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"Martin Buber's Philosophy of Translation in Comparative Perspective"
Queering Jewish Identity

A recent study of religious identity notes the constraints on keeping that identity within certain authorized boundaries. When this identity threatens to transgress its allotted territory, it is rudely thrust back. It is suppressed, pushed aside, and “stuffed back into the closet.”¹ The phrase is meant to echo the ways in which gay identities have been suppressed. The “queering” of religious identity is an important aspect of alternative religious expressions. Nowhere has this process been more obvious than in Israeli film. Raz Yosef has pointed out how portrayals of Israeli homosexual relationships between Jews and Palestinians mirror and critique the “heteronormative national ideology.” Taking queer life out of the Israeli closet and onto the Israeli movie screen challenges the way Israeli Jews—and Palestinian Israelis as well—understand their national identities.² This critique has become mainstream in the recent film directed by Eytan Fox, *Yossi and Jagger*. The gay heroes of this film are inside the Israeli army and represent a way of rethinking Israeli identities.

Sandi Simcha Dubowski’s film *Trembling Before G-d* moved from the arena of national identity to that of Jewish religious identity. The film shows several different types of Orthodox Jews and how they confront being queer. In this way it attacks two normative identities at the same time—that of an Orthodoxy that claims to be monolithic and uniform and that of a heterosexuality that marginalizes and demonizes homosexuality. This approach creates a crisis of identity; no single Jewish identity or sexual identity should be dominant. Identities evolve as people learn to express and develop the varied aspects of their selfhood—national, religious, or sexual. Jewish identity is “queered” by being brought out of the closet, by being perceived in its variety and difference rather than its uniformity. Despite this evidence, however, normative

forces still seek to reenclose both Jewish identity and sexuality in the closet.

Textuality and Closeting Identity

One influence that works to keep Jewish identity closeted is that of the Hebrew Bible. Monotheism seems to delight in rejecting variety and difference whether that be polytheism, polygamy, or diverse dietary, ethical, ritual, or sexual practices. This emphasis on uniformity and uniqueness represents what many regard as a major break with ancient Near Eastern religious traditions. Jan Assmann notes a common practice in the ancient Near East and the Hellenistic world of translating divine names from one culture into the name of a divinity in a different culture. That texts such as the Enuma Elish or Gilgamesh could be rewritten to fit this or that political group and its titular divinities merely by substituting the name of a local god for that of a god from another pantheon seems remarkable to him. It shows a conception of a shared deity whose different names do not imply a different essence. He considers the development of an idea of interchangeable divinities ““one of the ““major cultural achievements of the ancient world”” and one that both reflected the geopolitical realities of the times and also promoted ““intercultural translatability.””³ If religion is a metaphor for realities shared by different cultures, then no one religion possesses the exclusive truth. All that is needed for religious compatibility is an understanding of how the language of one culture renders the truths already recognized by another culture.

That open tolerance changes with the appearance of religion claiming to know a truth unavailable to others. Suddenly the language used cannot be translated into other languages. There is an essential truth hidden in the particular view of divinity that denies the truths associated with other divinities. If one God is true and the others false, then ““there can be no

question of translating the gods of the one into those of the other.”⁴ Communication between religious groups seems unalterably thwarted by such a view of an untranslatable divine truth. All non-conforming religious identities are stuffed back into the closet.

The traditions of revealed religion, however, do not limit themselves to profound silence—they do seek some sort of translation into a different idiom.. These religions are international and have spread to cultures where the vernaculars are both distinct from the ““holy language”” and unwilling to relinquish their hold on native speakers. In such cases translation is a practical necessity and has often been considered a religious imperative. There is a dialectic between the impossibility of translation and the necessity for translation that plays itself out. This dialectic claims, on the one hand, that the ideas and message of a revealed scriptures are transmittable to others. Much within that text can be transmitted without loss of meaning or significance in a language other than that of the original. On the other hand, it claims that the experience of revelation, the religious meaning communicated by the original, cannot be known except by those standing in a faith relationship to the text and its divine source. Outsiders cannot, by their very nature, comprehend how the scriptures function in the life of insiders.

Translatability of the Hebrew Bible

The queering of the Hebrew Bible lies in recapturing the variety and difference that the original biblical text apparently rejected. This can be done by moving beyond the uniformity of the biblical corpus to celebrate the uniqueness of each person’s reception of that text. A three-fold movement has taken place. The pluralistic translatability of the name of God in prebiblical religion first becomes a unique and untranslatable rejection of diversity. Secondly, that uniformity is thought to be translatable universally. The unique ideas and views of the Bible are

said to be understandable by all people. Finally, however, the Bible becomes understood as an untranslatable catalyst for an experience that differs for every person who undergoes it. The first stage lies beyond the scope of this essay—it should be addressed by those whose study focuses on the Hebrew Bible and its formation. This essay looks at the next two stages. The stage that emphasizes complete translatability may be said to express a normative Jewish identity—all alternatives are kept hidden in the closet. The third stage, however, opens the door of that closet, it allows divergent identities to arise, it represents a queering of the Hebrew Bible.

The two stages noted here should not be identified with two other aspects of biblical translation. Frederick Greenspahn suggests there are two basic approaches that characterize a ““Jewish”” translation of the Bible: an effort to transmit the Hebraic quality of the original and a reliance on the tradition of commentary and exegesis found in rabbinic, medieval, and modern Jewish sources. The first of these sets before every reader the original power and voice of the original. It seeks to restore the primal force of revelation through recapturing an originating language that transcends any particular language. It Hebraicizes a non-Hebraic language so as to communicate the experience of Judaism to both Jew and non-Jew alike.

The second of these reminds readers of the particularity of the Jew as the recipient of revelation. It emphasizes that which is strange, different, and alien about the Jewish reading of the Bible. It reJudaizes the Bible in order to rescue it from Christians who have appropriated it for themselves. Greenspahn suggests that while both these aims animate Jewish translations, they are inherently at odds with each other. Pursuing both these ends simultaneously may lead to an inner contradiction to the very idea of a translation.⁵ Translations of the Hebrew Bible seek a dynamic balance between affirmations of Jewish particularity and difference and affirmations of

religious universalism. The Bible is understood, most often, as both a peculiarly Jewish document and also as a document addressed to all humanity.

These two aspects of biblical translation, however, can each be put to use either for the creation of a uniform Jewish identity or to evoke a diversity of Jewish identities. At times the affirmation of biblical universalism and translatability becomes a means to insist on a single Jewish identity—often one that blends in with the dominant culture—and that forces other versions of Jewish identity underground or into the closet. At other times, however, this universalism valorizes human difference and refuses to make biblical meaning exclusively Jewish because of the narrowness of such exclusivity.

