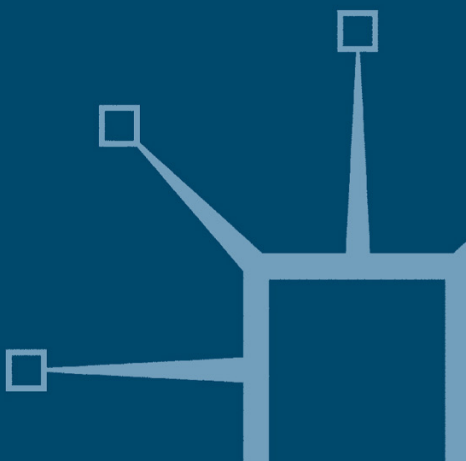
palgrave
macmillan

# Modernism and Zionism

David Ohana



*Modernism and …*
Series Editor: **Roger Griffin**, Professor in Modern History, Oxford Brookes University, UK

The series *Modernism and …* invites experts in a wide range of cultural, social, scientific and political phenomena to explore the relationship between a particular topic in modern history and 'modernism'. Apart from their intrinsic value as short but groundbreaking specialist monographs, the books aim through their cumulative impact to expand the application of this highly contested term beyond its conventional remit of art and aesthetics. Our definition of modernism embraces the vast profusion of creative acts, reforming initiatives and utopian projects that, since the late nineteenth century, have sought either to articulate, and so symbolically transcend, the spiritual malaise or decadence of modernity, or to find a radical solution to it through a movement of spiritual, social, political – even racial – regeneration and renewal. The ultimate aim is to foster a spirit of transdisciplinary collaboration in shifting the structural forces that define modern history beyond their conventional conceptual frameworks.

*Titles include*:

Ben Hutchinson
MODERNISM AND STYLE

David Ohana
MODERNISM AND ZIONISM

Roy Starrs
MODERNISM AND JAPANESE CULTURE

Marius Turda
MODERNISM AND EUGENICS

Shane Weller
MODERNISM AND NIHILISM

*Forthcoming titles*:

Tamir Bar-On
MODERNISM AND THE EUROPEAN NEW RIGHT

Maria Bucur
MODERNISM AND GENDER

Frances Connelly
MODERNISM AND THE GROTESQUE

Elizabeth Darling
MODERNISM AND DOMESTICITY

Matthew Feldman
MODERNISM AND PROPAGANDA

Claudio Fogu
MODERNISM AND MEDITERRANEANISM

Roger Griffin
MODERNISM AND TERRORISM

Carmen Kuhling
MODERNISM AND NEW RELIGIONS

Patricia Leighten
MODERNISM AND ANARCHISM

Thomas Linehan
MODERNISM AND BRITISH SOCIALISM

Gregory Maertz
MODERNISM AND NAZI PAINTING

Paul March-Russell
MODERNISM AND SCIENCE FICTION

Anna Katharina Schaffner
MODERNISM AND PERVERSION

Richard Shorten
MODERNISM AND TOTALITARIANISM

Mihai Spariosu
MODERNISM, EXILE AND UTOPIA

Erik Tonning
MODERNISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Veronica West-Harling
MODERNISM AND THE QUEST

---

***Modernism and …***
**Series Standing Order ISBN 978–0–230–20332–7 (hardback)**
**978–0–230–20333–4 (paperback)**
(*outside North America only*)

You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and the ISBN quoted above.

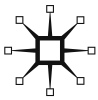
Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

---

# Modernism and Zionism

David Ohana
*Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel*

palgrave
macmillan





First published 2012 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-0-230-29012-9 ISBN 978-1-137-26485-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137264855

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Ohana, David.
Modernism and Zionism / by David Ohana.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.

1. Zionism—History. 2. Zionism and Judaism. 3. Buber, Martin,1878–1965—Political and social views. 4. Scholem, Gershom Gerhard, 1897–1982—Political and social views. 5. Judaism and state. 6. Jews—Politics and government. I. Title.
DS149.O44 2012
320.54095694—dc23 2012021625

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

# Contents

*Series Editor's Preface* vi

Introduction: Modernity, Modernism and Modernisation in Zionism 1

1 The Myth of Zarathustra: Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem and the Nationalisation of Jewish Myth 29

2 The Myth of Prometheus: Zionism and the Modernisation of Messianism 80

3 The Myth of Nimrod: 'Canaanism' between Zionism and Post-Zionism 122

*Bibliography* 179

*Index* 196

# Series Editor's Preface

As the title 'Modernism and…' implies, this series has been conceived in a open-ended, closure-defying spirit, more akin to the soul of jazz than to the rigor of a classical score. Each volume provides an experimental space allowing both seasoned professionals and aspiring academics to investigate familiar areas of modern social, scientific, or political history from the defamiliarizing vantage point afforded by a term not routinely associated with it: 'modernism'. Yet this is no contrived make-over of a clichéd concept for the purposes of scholastic bravado. Nor is it a gratuitous theoretical exercise in expanding the remit of an 'ism' already notorious for its polyvalence — not to say its sheer nebulousness — in a transgressional fling of postmodern *jouissance*.

Instead this series is based on the *empirically*-oriented hope that a deliberate enlargement of the semantic field of 'modernism' to embrace a whole range of phenomena apparently unrelated to the radical innovation in the arts it normally connotes will do more than contribute to scholarly understanding of those topics. Cumulatively the volumes that appear are meant to contribute to a perceptible paradigm shift slowly becoming evident in the way modern history is approached. It is one which, while indebted to 'the cultural turn', is if anything 'post-post-modern', for it attempts to use transdisciplinary perspectives and the conscious clustering of concepts often viewed as unconnected — or even antagonistic to each other — to consolidate and deepen the reality principle on which historiography is based, not flee it, to move closer to the experience of history of its actors not away from it. Only those with a stunted, myopic (and actually *unhistorical*) view of what constitutes historical 'fact' and 'causation' will be predisposed to dismiss the 'Modernism and…' project as mere 'culturalism', a term which due to unexamined prejudices and sometimes sheer ignorance has, particularly in the vocabulary of more than one eminent 'archival' historian, acquired a reductionist, pejorative meaning.

Yet even open-minded readers may find the title of this book disconcerting. Like all the volumes in the series, it may seem

to conjoin two phenomena that do not 'belong'. However, any 'shock of the new' induced by the widened usage of modernism to embrace non-aesthetic phenomena that makes this juxtaposition possible should be mitigated by realizing that in fact it is neither new nor shocking. The conceptual ground for a work such as *Modernism and Zionism* has been prepared for by such seminal texts as Marshall Berman's *All that is Solid Melts into Thin Air. The Experience of Modernity* (1982), Modris Eksteins' *Rites of Spring* (1989), Peter Osborne's *The Politics of Time. Modernity and the Avant-garde* (1995), Emilio Gentile's *The Struggle for Modernity* (2003), and Mark Antliff's *Avant-Garde Fascism. The Mobilization of Myth, Art and Culture in France, 1909–1939* (2007). In each case modernism is revealed as the long-lost sibling (twin or maybe even father) of historical phenomena from the social and political sphere rarely mentioned in the same breath.

Yet the real pioneers of such a 'maximalist' interpretation of modernism were none other than some of the major aesthetic modernists themselves. For them the art and thought that subsequently earned them this title was a creative force — passion even — of revelatory power which, in a crisis-ridden West where *anomie* was reaching pandemic proportions, was capable of regenerating not just 'cultural production', but 'socio-political production', and for some even society *tout court*. Figures such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Wassily Kandinsky, Walter Gropius, Pablo Picasso, and Virginia Woolf never accepted that the art and thought of 'high culture' were to be treated as self-contained spheres of activity peripheral to — and cut off from — the main streams of contemporary social and political events. Instead they assumed them to be laboratories of visionary thought vital to the spiritual salvation of a world being systematically drained of higher meaning and ultimate purpose by the dominant, 'nomocidal' forces of modernity. If we accept Max Weber's thesis of the gradual *Entzauberung*, or 'disenchantment' of the world through rationalism, such creative individuals can be seen as setting themselves the task - each in his or her own idiosyncratic way - of *re-enchanting* and re-sacralizing the world. Such modernists consciously sought to restore a sense of higher purpose, transcendence, and *Zauber* (magic) to a spiritually starved modern humanity condemned by 'progress' to live in a permanent state of existential exile, of *liminoid transition*, now that the forces of the divine seemed to have withdrawn in what Martin

Heidegger's muse, the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, called 'The Flight of the Gods'. If the hero of modern popular nationalism is the Unknown Warrior, perhaps the patron saint of modernism itself is *Deus Absconditus*.

Approached from this oblique angle modernism is thus a revolutionary force, but is so in a sense only distantly related to the one made familiar by standard accounts of the (political or social) revolutions on which modern historians cut their teeth. It is a 'hidden' revolution of the sort referred to by the 'arch-'aesthetic modernist Vincent van Gogh musing to his brother Theo in his letter of 24 September 1888 about the sorry plight of the world. In one passage he waxes ecstatic about the impression made on him, by the work of another spiritual seeker disturbed by the impact of 'modern progress', Leo Tolstoy:

It seems that in the book, *My Religion*, Tolstoy implies that whatever happens in a violent revolution, there will also be an inner and hidden revolution in the people, out of which a new religion will be born, or rather, something completely new which will be nameless, but which will have the same effect of consoling, of making life possible, as the Christian religion used to.

The book must be a very interesting one, it seems to me. In the end, we shall have had enough of cynicism, scepticism and humbug, and will want to live - more musically. How will this come about, and what will we discover? It would be nice to be able to prophesy, but it is even better to be forewarned, instead of seeing absolutely nothing in the future other than the disasters that are bound to strike the modern world and civilization like so many thunderbolts, through revolution, or war, or the bankruptcy of worm-eaten states.

In the series 'Modernism and…' the key term has been experimentally expanded and 'heuristically modified' to embrace any movement for change which set out to give a name and a public identity to the 'nameless' and 'hidden' revolutionary principle that van Gogh saw as necessary to counteract the rise of nihilism. He was attracted to Tolstoy's vision because it seemed to offer a remedy to the impotence of Christianity and the insidious spread of a literally soul-destroying cynicism, which if unchecked would ultimately lead to the collapse of civilization. Modernism thus applies in this series to all concerted attempts in any sphere of

activity to enable life to be lived more 'musically', to resurrect the sense of transcendent communal and individual purpose being palpably eroded by the chaotic unfolding of events in the modern world even if the end result would be 'just' to make society physically and mentally healthy.

What would have probably appalled van Gogh is that some visionaries no less concerned than him by the growing crisis of the West sought a manna of spiritual nourishment emanating not from heaven, nor even from an earthly beauty still retaining an aura of celestial otherworldliness, but from strictly secular visions of an alternative modernity so radical in its conception that attempts to enact them inevitably led to disasters of their own following the law of unintended consequences. Such solutions were be realized not by a withdrawal from history into the realm of art (the sphere of 'epiphanic' modernism), but by applying a utopian artistic, mythopoeic, religious, or technocratic consciousness to the task of harnessing the dynamic forces of modernity itself in such spheres as politics, nationalism, the natural sciences and social engineering in order to establish a new order and a 'new man'. It is initiatives conceived in this 'programmatic' mode of modernism that the series sets out to explore. Its results are intended to benefit not just a small coterie of like-minded academics, but mainstream teaching and research in modern history, thereby becoming part of the 'common sense' of the discipline even of self-proclaimed 'empiricists'.

Some of the deep-seated psychological, cultural and 'anthropological' mechanisms underlying the futural revolts against modernity here termed 'modernism' are explored at length in my *Modernism and Fascism. The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (2007). The premise of this book could be taken to be Phillip Johnson's assertion that 'Modernism is typically defined as the condition that begins when people realize God is truly dead, and we are therefore on our own.' It presents the well-springs of modernism in the primordial human need for a new metaphysical centre in a radically de-centred reality, for a new source of transcendental meaning in a godless universe, in the impulse to erect a 'sacred canopy' of culture which not only aesthetically veils the infinity of time and space surrounding human existence to make existence feasible, but provides a totalizing world-view within which to locate individual life narratives, thus imparting it

with the illusion of cosmic significance. By eroding or destroying that canopy, modernity creates a protracted spiritual crisis which provokes the proliferation of countervailing impulses to restore a 'higher meaning' to historical time that are collectively termed by the book (ideal-typically) as 'modernism'.

Johnson's statement seems to make a perceptive point by associating modernism not just with art, but with a general 'human condition' consequent on what Nietzsche, the first great modernist philosopher, called 'the Death of God'. Yet in the context of this series his statement requires significant qualification. Modernism is *not* a general historical condition (any more than 'post-modernism' is), but a generalized revolt against even the *intuition* made possible by a secularizing modernization that we are spiritual orphans in a godless and ultimately meaningless universe. Its hallmark is the bid to find a new home, a new community, and a new source of transcendence.

Nor is modernism itself necessarily secular. On the contrary: both the wave of occultism, Theosophy, and the Catholic revival of the 1890s and the emergence of radicalized, Manichaean forms of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and even Buddhism in the 1990s demonstrate that modernist impulses need not take the form of secular utopianism, but may readily assume religious (some would say 'post-secular') forms. In any case, within the cultural force field of modernism even the most secular entities are sacralized to acquire an aura of numinous significance. Ironically, Johnson himself offers a fascinating case study in this fundamental aspect the modernist rebellion against the empty skies of a disenchanted, anomic world. A retired Berkeley law professor, some of the books he published such as *The Wedge of Truth* made him one of the major protagonists of 'Intelligent Design', a Christian(ized) version of creationism that offers a prophylactic against the allegedly nihilistic implications of Darwinist science.

Naturally no attempt has been made to impose 'reflexive metanarrative' developed in *Modernism and Fascism* on the various authors of this series. Each has been encouraged to tailor the term modernism to fit their own epistemological cloth, as long as they broadly agree in seeing it as the expression of a reaction against modernity not restricted to art and aesthetics, and driven by the aspiration to create a spiritually or physically 'healthier' modernity through a new cultural, political and ultimately biological order.

Naturally, the blueprint for the ideal society varies significantly according to each diagnosis of what makes actually existing modernity untenable, 'decadent' or doomed to self-destruction.

The ultimate aim of the series is to help bring about a paradigm shift in way 'modernism' is used, and hence stimulate fertile new areas of research and teaching with an approach which enables methodological empathy and causal analysis to be applied even to events and processes ignored by or resistant to the explanatory powers of conventional historiography. I am delighted that David Ohana, himself the author of a groundbreaking trilogy on the rise of nihilism and totalitarian ('modernist') reactions to it (*The Dawn of Political Nihilism*, 2009) has contributed a volume to this series which presents Zionism in a startlingly unfamiliar context.

Roger Griffin Oxford
January 2012

# Introduction: Modernity, Modernism and Modernisation in Zionism

## Mythical modernism

Zionism was a three-dimensional project. It was a political movement arising at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (*modernity* as a historical category), setting itself the aim of creating a nation-state for the Jews dispersed in their different diasporas. It was a national ideology that was operative in all areas of Jewish art and culture (*modernism* as an aesthetic category) in Europe, in the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) in the first half of the twentieth century and later in the State of Israel that was established in 1948. Finally, Zionism developed political and economic institutions, undertook the building of settlements and initiated scientific and technological projects (*modernisation* as a sociological, economic and scientific category) in the Yishuv, and in the State of Israel. The result – the State of Israel – grew out of the contexts of modernity, modernism and modernisation, which developed together with the Zionist movement in Europe.

Although this study will focus on modernism, one has to differentiate between modernity, modernism and modernisation. *Modernity* as a civilisational epoch originated over two centuries ago. The idea of modernity concerns the interpretation of the present time in the light of historical reinterpretation (Blumenberg, 1983; Castoriadis, 1987; Bauman, 1987; Beck et al., 1994; Touraine, 1995; Eisenstadt, 2003). The *modernisation* paradigm saw societies as moving and transforming from traditional agricultural to modern industrial societies, from developing to

developed societies. The common denominator of all aspects of modernisation is the growing complexity, increase of knowledge and sophistication of performed human activities (Parsons, 1967; Bell, 1973; Wallerstein, 1974; Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). *Modernism*, as Roger Griffin suggests, is a 'revolt against decadence', a cultural rebirth in the modern era (Griffin, 2007). Modernism is typified by the destruction of the past while keeping a dialogue with tradition; rejecting religion and replacing it with secular religions; a state of mind that destroyed traditional definitions and categories; and a search for new cultural and political practices (Gentile, 2006; Adamson, 1993; Herf, 1984; Ohana, 2009).

*Modernism and Zionism* suggests a thesis that I call 'mythical modernism', where myths are not pre-rational or anti-rational states of mind typifying ancient or medieval times, but structures motivating modern thought and action. Nietzsche inspired 'mythical modernisn' by turning from historicism to myth, from reason to experience, from the pursuit of truth to the building of living culture, from the general to the unique and from the objective to the perspective. The significance of modern myth lay in its fundamental assumption of the ability of the individual to create a world in his own image, and in this way to establish a correlation between (modern) man and his (modern) world not through rational processes, but by means of a new myth: 'Without myth, every culture loses the healthy power of its creativity: only a horizon defined by myth completes and unifies a whole cultural movement' (Nietzsche, 1967: section 23). Nietzsche was the first thinker to establish a clear distinction for the modern age between thinkers who focused on truth, logos and the objective, and thinkers who focused on culture, mythos and the perspective. This had hitherto been the distinction between philosopher and artist, but Nietzsche's originality created a bridge between them, for by constructing a new myth the philosopher became a maker of culture.

Three subsequent German thinkers postulated that myth was the basis of every vital culture: Alfred Weber pointed out that each culture is expressed in a certain myth; Oswald Spengler predicted that a new culture would emerge wherever a myth is created; and Jacob Burckhardt described the Faustian myth of modern European culture (Ohana, 2009: 141–2). While the traditional philosopher or intellectual looked backwards, like the owl of Minerva, in order

to preserve an objective opinion, the new intellectual dwelt in the eye of the storm and created reality *ex nihilo*. Where Plato sought a philosopher-king who would unite reason and power, Nietzsche sought a philosopher-artist who would unite aesthetics and philosophy. Myth was now placed at the centre of the new existential idea. A myth, unlike a utopia, is not a vision of a perfect future society but an act of creating a counter-society. Only by means of a mythical state of mind can a militant group maintain its solidarity, heroism and spirit of self-sacrifice.

In contemporary Israel – product of the Zionist project – with its technological sophistication, its more easygoing individualism and all-too-cynical knowingness, nothing, it would seem, is sacred anymore. The old heroes, the ideal of self-sacrificing patriotism, collectivist ideologies or the naive cult of the 'new Jew' seem increasingly out of date – at least to much of the liberal and leftist intelligentsia or new professionals seeking access to the warming prosperity of the global economy. It is the stock exchange rather than the kibbutz, technocracy instead of Zionist visions, the dream of quick profits not Hebrew prophets, which sets the tone for much of present-day Israeli society. In this climate of opinions in which there are no great causes left, debunking the founding Zionist fathers and myths of Israel has become a national sport. For the left, this is a welcome part of the new maturity in Israel, a healthy and necessary process of adapting to modernity, and freeing the country from its imprisonment in outmoded ideologies and dogmas. In that sense, the demythologisation of Israeli history is viewed as a positive contribution to the peace process. Moreover, it tends to emphasise the virtues of negotiation and compromise rather than the mystique of self-sacrifice and death in the service of the homeland, encouraged by an earlier generation of Israelis. By the same token, this trend is seen on the right as undermining the ethos, the ideals and goals of Zionism – as a blow to the self-sustaining convictions and belief systems that have animated the country from its inception. This assault on founding myths is often presented as a form of decadence, as the cultural expression of defeatism and as a retreat from the dominant Zionist ideology, which can only lead to disaster.

The focus in *Modernism and Zionism*, however, is not on the Israeli–Palestinian or Jewish–Arab conflicts, which have taken so much international attention whether from politicians, academics

or the media. It is concentrated much more on those internal Jewish factors that have shaped Israeli collective consciousness and national-cultural identity during the past 100 years – in all their pluralism, ambivalence and contradictions. Naturally these myths – the 'new Jew', 'Promethean messianism' and 'Nimrod' – that shaped Israeli identity did not develop in a vacuum nor as the pure product of internal developments within twentieth-century Jewish history. They have all interacted with external forces in the non-Jewish world and been profoundly modified by confrontation and conflict with the Arab Muslim Middle Eastern environment. But Israeli society and culture also have their own inner historical dynamics that have for too long been ignored, whether through ignorance or design.

The deconstruction of national mythologies is of course a perfectly legitimate and necessary element in seeking to understand any long-term historical process. But it needs to be remembered that myth is something more subtle than merely an erroneous belief or dogma held against all of the historical evidence. The popular usage that equates myth with fallacies that can be disproved by logical reasoning or the simple reference to historical facts, is frequently accepted in a naive fashion by revisionist historians. New documentation and new interpretations of historical events based upon them are a normal and natural part of the evolution of historiography in any society. After all, most interpretations of history are to some extent based on an arbitrary selection of events and can easily assume a mythical character. Zionist and Israeli historiography are no exception to this rule, and like the writing of history elsewhere, have inevitably been influenced by ideology. But the process of de-ideologising that history and stripping it of its allegedly mythical aspects is by the same token not immune to similar objections of selectivity and arbitrariness. Is post-Zionist historiography, for example, any less subject to an ideological or political agenda, to the conscious (or unconscious) desire to create counter-myths, than the very orthodoxy against which it rebels?

