um sich selbst ringlet und endlich sich in den Schwanz beisst- da bricht die neue Form der Erkenntnis durch, die tragische Erkenntnis, die, um nur ertragen zu werden, als Schutz und Heilmittel die Kunst braucht" (p. 130). Since Socrates for Nietzsche represents science the

ideal of an artistic science is embodied in a music practicing Socrates.

[5]. It should be noted that in the last of Buber's latter essays on Judaism, "The Dialogue between Heaven and Earth," Buber interprets the Shoah through the Rabbinical theological concept of *hester panim*, what is experienced as an interruption of the dialogue between God and man. For Buber the hiding of God's face can be seen as the failure of God's presence to manifest itself whereby the just and innocent can find no help from an apathetic world that either allowed the murders to take place or assisted in carrying out those murders. The Shoah became for Buber the central event of diaspora history, expressed in the cosmic metaphor of the Eclipse of God or hiding of God's face. Buber acknowledges the predicament of the believing Jew after the Shoah when he writes, "For one who believes in the living God, who knows about Him, and who is fated to spend his life in a time of his hiddenness, it is difficult to live" (On Judaism (New York: Schocken books, 1972), p. 223. In *At the Turning* (p. 61) Buber also employs the metaphor of *hester panim* when he asks, "Do we stand overcome before the hidden face of God like the tragic hero of the Greeks before faceless fate? No, rather even now we contend, we too, with God, even with Him, the Lord of Being, who we once, we here, chose for our Lord. We do not put up with earthly being we struggle for its redemption, and struggling we appeal to the help of our Lord who is again and still a hiding one. In such a state we await His voice, whether it comes out of the storm or out of the stillness that follows it. Though His coming appearance resemble no earlier one, we shall recognize again our cruel and merciful Lord." Buber speaks of searching out God's presence so that the appearance of His face can manifest itself. Buber's advocacy of contending with God suggests that resisting thought must wrestle with Jacob's messenger who departs at dawn. All of us after the Holocaust must struggle with the moral failing that enabled the Shoah. Buber's metaphor of God's hiding his face finds echoes in Jacob's contending with the angel at Peniel where the patriarch sees God face to face despite the claim in Torah that one cannot see God's face and live. The light of God's face cannot become manifest until all of us wrestle with the moral questions that arise from trying to understand the Shoah. The story of Cain and Abel with the verse *Kol dimei akhiha tzoakim elai min haadama* related to the Shoah, also draws on the metaphor of the face for when Cain cries out, "My sin is too great for me to bare," the Hebrew for "to bare" - *n'so* is the same root as *Nesiat Panim*. Thus in this reading "my sin is too me to ever be

worthy of your turning your face back to me." The prefiguration of *hester panim* in history is apparent when Cain laments that he must always avoid God's presence thereby humanity becomes responsible for running away from God's face, and thereby causing *hester panim*.

[6]. J. J. White, *On Kafka: Semi Centenary Perspectives*, p. 146.

[7]. Ernst Pawel, *The Nightmare of Reason*, p. 189.

[8]. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, " (New York: Schocken Books), p. 112. Kafka provides us with an intimate detail of bureaucracies inefficiencies. In chapter five of *The Castle*, the mayor gives an intricate scenario of K's lost file. K. tells the mayor that his story is amusing because it gives "an insight into the ludicrous bungling that in certain circumstances may decide the life of a human being." Olga sums up the nature of bureaucracy when she says, "One can never find out exactly what is happening, or a long time afterwards." Often the bureaucracy makes mistakes as in the case when K. is sent a letter praising him for work he has not done. The maze of bureaucracy separates K. from the castle. Kafka reveals the dark side of bureaucracy that can cause the individual to feel like a nonentity. In chapter 20 of *The Castle*, the narrator recounts how the chambermaids who wait on the secretaries feel "lost and forgotten" as if they were working down in a mine. K. is a supplicant "down below" who aspires to enter the Castle "up above" but is denied access by the bureaucracy, accounting for what Thomas Mann called the "humanly unsailable transcendent". Thomas Mann, *Homage to Franz Kafka* (New York: Knopf, 1984).

[9]. Buber uses the phrase "our cruel and merciful Lord" in *At the Turning* when he writes, "Do we stand overcome before the hidden face of God like the tragic hero of the Greeks before faceless fate? No, rather even now we contend, we too, with God, even with Him, the Lord of Being, whom we once, we here chose for our Lord. We do not put up with earthly being we struggle for its redemption, and struggling we appeal to the help of our Lord, who is again and still a hiding one. In such a state we await His voice, whether it comes out of the storm or out of the stillness that follows it. Though His coming appearance resemble no earlier one, we shall recognize again our cruel and merciful Lord."