At times the insistence on the untranslatability of the Bible becomes a strident proclamation of Jewish difference, if not superiority. In that case, Jews whose identity falls more clearly within the general culture are branded as ““assimilationist”” and therefore less fully authentic as Jews. At other times, however, this insistence may lead to a queering of Jewish identity. If the Bible is untranslatable, then the identities it conveys may appear to differ one from the other. The mysteriousness of biblical meaning may lead to an authorization of divergent identities, thus swinging the closet door open wide. Perhaps the most persuasive queering of Jewish identity that arises from a translation of the Bible is the German translation of the Bible by Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber.

The Martin Buber- Franz Rosenzweig Translation of the Bible

One of the most significant of modern translations of the Bible, that into German made by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, illustrates the dialectic of particularism and universalism well and shows the interplay of translational choices with views of personal

identity. Politically and socially, these two thinkers were opening the closet door, introducing deviant Jewish identities that lay outside the institutional frameworks of Jewish identity in their times. The two began the work in 1925, and it was finally completed by Buber alone (after Rosenzweig's early and tragic death in 1929) in 1961. Gershom Scholem sagely noted that this production by a Zionist and a non-Zionist represents a divided understanding of Jewish identity. He has discovered an important truth, but misinterprets it. Scholem recognizes the political differences between Buber and Rosenzweig without acknowledging how insignificant they actually were. The insight that the translation reflects a double consciousness, an affirmation of both Jewish and German identity is quite true. Yet, Buber was an odd sort of Zionist who understood the new Jewish community in Zion as a model for all humanity, and Rosenzweig articulated an exceptional non-Zionism that also affirmed the importance of Jewish self-differentiation from non-Jews. The translation of the Bible they created was addressed to an inclusive audience of Jews and Germans. They felt themselves equally Jewish and Germanic and expressed both aspects of themselves in their translation. Not only in this way, but as leaders who stood outside established Jewish or academic institutions, both Buber and Rosenzweig opened the doors of Jewish identity to those deemed "deviant" by the powers of society. They transgressed boundaries as a way of widening the possibilities by which Jews might identify themselves.⁶

Scholem, an "orthodox" Zionist, could not comprehend this nonconformist aspect of the two. Especially in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust, he wondered whom they could be addressing. He characterizes their translation of the Bible as a "farewell gift Jews presented out of appreciation to a German culture" that became, instead, "the tombstone of a relationship

that was extinguished in unspeakable horror.”⁷ For Scholem this means that the translation cannot succeed either as a means to communicate with non-Jews or as a way to affirm a specific Jewish identity. It floats in limbo because of the destruction of its intended audience.⁸ Without a definitive audience, without a claim on being an exclusive entrance into one sort of Jewish identity, Scholem could not conceive of the Bible as a basis for Jewish selfhood.

Buber himself, however, disagreed with this assessment. The universal aspect of the translation seemed, to him, no less a true possibility after the Holocaust than before it. He was said to have remarked to the biblical commentator Nechama Leibowitch that Scholem had insufficient faith in Germany. Trusting to the openness of human beings to a voice addressing them, Buber affirmed the on-going relevance of his translation of the Bible. As long as an audience could listen attentively to God’s address, the translation would be useful.⁹ What is striking is that this universalistic aspect of the Bible lies in its untranslatability. The experience of the Bible, rather than the message of the Bible, is what the translation transmits. All human beings open to hearing the primal divine voice can hear it by listening for the sound that reverberates beneath the Germanic text. No single Jewish identity issues out of the Bible; the voice resounding in the Bible does not address any particular audience. That voice breaks down closet doors and liberates those whose identity is repressed and suppressed. What Scholem has misunderstood is that for Buber and Rosenzweig the translation succeeds not when it confirms a particular identity but rather when, through bringing all identities into question, it allows new religious identities to emerge, when it liberates repressed identities from their closets.

Scholem did not only criticize the translation; he also appreciated its usefulness. He noted the valuable aspects of the translation: that it forces the reader into active partnership in

discovering the meaning of the text, that it offers an interpretation, even without commentary (a point to be discussed later) and that it finds a creative way to balance Jewish reluctance to use the name of the divine with ““the obligation to make the biblical word readable, i.e., audible.””¹⁰ He emphasized what Martin Jay calls ““an ancillary goal”” —that of forcing the German reader to return to the Hebrew original.¹¹ The Hebraic German that Buber and Rosenzweig created liberated the Bible from the Christianizing effects of Luther’s German translation. It sought to put a clear Judaic stamp on the Bible so as to reclaim the priority of Jewish understandings of Scripture over that of the Christians.

This aspect of the translation might appear to be stuffing some religious identities back into the closet. Instead, it refuses to allow the Christian majority to define, even for Christians, what their biblical identity should be. The Hebraic elements in the translation function less as a way to make Judaism and Jewish religiousness normative as to call into question all normative approaches to religious identity. Precisely because the Hebrew Bible transmits a message that cannot be distilled, cannot be translated, the Buber-Rosenzweig translation refuses to make any single religious identity definitive and liberates both Jews and Christians from a biblical identity that has been thrust upon them by external authorities.

In order to obtain this liberation Buber and Rosenzweig resorted to certain techniques that will frame the rest of this study and show how decisions about translation were actually decisions about the construction of Jewish identity. A crucial decision was to make a fresh new translation rather than merely revise an earlier one. In following out the implications of that choice, Buber and Rosenzweig devoted themselves to seeking out original meanings, of authentic etymologies both in Hebrew and German. Another technique involved imitating the

rhythms and pulse of the Hebrew original in constructing their German text. Another decision was to allow the translation itself to be the interpretation, forgoing a commentary, although both Buber and Rosenzweig published articles reflecting on their philosophy of translation. This decision included their consultation of traditional Jewish commentaries without, however, making that resource obvious in the text. Finally, their way of rendering of the divine name illustrates a striking way of indicating relationship with rather than philosophical knowledge of the divine. These decisions echo those made by earlier biblical translators, and their significance becomes clear in comparison with those earlier attempts. Whereas other philosophies of translation sought to establish a canonical meaning in the Bible and force alternatives into hiding, into some closet for religious deviants, Buber and Rosenzweig created a Bible of liberation, one that would open new possibilities for Jewish religious identity rather than limit them.

Creating a New Translation Rather Than Revising an Older One

The decision to create a translation *de novo* was not an obvious one. The biographical context for the Buber-Rosenzweig translation of the Bible reveals the temptation they faced to limit their work to a revision of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German¹² Buber had been approached with a request for such a revision; Rosenzweig had expressed his doubts about the possibility of making a completely new translation of the Hebrew Bible but had shown interest in revising Luther. Soon, however, both men recognized the necessity to start afresh, to create something entirely different from a revision. What was there in a revision that was inimical to their project?

Jewish translators have often felt that a revision rather than an entirely new translation

would be more useful to their ends. In the Hellenistic world the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible dominated the vocabulary and style of religious philosophy through the time of Baruch Spinoza. The philosophy of Philo, the letters of Paul, and the early Christian Church enshrined the Septuagint as the definitive rendition of the Jewish Scriptures. The language and cadences of the Septuagint although couched in the common language of the marketplace, *Koine*, came to mark educated religious writing. Just for this reason, however, many Jewish leaders felt uncomfortable with the Septuagint.