*Modernism and Zionism* recognises that myths can simultaneously perform many functions. Not all of them are negative or merely justificatory rationalisations of a particular status quo. They may indeed provide legitimation for existing social and political practices, for a dominant elite, social group or ideology.

Myth may also be intended as a mobilising agent to galvanise commitment or identification with a cause, as has often been the case all over the world in the past two centuries. Above all, most myths are to some degree narratives that seek to anchor the present in the past – and the Zionist myths do not differ from this pattern. Myths seen in this light, as a special kind of narrative, as symbolic statements or frames of reference that give meaning to the past, are not necessarily false or harmful examples of pseudo-history. Their true significance more often lies in what they can tell us about the ways in which a particular nation, social group or set of individuals seeks to organise its collective memory and establish a distinctive identity. The process of analysing or deconstructing myth is most revealing precisely when it unveils the deeper social and unconscious needs that are served by the construction or symbolic invention of a particular national past.

## Zionism as a modern utopia

Zionism as a modern project was preceded by Zionist utopias that envisaged the future image of the Jewish state, its physical and architectural form, its metaphysical aspirations, its aesthetic character and its moral dilemmas (Elboim-Dror, 1993). These utopias were the political and social dreams of Zionism. In the historical development of Zionist thought, dreams of the future were part of the philosophy of history. Not only the past but also the planning and imagination of the future formed part of the continuity of history (Cassirer, 1957: 182). The Zionist utopias were a kind of laboratory for Zionism.

The utopian ideas offered alternatives that changed historical conditions and made possible an innovative interpretation and organisation of the historical reality (Mannheim, 1936; Mumford, 1922; Plattel, 1972). They were a preparatory stage for the processes of cultural change that took place in modern Jewish society. In reflecting the conceptual changes preceding the French Revolution and in preparing the conceptual and emotional infrastructure of the Zionist ideologies, the Zionist utopias were a necessary and important stage in the modernisation of the Jewish national movement (Gorny, 1984: 19–27).

The Zionist utopias prepared the intellectual and emotional background of the Zionist ideology and movement through their

critique of the old Jewish order, of the norms that existed in exile and of the passive mentality that prevailed. The utopias were a critical and satirical glance at the existing situation, a glance that gave hope (Eisler, 1885; Bachar, 1898; Bernfeld, 1920). The utopian genre played a role in the disputes between the intellectuals and it encouraged people to take action. The utopia represents a normative order (Ricoeur, 1986: 269–70). The utopia deals with social models and not with complex heroes or situations that never existed. The language of the future is unknowable as it has not yet been invented; the utopia is written in the language of the present, and that restricts the utopian imagination.

The idea of 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem' made the Land of Israel into a universalist utopia, and not only the desired location of a Jewish state. The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* (reforming the world) was responsible for major tendencies in Western culture. The paradox was that it was precisely utopian notions about the ideal Jewish society that would arise in the Messianic era that hindered thought about its realisation and prevented it from coming into being (Ohana, 2010b). There was fear about the implementation of utopian Zionism (Ravitzky, 2004). The Jewish utopia and the Zionist utopia fused in the political messianism of the end of the nineteenth century.

Secular utopianism and messianism have a special affinity to a modern conception of time that takes a negative view of the present and seeks to replace it with a different order either through a return to an original wholeness that was lost or through the creation of a new world. The aspiration to wholeness expressed in utopia was a remnant of religious faith. The secular Zionist ideology and the Zionist utopias were modern in that they rebelled against the traditional religious view of the redemption of Israel and its messianic expectations. As a secular ideology with an active messianic dimension, Zionism rejected the religious form of messianism but retained an affinity to its historical and religious roots. Among the writers of the Zionist utopias, there was hardly anyone, secular or religious, who imagined that one could create a Jewish state without rebuilding the Temple, reviving the Sanhedrin, observing the sabbatical year and so on. There is nothing surprising in the fact that the messianic idea among the Jews and the messianic movements were remarkable for their continuity together with their dialectical character and

paradoxicality. From ancient times to Zionism in modern times, this continuity was derived from the Bible. Many leaders of different currents in Zionism described it as a messianic movement: Joseph Aharonovitch, Eliezer Shochat, Mordechai Ben Hillel Hacohen and A. D. Gordon in socialist Zionism, Uri Zvi Greenberg and Abba Ahimeir in Revisionist Zionism, Rabbi Isaak Hacohen Kook in religious Zionism, and Martin Buber in cultural Zionism (Ohana, 2010b). Zionist ideologists made much use of messianic expressions, and messianism was more discussed among the people of the Haskala (the Jewish Enlightenment), the socialists and secularists than among the religious.

Zionism was the political, social and cultural revolution in the lives of the European Jews in the modern era. The socialist, liberal, revisionist and religious currents in Zionism disagreed about many things, but there was general agreement on two important points: namely, exile was no solution for the Jews, and a nation-state in Palestine was preferable (although for a certain time there was disagreement about the place as well). On everything else there was stormy debate: on the philosophy of history, universality versus particularity, historical continuity versus nativism, enlightened modernity versus reactionary modernity, and the character of the 'new Jew' (Herzberg, 1959; Shimoni, 1995).

Zionism was at first a revolutionary movement (Avineri, 1981). Like every revolutionary movement in the twentieth century, it made it a central aim to reject the values that underlay the old world that had to be destroyed and to replace them with new values for the modern man. Education, politics and a new space (Palestine) would give birth to a 'New Man' who would now be called the 'new Jew' or the 'new Hebrew'. Because Zionism was the common name of a number of different branches of ideology, as Amos Oz said (Oz, 1998), the 'New Man' was not all of a piece, and there were different models in accordance with the outlooks of his creators. Already before Zionism, the Haskala in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe wished to change the nature of Jewry that had been moulded by religion (Feiner, 2010). An essential precondition for this was the process of secularisation and modernisation of the European Jews that began in the eighteenth century, but with the appearance of Zionism this condition was not given sufficient consideration. Major thinkers of the movement for the self-determination of the Jewish people declared

that to education, productivisation and secularisation – the essential preconditions for the formation of the 'new Jew' – another element had to be added: the Land of Israel, an old-new space that was the only one in which a sovereign, independent and authentic Jew could be created.

The man who through his utopian and political writings, organisational capacities and political activities called upon the Jews to leave their exile and found an independent national entity was Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), the founder of the first Zionist Congress in 1897 and the World Zionist Organization. This political leader, later called 'the visionary of the Jewish State', combined utopian thought with Zionist politics. Two years before his sudden death, he wrote the utopian *Altneuland*, in which he described his vision of the return of the Jewish people to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish state (Herzl, 1960 [1902]).

The novel describes the return to Palestine after an absence of twenty years of the Jewish intellectual Friedrich Löwenberg and the Prussian aristocrat Kingscourt. After they had visited the pre-modern, poor, unpopulated Palestine, they had come to see a land that had changed beyond recognition. It was a European-type modern secular country in which there was a welfare state together with private enterprise, a third way between capitalism and socialism. There was central economic planning and social progress, cooperative farming, a seven-hour workday, relief works provided by the state for the unemployed and free education. The 'new society', the Jews' national home, had learned the lessons of European mass politics, and there were no mass parties or politicians but a professional bureaucracy, a parliament, a shrine of peace and a new Temple. The Hebrew language was used only for religious purposes and German was the language of commerce. Modernisation was exemplified by scientific and technological achievements, power stations, electric trains and a canal linking the Mediterranean with the Dead Sea that provided hydroelectric power. Herzl's dream in his youth of becoming an engineer, which he shared with the young David Ben-Gurion, was by no means accidental. Their dream was finally realised not in the scientific field but in the social and political realms, in which they tried to perform 'social engineering' similar to that of other modern nation-states (Ohana, 2008b). In *Altneuland*, Herzl described a 'new society', not a nation-state, and in this some people see him

as a 'proto post-Zionist' (Elboim-Dror, 1997) or 'the first post-Zionist' (Segev, 1996).

A number of Jewish artists were enlisted in Europe to disseminate the Zionist idea. There was a need to translate the ideological content of the Zionist idea into literary, artistic, architectural and musical terms and so on. In 1897, the Zionist movement adopted the Star of David as the symbol of the First Zionist Congress in Basle, and the menorah (the seven-branched candlestick) as representing the rebirth of Jewish nationhood (Donner, 1998: 535). One of the first artists to publicise the Zionist idea was Ephraim Mose Lilien in his illustrations to a book of ballads on biblical subjects. Some two years later, he designed the 'Zion stamp', the first stamp of the Jewish National Fund, the symbol of the national liberation movement. The *halutz* (the pioneer), associated with the idea of redemption, was depicted in two forms: as a Western European farmer, and in Jewish journals in Eastern Europe as a traditional Jew working the soil.

## The 'new Jew'

At the heart of every utopia there is an attempt to create something out of nothing. Since the French Revolution, political revolutions have boasted of creating a 'New Man' as the basis for a set of revolutionary values in a new society. The Zionist revolution was no exception, but more than a hundred years before it appeared, the Haskala began to envisage a 'new Jew', or, to be more exact, 'new Jews'. The 'new Jews' came into being in Europe in the eighteenth century in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which claimed that through a suitable habitus a rational, secular, enlightened and progressive Jew could be created. The Haskala movement in Germany believed that the 'new Jew' would be created through the penetration of the ideas of the Enlightenment into the day-to-day Jewish habitus, and especially through the education of children, who would be given new rules of behaviour (Zohar Shavit, 1986: 3–63). The Western cult of progress that envisaged a continual improvement of humanity necessarily involved the idea of improving the status of the Jews on condition that they conformed to the European environment. Although the anti-Semitism of the nineteenth century insisted that the 'new Jew' postulated by the Enlightenment was an illusion (Wistrich, 2010),

the crisis of modernity experienced by Judaism (and the Jews) at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not destroy the hope of a 'new Jew' coming to birth. On the contrary: there was an abundance of imaginary utopian literary portrayals and old-new artistic syntheses envisaging various models of the 'new Jew', each one reflecting the outlook of its creator (Hacohen, 2009: 1–8).

Indeed, the 'new Jews' embodied the various myths of the different Zionist ideologies: socialist, revisionist, liberal, religious, radical and so on (Anita Shapira, 2002: 113–30). What they all had in common, and what differentiated them from the 'new Jew' of the Haskala, was the idea that the new creation could come into being only in Palestine. The 'generation of the desert' – as Haim Nahman Bialik, the poet of the national revival called them – had to give way to the 'generation of the sons' who never knew the exile. Zionism, unlike the Haskala, thought that the renewal of the Jewish people could take place only in Palestine. The connection of the renewal of the Jewish individual and the return to the ancestral land was expressed in the words of Martin Buber: 'Just as the people needs the land in order to attain its full life, so the land needs the people in order to attain its full life' (Buber, 1985: 12). The creation of an image of the Jews of the future corresponded to the fear aroused by the encounter with the hostile European environment. But in addition to this negative aspect, there was also a positive aspect that was the hope of creating a modern individual able to contend on his own with the challenges of the future, the burden of Jewish history and the 'sicknesses' of exile.

Ahad Ha-Am thought that the cultural model of the 'new Jew' should fuse Haskala ideas with Zionist principles. Although the 'new Jew' could only attain authenticity in Palestine, he had to be secular, moral, renounce the use of force and be a builder of Israel as the centre of Jewry and the whole world (Zipperstein, 1993). The Jewish movement of rebirth in Berlin and Vienna at the beginning of the twentieth century shared Ahad Ha-Am's embrace of a cultural Zionism and created its own model of the 'new Jew'. This renewal of Jewish culture, which Martin Buber in 1901 called 'a new, modern aesthetic programme', sought to bring together Zionism, Judaism, modernity, the Jews of Germany and Austria, and the 'Hebrew' artists and intellectuals from Eastern Europe (Gelber, 2011: 106). The platform of the movement was 'to create

a Jewish national culture which would at the same time be part of general modern culture' (Bertz, 1999–2000: 17). Buber spoke of a 'reborn Jewish culture' and a national, cultural and physical renewal of the Jews (Biemann, 2001: 6). He envisaged the modern Jew as a new cultural phenomenon with Nietzschean vitality. This 'new Jewish type' would resemble the Nietzschean 'man of the Renaissance': a 'great individual', a 'saint and artist' and a 'warrior, poet and philosopher', all at the same time (Kuhlken).

The political model of the 'new Jew' was expressed by Herzl in the figure of David Litvak in *Altneuland*, and it was also to be found in Max Nordau and Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the head of the Revisionist wing of the Zionist movement. Nordau wanted a Jew who would turn away from European and Jewish decadence and would foster a 'muscular culture': a modern man devoted to science and progress, but at the same time appreciative of the ancient heritage of his people (Nordau, 1895). In his novel *Samson*, Jabotinsky praised the grandeur, the splendour and the aesthetic attractiveness of the power-seeking 'new Jew' (Jabotinsky, 1930). The socialist model of the 'new Jew', from Nahman Syrkin and Ber Borochov to A. D. Gordon and the kibbutzim, is the advocate of a just and egalitarian society, a man who seeks to change a corrupt set of values through education. Syrkin contrasted the 'darkness' of the exile with the period of enlightenment of the Jewish people. Exile, which was 'spiritual and moral garbage' had at all costs to be uprooted. Gordon also rejected exile as a state of existence: 'We don't want a new Jew on the European model but a new man in a Jewish form' (Gordon, 1957: 366). Although in socialist Zionism there are positions that are radical and others that are more moderate, the common denominator between them is the 'new Jew' who does not seek to leave the Jewish world but to renew Judaism as a means of reforming the individual and the nation.

Religious Zionism saw itself as continuing Jewish tradition, although as a current of a modern national movement it had a revolutionary self-perception. The main concern of the leader of religious Zionism, Rabbi Isaac Jacob Reines, the founder of Mizrahi (the religious wing of the Zionist movement), was to assure Jewish existence in the face of the anti-Semitism in Europe, and he therefore identified with the political position of Herzl (Reines, 1902). This moderate current, with its pragmatic attitude to Zionism, was joined by a number of eminent rabbis such as Zvi Yehuda

Berlin and Samuel Mohilever. Against this, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook, the first chief rabbi of Palestine, thought that nationhood was essentially religious and therefore the 'new Jew' had necessarily to be religious. The 'new Jew' in his eyes was the true national Jew, brave, willing to sacrifice himself for the nation and religiously observant (Ish-Shalom, 1993; Ravitzky, 1996).

The modernistic model of the 'new Jew' was the most radical of all, and its ideologists were influenced by the writings of Nietzsche. This model was hammered out in the debates between Ahad Ha-Am and Micha Josef Berdichevsky, the leader of the modernistic 'Tse'irim' (Young Guard). Unlike Ahad Ha-Am, who demanded cultural unity and stressed the conservative basis of Jewish continuity, the Nietzschean school in modern Hebrew literature sought the Europeanisation and aestheticisation of the 'new Hebrew', which meant a transvaluation of traditional values and an education in heroic and existential values (Brinker, 2004: 293–413). Their ideal was modernistic in all senses: an anti-hero who rebelled against ossified history, the cultural establishment, the conservative society and conformist attitudes. The focus of debate was shifted from the abstract spiritual problems that preoccupied Ahad Ha-Am to existential and individual problems, from 'Judaism' to 'the Jews', from 'the Book' to 'life'. Nietszche was seen by tens of thousands of Jews who had escaped from the yeshivas as a radical thinker who raised doubts about all that was accepted: conventional values, social arrangements, hegemonic ideologies (Ohana, 2012: 38–72).

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the German philosopher was brought to the Jews of Russia and Eastern Europe by George Brandes, Georg Simmel and Lev Shestov. After the self-criticism provided by the Haskala, thousands of Jewish youths turned towards active, pragmatic ways of thinking. How could they create their modern identity? Should they abandon their ancestral heritage completely, and adopt progress and secularism? Or should they create a radical form of life, an abundant, productive life, open to the spirit of modernity and the new aesthetic, praise the human body and open a window on nature? Nietzsche gave them an intellectual framework for these questions about their religious values, their revolt against history and the formation of their personalities. It was a modern project par excellence and an impressive project by any standards: hundreds

of thousands of young people who left the world of the past that had endured for thousands of years, and now took part in the formation of a modern Jewish world that would be Eurocentric, secular, enlightened, aesthetic and heroic.

## The modernisation of Hebrew culture

From the last third of the nineteenth century, when it began to be said that the Jews were 'a people with a culture', and from the time of the Haskala, when it was claimed that the Hebrew culture was the national culture, the Hebrew culture in Palestine was finally identified with the national idea. The national and cultural renaissance and the creation of the 'new Hebrew' gave momentum and legitimacy to the Zionist political idea and formed modern Jewish society in Palestine (Yaacov Shavit, 1999: 9–30). Hebrew culture, identified with the secular national ideology, contended from the beginning both with ideas for Jewish possibilities outside Palestine such as those of the 'Bund', the autonomists and the territorialists, and with religious orthodoxy. For the secular nationalist Jew, the national culture was the basis of his identity in modern times, while for the religious nationalist Jew it was a layer added on to his traditional Judaism. As an alternative to both of these options, the Canaanite group wished to base the national culture of the Hebrew entirely on his soil and language (Ohana, 2012).

What was the content of the modern Hebrew culture? Was it the Hebrew language, the morality of the prophets, the messianic idea, the national territorial idea? The answers were divided between the different ideological camps, each of which had its own idea of culture derived from its outlook, its philosophy of history and its vision of the future. The assumption common to all of them was that the Hebrew culture had to be subject to the criteria of modern culture in general, which among other things meant the adoption of modern aesthetic norms. This principle applied to Hebrew culture in its totality: that is to say, all of its elements would come into being together – theatre, music, architecture, cinema. It was agreed by all ideological camps that the task of Zionism in Palestine was to create a modern Western society, with urbanisation, industrialisation and advanced technology. Modernisation was reflected in all areas of public and private life, and in the adoption of the materialistic civilisation of the West. In the literary

sphere, this modernistic spirit was reflected in the influence of futurism, socialist literature and the communist utopia in hymns of praise to electricity, city life and concrete. But most of all, the Hebrew culture found expression in the modernisation of the language.

The modernisation of Hebrew literature and journalism in the last third of the nineteenth century was amazing in its scope. Hundreds of books and dozens of journals engaged in a discourse on a new, secular and national identity, opening up new horizons to hundreds of thousands of young Jews in the Czarist Empire and in Eastern (and also Central) Europe. The Hebrew language was the only one that they knew from their studies, and it served as an intermediary between the former yeshiva students and the secular culture of Europe. It was precisely the attempt to leave the traditional national culture for European culture that necessitated the use of the Hebrew language, and through its modernisation it made it the medium as well as the content of the Jewish renaissance. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a decline in the circulation of Hebrew books and newspapers because the readers had in the meanwhile struck roots in the European national cultures and learned their languages. The next awakening in the modern dialectical development of Hebrew culture took place only in the 1920s and 1930s, in Palestine when the first patterns began to emerge of the Hebrew culture in the national homeland (Miron, 2000).

The Zionist educational system in Palestine played a central role in the modernisation of Hebrew. Although from the second half of the nineteenth century, Jews in the 'Old Yishuv' in Palestine spoke Hebrew as a lingua franca, its use was limited. This use was broadened when Hebrew became the written and spoken language of the Jews in Palestine, a modern process that took place through the 'new Hebrew' educational system (Nir, 1999: 107–22). The point of departure was in 1880, when Eliezer Ben-Yehuda published two articles entitled 'The question of education' in the weekly journal *Ha-Havatselet*, in which he asked for Hebrew to be used as the language of instruction in the schools in Palestine. The success achieved in meeting this challenge may be ascribed to teachers with a Zionist ideology who saw Hebrew as the symbol of the new national culture. Rachel Elboim-Dror, the historian of Israeli education, thinks that 'the language was the first and most

important instrument of national education' (Elboim-Dror, 1986: 368). The penetration of Hebrew as the language of instruction in schools was more rapid than its penetration as a language of conversation. It was in the period of the revival of the language that the two Hebrew gymnasia (high schools) were founded: the Gymnasia Herzliya in Jaffa–Tel Aviv (1906) and the Gymnasia Ha-Ivrit in Jerusalem (1908). The school became the stronghold of the language. The climax came during a special session of the eleventh Zionist Congress in 1913, in which it was decided to create a university in Jerusalem where the language of instruction would be Hebrew. As a result, the Hebrew University was founded on 1 April 1925, and the teaching there was almost entirely in Hebrew. After the end of the Ottoman period in Palestine in 1917, Hebrew was recognised as the third official language in the country together with English and Arabic. The modernisation of the Hebrew language – 'language planning' – was possible due to the rise of Zionist bodies that worked to implement a linguistic policy. After the founding of the State of Israel, the 'Committee for the Hebrew Language' became the 'Academy of the Hebrew Language', and it accompanied the process of the modernisation of Hebrew.

## Israeli modernism

The paradox of the relationship of Zionism and modernism is the fact that Zionism is a modern enterprise umbilically connected to Jewish history. Zionism was a 'restorative utopia', to use Gershom Scholem's expression, a modern revolution reconstructing a model of independence that existed twice in the remote past of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel (Ohana, 2008a). There were also other discrepancies in the modernist–Zionist paradox. Zionism wanted to create a 'New Man', but did not renounce the Jews' ancient connection with the Jewish religion; Zionism wanted to found a national home for the Jews in Palestine but could not cut its umbilical ties with the Jewish Diasporas. The aim of most of the currents in Zionism was to create a secular, democratic, modern form of life, but it insisted on being a political theology. Like other European national movements, Zionism did not succeed in ridding itself of the discrepancy between its particular messianic basis and its universal-civil basis.