[10]. Morgan writes, "Scholem gives an excellent summary of his views about revelation and language in his famous paper, 'Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in Judaism.' Formulations and phrases used

in this essay go back to the early conversations with Benjamin. They recur in Scholem's correspondence with Benjamin in the 1930s about Kafka and Benjamin's essay about Kafka" (p. 57). Morgan writes in footnote 18, "It is often thought that Benjamin borrowed his ideas about language, creation, and revelation from Scholem's recovery of a Kabbalistic theory of names. I believe that the borrowing was the reverse" (p. 132). Morgan summarizes, "In short, what Benjamin conceptualizes, in a Platonic manner, is akin to what Scholem later takes to be a great achievement of the Kabbalists" (p. 59). Morgan argues, "Already in Benjamin's early essay, then, we find the view of revelation and language later employed by Scholem to explicate and clarify the Kabbalistic notions of revelation and redemption" (p. 60). Despite this influence of Benjamin on Scholem, Morgan also considers the differences between the two scholars with regards to the diverging readings of Kafka. Morgan suggests "their differences over Kafka may very well reflect an important difference between them as well" (p. 65).

[11]. Morgan writes, "Benjamin's language in these aphorisms blends together terms from the Kabbalah and Jewish tradition, Marxism, and surrealism. The language that Benjamin uses here is doubtless drawn from surrealism, the method of collage and literary montage" (p. 75). Benjamin draws on the religious tradition with his view that "only the messiah himself consummates all history." Benjamin draws on mysticism to articulate his view that "the present as the time of the now (*Jetztzeit*) is shot through with chips of messianic time" and "every second of time is the strait gait through which the Messiah might enter" (p. 75). Benjamin adopts as presupposition from surrealism that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" and thus one cannot read texts as they present themselves or take cultural artifacts at face value. Rather the task of the genuine historian, the literary and cultural critic is "to brush history against the grain" to interpret existing evidence contrary to apparent meaning and significance, to disclose what it hides about oppression, injustice, and suffering" (p. 73).

[12]. Rather than unconditionally affirm this Romanticism Morgan is cautious in embracing the neo-Romantic for he notes that Nazism "emerged out of the neo-Romantic, Volkish, and conservative thinking that was aimed at solving the problems of relativism, historicism, and skepticism that accompanied the new culture of urban Europe, rapid industrialization, the breakdown of traditional society and norms, the war, and the development of new ideas about history and human experi-

ence" (p. 23). Morgan draws from Nazi totalitarianism and the Holocaust the lesson warning against the moral risks of both relativisms and absolutisms. Morgan asserts that "all honest responses to the Holocaust must seek to stay within its utter historicity and refuse flight into the abstract, the detached, and the universal" (p. 28).

[13]. Morgan may have in mind here essays such as Alfred Ivry's "Leo Strauss on Maimonides" and Rene Brague's "Leo Strauss and Maimonides" which appear in Leo Strauss's *Thought: Toward a Critical Engagement* as well as Kenneth Hart Green's brilliant study of Strauss as philosopher and Jew. Essays by Strauss such as "Classical Political Rationalism" and "How to Begin to Study Medieval Philosophy" in the collection *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism* characterize this renewed interest in Maimonides and medieval rationalism.

[14]. Those who regard the Shoah as a consequence of the punishment for anti-Zionism include Rabbi Y.S. Taichtal (see "A Happy Mother of Children," Jerusalem 5743), Rabbi Menachem Emanuel Chartum (see "Reflections on the Shoah," *Deot* 18, Winter 1961), and Rabbi L. Kaplan (see: *Tradition*, Fall 1980: 235-48). These three views are the polar opposite of the Satmar Rebbe who saw the Holocaust as resulting from the sin of Zionism itself. See Vayoe Moshe, *The Introduction* (New York, 1959) and "On Redemption and Ruth", 4:7 (New York, 1967). In Yeshivah circles, the more widespread opinion was that the sin for which the Holocaust was punishment was the Haskalah in general and the way the intellectuals transformed Berlin into their Jerusalem. They cite what was written by the Baal Meschech Chochmath. R. Meir Simcha Cohen in his commentary on Parashat Bechukotai (Lev.26:44), "Yet even then; and before him by the Netsiv in his commentary, *The Gate of Israel* (Sha'ar Yisrael). There are also some who link the Shoah to "the footsteps of the messiah" (*ikavta d'meshicha*). Anti-Theodicy rejects these explanations of the Holocaust in God's plan.