An earlier Greek version of the Septuagint, that of Theodotion, had retained much of the Septuagint translation, even while revising it to resemble more closely the Hebrew of the Masoretic Text. This Greek revision of the Septuagint became the basis for a Jewish alternative to the Christianized version of the canon.¹³ This work, known as Aquila, is often regarded as awkward and unintelligible to all except Jews.¹⁴ It affirmed Jewish identity by retaining much of the Septuagint style while providing demarcations throughout that indicated its Judaic nature. Although some scholars argue that these demarcations are drawn from rabbinic literature, others deny that claim. Tradition sometimes associates Aquila with the traditions of the rabbinic scholar Akiva living in the land of Israel, but this again is unlikely. What is clear about the revision is that it straddles the fence of affirming Jewish distinctiveness and bringing the content of an alien Hebrew idiom to an audience no longer able to understand it.

Other translations that are essentially revisions of previous works perform a similar function. Moses Mendelssohn's influential translation and commentary on the Bible is, as some scholars recognize, a revision of an earlier rationalist translation that had been banned.¹⁵ Mendelssohn's purpose in this revision was two-fold. He wanted to provide a Bible that would

be a Jewish alternative to a Christianized reading of the Jewish Scriptures. He also wished to use the translation to encourage Jews to enter the modern world and adapt to the general German culture.¹⁶ The same motive underlies much of American Jewish biblical translation. The first great Jewish translator of the Bible in America was Isaac Leeser. Lesser translated the Bible so that Jews could have a biblio-centric American religion just as Protestants had. He envisaged and may have achieved what Harry M. Orlinsky calls ““a Judaizing of King James.””¹⁷ A later translation, that of the Jewish Publication Society under the direction of Max Margolis, sought a similar aim. Margolis sought to deChristianize the Revised Version of the Bible in a way suitable for Jews that could also help immigrant Jews become acculturated into American life.¹⁸ The purpose of a revision of an existing translation emphasizes a double positive evaluation of both particularistic and universalistic identity—Jews are urged to be proud of distinctiveness and difference while, at the same time, entering into the general culture. These various revisers of an earlier tradition seek to impose their ““Bible”” on previous versions. They establish a single normative text out of which a single normative Jewish identity arises. Both Leeser and Margolis sought to construct the ideal American Jewish identity, to close the closet door on alternatives.

Buber and Rosenzweig disagree with these evaluations. They are seeking to revise the way both Jews and Germans understand the Bible. Luther’s translation of the Bible has, according to Rosenzweig, Christianized German. It has created a language that identifies Germanic language and Christian ideas and values. A revision of the Bible fit for Jews would not remedy this basic problem. As long as German remains the language of the Luther translation it offers a misleading guide to Germanic identity—it restricts that identity to Christians. Germans are misled by Luther’s translation to think of the Bible as purely a Christian book.

Buber and Rosenzweig feel that Jews no less than Germans have misunderstood the Bible and its language. Buber describes his own experience—as a child he had read the Hebrew Bible and loved it, but became alienated from it as he read it in translation. Later, however, he reread the Bible as a text with which he would need to struggle. This was a book in which ““Every word had to be won, but every word could be won.””¹⁹ The approach taken in the Buber-Rosenzweig translation forces each reader to engage in such a struggle. The identity of both Jew and German must be reconstituted through a struggle with an original Bible, not with the comfortable Bible assumed by either tradition.

The balance between particularism and universalism found among revisers also animates Buber and Rosenzweig. What makes a revision impossible for them is that they see identity as arising again and again out of a present engagement with an ever new biblical text. The Bible neither confirms Jewish identity nor introduces Jews to a stable general culture. It destabilizes both identities and encourages the emergence of both a new Jew and a new German. Confident in their own visions of a renewed Judaic and Germanic identity, Buber and Rosenzweig use their translation to evoke what they see as more ““genuine”” and ““authentic”” understandings of self. They translate the Bible anew so they can begin recreating what it means to be a Jew and what it means to be a German. The translation is their key to a revival that is both Jewish and universal. That revival depends on individuals reading the Bible according to their own individuality. Each reader discovers what is universal and what is Jewish through an encounter with an ever new text. This approach queers the Bible and liberates alternative Jewish identities from their closets.

Walter Benjamin’s criticism of the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible may have misunderstood this aspect of its purpose. Benjamin rejected the translation, first, because it assumed that the

Bible was powerful enough to penetrate the barrier erected by modernity and elicit an experiential response.²⁰ He felt only a critical analysis of modernity, that rubbed history ““against the grain”” could achieve such penetration. Nevertheless, he also rejected the translation because of his objection to Buber’s view of Judaism as experiential. Brian Britt comments that ““Buber’s emphasis on the individual’s direct encounter with the Jewish tradition stood in stark contrast to Benjamin’s interest in a broad analysis of modern culture as a nonobservant, intellectual Jew.””²¹ Yet Buber, as an equally nonobservant, intellectual Jew, was not demanding a return to tradition. He sought as critical and anti-theological return to Jewish identity as Benjamin.

Discerning the Meaning of Words

One of the most striking elements in the Buber-Rosenzweig translation results from the attempt to create these new identities. Buber and Rosenzweig determined that to cleanse the Bible of its accumulated associations, they needed return to the original etymologies of both the original Hebrew and the German into which they translated that original. To do this they often had to recreate German. Klaus Reichert takes the example of Genesis 1:2 as paradigmatic.²² The Hebrew description of pre-creation chaos evokes a mighty wind fluttering over the darkened depths. The term ““mighty”” uses the Hebrew ““elohim”” that often, but not always, refers to divinity. The standard translations ““divine spirit”” ““Holy Ghost,”” ““wind of God,”” or ““divine breath”” all have associations that lead away from the literal Hebrew which both represents a natural occurrence and also intimates something extraordinary. Buber and Rosenzweig reach back into German for a word connected with the tossing of the sea and describe a ““Braus Gottes,”” ““a divine bluster.”” This certainly expresses the wildness that God

will eventually tame. It does not, however, reflect what was a colloquial usage of the term. More usually the “bluster” involved is that of “revel and riot.” Buber and Rosenzweig, however, were more intent on creating a new German than on transferring Hebrew into an idiomatic German. They intended “to revitalize German from its roots, as they went back in their reading to Hebrew roots, using obsolete words alongside common ones.”²³

What Buber and Rosenzweig sought to do was two-fold. First they sought out root meanings of Hebrew words. Since Hebrew builds verbs, nouns, and participles out of a tri-literal set of consonants, they traced these consonants through their various incarnations in the text. Then they translated diverse words in ways that would reveal their literal connections; thus they demonstrated the interconnected fabric of biblical language. Those reading their German translation could not escape the echoes of “key words” (*Leitworten*) throughout.²⁴ That web of interconnected meanings transforms the Bible from a set of laws or an anthology of stories into a “highly complex network of allusions and assumptions.”²⁵ Such a reading of the Bible shakes readers out of a feeling of secure knowledge of what the text is saying.