A distinction must be made between Zionism as a modernist ideology that transformed the Jewish subjects in various countries into responsible citizens of a national community, and the modernist culture that these subjects brought to Palestine. Yesterday's European immigrants brought the new nation-state a modernism whose origin was European; European modernism immigrated to Palestine together with the artists (Manor, 2010: 71). The agents of modernism – artists, architects, *hommes de lettres* – who might have been expected to act in an iconoclastic fashion in accordance with the spirit of the European modernism from which they had come, instead found themselves cast in the role of emissaries of the Zionist revolution, building the national enterprise with their own hands. In practice, there was no discrepancy between European modernism and the local scene and it was therefore not seen as alien or external. From agents of modernism who might have been expected to question the norms of the cultural and political establishment, they became pioneers of the modern project of Zionism. What is interesting about this is that the pioneering role was not imposed on them, but the opposite took place: they left their studios in Europe and the landscapes of their lands of birth on their own initiative in order to take part in the Zionist enterprise, constructing public buildings and housing for the workers, erecting monuments in the town centres, and producing etchings, paintings, photography, sculpture, and depictions of the Palestinian landscape with all the physical and human elements that it contained.

Just as Israeli modernism at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and in the period between the two World Wars was influenced by its European sources, so it cannot be separated from the national conflict with the Arab states and Palestinians. Until the end of the 1920s, the orientalist modernism of the Jewish artists in Palestine tended to view the Arab in a favourable light, as the subject of erotic fantasies, the antithesis of the West: the image of the authentic Hebrew, planted in his soil, self-assured, in appearance resembling the characters of the Bible. However, the major blood feud between the Arabs and the Jews in 1929 ended the modern Zionist romanticisation of the Arabs. The Arabs were henceforth seen as the ultimate enemy, the 'other', embodying danger and threat (Zalmona and Manor-Friedman, 1998: 47–93). At the same time, it must be pointed out that those who came

to Palestine in the waves of immigration of the first third of the twentieth century did not represent colonialism like the 'ethnic modernism' in Asia, South America or Africa, or like the British in India (Court, 1999: 147–52; Mitter, 1994). A distinction must be made between 'colonialism' and 'colonisation'. Zionism was not a colonialist movement, although it carried out colonising projects in settlement, industry and agriculture. Only with the rise of the national conflict between the Jews and Arabs did the Israeli modernists become critical of the political establishment, the national consensus and the security elite in Israel.

The first period of art imported from Europe in Palestine was the first decade of the twentieth century with the founding of the Bezalel Academy of Art in Jerusalem in 1906. The first director of the school and its guiding spirit was Boris Schatz, who is considered the founding father of Israeli art. In his utopian novel *The Rebuilt Jerusalem*, he depicted the future of Israel as a biblical Garden of Eden. The orientalist attitude and Jewish approach of Bezalel reflected in prints, posters and books had also an educational and moral purpose. The artists of Bezalel sought in Jewish history symbols relevant to the Zionist present, symbols taken from the centre of Zionist activity in Central Europe, but that had undergone an adaptation with their absorption into the physical and human landscape of Palestine. Ze'ev Rabban's illustrations to the *Song of Songs* under the influence of art nouveau and Lilien's representations of the Hebrew world in the time of the Bible were intended as mobilised national art. The first teachers in Bezalel – Schatz, Abel Pann and Ze'ev Rabban – had studied in Paris, and when they immigrated to Palestine they brought with them the values of modern Western painting. They focused on creating a new local identity combining an oriental iconography as a mark of Palestinian authenticity, an affinity with Jewish art and the characters from the Bible through the production of ritual implements, a connection with Western art with the influence of art nouveau, and an alienation from Israeli modernism. The artistic practices of Bezalel reflected four aims of Zionism as a modern undertaking: sovereignty in the Land of Israel, integration into the East, productivity of the Jewish people and the renewal of Jewish culture (Trachtenberg, 2010: 99–156).

The second period, the 1920s, saw the transference of the artistic centre from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. The discrepancy between

Bezalel's 'retroactive utopia' and progressive cultural ideologies caused a change in the attitude to the cultural ideology of Bezalel. The Zionist Jewry in Europe and the bourgeoisie in Palestine, the group to which Bezalel related, were identified with religious symbols and with a conservative outlook unsuited to the growing influence of the socialist pioneers in Palestine. The urban bourgeoisie, especially in Tel Aviv, also turned its back on the Jerusalem world-of-the-past and the Bible. The artists, known as the 'second generation' or the 'modernists', found their inspiration in French modernism. They defined their habitus through artistic purity, a contemporary approach and the centrality of the artist. In addition to Paris, Israeli modernism always paid attention to the international centres in Europe and the United States (Manor, 2005). One began to feel the influence of modernist currents, especially cubism, futurism and Russian constructivism that tried to create a new order. Israeli modernism was likewise influenced by the October Revolution, the First World War, rapid industrialisation, the British Arts and Crafts movement, the German Werkbund and Bauhaus and the Swiss architect Le Corbusier. This adaptation of European models and the mixture of styles in different cultural spheres were reflected in the dynamics of the country, and especially in the art and architecture of Tel Aviv.

The curator and art critic Sarah Breitberg-Semel described the difference between the 'there' overseas and the local 'here': 'Over there, there is aesthetics, over there, there is the great culture of the West, over there materials have soul and meaning: the wine is blood, the bread is the body, the cross is redemption.' As against this, the meaning of 'here' is 'art with a short history, completely modern […] without symbols or rich visual sources, without mythologies and without Christianity […]. That is to say, it is outside the sphere of Europe: that is to say, basically, it has poor materials' (Breitberg-Semel, 1988: 13). This meagre Israeli modernism was the vehicle of a local art that sought to express an authentic 'Hebrew' identity stripped of any Jewish associations or historical pathos. Its nomenclature in the history of Israeli art in the twentieth century kept changing – Hebrew art, Eretz Israel (Land of Israel) art, original art or local art – but its essence remained the same, and that was to represent the place.

A permanent pull between a local orientation representing an attachment to the place, the local language and landscape, the

country, the people and the Arab neighbours, and an international orientation representing the fashions in the world capitals, the new styles and especially abstraction, was characteristic of Palestinian modernism and later of Israeli modernism. The polarity between the 'local' Reuven Rubin, who painted the landscapes of the Land of Israel, and Joseph Zaritzky, the crowned king of the abstract and universal tendency, fuelled the energies of Palestinian modernism. There was a correlation between the 'local' artists and the public's expectation that they would represent the national collective, its socialism and its values, or, in other words, that they would serve the national objectives, and there was likewise a correlation between the 'international' artists and a tendency to individualism and self-expression.

In the 1920s, there was a debate in artistic and intellectual circles about the degree to which art and culture can or should be involved in the construction of the national identity. The historian of Israeli art Dalia Manor has documented some of the echoes of the controversy about the relationship of art and Zionism (Manor, 2010: 67–98). In 1924, Dr Shalom Spiegel, for example, expressed his firm opinion that 'art is not a product of the national will or consciousness'. In his opinion, artificial collective attempts to create a national style could not succeed: the freedom of the individual and the unique style of the artist were in themselves their contribution to national art. The painter Menahem Shemi also spoke ironically against the call for an authentic national art: 'Give us original Palestinian art! Give us something original, give us something Palestinian!' Another approach to the role of art in Palestine was expressed by the poet Yehuda Karni, who in 1922 called for a local art to be created in the surroundings in which the artists settled: 'Did we not come here in order to reform our lives and create new values?' He believed that the creation of a local art required an involvement with folklore, popular creativity and local conditions. The poet Mordechai Avi Shaul gave art a mission: to reflect the project of Zionist settlement that in his opinion had not received proper artistic representation. This was not a call for mobilised art as in the totalitarian ideologies in Europe (Ohana, 2010c), but for the commitment of many artists, who did not see themselves as critical, to the national enterprise in which they had participated. Unlike the case of modern Hebrew literature that originated and

developed in Eastern Europe and was the basis for the culture of the national revival, there had been no previous Zionist plastic art, except in graphics. The development of art in Palestine required the artists to relate in their works to the local landscape, the settlers and their projects; that is to say, to the basic elements of the national identity.

The 1930s saw the crystallisation of the artistic image of the mythological *halutz*, a synthesis of local myth and avant-garde movements disconnected from their cultural links with Europe. The poster's role as a visual symbol and as a means of communicating the ideology of the Soviet Revolution accelerated the crystallisation of this image, which has been called the greatest artistic creation of the Second Aliyah. The image of the Hebrew pioneer with a plough in one hand and a rifle in the other symbolised the shift from utopia to myth. The old images of European farmers, immigrants from the Yemen or Arab children were discarded in favour of the socialist message of the Russian constructivists, El Lissitzky and Alexander Rodchenko. Modernism was bound up with modernisation: the image of the pioneer in the 1930s was the mirror of the economic changes in the Yishuv. The image was part of the propaganda that called on the Hebrew worker to take part in the 'conquest of labour' that derived from the economic success of the Yishuv and the new bourgeois way of life. The figure of the pioneer appeared on posters for Jewish sporting events such as the Hapoel Congress of 1932 and the second 'Maccabiah' of 1935, and in advertising and photography. The ideology of the pioneer was also expressed in the creation of stereotypical images of the Palestinian landscape: the sabra bush and apple trees became features of Zionist iconography. Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city, was represented in the famous photograph of casting lots for houses in 'Ahuzat Beit': the photograph does not show the Arab neighbours in nearby Jaffa. Many images of the Zionist enterprise were disseminated: in Jerusalem, the archetypical symbols of the Old City walls, the Tower of David and the Wailing Wall; and in Tel Aviv, the Habima Theatre, the building of the port at Tel Aviv, and *Yarid Ha-Mizrah* (the Fair of the East). In the kibbutzim, there were the Haggadot for Passover, and in the national sphere, the national institutions and the Hebrew University, opened in 1925. These graphic images created and conveyed social myths about the realisation of the Zionist project in Palestine.

In defining the national identity, Israeli modernism was split between a Western orientation and an Eastern orientation (Ohana, 2012). In addition to the artists of Bezalel and the Canaanite artists who favoured the East, a prominent representative of the Eastern orientation was the sculptor Avraham Melnikoff, who created the heroic monument at Tel Hai. The sculptor depicted a lion as the heroic–aesthetic symbol commemorating eight watchmen killed in the Galilee. Melnikoff was the first of the Jewish–Hebrew sculptors to think of turning to the East as a means of modern expression. In 1954, he wrote in a letter to a friend:

> We must not forget the East. I am sure all this modern talk of the Israeli artists, all these imitations of Picasso, Matisse and the like – all this will disappear like the froth on a stirred cup of tea, and if we really have the right – and let us not allow anyone to deny us this right – to call ourselves an oriental people, we will have to turn eastwards. We will be lost if we do not exchange our exclusive Western orientation […]. (Zach, 1982: 9)

The eastern orientation in Israeli modernism applied to both time and space. It drew inspiration for the Hebrew national renaissance from the monumental civilisations of the Fertile Crescent through a revival of the Assyrian or Canaanite styles, and at the same time there was the return to the old-new space of the East underlying the creation of the 'new Hebrew' who turned his back on the exilic European ways of the 'old Jew'. Unlike Melnikoff, however, the Israeli poet Yaacov Fichmann thought that Israeli art was naturally drawn towards Western modernism because of the Jewish tie to Europe. Fichmann rejected both the turn to the distant past as superficial romanticism, and orientalism as an inappropriate model for the national revival, which was essentially Western: 'We will not betray the West: we are part of it. We came here with it, and with it we shall continue' (Fichmann, 1929b). The point of view of Fichmann and the painter Menahem Shemi that Israel belongs to the modern West was what was finally accepted. Zionist modernism and later Israeli modernism developed within the framework of Western concepts and values, firstly because most of the artists came from Europe and not from the East, secondly because 'the Orient' was for many of them a

source of imaginary longings, and thirdly because Eastern culture was thrust aside by Western modernism.

From a modern secular position – turning one's back on the Jewish religion whose origin was in exile, which was the starting point of the Zionist revolution – two contrary yet complementary paths developed in Israel. One was secularism as a way of life that from the 1930s guided abstract modernism and drew away from Jewish tradition and the idea of the East towards Western universalism, and the other was Canaanism that saw Judaism as an enemy, turned to the ancient East, the opposite of Western universalism, and found its ideal in orientalist nativism (Hirschfeld, 1998: 1–31). Yitzhak Danziger's sculpture 'Nimrod' (1939) proclaimed the ideology of the 'Canaanite' group. The Canaanite group represented a deduction from Zionism that the Israeli place and the Hebrew language were the definition of its identity, but in fact it cut the Zionist umbilical cord that linked the history of the Jews to the place of the Israelis (Ohana, 2012).

There are some who say that 'art for art's sake' was the main concern of Israeli art in the period of the Yishuv before the founding of the State of Israel (Trachtenberg, 2005). Many artists focused on aesthetic experimentation and on the crystallisation of a style that originated in Europe. In the mid 1920s, there began to be attempts at abstraction of the artistic language. The outstanding artists of Israeli modernism who practiced abstract art in the 1920s were Pinhas Litvinovsky, Arieh Lubin, Nahum Guttman, Morderchai Levanon, Haim Glicksberg, Joseph Zaritzky, Moshe Mokady, Avigdor Steimatzky, Menahem Shemi and Ziona Tajar. Despite the heterogeneity of the art in the period of the Yishuv, aesthetic modernism was the dominant style. The climax of abstract modernism came in 1948 with the founding of the 'New Horizons' group, the main features of which were international art, 'art for art's sake' and an avoidance of subjects connected with the Zionist project in Palestine.

Parallel with the 'generation of 1948', which painted and sculpted subjects connected with the Israeli War of Independence, especially the fighter, who became a classic hero (like Samson or, paradoxically, the sacrificed Isaac), the emergence of the New Horizons group after the war offered a challenge to the fighting generation. It was a universalistic artistic response, like the lyrical abstraction that was dominant at that time in Paris. The New

Horizons group comprised a multiplicity of subjects and styles, from the abstract still lifes of Joseph Zaritzky to the social realism of Yohanan Simon, the symbolism of Aharon Kahana, the expressionism of Marcel Janco and the primitive ritualism of Kosso Eloul. But the dominant modern tendency was a flight from all Zionist subjects or Israeli content to abstraction. Zaritzky insisted that the painting in the country had to be 'an inseparable part of modern painting in the world', and Yehezkel Streichman claimed that 'a great artist does not have to search for the locality. He must have a universal vision' (Bar Or and Ofrat, 2008: 19).

## The architectural project

The Zionist movement, which was born in Europe and realised its programme in Palestine, was something unique. The first Israeli modernists were born in Europe, were formed by it, and produced their art in Palestine and later in the State of Israel. The same applied to the Israeli architects of the 1920s and 1930s, who studied at the most advanced schools of architecture in Europe, and some of whom worked in the offices of the pioneers of modernism. Kurt Unger and Paul Engelman were students of Adolf Loos in Vienna; Shlomo Bernstein and Benjamin Chelnov worked in the office of Le Corbusier. Eighteen architects studied at Bauhaus, including the architect Arieh Sharon (1900–84), who studied under Hannes Meyer and Walter Gropius. While every country had its own special version of the International Style (Pevsner, 1936), in Israel the followers of the different currents of European modernism worked concurrently. For example, *Me'onot 'Ovdim* (Workers' Homes), which was founded in Tel Aviv in 1936–37, was an outstanding example of the joint work of four architects who created a synthesis of various styles. Bauhaus became synonymous with modernism in Israel. While in the United States it was called the 'International Style' following the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1931, in Europe they preferred the term 'modern movement'. In addition to the Bauhaus, Palestine served as a laboratory for many modernist ideas. This was helped by the ideological closeness of the kibbutz, the *moshav shitufi* (cooperative village), *Me'onot 'Ovdim*, the institutions of the Labour Federation and the European avant-garde of the 1920s and 1930s (Levin, 2010: 197–216).

The utopian ideas of modernism took on flesh and blood in the Israeli reality. Egalitarian programmes were realised through special forms of settlement such as the kibbutz, the transformation of city-dwellers into agricultural workers, the creation of workers' homes for people of similar ideology, the creation of garden-cities. Various forms of agricultural and urban settlement were undertaken: the kibbutz and the *kvutza*, the *moshav* and the *moshav shitufi*, neighbourhoods and garden-cities. The idea of the garden-city, for example, was a very important source of inspiration in planning towns, neighbourhoods and other settlements in Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century. The ideals of closeness to the soil and to nature and of the importance of verdure, and the cooperative principles that guided the creators of the garden-cities, endeared it to the Zionist movement. Nahalal was the first *moshav* to be founded, and it was laid out in accordance with the geometric, ideological and utopian plan of a round, slightly elliptical settlement, around which were fields divided up equally into triangles. It was the idea of the garden-city that guided Richard Kaufmann in planning six neighbourhoods in Jerusalem and most of the new neighbourhoods in Haifa. When UNESCO declared Tel Aviv a World Heritage Site in 2003, it achieved this status because of its combination of a garden-city with the largest concentration in the world of buildings of the early period of the modern style. Likewise, in the kibbutz, thought and resources were devoted to the construction of dining halls, cultural centres and educational institutions in a modern spirit. The best Israeli architects designed dining halls for the kibbutzim, which were the crowning glory of the planning that expressed the vision and enthusiasm that characterised the spirit of that period (Sharon, 1976).

The architect Arieh Sharon played a role of the greatest importance in designing and constructing buildings that for generations fixed the architectural map of Israel. His work played a central role in the building of the country and the State of Israel, and he was the chief exponent of both architectural modernism and a national style. Between the disturbances of 1929 and 1939, Tel Aviv, like other cities, knew seven years of economic growth, rapid construction and urban and cultural development. This was the contribution of the Fifth Aliyah (wave of immigration) to Palestine, and in particular of the immigration of Jews from

Germany who accelerated the process of the modernisation of Tel Aviv and made it into a metropolitan city. A modernistic visual revolution took place there for which the city engineer in the 1930s Yaakov Ben Sira and the architect Sharon were responsible. Sharon also drew up the national master plan of 1950, which was executed in one decade and fixed for the distant future the disposition of the urban areas in Israel. The historical context of the plan was the waves of immigration that trebled the Jewish population in three years. In addition to coping with the state of emergency, one had to solve the problem of population density: more than 80 per cent of the population was crowded together in the three large cities. For national or security-related reasons or for agriculture, 430 settlements of various kinds were founded.

The 1950s were the golden age of Israeli architecture. This decade witnessed the switch from the stylish and elitist 'white architecture' for the urban bourgeoisie to massive building for the flood of immigrants and nationwide planning and rapid modernisation that were also characteristic of post-war Europe. The combination of the power of execution of the political establishment and the audacity of the avant-garde ideas gave the architects around Sharon an unprecedented drive. All the internal contradictions that arose in the realisation of Zionism – the demographic struggle between the Jews and Arabs, the interests of the individual immigrant versus the national vision, the traditions and customs of the Jewish Diaspora communities versus the revolutionary Zionist demands, the needs of modern life versus preservation of the past – were reflected in architectural modernism. Zvi Efrat, organiser of the exhibition 'Israeli Project 2005' at the Tel Aviv Museum, summed up the approach of the national architect Arieh Sharon as: 'intoxication with power and control of space and distortion of the relationship of subject and object', and called his rapid construction 'encroaching civilian conquest' (Efrat, 2005). It can be said that the architectural project of the 1950s represented a fascinating synthesis of the Zionist revolution and modernism in Israel.

## The case studies

*Modernism and Zionism* will analyse three case studies. The first one will deal with the Zarathustra myth, the combination of

modern myth (Nietzsche) and Jewish nationalism (Zionism) that made its mark on the young Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem. They shattered the dichotomy that had been made in the 'science of Judaism' between myth and modernism, and they made a revolutionary move: the modernisation of myth. Buber and Scholem perceived a modern consciousness, a self-aware consciousness, in Jewish myth. It is the biblical stories and the allegories of the Kabbala that created our picture or image of God, and not the other way round. It was not only the Hassidim that spoke of the redemption of God: the Kabbala also thought that God could be redeemed by self-construction or purposeful action. This is a modern approach par excellence, or perhaps one could say a revolutionary consciousness whose very existence paved the way for modernity. This is a self-perception in which the 'new Jew' creates his own world, the objects of his desire, his values, his ideology and his myths. One of the great myths was that of the 'new Jew' who was created in a Nietzschean spirit and who could put on flesh and blood only in a Zionist framework: that is to say, in the Land of Israel.

*Hassidism* and the *Kabbala* were two modern attempts to revitalise Judaism by renewing it through myth. Buber and Scholem are each related to one of these historic phenomena, granting a central status to myth in their research. The revolutionary nature of their approach is reflected mainly in their critique of the assumption that saw Judaism as an essentially anti-mythical religion, resolved as Scholem put it, to eliminate myth. Both scholars broke with tradition by perceiving myth as an innovative factor in traditional Judaism. Nietzsche exerted a significant influence in shaping the approach of Buber and Scholem to myth, rehabilitating it as a vital and creative element in all societies.