[15]. Zachary Braiterman, *(God) After Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 4. Braiterman notes that theodicy traditionally explains the existence of suffering by theories of just deserts, spiritual and ethical catharsis, the free will argument, privation theories of evil that deny its ultimate existence, deferred compensations, divine pedagogy, vicarious atonement, appeals to mystery, and doubts about the human capacity to know the ways of God. Braiterman describes how the Bible often ascribes theodic valence to suffering as a punishing sign of divine displeasure (see Leviticus 26:16-22;

Deuteronomy 11; Deut. 34) and how the Rabbinic tradition often understands suffering as a sign of God's passionate love for the persons suffering within the framework of *yisurin shel ahava* (see *Berakhot* 5a-b where Raba said R. Sehorah said R. Huna said, "whomever the Holy One, blessed be He, prefers he crushes with suffering"). Braiterman further notes that the Rabbinic tradition suggests that suffering can represent a good, something to be valued for the wisdom derived therefrom (see *Genesis Rabbah* LXV:IX).

[16]. In *Quest for Past and Future*, Fackenheim announces that the Holocaust will never bare religious meaning and calls the attempt to find one blasphemous (p. 18). This claim of sacrilege is again stated in *God's Presence in History* where Fackenheim writes, "If historical explanation (seeking merely causes) remain precarious, theological explanations (seeking nothing less than meaning and purpose) collapse altogether, not because they are theological but because they are explanations. They fail whether they find a purpose, such as punishment for sin, or merely assert a purpose without finding it, such as a divine will, purposive yet inscrutable. This theological failure is by no means overcome if the Holocaust is considered as a means, inscrutable but necessary, to no less an end than the dawn of redemption, of which in turn the state of Israel is viewed as the necessary beginning. No meaning or purpose will ever be found in the event and one does not glorify God by associating his will with it. Indeed, the very attempt is a sacrilege" (p. xxiv).

[17]. Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997), p. xxiii.

[18]. Neusner writes, "The century now drawing to a close marked the most difficult period in the history of the Jewish people and of Judaism. What happened, as is well known, is that six million Jews were murdered in death factories created by the German government for that very purpose. The issue of the Holocaust draws us to a revision of the entire civilization of the West, which produced, as its most civilized country, the Germany that did these things. How to construct a theodicy—a justification of God's ways—in the aftermath of the murder of six million men, women, and children is something no one knows. That task at hand demands a different gift: the grace to hope and not despair, to say, even in the twentieth century. Amen. Your will be done. And by going on with life, the Jewish people have said just that". Jacob Neusner, *Evil and Suffering* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1998), pp.116-117. Most Holocaust theologians agree with Neusner "that in the end theodicy

fails" and Judaism has no answer to the problem of evil when that problem is framed in contemporary images. Most Holocaust theologians agree that in the wake of the Holocaust theodicy collapses and cannot provide any adequate justification for why European Jewry suffered.

[19]. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (Seabury Press, 1973), p. 367.

[20]. David Patterson, "Levinas, Fackenheim, and a Post-Holocaust Tikkun," in *World Congress of Jewish Studies* 11:22 (1944), p. 88. See *The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim*, p. 320.

[21]. Emi. Fackenheim, *What is Judaism?* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), p. 180.

[22]. See Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 22. Rambam asserts, "It is on account of this intellectual apprehension that it is said of man: In the image of God created He him."

[23]. See *Pirke Avot* II, 2; Rabban Gamaliel, the son of Rabbi Judah the Prince, says, *Mah Yafa Talmud Torah Eim Derek Eretz*.

[24]. Catherine Chalié, "Après La catastrophe: La pensée d'Emil Fackenheim," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 90:3 (1985), p. 350. Chalié further elaborates, "Ce retour s'inscrit tout d'abord en faux, volontairement et obstinement, contre la certitude impitoyable qu'on peut détruire en l'homme l'image de Dieu, c'est-à-dire l'humanité même, Puisque c'est sur le peuple Juif que les nazis voulurent l'effacer à jamais, ce même peuple se doit de montrer qu'il n'a pas réussi. En ce sens les Juifs d'après Auschwitz représentent l'humanité quand ils affirment leur judéité et refusent le déni nazi, quand ils respectent, en eux-mêmes et en leurs frères, ce principe biblique d'un homme créé à la ressemblance du divin. Ne faut-il pas même affirmer que travailler à restaurer cette image—si éprouvée et meurtrie—et témoigner pour elle jusqu'à l'extrême de ses pouvoirs et en refusant le désespoir, se commande de façon encore plus absolue depuis Auschwitz? Et ne doit-on pas garder souvenir du fait que déjà, aux heures les plus lugubres, certains trouverent en eux la force de ne pas renier cette image de Dieu?" (p. 351).