The Buber-Rosenzweig translation shocks the reader again and again with an association that had not been recognized before. Such shock was intended. The translation was meant to “confront the reader with an almost aggressive unfamiliarity as if its language were coming from “outside.”²⁶ This alienation is meant as a preparatory destruction after which Jews could recreate their sense of self in a more primal and authentic way. The translation was “an object lesson in the philosophical invention of Jewish identity.” By presenting Jews with an alien Bible, Buber and Rosenzweig were conveying an idea about Jewish origins and meaning to challenge conventional Jewish thinking. They were “re-inventing Jewish origins from the

ground up”” and providing ““readers with a specifically German-Jewish literary past.””²⁷

If the return to original Hebrew keywords challenged conventional views of Jewish identity, the introduction of radical new ways of using German challenged the self-understanding of non-Jews and Jews alike about the nature of German culture. The language that Buber and Rosenzweig chose mixed ancient forms and newly created words. This decision to reinvent German inspired fierce criticism. Buber and Rosenzweig were accused of having fallen prey to Romanticism, Wagnernism, and the worst of racist and folkish ideology.²⁸ The point, however, was not to introduce nostalgia for its own sake nor to reinstate some imagined golden age of the past. Rather the use of both archaic forms and neologisms suggests that translation should stretch the language into which a work is rendered. The universalist element in translation here becomes the gift that the original gives to the receiving language. Rosenzweig clearly announces what the translation is trying to do. A translator, he insists, must avoid transforming what he translates into his own jargon, his own dialect. Translators should not set artificial limits on what is ““linguistically possible”” but always seek new ways of conveying the original in the target language.²⁹ The translation should transform the language in the shape of the original no less than the target language should transform the original.

This double approach—challenging both particularistic identity and the culture into which that identity is entering—had already been utilized in the Septuagint translation of the Bible. That translation has been recognized as clearly a Jewish one, arising from a symbiosis between Jews and the Hellenistic environment. Many Hellenistic Jews celebrated the revelatory power of a work that conjoins two cultures. In this way the Septuagint represents a change in Jewish identity, a rethinking of what it means to be a Jew. Sometimes even the exact wording of

the original needed changing to suit the new environment, the new identity of the Jew. By rethinking the origins of revelation and the primal meaning of scriptures, the Jews writing the Septuagint challenged accepted definitions about Jewish identity.³⁰

At the same time, to achieve their ends many of the authors whose works became part of what is called the Septuagint stretched the Greek language into which they rendered that original. They sought to transmit the meaning of the original text. Translations often seek out what can be called ““functional equivalence”” between the two languages.³¹ They do not translate the original word for word, but rather in a way that conveys its intent. This may mean altering the sentence structure, the grammatical peculiarities, and even the word choices of the original. Harry Orlinsky used this approach in his ““new translation of the Torah.”” He defends the need for an entirely new English translation rather than a revision of older ones because ““the English Language has changed, and so has the American Jewish community.””³² The new translation looks different from older translations because its use of English is not intended to mimic the Hebrew but rather to transmit its meaning. Using this approach, Orlinsky notes, ““ the new version has tended to break up sentences and to combine sentences by subordinating clauses far more frequently than previous translations have done...””³³ He often suggests that earlier translators ““in their pursuit of literal translation”” missed important aspects of the Hebraic meaning by neglecting the variety of meanings possible in conjunction such as ““and”” or ““therefore,”” in the several nuances in a single word such as ““house”” or in the usage of a singular noun to indicate a collective entity (clouds, homes, ears, etc.).³⁴

In the same way, many of the Septuagint texts achieve this goal by rendering the meaning of the Hebrew text into as exact a Greek equivalent as possible. Orlinsky comments on this

approach and the way in which even the Greek word order was made to echo that of the Hebrew.³⁵ To do this the translators often resorted to coining new words or using old words in new ways. Some of the most influential coinages in the Greek translation remain imbedded in contemporary religious vocabulary. Words such as ““Lord,”” or ““Angel,”” or ““Devil”” spring from ““a fusion between a Hebrew and a Greek word.””³⁶ One aspect of this translation is to find a way to transform a Greek word into a more appropriate vehicle for expressing Jewish ideas.

What Buber and Rosenzweig do by returning to original meanings and coining new words continues the double approach of the Septuagint. Yet the difference between the Septuagint and other efforts to provide a ““functional and dynamic”” translation of the Hebrew Bible is crucial. Both Orłinsky’s American translation and the Septuagint assume a single meaning to the Bible. Next, they work with the target language to convey both the particularistic and universalist elements of that meaning. That identification of a single message closes the closet door on alternative views of Jewish identity.

Buber and Rosenzweig, by contrast, challenge both particularistic and universalist images of identity. Buber remarks that the translators did not care about what the particular message of a biblical passage might be. Their only concern was ““to free the real, spoken, and speakable word that lies caught in Scripture, and to let it sound again in the world.””³⁷ That effort opened the closet door and released several competing and potentially incompatible Jewish responses to the ““real, spoken, and speakable word.”” Their ideal was to convey a word that would liberate new possibilities rather than convey a single meaning, a uniform and normative message.

Translation as Re-Creating the Original

Hebraicizing of the target language means revising word usage to fit the original patterns of the original, researching older words in the target language that may have a meaning close to the Hebraic term translated, coining new words in the target language that are derived from the Hebrew, and changing grammatical forms so that they echo the forms of the Hebrew, This approach of the Buber and Rosenzweig attempt has been followed by several other biblical translations. Parts of the Septuagint, in particular those influenced by the so-called Aquila translation discussed above, display a similar attempt. They ““jettison”” the features of Greek so as to produce a ““foreign sounding”” work that recalls the original. This approach occurs in a ““modern reflex,”” Leonard Jay Greenspoon suggests, in the Buber Rosenzweig German translation of the Bible and in the contemporary translations of the Bible into English by Everett Fox.³⁸ This creation of a Hebrew sounding translation does more than coin new words or look for ancient formulations. It recaptures the ““phonetic rhythm”” of the original in which language conveys ““divine instruction”” as much by its intrinsic holiness as by its intellectual content.³⁹

This approach to the power of language independent of its content resembles how Muslims view the Qur’an. From the standpoint of Islam there is, and always has been, one and only one true revelation-the one given in ““clear Arabic”” in the Qur’an. Before the time of Muhammad, Muslims admit, other nations were entrusted with one or another version of this revelation, a revelation that they subsequently corrupted so that the true and untranslatable ideal, that of the Arabic Qur’an, became a necessity. For the Muslim that implies that the Qur’an is an artifact of the divine. Its final language, Arabic, transcends the ““translations”” given in its previous languages-Hebrew and Greek.