History overturned the arena in which modern myth was constructed. Already before Claude Lévi-Strauss, who asserted that mythical thought is dominant in history and that we make a mythological use of history, Buber and Scholem stated that myths are of primary importance to modern man, and consequently to the 'new Jew'. The gods created in Mesopotamia and Greece were replaced by modern myths that are secular and historical. This manifestation penetrated modern nationalism and hence Zionism, 'secularising' myth in the process. Nietzsche had a central role in this, because his radical philosophical ideas, his polemical style,

his criticism of the old civilisation and the new possibilities that he offered had an effect on many Jews in Eastern and Central Europe at the turn of the ninetheenth and twentieth centuries.

The second part of the book will deal with 'Promethean messianism'. From the time of the Bar-Kokhba revolt of 132 CE – the last act representing a fusion of Jewish sovereignty and the messianic vision before the exile of the Jews from the Land of Israel – until the appearance of Zionism in Europe, the faith of many Jews for nearly two millennia was characterised by what might be termed a 'transcendental messianism'. In this form of messianism, redemption was made dependent on a supernatural authority and the end of history was postponed. The concept of redemption was unconnected to the will or actions of men. The historical process was seen in an apocalyptic and ahistorical perspective. The end of history in this context was an event that was hidden, from the human point of view, but also predetermined (Rosenberg, 1997: 52). The limited function of the Jew in the Middle Ages was to be content with hastening the redemption, but the redemption itself was in the hands of the kingdom of heaven. This situation was to change in the modern era, although the change did not take place overnight.

Unlike other peoples who were exiled and then assimilated, in many Jewish communities of the Diaspora the consciousness of redemption was introverted. It was precisely their messianism that in many cases caused their separateness in exile and at the same time was a result of it; the expectation of redemption nourished this separateness and the separateness deepened the expectation of returning to Zion. This dependence of Jewish messianism distinguishes it from other kinds of messianism, including Christian messianism. Another peculiarity of Jewish messianism was its relationship to historical fact: at a certain point in the past the Jews had independence, and the hope of the Jews with self-awareness was to 'renew their days as of old'. The paradox is that owing to the mythical memory, the exile served as a springboard for a messianic future (Katz, 1982: 34–41). Zionism – the revolt against the decree of exile – sprang up within it at the same time as the nineteenth-century revolutionary ideologies, which were filled with a 'Promethean messianism'. In this form of messianism, redemption was neither passive nor deterministic, but was carried by a modern individual who prepared himself and his circle and claimed to

form a total world within a partial reality. In 'Promethean messianism', it was human action that brought about redemption. Maimonides' contribution to this modern Jewish consciousness is based on a rejection of the cosmic principle in the vision of redemption. This rejection permits one to see the Messianic era as a historical happening subject to the laws of nature. Maimonides understood the transition to the Messianic era at the end of days as something achieved by rational means. This rationalisation and modernisation of the messianic process had a great influence on the pre-Zionist consciousness.

The third part follows the genealogy of the statue, *Nimrod*. The artist Yitzhak Danziger (1916–77) created the sculpture *Nimrod* in the year 1939. *Nimrod* is considered as the most important work in Israeli modernism, and it became an artistic icon, a symbol of nativistic identity and a founding myth in Israeli culture. *Nimrod*, which was a heroic and aesthetically inspiring model for the imagined community of the 'new Hebrews', was transformed in the present generation to a post-Zionist vision. The Nimrod utopia and the messianic longing are, on the face of it, opposites. *Nimrod* symbolises the modern, secular man who builds his own world on his own, and accordingly the autochthonic and heroic myth of the 'new Hebrew'; 'messianism' is founded on non-human and ahistorical laws. *Nimrod* embodies the physical basis, the place; 'messianism' represents the metaphysical basis, 'the Place' (that is to say, God). *Nimrod* promoted Hebraism as a territorial nationalism, based on a nativistic myth; 'messianism' laid emphasis on the universality of the Jewish religion. *Nimrod* represents 'Canaanism', a national, geo-cultural ideology, in which a certain piece of land defines the collective identity of its inhabitants; 'messianism' is a religious belief that at the end of history 'all human contradictions will be resolved'. There seems to be an inevitable contradiction between these two 'conceptual archetypes'; however, in reality one can imagine a possible dialectic synthesis – a 'Canaanite messianism'.

# 1

# The Myth of Zarathustra: Martin Buber, Gershom Scholem and the Nationalisation of Jewish Myth

## The Nietzschean Buber

In 1898–1900, Martin Buber wrote his first article, 'Zarathustra', devoted to Nietzsche, and in 1901 he was appointed editor of *Die Welt*, the organ of the World Zionist Organization. The proximity of the two dates was not coincidental in Buber's political and intellectual development: it is not surprising if he discovered Nietzsche and Zionism at the same time. He saw the German philosopher and the Jewish national movement as embodying modern, secular and vital forces that rebelled against a normalisation of private and public life that finally leads to decadence, and necessitated different conditions of existence for the individual and the people. In the year in which he published his article, his poem 'Das Gebet' appeared in the pages of the newspaper that he was to edit, and it is impossible not to see that the subject of the poem, the Jewish people, is viewed from a Nietzschean perspective:

> Lord, Lord, shake my people,
> Strike it, bless it, furiously, gently,
> Make it burn, make it free,
> Heal your child.
>
> God, give the lost glow
> Back to my weary people,
> In wild, intoxicated flames
> Bestow on them your happiness.

> See, only a fever can save it
> And raging exuberance
> Awaken it, and, Father, lead the throng
> To Jordan's field. (Buber, 1901)

The poem emphasised the spiritual rebirth (Auferstehung) that Buber wished to bring about in the Jewish people, an aim that was in opposition to the political direction that Herzl gave the Zionist movement. In December 1901, Buber, together with Ephraim Mose Lilien, organised an exhibition of Jewish painting that took place during the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basle. In his article 'On Jewish art', published after the exhibition, he wrote:

> Zionism and art are two forms of our rebirth […]. [Jewish art] signifies for us first of all a great educator. An educator for a vital perception (*Anschauen*) of nature and human beings – a vital feeling (*Empfinden*) of all that is strong and beautiful. This perception and feeling, which we have lacked for so long, will be restored to us by our artists. And it is of utmost importance for us that our people regain this vital perception and feeling. For only full human beings can be full Jews, who are capable of and worthy of achieving for themselves a homeland. (Buber, 1916b: 64)

The aesthetisation of politics was not an empty formula for Buber. The aesthetic revolution that Nietzsche sought to bring about in Western culture did not leave the young Jewish thinker indifferent. The audacity of the philosopher of the will-to-power was in his opinion shown first and foremost in his call for a self-creating human being. This also applied to Judaism. The Zionist revolution presented a historic opportunity to modernise the Jewish people who were sick because of living 'outside itself' in exile.

But Buber's enthusiasm for both the philosopher (Nietzsche) and the leader (Herzl) quickly waned. As Akiva Ernst Simon astutely observed: 'Neither vitality for vitality's sake in the case of the philosopher nor nationhood for nationhood's sake in the case of the leader held him for very long' (Simon, 1985: 168). Buber turned to Ahad Ha-Am, whom he saw as a teacher and not as a leader, and inspired by spiritual Zionism founded the cultural section of the Zionist Association in Berlin and then set up the Jewish publishing house Jüdischer Verlag with his friend Berthold Feiwel.

Buber's philosophical theology, expressed in his most famous work *I and Thou* (1970 [1923]), is in total contradiction to the philosophy that Nietzsche expressed in his writings. Apart from the opposing philosophical content, it should be pointed out that Nietzsche was chiefly a philologist, philosopher and poet, whereas Buber was a philosopher, theologian, sociologist and intellectual with a Jewish-Zionist outlook, who sought by means of books and lectures to influence readers and listeners in the national, religious and political spheres. Buber sought to disseminate his ideas through the publication of books and articles, creating a group of followers, editing journals and attending political congresses. Unlike Nietzsche, who only operated on the philosophical level, Buber operated on four levels: the philosophical, the ideological, the theological and the political. Nietzsche was an atheist, Buber was a believer (Kaufmann, 1981); Nietzsche gave a central place to the sovereignty of the individual over his world, his self-creation, his self-sufficiency, while Buber stressed man's relationship with his neighbour and his relationship with his God. Nietzsche exposed the manipulative structures of all ideologies and religions, while Buber was a Zionist to the core and a religious individual through and through. To Nietzsche, nationalism, socialism and democracy were modern manifestations of the 'slave morality' (Ohana, 2009), while Buber saw Hebrew humanism, the morality of the prophets and the utopia of the kibbutz as worthy ideals for which he left the landscape of his European land of birth.

If this was the case, what was the reason for the obsessive interest that Buber showed in the German philosopher, both in his early adulation and his later opposition? Why did he repeatedly go back to his works even though already in his youth he had revolted against his spiritual guide? Why did he value Nietzsche? Was it because of his personality, his thoughts, his revolutionary qualities? What purpose is there in a contemporary reading of the confrontation between the ideas of the Zionist humanist and those of the thinker who 'philosophied with a hammer' and proclaimed, and some say hastened, the arrival of the age of nihilism? The answer to these questions requires a genealogical survey of the development of Buber's thoughts and an examination of Nietzsche's influence on his ideas (Schmidt, 1995; Silberstein, 1989).

In *Autobiographical Fragments*, which described the sources of his intellectual development and the books that influenced him early

in his life, Buber mentioned only two thinkers: Kant and Nietzsche (Buber, 1967b). He added that he was mesmerised by *Thus Spake Zarathustra* when he had read it at the age of seventeen:

> About two years after that [his liberation from the category of time by Kant] *the other book took possession of me* [emphasis added], a book that was, to be sure, the work of a philosopher but was not a philosophical book: Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. I say 'took possession of me,' for here a teaching did not simply and calmly confront me, but a willed and able – splendidly willed and splendidly able – utterance stormed up to and over me. This book, characterized by its author as the greatest present that had ever been made to mankind up till then, worked on me not in the manner of a gift but in the manner of an invasion which deprived me of my freedom, and it was a long time until I could liberate myself from it. (Buber, 1967b: 44)

The works of Kant and Nietzsche – 'catastrophic events' as Buber called them – left their imprint on the development of his thinking. Until he read them, he had difficulty in understanding the concept of time and its significance both as an axis with a beginning and end and as an axis *without* a beginning and end. Kant explained that space and time are formal conditions of our understanding, and this gave him a valuable lesson in philosophical freedom. And Nietzsche, for his part, gave him a particular understanding of time: 'the eternal recurrence of the same', a cyclical concept in which there is the possibility of experiencing all possibilities, in which different states of existence keep returning. Nietzsche, thought the young Buber, wished the 'basic perception' of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* to be understood as an interpretation of time in which all things would finally appear to be as they were at the beginning. He saw this perception of time as the greatest innovation of *Zarathustra*. The Dionysian pathos that characterised *The Birth of Tragedy* became a philosophical ethos in *Zarathustra*. He was a modern Dionysus who with the enthusiasm of a 'New Man' soared above heights and depths. Although the nihilistic implications of 'eternal recurrence' were unacceptable to the young Buber, he also found consolation in this cyclical vision: the greatness that the Jewish people knew in the past could

reappear in a different form in the future. 'What has been will be' is not only a passive and sceptical idea but represents a new, or rather renewed, horizon. Life does not simply grow faint and fade away but springs forth as an inexhaustible source of eternal forms and recurrent phenomena.

In *Autobiographical Fragments*, Buber, with great perspicacity, acknowledged his spiritual enslavement to his philosophical guru, as if he were possessed by him, as if he had lost his independence and his critical faculty, as if he were under a spell or had drunk an intoxicating brew that for a certain time had made him lose his liberty and peace of mind. This intoxication and his later disillusionment naturally recall Nietzsche's relationships with Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner. It was only Nietzsche's liberation from these two mentors and his overcoming of their personalities and teachings that made possible his own creative freedom and original thought. Nietzsche may have needed them in order to build himself up and arrive at the crystallisation of his 'self' and the concept of the transvaluation of values. In a similar way, the young Buber needed Nietzsche in order to overcome him after his own path had been established according to Nietzschean principles.

In a footnote to *Autobiographical Fragments*, Buber said that when he read *Zarathustra* at the age of seventeen and was entranced by it, he decided to translate it into Polish. He set to work, translated the first part, and when he was preparing to continue with the second part, a well-known Polish writer informed him that he had already begun to translate parts of the work and he suggested to Buber that they should translate the book together. Buber deferred to the writer and abandoned his intention of completing the translation. As a schoolboy, he regularly brought *Zarathustra* to school and read it enthusiastically, like many of his generation in turn-of-the-century Europe.

Vienna at the turn of the century was a European cultural centre and the home of radical philosophical ideas, experimentation in music and the theatre, and anti-Semitic manifestations. Nietzsche had the reputation of being a rebel against the bourgeoisie, a destroyer of conventional notions, a nihilistic prophet, and at the same time the founder of a new philosophical religion (Young, 2010). His daring proclamation of the death of God was a breath of fresh air for many young people who were attracted

by the revolution in philosophy taking place in their time. The main feature of this revolution was the shift from the concepts of good and evil, truth and falsehood – which were seen as the false values of a decadent culture about to die – to the aesthetic values of creativity, vitality and heroism that were inspired by a reexamination of the works of classical culture. Echoes of the Nietzschean revolution found their way into the political ideas of the left and right, feminist manifestos, religious platforms, and an unrestrained intellectual atmosphere that gave free play to any new idea. Zarathustra was the symbol of the intellectual revolution that Nietzsche brought about, a revolution that had as its main gospel the shift from ethics to aesthetics. The 'New Man', the crowning glory of the revolution, of whom Zarathustra was the mentor and proclaimer, was the representative of a live, individualistic and creative civilisation, trampling underfoot the shibboleths of yesterday's culture: the slave morality, the values of a sick condition, the illusion of progress, the cult of asceticism, the preaching of equality and belief in a religious or ideological world-to-come. This was the radical atmosphere that Buber knew in Vienna when he wrote 'Zarathustra'.

The short article, 'Zarathustra', appears to have been written between the years 1898 to 1900. Paul Mendes-Flohr pointed out, after a careful examination, that Buber treated Nietzsche in the article as someone who was still alive (he passed away in December 1900). Moreover, the psychological aspect is stressed in the article, evidence of the years that Buber sat on the benches of the University of Vienna as a student of psychology (Mendes-Flohr, 1989: 147–8). After reading *The Birth of Tragedy*, his first encounter with Nietzsche, the Jewish youth saw the German philosopher as a modern, anti-bourgeois thinker and a restless romantic. Nietzsche's early adulation of Wagner helped to make Buber a Wagnerian, but when he felt that Nietzsche was guilty of inconsistency, he stopped reading him. Only when he read *Zarathustra* again did he discover the myth of eternal recurrence. This time, he no longer regarded Nietzsche as someone with a consistent doctrine but accepted him as the spokesman of a critical and sceptical point of view.

Even before writing the article 'Zarathustra', Buber wrote a preface to the article, a preface that has remained unpublished. In this undated preface, written in antique German script, he wrote: 'This

above all: if you ever come across a book on Friedrich Nietzsche with my name on the cover, please know that this is the introduction [Einleitung] as well as the manual [Anleitung] to its comprehension' (Buber, 'Zarathustra' manuscript, 1898–1900: unpaginated).

The poem that appears on the cover is a sort of dedication:

> To you, the daring seekers, experimenters, and all
> those who ever sailed onto the terrible seas,
> To you, drunk on riddles, bedazzled by twilight,
> whose soul has been attracted to every deceptive
> abyss by the sound of flutes
> For you do not wish to follow a lead by a coward
> and, you hate to decipher where you can
> guess the answer—
> To you alone I will tell the riddle which I beheld,
> —the face of the most lonesome one. (Ibid.)

What fascinated the young Buber was the audacious appearance of Nietzsche on the philosophical stage as a discoverer of new continents, a venturer into the unknown, a spiritual adventurer who endangered himself in his spiritual journeys. The literary style of the preface inserted itself into the article: 'It is my peculiarity to speak of each human being in his language, and when I sing of a person's harmony, I shall do it in his own rhythm. Forgive me, therefore, for the nonmethod [Unart] of these Zarathustra-sounds, oh my friends!' (ibid.). Buber, with the chutzpah of the young, was proud of his aphoristic, unregulated style, depending on sound and rhythm, like that of the celebrated philosopher, rather than on content.

In scattered observations in 'Zarathustra', Buber compared himself to a patient who, as in the Nietzschean model, could only find the cure for his illness if he contracted a new one. He admitted that he would not get to the bottom of his illness until he became famous. Although he felt the intensity of the identity crisis that he experienced, this was not the illness that he suffered from. He had recovered only recently, as a result of insights gained from Nietzsche. The analysis that he made of his illness revealed that, in his youth, Buber was drawn to the system and thought of the philosopher and not to his personality. He did not see the living thinker beyond the philosophical veil. He summed up his relationship with Nietzsche in those days as follows: 'that was my

illness. I did not believe in you, I believed you.' What rescued him this time was Zarathustra:

> It came over me, like a revelation […]. It is only a beginning […] and truly also – think about it – a birth of tragedy from the musical spirit, but soon, so it seems to me, I will lose the thread of the maze. For it came over me like a gigantic chaos illuminated by flashes of uncreated light, a Dyonisian dithyramblike laughter, a childlike euphoria, a sublime joy, a first 'yes'. An intimation of dancing overcame me which pulled me upward into the deep black abysses (Buber, 1898–1900).

This was an ecstatic experience that according to him, transferred him from the world of philosophical systems to a state of poetic freedom. It was a liberation from the stranglehold of theory that stifles free self-expression. The experience of the illness and the healing of it was so overwhelming that Buber was unable to bear it alone. He felt the need to bring in future friends: 'Who, but you, wants to listen to the story of an illness with its convalescence and redemption, listen to it as your own inner joyful experience. Who besides you wants to – laugh blood – with me' (ibid.). Unlike the ecstasy of the mystic, an experience that is self-contained and has no need of anyone else, Buber admitted that the emotional storm that enveloped him was more than he could bear, and calls to (his) comrades of Zarathustra:

> No excuses! No forgiveness!
> You happy, free soul.
> Lend to this unreasonable book
> Ear, heart, and shelter!
> Believe me, friends, my unreason,
> Did not lead to my undoing. (Buber, 1898–1900)

'Zarathustra' provides us with a glimpse of the feverish mind of the Jewish youth making his way within the Jewish tradition and trying not to lose himself among the waves of European philosophy sweeping over him and the currents of contemporary thought threatening to drown him. He struggled with his teacher: they exchanged blows. On the one hand, he acknowledged: 'I love you Friedrich Nietzsche, for your free speech […] your performance as a teacher-builder […] I love the artist in you, the psychologist and

moralist' (ibid). On the other hand, he wrote: 'Man has to leave Nietzsche in order to learn to like him' (ibid.).

Buber admitted in 'Zarathustra' that at an early stage of his studies he discovered the illusions of German culture that were prevalent at that time, and the decadence of the period:

> I was never an ultra-positivist. There was always a certain amount of romanticism in me, a kind of artistic will to create my own God, Zeus Cronius, ideal, *Ubermensch*; self, Prometheus unbound [in English]; Peer Gynt, culture of beauty. And innumerable other elements: a deep, fanatical passion for the Greek ideal, an oceanic, limitless self-consciousness/self-unconsciousness, filled with sunshine and titanic paroxisms of madness, a raging hatred pregnant with disgust of the entire atmosphere in which I lived; a grim dislike of official morality; official *Bildung*, the conventional senile smiling, whimpering, and wordplays; tigerlike desires reaching to heaven, disdain, sickening disdain of all catholicism and asceticism, in short, a young, unbounding Dionysian power which wanted to sing, to fly, to laugh, to destroy, to build – to build castles in the air. (Schmidt, 1995: 28)

There was a great similarity between Nietzsche and the young Buber. Both wanted to cast off the chains of civilisation in order to pursue their special path; both were obsessive about their philosophical illness and overcame it; both wanted to revolutionise the basic norms and were entranced by the culture of beauty; both expended great energy in seeking to mould themselves.

In December 1900, four months after Nietzsche's death, Buber published his eulogy, 'A word on Nietzsche and life values' in the women's magazine *Die Kunst im Leben* (Art in Life). In the eulogy, Buber described the personality of the philosopher, a man after his own heart. Unlike Schopenhauer, who was depicted in the article as lukewarm, Nietzsche, according to Buber, was a messiah-like hero in an age of mediocrity. The deceased philosopher was compared to Siegfried, Wagner's mythical hero in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, proclaiming resurrection who:

> fought with the finest and noblest sword of the century against the prevailing metaphysics and morality, or he saw in them tools and symptoms of decaying.

> He uncovered the feeble lies of our values and our truths. But the tip of his raised sword glistened purple in the light of the rising sun. He found fresh, powerful seed corns in ancient royal crypts; from dead cultures he wrested elements for new formation. In the confused and barren turmoil of the present, he collected the authentic and the productive. He erected in front of our eyes the statue of the heroic human being who creates his own self and beyond his self. In place of a thin and lame altruism he put the egotism of his own development and the virtue of giving; in place of pity he put cooperation and shared joy [Mitfreude]. To those who worshiped the beyond, he taught the noble meaning of the earth and of the human body. He contrasted the ideal of a comfortable and painless life with a stormy and dangerous life, whose powerful beauty is enhanced by the pain. Instead of happiness for the greatest number, he considered the creation of great people and great ideas to be the purpose of humanity. (Buber, 1900: 13)

This succinct formulation sums up the effect that Nietzsche had on Buber's generation. They were open to the transvaluation of their values, to the promotion of the 'ego' in place of the altruism of the slave morality that had become the accepted norm, to the example that Nietzsche provided of a heroic figure creating himself. The healing Nietzschean message for the sickness of the age was so urgently needed that Buber sought to obtain it at any price. His adulation for Nietzsche and his vision caused him to transfer the concepts of resurrection, will and power to the Jewish revolution. The Jewish revival as conceived by the young Buber was a mixture of cultural renewal and dithyrambic metre, messianic gospel and self-creation, the transvaluation of Jewish values and the will-to-power.