[25]. Michael Morgan, "Philosophy, History, and the Jewish Thinker: Jewish Thought and Philosophy in Emil Fackenheim's *To Mend the World*," in *Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought: The Dialectics of Revelation and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992),

p. 121.

[26]. Susan E. Shapiro, "For Thy Breach is Great Like the Sea: Who Can Heal Thee?", *Religious Studies Review* 13:3 (July 1987), p. 211.

[27]. See Gregory Baum, "Fackenheim and Christianity," in *Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 1992), p. 199. Baum lays out five ways Christians can begin to respond to Fackenheim's call for Tikkun of the rupture created by the radical evil of the Holocaust. First, Teshuvah for Christians means to recognize that, without the anti-Jewish bias of the Christian message and the Jew-hatred associated with it, Nazi anti-Semitism would have been impossible. Second, Fackenheim demands that Christians give up the theory of supersessionism. Third, Fackenheim demands that in response to the Holocaust, Teshuvah become a permanent dimension of Christianity instead of the negation of Jewish existence. Fourth, Fackenheim demands that Christians stand in solidarity with Jews and for this reason they must be lovers of Israel. Fifth, Fackenheim proposes that the Holocaust raises the question all Christians must face whether there is any good news at all i.e. Can the sentence 'God is love' be repeated before suffocating Jews in the death camps without sounding like a taunt. According to Baum, for Fackenheim, until Christians perform Teshuvah, after the Holocaust, they are living in a state of unredemption. Baum insists that Christians must no longer blame the Jews as the source of evil for lack of baptism and the guilt of original sin and the guilt of the deicide charge, when he writes, "After Auschwitz the traditional Christian manner of dealing with the problem of evil and explaining the ways of God to man will no longer do" (p. 190).

[28]. Fackenheim writes, "We are first, commanded to survive as Jews, lest the people of Israel perish. We are commanded, second to remember in our guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaust lest, their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair of God, however much we may have to contend with Him or with belief in Him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden finally to despair of the world as the place that is to become the kingdom of God lest we make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. To abandon any of these imperatives, in response to Hitler's victory at Auschwitz, would be to hand him yet other posthumous victories". "Transcendence and Contemporary Culture: Philosophical Reflections and a Jewish Theology" in *Transcendence*, eds. Herbert W. Richardson and Donald R. Cutler, (Boston:

Beacon Press, 1969), p. 150.

[29]. Braiterman and Steven Katz note that Michael Wyschogrod is critical of Fackenheim's formulation. Wyschogrod questions how one can generate any positive commitment to Jewish existence from the radical evil of the Holocaust. For Wyschogrod, Auschwitz reveals no 614th commandment but rather a demonic presence in history. Wyschogrod asserts that Jews should respond to God to survive, not to Hitler's radical evil. Wyschogrod is critical of Fackenheim for he feels that any construction that places Hitler at the center of Judaism is confused and self-defeating. Katz formulates Wyschogrod's objection by writing, "Wyschogrod's claim is that for Fackenheim Jewish belief and survival is not commanded either by Word heard at Sinai or the grandeur of nature that compels belief in nature's Creator but, inversely, by the evil of Nazism" (Steven Katz, "Emil Fackenheim on Jewish Life After Auschwitz," in *Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), p. 223. Katz rejects Wyschogrod's criticism of Fackenheim, but agrees that the duty to survive as Jews did not need Auschwitz and its correlative commandment to be under this obligation, for Jewish survival has always been deeded a Divine imperative by the rabbinic tradition. However Rubenstein shares Wyschogrod's critical stance towards Fackenheim's formulation of the 614th commandment when he writes, "It hardly seemed likely that even a jealous God would require the annihilation of six million Jews as the occasion for a commandment forbidding Jews to permit the demise of their tradition." Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, p. 182). Hetherington also is critical of Fackenheim's formulation when she writes, "One wonders on whose authority Fackenheim speaks, for a in Biblical and Rabbinic tradition only God or a divinely appointed prophet can formulate a divine imperative. To my knowledge, Fackenheim has nowhere claimed to embody a return of prophecy in the modern era." Naomi Hetherington, "Reform Responses: Fackenheim and Rubenstein on Holocaust Theology," in *Response* 68 (1997-1998), p. 152. Despite these criticisms of Fackenheim's 614th commandment his formulation stands as a way of resistance against the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews. By promoting Jewish life the 614th commandment is fulfilled. The 614th commandment is a mode of resistance to the epoch making event of the Holocaust. By fulfilling the 614th commandment, having Jewish children, one affirms Jewish existence by living Jewishly.