Muslims find in the Arabic Qur’an a presence, a divine encounter, that goes beyond the

communication of any particular ideas or information. Muslims pray in Arabic because so much of prayer comes from the Qur'an. The power of such prayer lies so much in its language that it is efficacious even if worshipers do not understand the literal meanings of the Arabic they are reciting. The Qur'an is thus a "spoken word" rather than a written one, an audible revelation rather than merely a textual one.⁴⁰ This approach to Arabic may seem to be unique and peculiarly Islamic. In fact, it reflects a general effect that occurs when a written text becomes revered as "revealed Scriptures" as Franz Rosenzweig himself understood.

For Rosenzweig, the Islamic view of the Qur'an and the inherent qualities of Arabic as the language of revelation, had a closetting rather than a liberating effect. The scripturalization of the oral and aural word provided a dogmatic standard for all literature that followed. The language of revelation determined the shape of all future literature and therefore suppressed all alternative possibilities. Rosenzweig suggests similar consequences for German from Martin Luther's translation of the Bible. He claims that once language and revelation have been collapsed into a single unity, all future use of language—both oral and written—look to this fixed point of orientation. The orality, the linguistic expressiveness, the givenness of the revealed Word takes on a power of its own that goes beyond either "culture" or "message." Fidelity to the Word in this case means fidelity not just to a set of ideas or even to a linguistic tradition but to the definitive nature of THIS particular use of language.⁴¹

Buber and Rosenzweig intended to demonstrate what Everett Fox notes as a chief characteristic of the Hebrew Bible: the Bible, "if not an oral document, is certainly an aural one"—that is if not originally given in speech, it was meant to be attended to as speech; it was a document to be heard rather than read.⁴² To recreate this auralty, Buber and Rosenzweig

constructed a German that would imitate the breathing patterns they discerned in the Hebrew. Rosenzweig wrote of the ““obligation of hearing the breathing movement of the word from the pen-strokes of the Scripture.”” Once this ““self-imposed internal law”” is recognized, then the translation will become a living entity, as was the original. The original, he insists, was not just a formal content, a ““madness”” or ““objectivity”” associated with a literary content. A true translation does not merely communicate such a content but reproduces the original in such a way as to allow that ““Scripture be suffused once again with the breath of the word.””⁴³ This return to oral/aural presentation, however, was meant, unlike the example of the Qur’an, as a means of stimulating variety, diversity and alternatives to standard meanings rather than as a new law and standard to be upheld.

This purpose of encouraging diversity and opening closed closets becomes clear when Buber and Rosenzweig explain that their translation had as its purpose to liberate the Bible from the accretion of associations and interpretations that had developed over centuries. They endeavored to strip off these accumulated coverings to reveal the true subtext underneath. They thought of their work as a restoration like that of a scholar faced with a manuscript in which a later text has been inscribed on top of a more primary one, a palimpsest. They peel off the waxen surface and the secondary writing on it and discover the ““original”” text beneath. They scrape away ““history”” to reveal ““the book.””⁴⁴

Buber and Rosenzweig look to the palimpsest because they link the power of revelation found in the Bible less to a transmission of a specific doctrine or set of beliefs than to the opportunity for a meeting with the divine invited by the original biblical text. They aimed at a translation that would achieve for modern readers what the original achieved for Hebrew

readers—a reverberation of and a recapturing of the intent of the original.⁴⁵ This German work would read not like a translation but rather ““as if it were a restoration of the Hebrew original.””⁴⁶ They contended that restoring the original force of the Bible would make that book a new and revelational power in the life of readers. To render the Bible a source of religious identity for modern people, Buber and Rosenzweig cleansed it of the accumulated meanings that institutional authority had imposed upon it.

Buber, in particular, emphasized the value of the Bible for the modern person. Scripture can open up personal meaning and purpose when approached anew rather than as a heirloom from the past.⁴⁷ When meeting the Bible as a document of the present, people today, Buber insists, can literally recall—that is call up again—the central fact of revelation, which he claims is not a historical moment at Sinai but a constantly present possibility of encountering the divine. Buber reads the Bible not for some eternal, unchanging message but rather for the constantly recurring possibility it offers to hear the lesson of the hour, a lesson that is always new every time the meeting with the divine recurs.⁴⁸ To attain this effect, he and Rosenzweig transformed the Bible from a work meant to be read to one meant to be heard.⁴⁹ The German Bible was to imitate the sound of the original so that the breath beneath the German words would be recognized as the same breath that was underneath the Hebrew and therefore become a vehicle for turning to the same spiritual source as the original.⁵⁰ Read afresh, the Bible invites readers to develop alternative identities. As a new call to each reader, the Bible encourages people to seek out the closets in which they have hidden the truth about their identities. Opening that closet, the Bible validates and legitimates variety of religious experience rather than uniformity.

This view of the power of language resonated with much of late nineteenth and early

twentieth century German thinking. Scholars were seeking the ““language of paradise,”” that linguistic form that underlies every language and that makes translation itself possible.⁵¹ This linguistic bedrock when once recovered will permit a perfect communication among people without the problems that the confusion of tongues usually creates. Walter Benjamin is, perhaps, the most famous exponent of such a view.⁵² Benjamin claimed not only that all languages are translatable. He also singled out works like the Bible as special cases. Translations of works that communicate ““truth,”” he felt have a meaning that exists between the lines. The truth they convey spills beyond the linguistic boundaries of any single language. He, therefore, holds that an ““interlinear translation”” works best. Such translations reveal the silences that offer the language underneath language.⁵³

Strikingly, Benjamin rejected the Buber-Rosenzweig translation and announced his preference for the simplicity of other versions. Edward L. Greenstein finds this response incomprehensible. He thinks that despite Benjamin’s personal reaction, the Buber-Rosenzweig translation is one that best illustrates Benjamin’s theory of language.⁵⁴ The disagreement, however, is far more complicated than it appears at first. Brian Britt shows how the controversy reflects the different ways German Jews appropriated German Romanticism in general and Schleiermacher in particular.⁵⁵ Whereas Buber and Rosenzweig trusted the Bible to pierce the problematic barriers raised by modernity and elicit a new revelational experience, Benjamin denied that possibility. Benjamin and Buber and Rosenzweig disagreed on the theological meaning of translation. As Martin Jay points out, Buber and Rosenzweig assumed both that the Bible evoked the authentic divine word and that reviving the voice speaking through that word could redeem the world. Benjamin disagreed with both these presuppositions.⁵⁶ Benjamin sought

the unspeakable truth that lies behind all language. He was convinced that a singular and unique reality lay beyond the differences between linguistic utterances. No less than those seeking a functional and dynamic conveying of a message, Benjamin imposed a uniform truth upon reality.