Nietzsche, for Buber, was a unique thinker who transcended conceptualisation:

> At all times there have been human beings who did not belong in a particular category and who cannot be labeled, for every classification does them violence: every classification defies expressing the essential in them. Too many different spheres cross in them, for too many different intimations and dawns are they the mouthpiece and the aurora, and they cannot be forced

into a particular conceptual box with others. They are great and defy definition as life itself does, whose apostle they are.

Is he a philosopher? He did not create a unified edifice of thought. Is he an artist? He did not create any objects. Is he a psychologist? His deepest knowledge deals with the future of the soul. Is he a poet? Only if we think of poets *as they once existed* [emphasis added]: 'Visionaries who tell us what might be', who give us 'a foretaste of future virtues.' Is he the founder of a new *Gemeinschaft*? Many rise up in his name, but they do not unite, for each one finds a different guiding light in this blessing night sky, his own, and only that, and each owes him not thanks for general knowledge of a kind that can unite people, but the release of his own innermost powers; it was not his deepest intention to share his innermost self, but to elicit from each that which is personal and productive, the most secret treasures of his individuality, and to transform them into agitating energy; heightening of general productivity, that's what he himself called the innermost meaning of his work. (Buber, 1900: 13)

Nietzsche, Buber continued, proclaimed new modes of being for the human race. He provided an attractive model of people creating themselves, transcending themselves; he nurtured the human capacity to long for something beyond the horizon, for a personality on a grand scale, and not to be content with the mediocrity of the masses. From now on, man would change from being a physical, existential entity to being a participant in the ever-evolving process of creation. In place of the static God of the creation narrative, a new human strain would come into being: the evolving God (werdende Gott), and as Buber said: 'Over and against the God of the world's beginning he set up a formidable adversary, the becoming God to whose development we can contribute, the envisaged product of future evolutions' (Buber, 1900). These expressions, observations and perceptions made Nietzsche a thinker–artist–psychologist who eluded all definition.

## Mythical hermeneutics

Buber developed a modern interpretation of myth that may be described as a 'mythical hermeneutics'. It was a systematic,

original and sophisticated interpretation that foreshadowed those of other famous interpreters of myth. Buberian interpretation has two aspects: the theological interpretation of the monotheistic myth in Judaism; and the historiographical interpretation of myth that changes things and that itself changes and that stands in opposition to frozen historicism. The Haskala, from its nineteenth-century representative Hermann Cohen to scholars of religion like Yehezkel Kaufmann, Julius Guttmann and Moshe David Cassuto, tried to prove that Judaism and myth are irreconcilable, and that biblical and rabbinic Judaism were entirely free of myth. Unlike them, Buber saw monotheistic myth as the very basis of his concept of Judaism. In his conception of a living monotheism, he claimed that myths were not the product of an aesthetic or psychological view of things: myths, in his opinion, were real historical memories handed down from generation to generation. Myths are memory, not imagination, and they are woven around a kernel of historical memory. Myth was seen by Buber as a living thing that is operative in every person (Schaeder, 1973: 91–106).

Nietzsche had a decisive influence on the formation of Buber's conception of myth, in that he rehabilitated myth as the living and creative foundation of all culture. Gershom Scholem hit the nail on the head when he pointed to Buber's experience of Nietzsche as the turning point in his approach to myth:

> Alongside his analysis of mysticism as a creative factor in Judaism, Buber developed a no less keen interest in its mythical foundations which related to a change in appreciating the vital nature of myth. The change of assessment, common to many of Buber's generation, [...] was the result of Nietzsche's influence. (Scholem, 1989: 383)

J. Laurence Silberstein reinforces Scholem's thesis by saying: 'Buber's turn to myth and his divergence from historical scholarship are further indication of his affinity to Nietzsche' (Silberstein, 1989: 52). The war that rabbinic Judaism declared on myth was highly praised as a campaign to rid Judaism of foreign elements. Buber recalled David Neumark, the Reform rabbi who in 1894 wrote the first Hebrew essay on Nietzsche, as having written: 'The history of the development of the Jewish religion is in reality

the history of the wars of liberation fought both against our mythology and that of others, both in the remote past and in more recent times.' Buber saw fit to correct him: 'The history of the development of the Jewish religion is in fact the history of the wars between the natural creation of a mythical-monotheistic folk-religion and the rational-monotheistic religion of the writers of the Talmud' (Buber, 1960: 83).

Buber was the most eminent thinker to speak of the monotheistic myth of Judaism:

> There is no truth whatsoever in the assertion that monotheism and myth are mutually exclusive, and that a people with a monotheistic outlook must necessarily have no capacity to create myths. Every living form of monotheism has a mythical basis, and as long as this exists it is alive. (Buber, 1960: 83)

The need to redefine the mythical phenomenon in the monotheistic context revealed a dialectical continuity between the Haskala orientation in the nineteenth century – that of disregarding myth – and the movement to resurrect myth in the first half of the twentieth century. There is an interesting interrelationship between myth and history, the subjective mythical truth and the objective historical truth. There is a dialectical relationship between myth and the historical present in that each moulds the other in its image. The needs of the present bring about a rewriting of myth, and myth for its part moulds the perceptions of the present. Myth gives the present meaning, but at the same time it moulds itself post factum according to the requirements of that same present. In other words, myth is one of a number of past events that has been chosen in order to serve the needs of the present. 'Historiology', to use Thomas Mann's expression, is a recording of the past for the purpose of scientific knowledge while myth is the creation of the past in order to mould the present. The mythical event is seen as an event that reappears with the passage of time, and it moulds it and gives it a form (Ohana, 2010a).

There are three consequences of the biblical story of Moses in Buber (Breslauer, 1990: 194–227). The early life of Moses shows the effect produced by a recognition of God's presence, the directives to the Israelites concerning the Passover shows the effect of law as a moulder of culture, and the revelation at Sinai had the

effect of creating a basis of social equality among the Israelites. In viewing the story of Moses as a mythical representation of these values – God's presence, law and equality – Buber understood the myth as an invitation to repentance that each generation reapplies to itself. The myth also changes the observer and leaves its mark on him. This is the mythical, dialogic hermeneutics between the one who remembers and the event, between the event and the memory of the observer. As a myth, the story of Moses invites every Jew in each generation to take the path that Moses did (Ohana and Wistrich, 1996).

## Self-overcoming

The young Buber was tremendously affected not only by Nietzsche's precepts – self-overcoming, the will-to-power, the superman, the transvaluation of all values – but also by the inspiration that the philosopher gave to restless young Jews in Eastern and Central Europe at the turn of the century, young people who wanted to create with their own hands a new, healthy, productive Judaism. In 1902, Buber, still dazzled by the attractions of the Nietzschean philosophy, published the article, 'The creators, the people and the movement', the opening shot in his war against political Zionism and a presage of things to come. Already here he hinted at the creation of a cultural myth of a people who could become a symbol of national rebirth. The 'creators' were not intellectuals or politicians but possessors of 'creative cultural forces', 'hidden kings of the people'. 'Productivity' meant creative participation in the culture of a particular people, but also in that of humanity as a whole. Up to a certain stage, Buber's relationship to the Germans was parallel to his relationship with the modern Jews: both groups fought against the cultural values prevailing in their time, both of them wanted to discover their national roots and the energies hidden in the life of the people. Immersed as he was in the heroic–tragic outlook of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Buber applied the lessons of the Greek revival to the Jewish rebirth. For him, Zionism was more than a movement with social objectives: it was first and foremost a movement for the cultural renewal of the nation (Silberstein, 1989: 33). Hans Kohn related that in 1903, Buber wrote a philosophical work that was never published, entitled 'Creation as redemption or evolution and revolution' (Kohn, 1961: 295). The terms 'creation'

and 'redemption', a Nietzschean juxtaposition, have a special significance as an acknowledgment of the state of mind of many Jewish youths who thought that the redemption of the Jewish people required creative energies, or as Paul Mendes-Flohr, basing himself on Schiller and Schelling put it, 'Zionism and the aesthetic education of the Jews' (Mendes-Flohr, 1997: 233–4).

The image of Buber as the German Ahad Ha-Am is accepted by many commentators, but the parallel is exaggerated and misses the point. Buber played a prominent role in the Democratic Fraction, the group opposed to the political and diplomatic Zionism of Herzl and Nordau. Herzl sought to solve the Jewish problem that he believed was caused by anti-Semitism, whereas Buber and Ahad Ha-Am wanted a solution to the problem of Judaism: that is to say, the creation of a new cultural and mental space, secular, modern, for a Judaism that had been frozen in tradition. The positivist Ahad Ha-Am rejected the call of the 'Tseirim' (a literary group) for a radical transvaluation of the values in the Jewish agenda out of a fear of Nietzschean nihilism, while the romanticist and aesthete Martin Buber derived spiritual force for a national cultural revival from those very Nietzschean concepts. Buber called for a *Kulturpolitik*, a spiritual and aesthetic education of the Jews for the purpose of a political and social transformation. In his article, 'Zionist politics' (1903), he asked in Nietzschean terms for 'a transvaluation of all aspects of […] the life of the people down to the very depths. This must reach the soul […] We must liberate the vital forces of the nation and grant freedom to its instincts' (Buber, 1916a: 113).

The article, 'The Jewish Renaissance' (1903), represents a first crystallisation of cultural Zionism in the context of Buber's activities in the Democratic Fraction and under the inspiration of Nietzsche's thought (Buber, 1961a: 7–16). It was really a rewriting of an article that he had published two years earlier in an experimental number of the journal, *Ost und West* (East and West) (1901). Both versions owed a debt of precedence to Jacob Burckhardt and his interpretation of the Italian Renaissance – seen as a creative rebirth rather than a revival of the past – that contributed to a popularisation of the debate at the turn of the century in which pupils of his, like Nietzsche, Arthur de Gobineau and Stefan George, participated. For Buber, the Jewish Renaissance meant the rebirth of the Jewish people in language, costume and art. It was

a renaissance because of the transformation of the Jewish fate into a national movement, and a cultural rebirth in the sense of a renewal of the total human entity and not a return to old ideas and ways of life. It meant a change from an apparent existence to a real existence, from consumption to production, from learned dialectics to natural perception, from medieval asceticism to a sense of the fullness of life, from the confines of a narrow community to the freedom of the individual, from an unformed cultural potential to a well-turned and beautiful cultural creation. These were Nietzsche's aesthetic criteria for the 'Apollonian' moulding that gave form to the chaotic 'Dionysian'.

The young Buber was totally under the influence of the *Lebensphilosophie* (philosophy of life) of the school of Nietzsche, Schelling and Klages that in place of reason – the matter of philosophy from Socrates to Hegel – emphasised will, vitality and myth. Buber said that in order to understand the Jewish renaissance, a phenomenon full of joy and beauty, one has to see it as a single totality that had its roots in the end of the eighteenth century. Two powerful movements penetrated Judaism at that time: Hassidism from inside and the Enlightenment from outside, and the two of them created a dialectical synthesis with tremendous repercussions on modern Jewish history. Until the eighteenth century, the energy of the Jews was repressed not only from the outside by foreign national forces, but also from inside by the tyranny of the Law (the reference was presumably to Halacha, D. O.). The Law trampled on all that was bright, joyful and beautiful, dominated education and gained unprecedented power. Personal feelings were repressed, and only activities based on the Law were permitted. Creativity gave way to reliance on books of the Law. But for hundreds of years there were underground currents beneath the dominance of the Law, something for which two movements were responsible. The first was Hassidism, which demanded a greater emotional expression than the Law provided, a demand that entered into Jewish mysticism. And the second was the Haskala, the Jewish movement of enlightenment that aimed at liberating modern thought from the traditional Law. Hassidism and the Haskala together brought about a physical and spiritual struggle and unintentionally led to the emergence of the Jewish renaissance, as a result of which, Buber said, 'slowly and gradually a new type of Jew [will develop]'.

Hassidism, or the strong spiritual current that gave birth to it, formed the 'self-renewing Jew' according to the Nietzschean Buber. The Hassidic world was bereft of sentimentality but was full of mysticism that had power and feeling, and created the transition to the here-and-now, allowing life to be exposed to the concrete and to a living, authentic and decisive experience of renewal, a new form of the ecstatic, an active sense of holiness between the human entity and God (Buber, 1950b). Creativity (Schaffen), a long drawn-out process, is a phenomenon operative in all times and places through human beings working in anarchy and love. The aim of the Jewish Law is to transform the human entity into the Law itself (man as Law: that is a prolonged echo of Nietzsche). The Haskala, for its part, opposed Hassidism and rabbinic Judaism because both in its opinion were based on faith rather than on knowledge. The Haskala, which sprang up in the name of knowledge and European civilisation, wanted to enlighten but was artificial, wished to popularise but did not succeed. The Haskala demanded the self-determination of the autonomous man based on thinking and not on tradition, desired the Europeanisation of the Jews and sought to revive Hebrew and universal ideas. In these respects the Haskala was an important factor in the intellectual revival of the Jewish people.

The Talmudic Jew, said Buber, was passive, suffered persecution without complaint or pride, with sealed lips and a desensitised heart. In his passive attitudes and actions there was not only grandeur but misery and pathos. By contrast, the new Jew of the Emancipation who followed the line of thought of Spinoza, was audacious, acted freely, opposed Halacha and behaved in accordance with his thoughts and feelings. The world of creativity had been disregarded by him for too long, and now he sought purification and self-redemption. But many people of the Haskala who at the beginning of the nineteenth century adopted a cosmopolitan outlook soon found that instead of gaining spiritual freedom, they were destined to assimilation and absorption by other peoples. This pathological crisis was due to geographical dispersion and the emancipation following the French Revolution, and as a result, the Jewish national movement sought to revive the latent energies of the nation. Buber expressed it in Nietzschean terms, saying that if the Jews considered the renaissance as an organism, the national idea would be the consciousness and the national

movement the will-to-power. The Jewish national movement saw its mission as creating a new Jewish community in Palestine, and it sought to do so not for Zionist but for humanitarian reasons. True cultural activity spontaneously brought forth territorial fruits and at the end of the day gained a country.

The young Buber took his first steps on a dual path, the Nietzschean and the Jewish, as expressed by Akiva Ernst Simon (Simon, 1985: 32). The closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth witnessed his intellectual and national development on parallel lines, lines that converged in a single trajectory. These were fascination with the German philosopher who first taught him the 'philosophy of life', and his involvement in the Zionist movement that among other things found expression in his editing the journal *Der Jude* (The Jew). Each of these enthusiasms nourished the other, but his disappointment in them was also mutual. The Nietzschean nihilism finally made him turn his back on his former teacher of philosophy, and the Zionist leaders' focus on politics and neglect of the cultural aspect caused him to abandon official Zionist activities. He eventually admitted his dual disappointment, in the philosopher and in the movement. His demand for a rebirth and renewal of Judaism and his hope for 'something astounding and gigantic which would not be a continuation or rectification but a repentance and an overturning' ended with the feeble declaration of 'slight changes'; 'audacity of soul and the power of sacrifice' led to 'entering into contracts'; and 'the longing for a new life of heroism' acquired a pathos exemplified in the figure of Nietzsche:

> The most tragic example is that of a man in whom these feelings were more powerful than they were in any other man, but who was nevertheless able to liberate himself from this course of development: Friedrich Nietzsche. (Buber, 1950a: 38)

It is not surprising, said Simon, that Buber's divorce from Nietzsche also appeared in one of the 'Speeches on Judaism', in which he:

> bore witness to Nietzsche's tragic failure. Later, Buber was to speak of the far greater tragedy that arose out of the doctrine of the superman. For in reality this doctrine was superimposed on the model of biological development, and this in turn

> was superimposed on history with the same spurious success. (Simon, 1985: 33)

## Messianism and Zionism

In his article 'Buber and Ben-Gurion', Akiva Ernst Simon, the pupil and friend of Martin Buber and Ben-Gurion's opponent, gave a good description of the relationship between the philosopher and the statesman:

> it seems that these two, the philosopher and the statesman, may be considered two of the greatest Jews of the first half of the twentieth century. Some have said that they complemented one another, that each one had what the other lacked; others see them as the personification of two contrary outlooks which cannot be reconciled. (Simon, 1966)

The intellectual and the prime minister were on opposite sides of the fence on many political questions: Buber's position on the Arab question as shown in his membership of the radical leftist intellectual group *Brit Shalom* (1925–33), and the *Ihud*, founded in 1924; the affair surrounding Ben-Gurion's accusation of the leftist Israeli scholar Aaron Cohen (1910–80), who was sentenced and imprisoned for spying; the nuclearisation of the Middle East; the execution of Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi official who was tried in Israel in 1961; and other controversial subjects.

Buber's intellectual and scholarly interest in messianism was intense and it can also be said to have been methodical. Messianism and its universal essence were the very foundation of his thought. His methodical treatment of messianism encouraged the idea that his dialogic approach to philosophical enquiry was an authentic philosophical method. In his early *Three Speeches about Judaism* – 'Judaism and the Jews' (1909), 'Judaism and mankind' (1910) and 'The renewal of Judaism' (1910) – we find a peculiarly Buberian combination of the idea of redemption as a cardinal principle for the individual with the Nietzschean concept of the will-to-power.

In 'The renewal of Judaism' (1910), he stated that, 'Messianism is the most original and profound idea in Judaism.' Buber's enthusiasm for the First World War was also, like that of his generation,

ascribable to his attraction to Nietzsche's *Lebensphilosophie* (philosophy of life).

At least three books by Buber – *The Kingdom of Heaven* (1932), *The Teaching of the Prophets* (1942) and *The Messiah* (1964) – dealt with the connection between the messianic idea and the philosophy of history. They were preceded by the lecture, 'The Messianic mystery', given on 6 March 1925 in Berlin on the occasion of the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Theodor Dreyfus, the translator of the lecture, declared that:

> it is not by chance that Buber chose a 'Messianic' theme for his lecture in honor of the opening of the Hebrew University. The central axis of his system is creating a true spiritual life in each and every society until the spirit guides the whole of humanity. (Buber, 1980: 117–33)

In 1927, Buber gave a speech in memory of Ahad Ha-Am, in which he pointed out at an early stage the use that Zionism made of messianic terminology. He protested against the secularisation and nationalisation of religion and warned against the transformation of religious language into nationalist language. It was the same danger of the banalisation of the sacred tongue that Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem had complained of early in the twentieth century and Simon, Baruch Kurzweil and Yeshayahu Leibowitz were to protest against in the middle of the century. This is what Buber said:

> All national movements are merely copies of religious movements [...]. All trends of liberation are simply secular reprints of longings for redemption [...]. These reprints are unlikely to be particularly faithful. One cannot transfer the qualities of religious language to nationalist language. Every mixture creates a confusion which is disastrous [...]. (Buber, 1961b: 243–4)

Buber's book *The Kingdom of Heaven* (1932), his main essay on messianism, appeared during his period of activity in Brit Shalom. Right at the beginning of the book, he declared that: 'The most important, in my opinion, of all the problems which have been ripening within me and which I now want to solve, has been the

problem of the development of Messianism among the people of Israel' (Buber, 1936, 1964: Introduction).

One can see this question 'ripening' in Buber in a series of lectures that he gave at the University of Frankfurt in the winter of 1924–25, and in a course that he gave about four years later at Ponte Teresa in Switzerland. In the introduction to *The Kingdom of Heaven*, the first volume in his messianic trilogy, he described the first part of his programme, an examination of the popular religious concept of the divine kingdom in ancient Israel. He expressed his intention to explore in the future (which he did in the two succeeding volumes, *The Teaching of the Prophets* and *The Messiah*) the relationship between the sanctified character of the king of Israel as the Messiah of God and this concept, and the way in which these two elements were transferred from the sphere of history to the sphere of eschatology. His dialectical argument was that the Jewish and general eschatological hope originated in hope in history, and with a growing disappointment in history it became eschatological. Eschatological faith comes out of historical faith. Historical phenomena create the vision of the end of days and become myth: the messianic myth is both the medium and the representation of the end of days.

According to Buber in his article 'Jewish myth', the Jewish messianic myth signified a belief in 'the existence of a connection between God and the world through the absolute rule/kingdom of God' (Buber, 1936: 8). This unique faith of the people of Israel was based on a real historical memory that had been given mythical clothing. The messianic quality of the Jewish tradition is not to be understood religiously but nationally: the national mission of the people of Israel is the universalising of this messianic factor.