[30]. Levi writes, "There life is short, but their number is endless; they, the Muselmaenner, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who mark and labor in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty really to suffer. One hesitates to call them living; one hesitates to call their death death. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Orion, 1959), p. 82. As Giorgio Agamben shows in chapter two of his book *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Der Muselmann is the complete witness, perfect cipher, the one who has touched the bottom of radical evil, the one who experiences something beyond the limit situation of even hell. Der Muselmann speaks to us in Primo Levi's question, *Se questo e un uomo* (If this is a man?) and asks, "what does it mean to remain human?" Der Muselmann is the site of an experiment in which morality and humanity themselves are called into question, so that Auschwitz becomes the radical refutation of every principle of obligatory communication. As an act of radical evil, the Nazis sought to empty the Jew of all dignity by reducing him to der Muselmann.

[31]. Fackenheim is aware that Immanuel Kant coined the term "radical evil" in his work *Religion within the limits of reason alone*. An essay like "Kant and Radical Evil" written in 1954 in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Kant's death, does not specifically mention the Holocaust, but after 1967 Fackenheim's thought links radical evil with the Shoah. While it was not until 1967 that Fackenheim turned towards addressing the Holocaust Fackenheim's later thought demands that for philosophy to be authentic it must confront the Holocaust. Fackenheim tells us in an autobiographical essay at the end of Morgan's volume "A Retrospective of My Thought," that in 1967 in the wake of the Six Day War, he underwent "a year of turmoil which forced him to face up to the Holocaust." *Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 222. Heidi Ravven comments on this remark by writing, "Fackenheim emerged from that year convinced of what he had already suspected, that modernity had failed. The failure was of a modernity defined as the Hegelian hope that the political and social institutions of the West would live up to their democratic liberal promise and embody universal ideals while reconciling those ideals with national, ethnic, and other particularist strivings. Fackenheim became convinced that that hope had been murdered along with the Jews of the Holocaust.

Heidi Ravven, "Observations on Jewish Philosophy and Feminist Thought" in *Judaism* 46:4 (1997), p. 427.

[32]. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Orion Press, 1959), p. 81.

[33]. Fackenheim is critical of Arendt for example when he writes, "Of course, some may hold that they were all robots obeying Hitler. Bettelheim's famous theory is that they lacked autonomy. I say that Nazism and the Holocaust are more complex than is imagined in the Freudian textbooks of pre-World War II Vienna. Survivors don't like Bettelheim, and no wonder. Somewhere he writes to the effect that the victims who went to their deaths unresistingly had something in common- a lack of autonomy- with the victimizers who followed orders no matter what. What an insult and what a distortion! Hannah Arendt is not too far from this, yet she herself mentions Eichmann's invoking of Kant's categorical imperative. He followed the Fuehrer freely, that is autonomously. It thus appears that the covering law theory of historical explanation has reached its limits." Emil Fackenheim, "Philosophical Considerations and the Teaching of the Holocaust" in *Jewish Philosophy and the Academy* (Teaneck: The Associated University Presses, 1996), p. 195. In *To Mend the World* Fackenheim is also critical of Arendt's description of Eichmann as a cog in a wheel when he writes, "And the conclusion to be drawn is that the doctrine of the banality of evil is only half a thought and half a truth, and that the complete thought and the complete truth is that just as the totalitarian system produced the rulers and operators, so the rulers and the operators produced the system. In however varying degrees, those manipulated let themselves be manipulated; those obeying even escalating orders chose to obey without limits; those surrendering in a blind idealism made a commitment to blindness. Not only Eichmann but everyone was more than a cog in the wheel. (p. 238). Fackenheim sees Eichmann's freedom to obey the Fuehrer not only as a repudiation of Eichmann's position taken in Jerusalem, but as a repudiation of Arendt's sketch of the bureaucrat as a robot. Fackenheim writes, "First, everybody was not just blindly obeying Hitler; this is simply not true. As already mentioned, when Arendt treats Eichmann as a robot who doesn't think, as banal in his evil, she doesn't understand him and what's more she testifies against herself, for she herself reports how, at the Jerusalem trial, Eichmann invoked Kant's categorical imperative." "Philosophical Considerations an the Teaching of the Holocaust", p. 197.

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