Buber and Rosenzweig did not attempt to unveil some universal language beyond language. Instead, they attempted to shock readers into response, to elicit the diverse and individual answers that every person would give to the biblical presence. To do that they created a translation that would bristle with difficulties. That linguistic choice did not, as some have suggested, have as its primary purpose the pedagogical task of reminding people that they must learn Hebrew and read the original. Edward L. Greenstein misreads their intent when he thinks that ““Buber and, in this case especially, Rosenzweig sought to produce a translation that would sound like a translation.””⁵⁷ Instead they wanted to create a work that would reproduce the effect of the original in a different language. They preserved the Hebraic aspects of the original because they thought these were essential for achieving their theological task—that of introducing people today to the eternal voice of God. Unlike those who made Hebrew a touchstone of truth, a key to the one true meaning of the biblical text, Rosenzweig and Buber used Hebraic forms to activate a challenge that evokes a different response from each reader. They made the Bible less accessible and more difficult not because they thought only Hebrew could transmit the plain meaning of the text, but because they rejected any such ““plain”” meaning in exchange for the complexity of diversity. They refused to allow the Bible to slam doors shut, to relegate any potential religious identity to the closet.

To achieve their aim of widening the audience of the Bible, Buber and Rosenzweig ironically used Jewish particularity as a tool for liberation. Peter Gordon argues that Buber and

Rosenzweig justified their translation on the basis of their peculiar insight into it as Jews. Their translational theory, he argues, attempts “to mobilize the notion that Jews enjoy a special ‘understanding’ of Biblical meaning.”⁵⁸ Naturally “understanding” means more than intellectual knowledge. Jews have a sense of the Bible, a responsive way of reading it, that is distinct from the doctrinaire and dogmatic reading that Christians give it. The Buber-Rosenzweig translation was meant to be universal, but its source was understood as fundamentally Jewish. Jews “hear” the Hebrew Bible differently than others. Their gift to Germany was to enable non-Jews to hear the Bible that way as well. The desire to take the special talents of the Jew and use them to reveal the common universal language of humanity represents a unique blending of the inclusive and exclusive elements in biblical translations. The translation would allow all peoples to encounter the divine voice issuing from the Hebrew Bible, a voice that had been muted for both Jews and non-Jews through the centuries of Christian usage of the so-called Old Testament. The effect of this reawakening of the original voice of the Bible was to liberate the Hebrew Bible from a singular and dominant interpretation. The uncloseted Jewishness of their translation was a way to widen the horizons of biblical meaning. Presenting a self-consciously Jewish Bible was a “queering” of the biblical culture of Christendom. The Bible became a vehicle not for the repression of difference but for its celebration. In this way even a particularist affirmation of the Jews’ special relation to the Bible becomes a vehicle for allowing a plurality of religious identities and for opening up repressed possibilities.

Jewish Sources and Commentary on the Bible

Since Buber and Rosenzweig were presenting what they felt to be the original intent of the Bible they felt no need to identify the sources they used to reach their conclusions about the

appropriate choices of words or meanings for difficult passages. From their perspective the Jewish nature of their work arose from the honesty of their translation, not from the decision to consult Jewish commentators. For them the history of Jewish exegesis was but a preliminary for the immediacy of the moment of heeding the voice issuing from the text. For them ““Neither the past nor the future was determining; only the present, the lived moment really mattered.””⁵⁹ Commentary would only interrupt the power of the moment that they sought to evoke. For them commentary would become an obstacle preventing direct access to the divine presence. They wanted to avoid the problem of Ludwig Phillipson’s *Israelitische Bibel* in which ““There is a veil spread between text and commentary which can never be lifted.””⁶⁰

Without a commentary, but informed by commentaries, a translation often raises a question about its Judaic pedigree. How does one tell if the translation is ““really”” a Jewish one informed by Judaic tradition? One such set of translations, the *Targumim*, the Aramaic renderings of the Torah, incorporate what might be called the exegetical tradition in the main body of their work. This set of often varied and distinctive works share one purpose—while some are more ““literal”” than others, and some add very extensive internal commentary in their translation—they all seem to present the Bible through the eyes of rabbinic teachings. These works stem from the rabbinic tradition itself and reflect both the legal and non-legal perspectives of the rabbis. They often rewrite the original text in a polemical and pedagogical way. The interpretive translations become the means by which the attending congregation ““is brought up to date with regard to ritual practice.””⁶¹ The Judaic authorization of that translation required no justification.

More recently, however, when the Jewish Publication Society published a new translation

of the Torah in 1962, Harry Orlinsky provided a ““systematic account”” of how the translation occurred on the grounds that ““mid-twentieth century America is not exactly a traditional time and clime.””⁶² One important function of these notes is to highlight the use of traditional Jewish exegetes. These exegetes are honored ““not from a blind acceptance of their views but rather from a critical evaluation of their exposition.”” Here the notes point to the internal justification of the translators—while they use traditional sources they claim that this use was predicated on general principles that go beyond a respect for tradition. In mid-twentieth century America it was, apparently, possible to offer a legitimating commentary independently of the biblical translation, particularly if that commentary reinforced an ““objectivity”” beyond fidelity to tradition as an end in itself. In this case the ““objectivity”” of a scientific study of the Bible forces alternative possibilities into the closet. The variant religious responses to the Bible that might emerge from non-scientific study are negated so that a ““definitive”” translation for a particular time and place (twentieth century America) is established.

While seeking a similar authority and power, Moses Mendelssohn’s translation of the Bible into German aroused considerable resistance from among both Jews and non-Jews.⁶³ Non-Jews expected a translation of the Bible to fit with rationalized, critical science. They looked skeptically on a Jewish approach to the Scriptures. They particularly suspected rabbinic tradition and exegesis. Mendelssohn also faced opposition from Jews. He broke with Jewish tradition in offering a translation directly influenced by the target language. He took pains to ensure that the translation would inculcate the highest style and most cultivated German usage of his time. He created a model of linguistic purity that he hoped would educate his contemporaries in methods of elegant written expression.⁶⁴ He tempered his Enlightenment ““science”” with a recognition

that history must be taken seriously. His translation, as David Sorkin comments, ““was historical without being historicist; he acknowledged history in the Pentateuch rather than the Pentateuch as a product of history””⁶⁵ This stress on historical fact would puzzle Jewish readers; the rejection of historicism would puzzle Enlightenment skeptics.

Recognizing that the very idea of his translation combined with some of his radical translational choices would stimulate dissent, Mendelssohn combined his commentary with the translation. His effort to begin an educational program for German Jews required both the new translation and its commentary.⁶⁶ To succeed as an educator Mendelssohn needed to convince his readers of the authenticity of both the idea of a translation of the Bible into the vernacular and of his particular decisions in that translation. He used his commentary to provide that necessary justification.⁶⁷ Commentary was the essential companion to a translation addressed to an audience of both Jews and non-Jews who would be suspicious of it.