The main area in which Buber investigated Jewish myth was Hassidism. In his book *For the Sake of Heaven*, he contrasted the active messianism of the 'seer of Lublin' with the 'holy Jew', who embodied the opposite pole, love and compassion: 'One must pity the human beings who make a god of their desires, for it is hard for them to be with the Living God' (Ohana, 2008a: 186). It is not difficult to see whose side Buber is on. He warns against the Promethean arrogance of the man who seeks to rise against his Maker: 'We are not entrusted with the areas within the purview of holiness but with the area which is not holy in order to correct it' (ibid.). Give to God the things that are God's and to man the

things that are man's. The 'seer of Lublin' was concerned with the messianic urge, and the 'holy Jew' was concerned with human responsibility. These were the two aspects of the Jewish idea of redemption. One can distinguish between the utopian principle and the messianic principle in Buber's teaching: utopian life concerns people operating in the historical reality; messianic life relates to the end of history. Utopia is 'a place which is entirely good'; eschatology envisages 'a time which is entirely good' (Avraham Shapira, 1987: 54). Both elements – the utopian and the messianic – appear in his writings.

Buber did not live in an ivory tower, and his writing reflected the Jewish and general environment in which he lived. He related that he wrote *For the Sake of Heaven* during the Second World War. He said that 'the signs of a false messianism abroad and at home' are what drove him to write the book, in which he described how 'I received the decisive push when suddenly, half-dreaming, I saw the figure of a false messenger, mentioned in the first chapter of my book – a sort of devil with a peculiar Goebbels-like face' (Buber, 1944; Avraham Shapira, 1987: 76–82). Already on 1 May 1933, when Hitler came to power, he declared at a public meeting in Frankfurt that:

> The Jewish belief in the redemption of the world does not mean that this world will be replaced with another, but it is a belief in a new world in the same place. There is no concept of this world and the world-to-come in the Hebrew language […]. We are not obliged to have a special 'Messianic' policy. But there is a kind of participation in public life in which we direct ourselves towards the kingdom of heaven while dealing with the world and politics […]. (Buber, 1966)

National Socialism was not the only false messianism for Buber. In his lectures at the Hebrew University in 1938, he spoke of the dangers of 'scientific messianism', caused by the dialectics of Marx and Hegel. The messianic goal, he said, was liable to justify any means of attaining it. The source of this secular messianism was in Christianity and the apocalyptics of predestination. The secular man, with his Promethean philosophical thrust, is sure that 'this very defective world is moving towards its total rectification'. Buber observed that 'Messianism was secularised' in the Marxist

philosophy of history. The Marxist messianism was the continuation of Christian secularism, 'a utopian modern metamorphosis of apocalyptics' (Buber, 1964: 115–16).

Buber and Albert Camus both saw the dangers of the 'scientific messianism'. In his function as editor of translated works of literature for the Mossad Bialik publishing house in Israel, Buber wrote to Camus and asked his permission to publish his *L'Homme Révolté* in Hebrew: 'Your book *L'Homme Revolté* is of such importance to human existence at the present time that I would like to recommend it to Mossad Bialik.' (Incidentally, Ben-Gurion planned to edit the Mossad Bialik translated literature series with Buber after he retired from politics.) Three weeks later, on 22 February 1952, Camus replied, 'I read your book *I and Thou* with much appreciation, and I did not expect to receive from you something that would give me such pleasure and do me such an honor' (Ohana, 2000a: 99).

After the Second World War, Buber testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry that visited Palestine in 1946. He declared to the Committee that messianism is 'the most productive and most paradoxical of human ideas'. Its universal mission is to command 'every generation to contribute to the upbuilding of the future'. The original aim of the people of Israel, added Buber, was messianic–ideological: 'Action towards the coming of the kingdom of God on earth' (Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, 1946). This was the faith that united the Jews in exile and gave them the hope of eventually returning to Zion. The historian Shalom Ratzabi pointed out that in Buber's statement to the Committee:

> he stressed first and foremost the special nature of Jewish nationalism which aimed at renewing the connection between the people of Israel and its land within the framework of the messianic process, which seeks universal redemption. Its first consideration, therefore, is not statehood but the building of a model society, the precondition to which is the concentration of the national forces capable of renewing their creative power in Eretz-Israel. (Ratzabi, 1998: 202)

Buber explained to the Committee that the Zionist enterprise in Eretz Israel in the 1940s was also 'important for the future of

mankind' (Buber, 1985: 177). Only in Zion could the Jews realise the messianic idea through their universal mission. The messianic people were seen as the enemy of anti-messianic anti-Semitism, and it was consequently natural to attack the messengers of messianism.

A year prior to his testimony before the Committee of Enquiry, Buber spoke on Dutch radio about the special nature of Zionism. Zionism, he said, represented a people that had unity and faith, both of which had a connection with antiquity: 'These are two things that are as one for the beginning of redemption, for the beginning of the reformation of the world in the Realm of the Almighty' (Buber, 1985: 166–72). Together with this idea that Zionism was a means to a universal end, he adopted a point of view opposed to the nationalisation and politicisation of the messianic principle. He called for 'political work', which meant 'a politics of depoliticization', saying that the domination of Jewish–Arab relations by politics would lead to a national state. He thought that a binational state was preferable, hence his membership of Brit Shalom (Ratzabi, 2002). Buber explained in a letter to Mahatma Gandhi in February 1939 that, 'We do not have a specific Messianic policy, but that does not mean that politics are outside the sphere of holiness' (Buber, 1961b: 163–74).

As soon as the Jewish state was established, Buber declared that a moral 'boundary line' was necessary. The state, he believed, was not an end in itself, and was justified only if it produced a 'Hebrew humanism', that is to say, a genuine rebirth, the renewal of a living tradition, as little injustice as possible and a striving towards wholeness and the categorical imperative. This was the 'purpose', the aim of the original Zionist vision.

Buber was one of the outstanding participants at the meeting with the writers and intellectuals arranged by Ben-Gurion in 1949. Like Rabbi Abraham Hacohen Kook, who saw the pioneers as furthering the messianic idea, Buber thought that although the pioneers did not intend to continue the Jewish tradition, they did continue it in practice, and through their labour continued to fulfil the very same purpose. Although the pioneers did not acknowledge their affinity with the Patriarchs, this connection nevertheless existed. However, the values represented by the pioneers were being voided of their content and were now becoming 'national slogans'. Buber protested against this nullification of the

'added value' of the 'purpose' that constituted Zionism's universal messianic dimension. Less than ten years later, at an international intellectual gathering that took place in Jerusalem in the summer of 1965, Buber again protested at the subordination of the theological to the political and at the secularising tendencies of Ben-Gurion's messianism: 'The spirit in all his ideas and visions is degraded and becomes a matter of politics' (Ohana, 2003: 255–60). He expressed the fear that messianism would be nationalised and its universal aspect would be neutralised and profaned.

In his reply to Buber, Ben-Gurion said that he was glad to know 'that I am in agreement with the great in seeing the messianic vision as one of the foundation-stones of Judaism', and he agreed that 'the messianic vision does not separate the redemption of Israel from the redemption of humanity' (Ohana, 2003: 274). Ben-Gurion thought that, unlike himself and Buber, the young people, workers and intellectuals in Israel did not always recognise the messianic vision as such, although it lived within them. He acknowledged that the political theology of the messianic vision was shared by him, the statesman, and the philosopher. Buber, in his letter to Gandhi mentioned above, had also opposed compartmentalisation: 'We shall be able to labor for the kingdom of heaven only if we labor in all the spheres allotted us' (Ohana, 2003: 184, 187). He believed that the modern world suffered from a sense of alienation precisely because of the dichotomy between the religious dimension and the secular, between the sacred and the profane. In his article 'Hebrew humanism', he stated that the roots of political theology, which did not recognise an artificial compartmentalisation, were to be found in the Bible. He thought that a renewed study of the Bible might bring Israeli nationhood closer to the universal messianic principle that it was so lacking.

## Thus spake Scholem's Zarathustra

On 23 July 1918, Gershom Scholem, who was then a Berlin student just starting to wrestle with his Jewish identity, wrote in his diary: 'Sometimes I start to think that Friedrich Nietzsche is the only one in modern times who has said anything substantial about ethics' (Scholem, 2007: 253). This 'something essential' that the author of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* introduced into the sphere of morality was of course the Nietzschean revolution of the shift

from ethics to aesthetics, the transvaluation of values, and the new criteria of the will-to-power and decadence that are beyond good and evil. These heretical philosophical views concerning the Judeo-Christian morality and the ideology of the German bourgeoisie (the young Scholem rebelled against his father, who represented the liberal lifestyle and bourgeois mentality of the assimilated Jew) left their imprint on the Jewish thinker at the beginning of his scholarly career. And indeed, his first Hebrew article, 'Mitzva ha-ba be-'avera' (Redemption through sin), published in Palestine in 1937, discussed what was described as the 'nihilistic revolution' of the Sabbataians and Frankists in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Europe, whose main feature was the rejection of the normative ethics of rabbinic Judaism. Alexander Kraushaar, the author of the book *Jacob Frank*, compared *Divrei Ha-Adon* (Words of the Lord), a hagiography of Jacob Frank written by his followers and considered the statement of belief of the non-believing Frankists, to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Kraushaar, 1895). Scholem himself, when he was seventeen years old, wrote in his diary on 17 November 1914: 'And what's so wonderful about Zarathustra? […] Zarathustra is in fact a new Bible, regardless of what one thinks about the ideas it propounds. To write something like it is my ideal' (Scholem, 2007: 36).

It is therefore not surprising if the editor of the English edition of Scholem's diaries called the preface that he wrote 'A Zarathustra for the Jews'. Other Scholem scholars followed suit and connected together the Jewish thinker, the German philosopher and the work with the name of the Persian god. The dream of the young Scholem was not so far from the reality, and it may have taken on flesh and blood in his great book *Sabbatai Sevi* (1973 [1957]), an exemplary work that is an aesthetic retelling of the Sabbataian revolt. But one may go further and say that the Nietzschean revolution against the Judeo-Christian morality was already exemplified as an aesthetic phenomenon in the article 'Redemption through sin', written twenty years before the biography of the seventeenth-century false messiah. Consequently, a reexamination of the early article and the biography and reading them as 'A Zarathustra for the Jews' is by no means unreasonable, and it may even provide refreshing insights into the development of Scholem's ideas and an opportunity to challenge him through an analogical perspective. In which way did the Nietzschean

influence affect the young Scholem, or the older one, for that matter? Was it a youthful phase, a need for a ladder (in the same way as Micha Josef Berdichevsky, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and Hillel Zeitlin needed one, for instance), a necessary stairway in the process of self-construction (Bildung), or was it a case of an inner affinity with matters that Scholem was concerned with all of his life, such as nihilism, self-overcoming, normative morality and the will-to-power? These matters preoccupied the young Scholem and gave him the spiritual strength to do great things, to be a 'superman' laying with his own hands his life's path and urging him to be a messiah to his people. Scholem aspired to a life of greatness and creativity, and intended to write his masterpiece, or another great work, or both, which would give him his place among other great modern thinkers like himself.

Echoes of the aesthetic revolution created by Nietzsche reached the German-Jewish youth who, between chapters of the Bible and portions of the Talmud that he studied under the guidance of the Orthodox rabbi Yitzhak Bleichrode, also hungrily devoured the works of Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Hofmannsthal, Stefan George and, needless to say, Nietzsche. In one of the early entries in his diary, in November 1914, Scholem identified aestheticism with Nietzsche: 'Aestheticism! Oh this word, an abyss on whose opposite side is nothingness. Aestheticism, by which of course is meant self-conscious aestheticism, is the dying man's last shivers and final attempt at life' (Scholem, 2007: 42). Further on, Scholem declared that a natural people is in its essence an aesthetic entity, but that a decadent people loses its natural aestheticism, and 'as a result – as with everything one lacks – it's become a science, the science of aesthetics (or just look at the "Science of Judaism"!!)' (ibid.). Here one can discern a very early criticism by Scholem of *Jüdische Wissenschaft* (the Science of Judaism). 'Sometimes it is tragic', he writes, 'when someone truly desires life only to arrive at aesthetics. Hofmannsthal, Nietzsche, George. It's a disaster, also called a *Kismet*. God spare us from aesthetics!' (ibid.).

A month later, Scholem once again attacked the scientific study of the Talmud and the Jewish proponents of methods imitative of the European method, which sterilise any 'oversoul' in Judaism. These people, he said, wished to approach the Talmud 'scientifically' but were incapable of studying it in the right way. Scholem saw himself and his contemporaries as a generation of the future

that would change everything from top to bottom, even if they came up against a brick wall. This was a generation that aspired to see the Holy Land, the Promised Land in the full sense of the concept. 'Where is our Moses?', asked Scholem. The people in their exile needed a leader like Moses or Jesus: 'his name just mustn't be Hermann Cohen' (Scholem, 2007: 43). The youthful, optimistic and challenging spirit to be found here is cogently expressed in the following declaration: 'with Nietzsche we say that the child's land is the land of the future' (ibid.: 42). Scholem was referring here to Nietzsche's words in the section 'On Old and New Tablets' of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

> O my brethren, not backward shall your nobility gaze, but outward! Exiles shall ye be from all fatherlands and forefatherlands! Your children's land shall ye love: let this love be your new nobility,—the undiscovered in the remotest seas! For it do I bid your sails search and search! Unto your children shall ye make amends for being the children of your fathers: all the past shall ye thus redeem! This new table do I place over you! (Nietzsche, 1995: part 3, section 12)

It is extraordinary how perspicacious the young Scholem was in his diary about the illusions of the First World War and the European culture that brought it about. His conclusions anticipated those of Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin. The war was a traumatic event for them; unlike many of their peers, they were revolted by it even before it began. They looked on with frustration as their spiritual mentors – Martin Buber for Benjamin and Georg Simmel for Bloch – greeted the war with the enthusiasm of the Nietzschean *Lebensphilosophie*. In fact, Benjamin refused to write for Buber's paper *Der Jude*. Bloch's greatest disappointment with what he called 'the ideas of 1914' and 'the utopias of the will' was Simmel's support for the war. The diary shows Scholem's negative attitude to the war, an attitude that exhibited intellectual ripening, political understanding and moral maturity – qualities that could not be ascribed either to Buber or Simmel in this context.

His hostility to the war grew more and more intense. His meetings with his brother Werner, a communist, in Berlin, and the attempts of certain circles to stand against the violent storm threatening Europe, strengthened his resolve. At the same time,

as the leader of a small Zionist circle 'Young Judea', he began to express his opposition to political Zionism. In a letter of September 1914 to Werner, Scholem said that he was waiting for his medical examination for the army, in which he said that he did not want to serve, and spoke of his relationship with his father, which had reached an impasse. Against this background, he expressed scepticism about the possibility of any laws in history and said that he preferred an anarchistic philosophy:

> Dear Werner, I do not believe in the philosophy of history – whether it be Hegel's (that is, Marx's), Ranke's, or Treitschke's, or (for all I care) even the negative form of it preached by Nietzsche. In other words, I believe that if history produces laws at all, either history or the laws are worthless. At the very most, I think that only anarchism can be of some use if you really want to prove something through history […]. (Scholem, 2002: 26)

At the same time, the young Scholem was temporarily convinced that he was the Messiah who was about to come. Buber, his Zionist hero and the hero of his generation of Jews, was cast in the role of prophet, like Nathan of Gaza. A few months later, Scholem changed his mind, and declared: 'At this moment I no longer believe as I once did that I'm the Messiah' (Scholem, 2007: 68). The historian Michael Brenner said that Scholem met Buber about five months after he wrote this, and readers of the diary cannot help raising an ironic smile at the thought of the relationship that must have existed between the would-be Messiah and his designated prophet. It is clear that contrary to the criticisms by some Kabbala scholars, Scholem was by no means a stranger to subjects that he wrote about such as mysticism and messianism. Casting oneself as the Messiah was nothing unusual at that time: we know of Herzl's messianic vision and the messianic secular universalist outlook of Ben-Gurion (Ohana, 2008a). These two statesmen worked in their mature years to realise Zionism, their early messianic vision, and the young self-appointed messiah became the doyen of historians of Jewish messianism.

In a confession striking in its honesty, Scholem declared that he could never provide a narrative in which he did not play the leading role. Thus, we see that in his attack on political Zionism

he was really aiming at Herzl, the head of the pyramid. The intellectual atmosphere in which he lived explains his revulsion at politics, his attachment to the cultural sphere and his attraction to the anarchic. Scholem wanted to be the ultimate revolutionary, a Zionist revolutionary:

> Our guiding principle is revolution! Revolution everywhere! We don't want reform or reeducation but revolution or renewal. We desire to absorb revolution into our innermost souls. There are external and internal revolutions […]. We should be revolutionaries and always and everywhere say who we are, what we are, and what we want. For the sake of Judah we want to fight it out with our foes. Above all, we want to revolutionize Judaism. We want to revolutionize Zionism and to preach anarchism and freedom from all authority. We will go to battle against all autocrats […]. We wish to rip away the formalistic facade from Zionism. In doing so we've arrived at Herzl, but only taking from him the force of his personality. We reject him. He's *to blame* for today's Zionism – a movement that instead of going forward looks backwards, an organization of shopkeepers that grovels in the dust before the powerful! Zionism is *Mauschel*!! It has taken up the Jewish problem merely as a form instead of in its inner essence. Its only thought has been the Jewish *state*. We preachers of anarchism reject this. We don't want a state. We want a free society, and Herzl's *Old-New Land* hasn't a thing to do with this! We Jews are not a people of the state, go to Palestine to found a state, thereby forging new chains out of the old […]. We want to go to Palestine out of a thirst for freedom and longing for the future. The future belongs to the Orient […]. (Scholem, 2007: 47–8)

Scholem's Zionist revolution was one that worked through changing hearts and not through political action, through Judaism and not through diplomacy, through a culture and not through a state.

On 15 November 1915, the first anniversary of his diary, Scholem wrote that he would stop keeping the diary as he was about to be called up. About a week later, he made a surprising announcement:

> We are Jews, which is a statement that must be properly understood. That we are also humans shall be called out with a full

> voice because some (or many) of my friends have forgotten it. It is no proof of one's Zionism to think that being Jewish is to occupy oneself *only* with Jewish matters. Someone can be Jewish and be with Jean Paul, Gottfried Keller, and Friedrich Nietzsche. You can't crawl out of your own skin, and for a Jew who knows something about his Judaism, there is nothing non-Jewish that can do damage to him if it's not damaging to other people. It's nonsense to assume that pursuing something else could lead you away from Zionism. Zionism is the presupposition for this pursuit. […] This is a lesson I've experienced and have understood over the past year. (Scholem, 2007: 47–8)

Scholem's Zionism is shown here to be existentialist rather than political. It demands of the Jews, as of himself, self-overcoming and the transvaluation of the bourgeois values of exilic Judaism. His model is Zarathustra; his anarchic call for a 'revolution everywhere' also applies to his own camp. Zionism must break open the boundaries of exile. His approach was a Jewish interpretation of the European crisis, and the radical answer to it was Zion, which represented 'the equilibrium of all things', 'the solution to all incompleteness'. For him, Zionism was 'the need for a splendid life in Palestine'. Benjamin Lazier has suggested that the change of names from Gerhardt to Gershom and from Scholem to Shalom was an example of the Nietzschean principle of self-overcoming and of the conscious creation of the 'self' (Lazier, 2008: 153). This is how Scholem described his move from nihilism to Zionism:

> From nothingness I went to Orthodoxy, and from there I continued on to Buber; and from Buber – by *giving him* up – I arrived at Zion. […] Is the Bible's divinity rooted in its humanity, as I once thought? No. Its divinity goes far, far deeper. It is *not* in myth, but in its view of history […] Judaism is the *absolute* truth, it follows that the Bible and the Torah are divine. For this reason, one can employ the Bible as a proof. […] At the very core of Judaism lies the belief that there is a revelation from God, and this is something no modern man can grasp. This is the point that Kierkegaard never understood, which comes out clearly in his brand of Christianity. […] Like Plato, he was Oriental, which is surely part of the problem with him,

> as it was with Nietzsche. For he approached philosophy from the question of history. […] He too tried to overcome historical skepticism by going to its source. There is absolutely nothing more devastating than the scientific study of the Bible. […] The Bible is the eternal *Untimely Meditations*. The Messiah will come during the generation in which the Bible is also 'externally' relevant. […] Judaism cannot be modernized without robbing it of its soul. Only from Zion can the real reformation of Judaism take place. Reformation is God's business, and God alone speaks to us from Zion. Indeed: for us Zionism is Judaism. (Scholem, 2007: 145–6)

These sections of the diary were written in October 1916. At the height of the war, they bear witness to Scholem's consolidated Zionist outlook. Judaism, Bible and Zion are the ultimate answer to the nihilist escape that lies at the heart of the European crisis. Modernism is unable to explain the divine revelation; the philosophy of history is impotent in the face of the mystery of Jewish existence; science cannot decipher the Bible. Out of all of the works that one can think of, Scholem chose Nietzsche's early essays *Untimely Meditations* (not the works generally considered most important) as ideal models of praise of the Bible – a clear sign of Scholem's respectful attitude to Nietzsche.

These abundant examples of the affinity of the young Jewish scholar to the German philosopher sprang up in purely German soil. Later on, we shall consider whether these affinities were shifting or accidental. If that is so, Scholem's later disavowal of Nietzsche and his insistence on stressing his alienation from the harmful influence of the author of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* are most surprising. Here are two typical examples of Scholem's reactions. In May 1975, he told the American-Jewish scholar of Hebrew literature Robert Alter about the fine review published in *Commentary* of the English translation of *Sabbatai Sevi*, but:

> to Nietzsche, I must confess that I feel no kinship to him or to his heritage, and as a young man I turned away in disgust from those writings of Nietzsche which came into my hands. Unfortunately, those seem to have been the wrong ones, like *Zarathustra*, and they prevented me from delving deeper. (Scholem, 2002: 454)

Again, in March 1978, Scholem reacted angrily to a critical article by Henry Pachter, 'Gershom Scholem: the myth of the myth-maker'. Scholem called it 'a very strange essay full of the most nonsensical assertions about me' (Scholem, 1977: 178), and he explained:

> what I found particularly amusing was the discovery that I derive from Nietzsche and that my work 'obviously' stands under the influence of *The Birth of Tragedy*, a work that I have never read, as I have hardly read Nietzsche at all, apart from *Zarathustra*, which particularly repelled me. (Scholem, 1994–99, 3: 178)

As we know that many of Scholem's pithy statements in his diary were of Nietzschean derivation, and as we know that *Zarathustra* inspired him, the historian Steven E. Aschheim comments: 'We may regard his later statements as at best disingenuous' (Aschheim, 2004: 906). Here one can offer an explanation: Scholem was not exceptional in distancing himself later on from Nietzsche, who had been a source of inspiration for him in his youth, as he was for many Jewish thinkers in Europe at an early stage of their intellectual development. Nietzsche was not regarded as just another thinker that one could boast about. Dependence on him as a source of inspiration automatically identified the person influenced with the one who influenced, which was something inadvisable at a certain period in the case of a thinker considered one of the progenitors of the Nazis. Here one should remember that Nietzsche called for morality to be turned on its head, that he despised all ideologies and founded a new philosophy of will-to-power. All this did not help his reputation, especially during and after the Second World War, and people of mature years, whose outlook was already formed, chose to deny him as a thinker who influenced them when they were moulding their personality. It is natural that creators who achieve greatness wish to kick away the ladder that they climbed up.

## In search of myth

The phenomenology of Jewish myth, Scholem's main preoccupation after the First World War, was suited to the European and

Jewish intellectual climate of opinion in the period between the two World Wars. Scholem belonged to the current of European thought that searched for the mythical roots of modern man, which included Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade in the general sphere, and Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber in the Jewish sphere.

Like the German intellectuals Julius Langbehn, Paul de Lagarde and Moeller van den Bruck, Scholem discerned a politics of cultural despair in Germany (Stern, 1961), and like the agents of the conservative revolution, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt and Ernst Jünger, he identified the nihilism at the heart of the German consciousness (Herf, 1984). Unlike them, however, he envisaged a Promethean horizon beyond the boundaries of the Rhine: the possibility of founding a cultural community in Palestine, where he would help to give birth to a new Jewish civilisation. The philosophical critique of the Enlightenment and the criticism of the German ideology influenced each other and were interconnected: 'In the manner of Nietzsche, he saw these two enemies as one' (Pachter, 1978: 22). Like Freud and Kafka, for example, Scholem took part in the post-Nietzschean criticism of the Enlightenment and reason, and like them he wanted to reveal the hidden dimensions of the human soul, and especially that of the Jew, which had been hidden beneath a rational conceptual cover until it had almost disappeared. This cultural and political intellectual atmosphere moulded the young Scholem, influenced his decision to study the foundations of Jewish mysticism and found expression in his Jewish historiographical enterprise.

The romantic nationalism in Europe took hold of many young people whose search for their roots harmonised with their revolt against abstract rationalism. The cult of national renewal and the longing for a revival of myth was not only typical of young Jews. The eighteenth-century German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder was the one who flung open the doors of modern nationalism, and the German romantics after him searched for their national roots and participated in the national revival in the nineteenth century. Scholem, a disciple of the German *Bildung*, belonged to the romantic national movement of the beginning of the twentieth century, and it swept him onto the shores of Jewish national historiography. What the German national awakening and the Jewish national renaissance had in common was the

attempt to locate in the culture of the past bodies of symbolism, religious rituals and sacred texts that would give lasting significance and authenticity to modern romanticism.

For Scholem, the history of religion was first and foremost symbology, a matter that was the common interest of the Eranos circle – a circle of leading historians of religion of which Scholem was a member, and which gathered under the inspiration of Carl Gustav Jung in Ascona in Switzerland from the end of the 1940s until 1976 (Wasserstrom, 1999: 217). This group gave itself the mission of investigating the phenomenology of religious symbols. Scholem claimed that the living God speaks in symbols, and that 'Judaism was more than anything else a *corpus symbolicum*' (ibid.). The symbol is the mechanism that activates religious experience as well as national consciousness. It is not surprising that one of the main symbols that Scholem investigated was the Star of David, and he traced the genealogy of its progress in the Middle Ages, in Sabbataianism, in the Haskala and in Zionism. The symbol, whose origin was medieval, was not originally Jewish but was a traditional talisman against the powers of evil, and it gained a Jewish significance only in the nineteenth century. From the Haskala and the Zionist movement to the Nazi regime, this magic symbol was adopted in Europe as representative of the Jewish people. The Nazis gave the Star of David a yellow colour, which symbolised the return of the Jews to a state of degradation and finally extermination. Some claim that in Scholem's genealogical investigation he humanised the symbol of the Jewish people, so taking it out of the hands of its conservative guardians and making it into a universal symbol that represented even the Reform Jews who are known for their desire to obliterate any mystical or magical element in modern Judaism (Pachter, 1978: 24). And there are some who criticise Scholem for claiming that the extermination of the European Jews is what gave the symbol a mythical significance. Like many Germans, he gave the Second World War and the history of modern Europe an apocalyptic interpretation as a mythical event. It may be that he himself contributed to the connection of nationalism with mysticism (Schwartz, 2009).

Already in his first work, Scholem asserted that the connection between nationhood and mysticism is not only a fortuitous, technical or historical one but represents a deep existential affinity. Henry Pachter thought that this was a Copernican turning-point in

historiography. Until Scholem, it was believed that mysticism had various cultural branches, but Scholem showed that Jewish mysticism, which was not influenced by its environment apart from technical influences, did not conform to this idea. Only a people that had experienced the suffering and shock of the Spanish exile could have developed the myth of God Himself living in exile and holding back the goodness of the world, a world in which evil held sway. Only such a people could suppose that God gives a message of total liberation from captivity, a special message to the Jewish people. The mythical significance of the Kabbala was particular, a significance that applied solely to the Jewish people and could not be understood by others. To such a degree was it impossible to untie the Gordian knot between the national aspect and the mystical aspect (Pachter, 1978: 16). Robert Alter, however, proposed another, universal explanation. Although at the heart of the Kabbala, especially the Kabbala of Yitzhak Luria, there is a strong element of national rebirth, at the same time there is a pronounced universal aspect expressed in the formulation of an all-embracing cosmological doctrine. This understanding of the Kabbala gives us a new view of the rise of modern Jewish nationalism: Zionism can be seen as an attempt to renew the Jewish people in a universal perspective (Alter, 1973: 76). According to the model of the Lurian Kabbala, the revival of the Jewish state can strengthen the universal nature of Jewish nationhood and not turn the nation into an isolated island in the Middle East.

So, does the Kabbala belong to the Jewish national heritage or to the universal religious tradition? Scholem believed that a myth and a people are close to each other: a nation cannot forgo any part of its past (Pachter, 1978: 17). The Reform Jews who wanted to have a rational religion and to assimilate into the Western Enlightenment were bewildered by mystical and magical elements and ideas connected to the Kabbala, and that was the reason for their attempt to obliterate the memory of Kabbalistic texts. Scholem said that although the practices of the Kabbala could not be revived, their memory could be. The historical chapter of the Kabbala had to be reconnected to the other chapters in the history of the Jewish people. The revival of the Kabbala was not only a matter of historiographical importance but a matter of national importance as well. Scholem looked for a myth that would support the miracle of the renewal of Jewish culture.

Myths become pragmatic as soon as they are given a role within the continuity of history, and that, in fact, is what Nietzsche and Scholem intended. The myth of the Kabbala was intended for a messianic mobilisation, and here Scholem was a good example of the history–myth dialectic. Myth lies outside the historical consciousness, but at the same time it operates in history and moulds it (Ohana, 2010a). The myths taken from history – the Bar-Kokhba revolt, the expulsion from Spain or the messiahship of Sabbatai Sevi – became ahistorical myths because they were detached from their time and nourished the historical memory. The reconstruction of history provided examples of how to change the present moment. Scholem traced the inner logic of the rise and fall of myths in Jewish culture in order to accelerate the progress of Jewish history in his time. In this he did not make a rationalisation of history but rebelled against the idea that reason is the main factor that moulds, or ought to mould, reality.

At the beginning of the modern age, when the ghettoised Jewish world of Eastern and Central Europe began to undergo a process of modernisation, many Jewish groups sincerely believed that a new age was dawning. They had the feeling that they saw the beginning of messianic redemption. The heavenly city was about to become a permanent reality; the contradiction between the messianic vision and the vale of tears was about to be effaced; the dream would become true. To those who believed this, said Scholem, 'the new Messianic world became a reality, and there was a feeling that there was no contradiction between that and external events […]'. The researches of the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski and his successors seem to support Scholem's assertions by showing that myth in primitive societies is not a product of the artistic imagination or an intellectual explanation but a reality of life (Malinowski, 1926). Primitive communities do not experience life in a simultaneous way – reality and vision, history and utopia. This way of seeing requires a critical faculty that only develops with the processes of secularisation and modernisation.

Unlike prophetic Judaism, in which the godhead is an entity without characteristics who is represented in the Bible in an allegorical way like the commandments in the works of an Aristotelian philosopher like Maimonides, Jewish mysticism gave the godhead a mythological life and symbolic significance. The cabbalists, who brought back the pagan principles of magical religions, said

that theosophy and myth bridged the enormous gap between the abstract deity and his symbolic representations. The mystical movements that flourished along the Rhine and in Provence particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries appear to have been influenced by the gnostics. Whereas the researches of Hans Jonas abound in gnostic–Kabbalist parallels, Scholem tried to play them down (Jonas, 1952: 68–76). In both systems, the gnostic and the Kabbalist, knowledge liberates and deepens the sphere of consciousness. The gnostics believed that there are sparks hidden in the world that need to be liberated so that the creation can be united with the godhead. In addition to the overlapping of the gnostic concept of alienation and the Kabbalistic concept of exile, there is also a great similarity between Lurian cosmology and the gnostic view of the creation.

Some of Scholem's commentators see Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* as the historiographical model chosen by the Jewish scholar (Biale, 1979). Just as the German philosopher found in early Greece the model of inspiration for the creation of a myth for the German people, so Scholem went back to the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times in order to create a national myth for the modern Jews. In his lectures at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York in 1959, Scholem said that he envied the German historians who yearned for a comprehensive and active understanding of their historical organism in a national perspective and futuristic orientation (Pachter, 1978: 17). A commitment of this kind is often found in historiography when historians decide to be creators of myths of their nation. They do not boast of setting up a universalist intellectual republic whose cosmopolitan language would transcend national frontiers. The idea that universal ideas can be realised by national means has died out. Henceforth, the truth is fragmented: there is a Jewish truth, a Nazi truth, imperialist and liberal truths and so on. Pachter warns against a dangerous viewpoint of this kind, especially when expressed by Jews living in Israel. That is precisely the trouble: this distortion of historiography is liable to gain acceptance among the 'modern' or the '*engagés*' in the form of a counterculture or as in the Frankfurt school (Pachter, 1978: 21).

At the beginning of Scholem's career as a historian, when he was taking his first steps as a researcher of Kabbala, conservative approaches were common in Germany, as were nationalist outlooks in German universities. History was the jewel in the

crown of the national myth, and Heinrich von Treitschke was its spokesman. Just as he rejected the possibility of the universality of mysticism, Scholem rejected the possibility that his Jewish nationalism bore any resemblance to German nationalism. Scholem was disgusted at the patriotic euphoria of the Germans, including many Jews, at the time of the First World War; he despised the bourgeois way of life and left his father's home; he enthusiastically aligned himself with cultural Zionism and denied the possibility of a Jewish–German symbiosis. He did, however, acknowledge the humanistic heritage that the Jews received from the Germans. In the terms of the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, a true 'community' did not arise (Tönnies, 2001).

Modern society deprives people of their individuality and neglects the virtues of the traditional community and the natural relationships of family and friends. Liberal society leaves people 'soulless', and the results of the Enlightenment can be described as what the German philosopher and sociologist Georg Simmel called modern man's 'estrangement' from his roots. One can understand in this context the myth of the expulsion from Eden and the legend of the wandering Jew (Pachter, 1978: 19). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the call to return to the life of the community was heard once again. Romantic nationalism that expressed a sense of community challenged the liberal, universalist and rationalist tendencies of the time. A consequence of this was that one could point to the 'other', the enemy, the source of alienation – the Jew. It is thus ironic that while the anti-Semites blamed the Jewish domination for the loss of their souls, Scholem declared that it was rather the Jews who had lost their uniqueness by yielding to the domination of the Germans. As long as the nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century was a cultural rebellion against the liberal world of his father, Scholem could allow himself to be open to the German and Jewish currents of his generation, but as a Jew reared and educated in Wilhelmine Germany he was unable to join the national romantics of his time. His protest took the form of anti-German feelings and a hankering after Jewish tradition. These circumstances and the direction of his thought were interactive, and the concepts that henceforth dominated his researches were exile and redemption. The exposure of Jewish nationalism in Palestine as a strain of German nationalism that sought as a secular movement to solve a spiritual problem

by secular means, and the arrogance of seeking to rescue the Jews at the expense of the rescue of Judaism, caused Scholem to leave political Zionism. He settled in Palestine in 1923, not in order to set up a state but to revive a cultural community that had theological roots and to re-establish its Jewish essence. In contrast to the Promethean passion of secular Zionism to give birth to the 'new Hebrew' in his country, Scholem at the outset of his career tended towards the mystical nationalism cultivated by the German youth movements and the first pioneering waves of immigration, a romantic nationalism in the spirit of Buber or Tolstoy. In Palestine he wished to find redemption from the German exile.

Once in Palestine, Scholem abandoned his preoccupation with the messianic aspect of the war and the revolution in Europe in favour of his researches into the Kabbala and involvement in the new problems that arose in the Middle East. In the first years of his immigration, there was a change in his understanding of the concepts of 'anarchism' and 'nihilism', and he gave them new meanings. In his late article 'Nihilism as a religious phenomenon' (Scholem, 1974: 1–50), the result of a lecture to the Eranos circle, he described nihilism in a different way from how he had previously done: the nihilist was now seen as a revolutionary, 'a sworn opponent to every kind of authority, who is unable to accept principles of belief if they are not linked to the basic intention of the principles' (ibid.). The nihilist was a modern rebel who rejected the contradictions of feudal and pre-capitalist Russian life, and as a result became a law unto himself beyond social norms (Jacobson, 2003: 69).

Scholem had an ambivalent attitude towards the Sabbataians: he admired them, but at the same time condemned their apostasy. His great sympathy for the religious revolutionaries paving the way to modernity, secularism and nationalism was connected to his own nationalist outlook, for utopian and messianic ideas seek political realisation. The more utopian or messianic they are, the more their realisation requires radical concepts of total revolution – what Pachter called 'the Sorelian myth' (Pachter, 1978: 33; Ohana, 2010a). Scholem seems to have believed that the cultural myth of the Messiah could be immediately translated into politics without an intervening period of political activity. He provided the myth but failed to provide the political tools. His political naivety, which brought him to Brit Shalom, created

a confusion between messianic expectation and a realistic movement, between a cultural ideal and a political insight. In the name of messianism, the greatest idea to come out of Judaism, Scholem, says Pachter, calls on us to celebrate a nihilistic revolution.

Scholem was not exceptional in his symbolisation of anomalous actions and in his modernisation of myth. The religious investigations of Scholem and his associates were not the only expressions of cultural Sabbataianism that took place during those years. The ethos of defeating evil from within was propounded, for instance, by Carl Schmitt, the leading jurist of the Third Reich. When summoned before the de-Nazification court, he gave evidence as follows: 'I have drunk the Nazi bacillus, but it did not infect me!' (Wasserstrom, 1999: 224).

The destruction of the ghetto was thus at the centre of the Frankist vision. The Frankist intention to destroy all Jewish values in Polish Jewry came to a head with Frank's encounter with a parallel intention whereby the non-Jewish world rejected Frankism. Both worlds closed their doors on the Frankists: rabbinic Judaism on the one hand, and Islam and Christianity on the other. The resulting isolation left the nihilistic urge no alternative except to be internalised within the world of the ghetto, and thus religious nihilism found an anchor in denying the basic principles of Jewish religious life. Scholem explained that, 'I found that because political activity was closed to him, Frank focused on moral rebellion against the dominant world order' (Scholem, 1971a: 78–141). Rather than the nihilistic urge directing its arrows against morality itself, it focused on the destruction of the basis of Law that was the source of the strength of the tradition that was challenged. The messianic urge overturns the entire Law by putting forward its opposite; for instance, the Sabbataians changed the meaning of *matir asurim* (releases the imprisoned) from an expression of hope for the release of prisoners to an order permitting imprisonment. Underlying Scholem's analysis is the claim that the more that rabbinic Judaism repressed the messianic principle, the more the destructive nihilistic principle increased and flourished.

## The messianic dimension

The Israeli historians and the intellectuals of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Ben-Zion Dinur, Yitzhak Baer, Joseph

Klausner and Gershom Scholem, investigated the development of the messianic idea in Jewish thought and history. The academic interest in the subject and its secular nature bestowed a certain legitimacy on the messianic discourse. Among the scholars, Scholem's comprehensive academic achievement stands out: he created a new research discipline with his investigation into Jewish mysticism and Kabbala (Mendes-Flohr, 1994). This historical and philological examination of the messianic idea cast a critical eye on messianic thought in the history of the Jewish people.

Scholem's radical historiography offered a new and refreshing perspective, and, to use Walter Benjamin's expression, his 'brushing history against the grain' gave legitimisation to the subversive narratives in Judaism such as Sabbataianism and Frankism and was a revolt against the hegemony that Orthodox rabbinic Judaism wished to possess over the course of Jewish history. Scholem's revolutionary project sought to reinstate what the historian David Biale called a 'counter-history' (Biale, 1979). If Benjamin wished to remember the oppressed and provide the narrative of 'the others', Scholem sought to recover the memory of denied Jewish individuals and movements.

Scholem's discussion of the messianic language owes a debt to Benjamin in the historical context of the period during and after the First World War. The theory of language developed by Benjamin from 1915 onwards is a lament over the devaluation of language, which degenerated from a divine tongue that expressed the essence of things to a functional human language of signs. From being the Word of God, it became a mere nomenclature. These insights were expressed about a year later in a letter to his friend, Gershom Scholem, and were published after Benjamin's death under the title 'On language in general and on the language of man' (Benjamin, 1996: 62–74). Ten years later, Scholem sent a letter to Franz Rosenzweig for his fortieth birthday, entitling it 'On our language: a confession' (Scholem, 1990: 97–9; Mosès, 1990: 100–16; Horwitz, 1992: 99–111). These were the years of Brit Shalom, during which the young Kabbala scholar expressed his fears of 'mixing up religious and political concepts. I categorically deny that Zionism is a messianic movement and that it is entitled to use religious terminology to advance its political aims' (Tzur, 1976: 44). It was

in this intellectual climate that Martin Buber, like Benjamin and Scholem, expressed his dislike of the nationalisation of religion and its language. The copying of messianic language by secular language, he wrote, is 'unlikely to be particularly faithful. One cannot transfer the characteristics of messianic language to nationalist language. Every mixture creates a confusion which is disastrous [...]' (Buber, 1961b: 224).

This is what Scholem wrote to Rosenzweig on the modernisation and secularisation of the Hebrew language, warning of the danger of transforming Zionism from a historical movement into a secular messianic phenomenon in Palestine:

> This country is a volcano, and language is lodged within it. [...]
>
> That sacred language on which we nurture our children, is it not an abyss that must open up one day? The people certainly don't know what they are doing. They think they have secularized the Hebrew language, have done away with its apocalyptic point. But that, of course, is not true: the secularization of the language is no more than a *manner of speaking*, a ready-made expression. It is impossible to empty the words so bursting with meaning, unless one sacrifices the language itself [...].
>
> [...] Those who endeavor to revive the Hebrew language did not truly believe in the judgment to which their acts are summoning us. May the levity that has accompanied us on this apocalyptic path not lead us to our destruction. (Scholem, 1990: 97–9)

Was the secular messianism – 'that apocalyptic path', as Scholem called it – a manifestation of political theology? These shifting interrelationships between the theological and the religious that worried German and French thinkers who studied political theology in the twentieth century, also troubled Jewish humanist scholars of religion like Scholem, Buber and Akiva Ernst Simon who were close to the theological–political tradition (Tal, 1979: 4–15; Mendes-Flohr, 1991: 159–85; Wolin, 1995: 43–54). They were concerned that modern society in its secularism had lost all sense of the relationship between the sacred and the profane, between morality, religion and practical life. Benjamin, for his part, considered the dialectical affinity between the secular, political hope of liberation and the religious and messianic hope

of redemption (Benjamin, 2003: 401–11). This ambiguity of a fascination with the sacred and at the same time awareness of the danger of the religious language characterised their intellectual thought and political practice.