Abigail E. Gillman thinks that Mendelssohn differs from Buber and Rosenzweig because while he sought to bring Jews from the margin of society into the midst of culture, they sought to distance Jews from that same culture. Mendelssohn sought to respond to the demands of history, while Buber and Rosenzweig sought to uncover an eternal voice.⁶⁸ In fact, however, what separated them was that while Mendelssohn sought to introduce a new biblical standard, to create a new model of Jewish identity, Rosenzweig and Buber avoided theological and ideological content. They wanted to stimulate difference, to free the Bible from just that definitive authority that Mendelssohn sought to establish. Mendelssohn’s new translation sought to closet alternative views of Jewish identity. His commentary was meant to overpower and discredit rival theories. Buber and Rosenzweig eschewed commentary because they wanted the

biblical voice to call forth not one but several responses; rather than closet difference they wanted to liberate it.

God's Name and the Identity Quotient of the Translator

The difference between the Buber-Rosenzweig translation and the Mendelssohn translation lies first in the authoritativeness they each emphasize in the biblical text. Secondly, each conceived of Jewish identity differently. For Buber and Rosenzweig Jewish identity was rooted in a primary relationship to the Hebrew Bible and through it to the divine voice continually addressing human beings. For Mendelssohn Jewish identity is associated with the Hebrew Bible as a historical work expressing certain universal truths in peculiarly Jewish ways. Mendelssohn and Buber and Rosenzweig might all agree with the statement of the rabbis (Babylonian Talmud Megillah 12b) that ““Anyone who abandons idolatry is called a Jew.”” Nevertheless, they understand that abandonment differently—For Mendelssohn abandoning idolatry means recognizing the philosophical truths about divinity; for Buber and Rosenzweig it entails an open meeting with the divine.

These differences are reflected in the different ways the two translations render God's personal name, a fact that Rosenzweig clearly recognized.⁶⁹ The four letter name of God, the so-called Tetragrammaton used as God's private designation in much of the Hebrew Bible, has a long and complicated history of usage. Rabbinic teaching emphasized the holiness of the name together with a prohibition on its utterance. Mystics, in particular, seized upon this confounding combination of the holy and the unattainable. They saw it as a key for unraveling ““the difference between things and names.””⁷⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, commenting upon this name, notes that it is ““privileged”” in ““having never to be pronounced.”” That privilege led to the

development of a substitute name “Adonai” (my Lord) that became “the name of the Tetragrammaton. The name has a name!”⁷¹ That “name” for the Tetragrammaton has often been used by translators, beginning with the Septuagint, in place of the four letter name itself.

Both Rosenzweig and Mendelssohn rejected that substitute name since--among other things--it had become “too freighted with Christian associations.”⁷² Mendelssohn, therefore, substitutes a philosophical designation “The Eternal,” a term that he uses, as Rosenzweig acknowledges, with trepidation.⁷³ Rosenzweig does not seem to recognize that for Mendelssohn that term suggests a useful ambiguity. Mendelssohn uses it because he thinks German cannot transmit all the meanings “inherent in the Hebrew names of God.” The term “Eternal” suggests the limitations both of the German language and of the human ability to comprehend the diversity of divinity.⁷⁴ Mendelssohn recognized that his way of rendering God’s name “had an alien ring” to it and developed an extensive commentary to explain its usage. The commentary also inspired further philosophical thinking and a recognition of the limits of the human mind.⁷⁵ Here the identity of the Jew as a philosopher joins with a philosophical recognition of limitations and inadequacy. Mendelssohn’s choice for rendering the divine name reflects both his view of Jewish identity as philosophical and his own vulnerability within that identity.

Buber and Rosenzweig refuse to render the name as a concept. They render it as an address, as a second person call to the divine. Although Gershom Scholem celebrates this tactic, the decision to take this step was part of the overall purpose of their new translation. It reinforced their conception of the Bible as establishing “an existential, dialogic relationship between a divine I and a mundane Thou,” and therefore they used pronominal forms rather than

the divine name ““to emphasise (sic) the presence of a partner in a conversation.””⁷⁶ Buber and Rosenzweig justified this usage on scholarly grounds as well as programmatic ones. Buber notes that some scholars have traced the origin of the divine epithet to ““some exclamatory pronoun”” or ““taboo word”” for recognizing the presence of the divinity.⁷⁷ Perhaps the most important scholarly resource they used was that of Benno Jacob, a biblical philologist who often introduced startling interpretations of biblical passages.

This scholarly argument, however, was less the cause of their usage than a legitimization of it. Their Bible was meant to open the ears of readers to the call of the divine. They wanted to draw attention to the presentness of divinity. Buber explains that the truth of the Bible, the center of its meaning, lies not in some historical event at Mount Sinai, but rather in the continual possibility it offers of attaining revelation now. The demand of the Bible is not that one should follow this or that law or believe this or that theory or philosophy. Buber holds that the Bible asks one thing—that people place themselves within the history of revelation, that they find their place within the story of God’s address to humanity. God’s name is not a philosophical concept because the purpose of the Bible is ““that I may find my origin in the origin of the world and my goal in the world’s goal.””⁷⁸ This individualistic approach to the Bible opens the closet that has shut up dissenters and deviants from finding themselves in the Bible. The Bible is not meant as a door to shut out all but a select few; it is not a sieve through which only the fine grain can pass. Rather God’s presence in the Bible assures each person of a place, of a goal, of a legitimization that goes back to the origin of the world. Rosenzweig and Buber queer Jewish identity by making the Bible the key to all closets into which diverse Jewish identities have been locked away.

Notes

¹ See Nancy T. Ammerman, ““Religious Identities and Religious Institutions,”” in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 222; see the entire essay 207-224.

² Raz Yosef, ““Homoland: Interracial Sex and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Israeli Cinema,”” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9:4 (2002), 555; see the entire article, 553-579.

³ Jan Assmann, ““Translating Gods: Religion as a Factor of Cultural (Un)Translatability,”” in *The Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between*, eds. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 26-28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵ Greenspahn, “How Jews Translate the Bible,”” 61.

⁶ Gershom Gerhard Scholem, ““At the Completion of Buber’s Translation of the Bible,”” in his *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 314-319.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 318.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 318-319.

⁹ Sanford Budick, ““Crises of Alterity: Cultural Untranslatability and the Experience of Secondary Otherness,”” in *The Translatability of Cultures*, 13.

¹⁰ Scholem, ““At the Completion of Buber’s Translation of the Bible,”” 315-317.

¹¹ See Martin Jay, ““Politics of Translation: Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin on the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible,”” *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute* 21 (1976): 22.

¹² See the discussion of this in Nahum Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken, 1953) and throughout Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Scripture and Translation a Translation From the German* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

¹³ See Greenspoon, ““Biblical Translators,”” Atahn, Delicostopoulos, ““Major Greek Translations of the Bible,”” in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, ed., Joze Krasovec (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 297-316; Lester Grabbe, ““Aquila’s Translation and Rabbinic Exegesis,”” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 527-536; Harry M. Orlinsky, ““The Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators,”” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 66 (1975): 89-114.

¹⁴ Delicostopoulos, ““Greek Translations,”” 307.

¹⁵ Paul Spalding, “Toward a Modern Torah: Moses Mendelssohn's Use of a Banned Bible.” *Modern Judaism* 19, no. 1 (1999): 67-82.

¹⁶ See Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn; a Biographical Study* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1973), 369-420; Edward Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans, and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 1996), 115-203; David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 52-84.

¹⁷ Harry Meyer Orlinsky and Robert G. Bratcher, *A History of Bible Translation and the North American Contribution* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 132-138.

¹⁸ See Greenspoon, ““Biblical Translators,”” 112 and his ““Traditional Text, Contemporary Contexts: English-Language Scriptures for Jews and the History of Bible Translating,”” in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, 565-575.

¹⁹ Martin Buber, ““The How and Why of Our Bible Translation,”” in *Scripture and Translation*, 208.

²⁰ See Brian Britt, ““Romantic Roots of the Debate on the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible,”” *Prooftexts* 20:3 (2000): 262-287.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 267.

²² Klaus Reichert, ““‘It is Time’: The Buber-Rosenzweig Bible Translation in Context,”” in *The Translatability of Cultures*, 178-179.

²³ *Ibid.*, 179.

²⁴ Several essays in *Scripture and Translation* focus on *Leitwort* as style, discourse, and message (*Botschaft*) in the Hebrew Bible.

²⁵ Reichert, ““It is Time,”” 178.

²⁶ Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University Press, 2003), 251.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

²⁸ See, *Ibid.*, 240-241 and Jay, ““Politics of Translation,”” 14-17.

²⁹ Franz Rosenzweig, ““Scripture and Luther,”” in *Scripture and Translation*, 65.

³⁰ See the discussion of the Septuagint in Delicostopoulos, ““Major Greek Translations,”” 306-307 and Orlinsky, ““The Septuagint As Holy Writ,”” 89-114.

³¹ On ““functional equivalence,”” in translation see Jan de Waard and Eugene A. Nida, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986). It should be noted, however, that in the case of these Greek translations the problems of ““cultural and temporal distance,”” noted by de Waard and Nida (185-186) are less striking.

³² Harry M. Orlinsky, ed., *Notes on the New Translation of the Torah* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), 11.

³³ *Ibid.*, 20

³⁴ See *ibid.*, 20-33.

³⁵ Orlinsky, ““The Septuagint As Holy Writ,”” 108.

³⁶ See the discussion in A. Meillet, ““Influence of the Hebrew Bible on European Languages.”” In *The Legacy of Israel*, eds, Edwyn R. Bevan and Charles Singer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 473-481.

³⁷ Buber, ““The How and Why,”” 215.

- ³⁸ I am citing from a forthcoming manuscript ““Texts and Contexts: Perspectives on Jewish Translations of the Hebrew Bible,”” that the author graciously let me see before publication.
- ³⁹ See Martin Buber ““Language of *Botschaft*,”” in *Scripture and Translation*, 27-31.
- ⁴⁰ James N. Baker, "The Presence of the Name: Reading Scripture in an Indonesian Village." In *The Ethnography of Reading*, ed, Jonathan Boyarin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 98-138 and William A. Graham, "Qur'an As Spoken Word: An Islamic Contribution to the Understanding of Scripture." In *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed, Richard C. Martin (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 23-40.
- ⁴¹ Franz Rosenzweig, ““Scripture and Luther,”” in *Scripture and Translation*, 51-52.
- ⁴² Everett Fox, *Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy: A New Translation with Introductions* (New York: Schocken, 1995), ix.
- ⁴³ Franz Rosenzweig, ““Scripture and Word: On the New Bible Translation,”” in *Scripture and Literature*, 40-46.
- ⁴⁴ Buber, ““The How and Why,”” 89.
- ⁴⁵ See Klaus, ““It is Time,”” 171, 173, 176.
- ⁴⁶ See Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger*, 252-253.
- ⁴⁷ Martin Buber, ““People Today and the Jewish Bible: From a Lecture Series,”” in *Scripture and Translation*, 4-26.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ⁵⁰ Klaus, ““It is Time,”” 174.
- ⁵¹ See Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
- ⁵² See Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*." in his *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 59-82.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 82.
- ⁵⁴ Edward L. Greenstein, "Theories of Modern Bible Translation." in his *Essays on Biblical Method and Translation*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 118.
- ⁵⁵ Britt, ““Romantic Roots of the Debate on the Buber-Rosenzweig Bible.”” Britt recognizes that the act of translation has implications for self-identification; he admits that ““the translation was an act of self-determination by a marginalized group”” (282); nevertheless, he does not develop this aspect of either the translation or of the controversy over it beyond some very suggestive remarks noted in footnote 21.
- ⁵⁶ See Jay, ““Politics of Translation,”” 10, 19.
- ⁵⁷ Edward L. Greenstein, ““Assessing a Bible Translation,”” in his *Essays on Biblical Method*, 137.
- ⁵⁸ Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger*,”” 255.
- ⁵⁹ Jay, ““Politics of Translation,”” 15.
- ⁶⁰ Klaus, ““It is Time,”” 171.
- ⁶¹ Michael L. Klein, ““The Targumim: Translation and Interpretation,”” in *The Interpretation of the Bible*, 330; see the entire article 317-331.
- ⁶² Orłinsky, *Notes on the New Translation of the Torah*, 3.
- ⁶³ See the discussion in Breuer, 109-124 for the objection of the Enlightenment and 151-168,

and on Mendelssohn's affirmation of tradition and rabbinic Judaism, 185-203.,

⁶⁴ See Greenstein, "Theories of Modern Bible Translation," 101.

⁶⁵ Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 85.

⁶⁶ Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study*, 372.

⁶⁷ See Abigail E. Gillman, "Between Religion and Culture: Mendelssohn, Buber, Rosenzweig and the Enterprise of Biblical Translation." in *Biblical Translation in Context*, 95-98.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 113-114.

⁶⁹ Franz Rosenzweig, "The Eternal": Mendelssohn and the Name of God," in *Scripture and Translation*, 99-113.

⁷⁰

See Joseph Dan, "The Name of God, the Name of the Rose, and the Concept of Language in Jewish Mysticism," in his *Jewish Mysticism III: The Modern Period* (Northvale, Jason Aronson, 1998), 131-159.

⁷¹ Emmanuel Levinas, "The Name of God According to a Few Talmudic Texts," in his *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 121.

⁷² Rosenzweig "Mendelssohn and the Name of God," 101.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁷⁴ See David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 64-65.

⁷⁵ See Altmann, "Moses Mendelssohn," 374, 408-409.

⁷⁶ Jay, "Politics of Translation," 10-11.

⁷⁷ Buber, "The How and Why," 219.

⁷⁸ Buber, "People Today and the Jewish Bible," 8.