In his daring avant-garde essay 'Redemption through sin' (Scholem, 1971a [1937]), Scholem wished to offer an explanation of the historical dynamics of Sabbataianism in the seventeenth century and of Frankism in the eighteenth century. In both of these, a Jewish messiah was converted to another religion: Islam in the case of Sabbatai Sevi and Christianity in the case of Jacob Frank. Sabbataianism and Frankism, as religio-anarchic manifestations that were characterised as antinomian movements with gnostic roots, were described by Scholem as paving the way for infidelity and secularism, and by so doing, leading many Jews to the Enlightenment and Zionism (Scholem, 1969: 5–31).

'Redemption through sin' was not a study of a unique and marginal phenomenon, but may be placed, as Wasserstrom suggested, within the context of the intellectual climate of Europe in the 1930s (Wasserstrom, 1999: 215–24). In Palestine, Scholem linked Jacob Frank, the 'liberator', with the French Revolution, and at the end of his life he published a book entitled *Du Frankisme au Jacobisme* (From Frankism to Jacobism) (Scholem, 1981). Major French thinkers and philosophers such as Pierre Klossowski, Georges Bataille, Roger Caillois, Denis de Rougemont, Henri Corbin, Maurice Blanchot and Jean Paulhan saw the Marquis de Sade as a model of total liberty. They were preceded by Guillaume Apollinaire, who described the French marquis as 'the freest spirit that ever lived' (Klossowski, 1988: xiii). Klossowski called his lecture in 1939, at which his friend Walter Benjamin was present, 'The Marquis de Sade and the French Revolution', claiming, in this lecture, that de Sade celebrated 'a utopia of evil' (ibid.: 218–33). In the same spirit, Scholem declared that Frank promulgated 'a religious myth of nihilism' or 'a mythology of nihilism'. Klossowski and Scholem, and, one may add, Hans Jonas and Eric Voegelin, thought in concepts of modern gnosticism (Jonas, 1952: 68–73).

The translation of 'Redemption through sin' into English triggered many comments that drew an analogy between Sabbataianism and communism, or more specifically, between

Sabbataianism and Stalinism. Norman Podhoretz gave a good description of this in his journal *Commentary* in 1971:

> A reader of 'The Holiness of Sin' in 1937 would have had to be very narrowly focused indeed in his thinking to miss the breathtaking similarities between the kinds of arguments the Sabbataians used in denying that the conversion of Sabbatai Sevi to Islam proved that he was not after all the messiah of the Jews, and the arguments employed by the Stalinists in trying to persuade themselves against all the evidence of the senses that a socialist revolution was in fact being fulfilled in the Soviet Union under Stalin. (Podhoretz, 1971: 5–6)

Irving Howe, the cultural critic, joined Podhoretz's American conservative camp when in an interview with Scholem in 1980, he admitted that he could not avoid making the contemporary analogy when reading 'Redemption through sin'. Scholem replied: 'It is obvious that there is a strong parallel between the dangers of apocalyptic messianism and the dangers of apocalypse in secularist disguise' (Howe, 1980: 53–7).

Scholem claimed that the failure to distinguish between messianism and secular movements becomes a destructive phenomenon, and, like Jacob L. Talmon, he saw the messianic idea as the source of the destructiveness. He told his friend Walter Benjamin of his attraction to 'the positive and noble force of destruction', and declared that 'destruction is a form of redemption' (Ohana, 2005: 7–48). This was not very different from the 'nihilist–totalitarian syndrome' marked by the ambivalence of the desire to destroy together with the desire to construct. On two occasions Scholem dwelt on this price of messianism: in his introduction to his monumental work *Sabbatai Sevi* (1973 [1957]) and in the programmatic essay, 'The messianic idea in Judaism' (1971b).

As well as praise, *Sabbatai Sevi* drew criticism from various quarters. The most famous example was that of the Orthodox literary critic Baruch Kurzweil, who discerned in Scholem 'a tendency to a positive view of mythical and irrational factors', and thought that he showed 'a certain sympathy for phenomena which are in fact a highly dangerous resurrection of nihilistic myths and irrational, meta-ethical principles' (Kurzweil,

1969: iii). The historian of religions, R. Zvi Werblowsky, also said about Scholem that:

> the accusation of 'dogmatism' is a two-edged sword. If it is relatively easy to show that the orthodox or rationalist view distorted history, it is just as easy to show – or at any rate, to wonder – whether there is not some distortion in the new, revolutionary view. (Werblowsky, 1985: 6–22)

In both his reaction to these criticisms and in the development of his ideas on the subject, in 1972 Scholem continued to speak of the price of messianism: 'For the messianic idea is not only consolation and hope. Every attempt to realize it tears open the chasms that lead each of its manifestations *ad absurdum*' (Scholem, 1971c: 35–6).

Scholem thought that the Zionist enterprise did not aim to solve the Jewish question on the messianic or meta-historical level. Zionism, unlike messianism, did not claim that we live at the end of history. Ahad Ha-Am and Herzl, who were non-messianic, did not operate on the metaphysical plane but sought to act within the historical process. Scholem considered 'the beginning of redemption' – a phrase coined by a leading figure of the generation, Rabbi Abraham Kook – to be a 'dangerous formula' (Galili, 1994: 57). Scholem said that Rabbi Abraham Kook, whom he saw as 'the example and model of a great Jewish mystic', wrote 'an obscure and strange book', *Orot Ha-Kodesh* (Lights for Holiness), in which in its three volumes, rather than 'thoughts, there was a poetic effusion […] and, behind all this, a deep mystical turbulence' (Scholem, 1982: 76). Rabbi Abraham Kook expressed mystical experience in human language, and understood the secularity of the Jews in Eretz Israel as part of the process of setting up a modern nation. The *halutzim* (pioneers) transgressed the prohibitions of the Torah, but as the agents of Jewish nationhood they preserved Jewish continuity.

In a lecture that Scholem gave to the intellectual circle at Kibbutz Oranim in 1975, he said that the greatness of Rabbi Kook lay in his perception of the holiness of the profane, and his weakness was his 'mixture of the messianic element with Zionism […]. He created a confusion of concepts by authorizing a mixture of the ideal of building a society and state with contemporary messianism.' However, 'the person mainly responsible' for this 'was, of course, Ben-Gurion' (Scholem, 1982: 15).

Yet, at the same time, although Scholem recoiled from connecting the messianic idea with actual history, his comprehensive investigation of the subject, the discussion it gave rise to and his dominant personality provoked a messianic discourse. Only from this point of view were Scholem and Ben-Gurion on the same side of the barricade: despite their warnings against mixing theology and politics, the thorough investigation of the messianic vision, its language and accomplishments had consequences for the public and academic discourse on the subject. In founding the state, Ben-Gurion had made the most significant attempt at nationalising the Jewish messianic concept. Zionism was a historical experiment in nationalising religious concepts and metamorphosing them into the secular sphere. Ben-Gurion brought the matter to its ultimate conclusion in his attempt to nationalise the Bible and messianism (Ohana, 2008a: 169–88).

Scholem was frightened precisely of this nationalisation of concepts:

> Messianism exists here only as a figure of speech. It was used a great deal by Ben-Gurion, who was responsible for this figurative use of Messianism. He made endless use of this figure of speech, which he understood in a totally secular way, as if he were a true believer […]. He used the term 'Messianism' no less than the people of the religious camp, who perhaps really believed in 'the beginning of redemption'. (Galili, 1994: 58)

In Scholem's opinion, the failure of messianism in the seventeenth century invalidated the idea of a figure of flesh and blood. Ben-Gurion's messianism was directed towards the State of Israel, whereas the messianism of Gush Emunim, the movement for settlement in the West Bank, focused on the Land of Israel. In 1980, in a rare political statement, Scholem replied to the question of whether he saw Gush Emunim as a modern version of the Sabbataian movement as follows:

> Yes, they are like the Sabbataians. Like the Sabbataians, their Messianic programme can only lead to disaster. In the seventeenth century, of course, the failure of Sabbataianism had only spiritual consequences; it led to a breakdown of Jewish belief.

> Today, the consequences of such Messianism are also political, and that is the great danger. (Biale, 1980)

After the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, Scholem began to take an interest in messianism and researched the personal and collective history of Sabbataianism. He made a distinction between historical time and mythical time. Zionism operated in historical time, restoring Jewish sovereignty and hence the total responsibility of the modern Jews for their fate, while messianism operated in mythical, ahistorical time. Scholem rejected the universalistic approach of the school of Hermann Cohen, who gave messianism a moral universalist mission, but he also rejected the apocalyptic approach, which he feared (Scholem, 1971c: 35–66). Instead, he favoured a third approach, the national approach to messianism. According to him, the messianic myth is the expression of a desire for national independence, for liberation from the yoke of the exile and political servitude. Messianism is thus a vitalistic *Lebensphilosophie* that is in contradiction to rationalist thought or a historical approach. It was the tension between mystical messianic time and historical pragmatic time that actuated Jewish history.

Gush Emunim overturned the historical basis of Zionism by combining the mythical with the historical and the metaphysical with the concrete. Scholem's historical undertaking can also be understood as a warning to the Zionist movement of the danger of the messianic expectation. In this connection, David Biale, the Jerusalem historian of messianism, asked Scholem in 1980 if messianism was still a Zionist enterprise. Scholem answered:

> Today we have the Gush Emunim, which is definitely a Messianic group. They use biblical verses for political purposes. Whenever Messianism is introduced into politics, it becomes a very dangerous business. It can only lead to disaster. (Biale, 1980)

When interviewed by Irving Howe, Scholem expressed his fears of 'the extremists in Gush Emunim', who 'use religious sanctions in order to justify their activities in the territories. There is nothing more contemptible or harmful than the use of religious sanctions in a conflict between nations' (Howe, 1980: 53–7). Scholem shared

Talmon's fears that the phenomenon could lead to a religious war. He warned that if Zionism blurred the boundaries between the religious-messianic plane and the political-historical plane, it would be liable to cancel out the significance of the Jews' entry into modern history. He said that action in the political arena of secular history and action in the spiritual-religious arena are like two parallel lines that should never meet: 'It would be disastrous to mix them' (Tzur, 1976: 1–48). At the same time, the mystical aspect of Zionism is not necessarily identical with the messianic aspect: it represents a renewal of spirit within history and not a situation that only comes about at the end of history. In a lecture that he gave in 1973 at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, Scholem spoke of the importance of theological concepts in a secular form. He explained that although concepts like creation, revelation and redemption were legitimate, they lacked the explosive charge that they formerly possessed. 'Yet, the messianic idea has maintained precisely this vehemence. Despite all attenuations, it has proved itself an idea of highest effectiveness and relevance – even in its secularized forms' (Scholem, 1982: 577). This, of course, was a late echo of Scholem's letter to Rosenzweig in 1926, in which he warned that the sacred tongue was 'brimful with explosive material' (Scholem, 1990: 97–9).

According to Scholem, the messianic language could only be divested of the explosive charge that threatened to blow it up if the Jewish tradition preserved a constant tension in which none of its elements was neglected. In this tradition, there were attractions and tensions between different trends and currents. There was the tension between apocalyptic trends and trends that worked against them; the tension between restorative trends that sought to revive an ancient glory and utopian trends; the tension between sober and realistic messianic trends such as that of Maimonides and apocalyptic or extreme utopian trends; the tension between a movement towards redemption as a process within history and ahistorical trends including the redemption of nature as in the Kabbala of Yitzhak Luria; and, recently, the tension between secular or revolutionary messianic trends such as those of Ernst Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse and liberalism. In all of these trends, the conflict was neither resolved

nor mitigated, and this also applied to the mutual relationship of messianism and Zionism.

## Conclusion

The messianic yearning and its various metamorphoses, whether as a philosophy of history or as a 'structuralist explanation', eventually needed a narrative, a detailed historical description. Jean-François Lyotard explained that all forms of legitimacy are connected with the telling of a story or a narrative presentation (Decombes, 1980: 180–6). The narratives that bestow this legitimacy provide significance and content. All activity or reflection claiming authenticity requires legitimacy in the form of a narrative, and the more complex and universal the activity is, the more the legitimacy is strengthened. The meta-narratives of modernity such as that of secular messianism are philosophical statements about the meaning of history.

Buber and Scholem did not engage in the intellectual discourse about political theology that took place in Germany. At the same time they forestalled the deconstructive discourse of postmodernism concerning the great political narratives of modernity, the attempt to set up moral political communities. It is doubtful if, in their affinities, their thoughts and their language, Buber and Scholem could have participated in either of these two forms of discourse.

While the great religions offered a transcendental solution via a metaphysical explanation beyond the physical world, the secular religions offered a meta-narrative of contemporary politics via the modern ideologies. It was not the transcendental theology of the religions but a political theology of modern life. This was different from the teachings of Carl Schmitt, whose thinking had a correlation between the understanding of this structure, the political theology, and the will to enforce it at the beginning of the twentieth century. For Scholem, the French Revolution was the culmination of the Sabbataian apostasy, which resulted in the overthrow of systems, the modernisation of the Jews and the development of Zionism (Funkenstein, 1992: 123–39; Mendes-Flohr, 1994: 73–86; Taubes, 1982: 595–600).

Buber and Scholem were committed intellectuals who did not wish to throw out the Zionist baby with the bathwater, although

they were critical about the movement to which they saw themselves as belonging. Both showed responsibility towards society from within because they saw themselves as part of it. The subject of messianism was close to their hearts because it was their way of revealing conceptual and historical dialectics. Both recoiled from a messianic determinism imposed on history.

The two philosophers' fears of a fusion of messianism and history not only existed in the Jewish context but also in the modern world. They identified communism (and also fascism) not only as a messianic political religion but also as a kind of psychological manifestation: people need myths to follow (Ohana, 1986: 119–40). In the course of their investigations, Buber and Scholem discovered the danger inherent in messianic Zionism.

# 2
# The Myth of Prometheus: Zionism and the Modernisation of Messianism

## The search for modern messianism

The religious messianic movements and manifestations of ancient times ended with the abandonment of society and the creation of exclusive sects; modern messianism seeks to bring about a revolution in society. The Christian revolutionaries owed allegiance to the Lord of the Universe and refused to recognise the rule of man; modern messianism recognises only human reason and seeks to achieve universal happiness within history in the here and now. The Christian revolutionaries, apart from the Calvinists and Anabaptists, recoiled from the use of force; secular messianism tries to reach the absolute by all possible means. The dichotomy of the heavenly kingdom and the worldly kingdom facilitated the spread of religious messianism; the monism of secular messianism is free from this religious dichotomy and from spiritual inhibitions and demands an immediate on-the-spot settling of accounts (Talmon, 2000: 13).

Judaism was not originally a messianic religion. Only gradually did the messianic faith cease to be a marginal concern and gain a central position during the darker phases of Jewish history in Israel and the Diaspora. The messianic hope became a refuge from exile, from religious persecution, from destruction and oppression. The messianic faith represented a hope of national or universal redemption that appeared in particular historical situations. Jewish messianism has been described as a multistoried building to which many spiritual, universal, cosmic, philosophical and mystical levels had been added, and each floor changed the character

of the previous floors. The tension between Jewish existence and Jewish messianism resulted in moments of historical movement towards messianism and movement away from messianism (Werblowsky, 1983: 21–4).

The Jewish presence in general history could be demonstrated by revealing the messianic principle in Judaism and its contribution to universal history. The Jewish idea of Providence overseeing history and moving it towards a redemptive solution nurtured the revolutionary potential of the radical end-time movements that sought to achieve the kingdom of God within history. Jean-Paul Sartre acknowledged in his final interview that Judaism's special contribution to the world was messianism: 'For me, Messianism is something important which only the Jews conceived of, which can also be used by non-Jews for additional moral purposes […]. This idea of the final end of a revolution is Messianism, so to speak' (Sartre and Levy, 1996). This perception of Sartre's bears a surprising resemblance to that of another Frenchman, Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), who identified the vision of the redemption of mankind with the Jewish messianic message:

> The chosen people of God, has always maintained that a great age will arrive, to which they have given the name of Messianic, an age when the religious doctrine will be set forth in the most universal terms of which it is capable, when it will govern the actions both of the temporal and of the spiritual power, and every human race will have the same religion and the same organization. (Markham, 1952: 84–115).

Gershom Scholem already perceived that 'all radical Messianism, if taken seriously, opens up a chasm in which through an inner necessity antimonian outlooks and anarchic moral attitudes accumulate' (Alter, 1973: 69–77). In his investigations of political messianism, Jacob L. Talmon revealed destruction as the other side of redemption, the apocalyptic ruin from which a cleansed and reformed world was supposed to spring forth. In messianism there is a discrepancy between the absolute and the complete and the attempt to achieve it that involves the destruction of all that is not part of it; the hope of redemption is fulfilled at the cost of the elimination of all incompatibilities in human existence. Three such incompatibilities can be discerned: that of liberty with

equality, that of private property with the organisation of the collective, and that of the freedom of the individual with historical determinism. The messianic ideologies wished to reconcile these differences.

## Zionism as a Promethean messianism

Was it a good thing for the Jews to 'anticipate the end' and accelerate the coming of the Messiah? Could they carry the vision of the end of days on their weak shoulders and truly bring it to pass? Did the messianic era depend on human actions? Eliezer Schweid enumerated three approaches to this question. The first approach is deterministic: that is to say, all is predetermined. According to the second approach, the time of redemption is not predetermined and will be fixed only when the people of Israel is worthy of redemption. According to the third approach, the coming of the Messiah will take place at the fixed time in any event, but if the people of Israel shows itself worthy, it can accelerate the redemption. The majority opinion favoured the two last approaches, and according to these the Jews can hasten the coming of the Messiah by their actions. The Bar-Kokhba revolt in AD 132 was the watershed with regard to the physical or active approach to messianism. From the days of the Hasmoneans to Bar-Kokhba, the rebellions against foreign rule reflected an active political and military approach to bringing about redemption. After the failure of the revolt, there was a prohibition against rebelling and 'mounting the ramparts'. In the meantime, the Jews had to remain under the decree of exile (Schweid 1985: 63–78). The Bar-Kokhba revolt, the fifth and last messianic initiative, gave birth to the passive messianic faith of the Middle Ages.

The granting of citizenship to the Jews in post-emancipation Europe in practice ended the situation of exile. With the emancipation, the Jews were asked to renounce the messianic expectation. Moses Mendelssohn took the second step in leaving messianism and entering history: the first had already been taken by Maimonides. A more radical view was adopted by four intellectuals of the Haskala, the Jewish Enlightenment, at the end of the eighteenth century: David Friedlander, Solomon Maimon, Saul Asher and Lazarus Ben-David (Feiner, 1995: 73). Basing himself on a minority opinion given in the Talmud limiting

messianic activity to the biblical period, Lazarus Ben-David concluded that the Jewish religion could henceforth exist without the messianic expectation, which had been realised in the era of the Enlightenment by the rulers of states. Because it was not possible to abandon the ancient messianic faith completely, all that could be done was to give it a new meaning. Although the emancipation had been given a messianic significance, many people refused to jettison their future connection with national redemption.

The forerunners of modern Zionism, Judah Hai Alkalai (1798–1878), and his German counterpart Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1796–1874), foreshadowed many of the Zionist themes. They saw emancipation as the beginning of redemption. In this they were traditionalist heralds of modern Jewish nationalism. This was a new development in Jewish thought that permitted and even demanded the realisation of the messianic vision by means of human actions. From here the way was open to a revolutionary transition from a transcendental messianism to a Promethean messianism that was essentially a human atomisation of redemption. It was Jews with a modern consciousness that were now to spur on the messianic project by means of settlement in Eretz Israel as well – means intended to bring nearer the messianic goal.

The modernisation of Jewish messianism was the result of foreign influences. All of the historical declarations of Zionist ideology were made following the triumphs of national movements. Thus, inspired by the Greek War of Independence and the rise of Serbian nationalism, Rabbi Alkalai advocated Jewish settlement of the Land of Israel. When Moses Hess wrote *Rome and Jerusalem*, he was influenced by the concurrent unification of Italy; Moshe Lieb Lilienblum called for a Jewish revival following the Hungarian national revival; and Leon Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation* was written against the background of the founding of the Kingdom of Bulgaria. One therefore cannot understand the roots of Zionism without understanding the mutual relationship between the messianic self-perception of many Zionist circles, which wished to establish a 'restorative utopia' in their historic homeland, and the modern messianic intellectual climate of the national movements in Europe.

Ahad Ha-Am (Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg) (1856–1927) was a Hebrew essayist and one of the greatest pre-state Zionist thinkers. He was an outstanding representative of the national-historicist school that stressed the contributions of past generations as

builders of the road to the goal of national redemption in the best tradition of Western theories of progress. Nationalism, according to Ahad Ha-Am, also reflected the nineteenth-century European tradition that sought to combine a national mission with an aspiration to universality. To the 'Third Rome' of Giuseppe Mazzini, which had a messianic mission, to the Poland of Adam Mickiewics, the 'Christ among the nations', Ahad Ha-Am added national morality as the universalistic mission of Jewish nationalism. Unlike them, he was fearful of romantic messianic activism and he was likewise repelled by Herzl and his messianism. His elitist disposition distanced him from the aspiration of Zionism to be a movement of the masses. After the Uganda crisis, he declared that those who supported political Zionism resembled the followers of Sabbatai Sevi and Jacob Frank (1726–91).

In contrast to Ahad Ha-Am, there was the existential, national-particularist, heroic and aesthetic tradition of the Berdichevsky school of thought. The tradition of heroism in nineteenth-century European culture that reached its apex in the writings of Thomas Carlyle sanctioned the hero as the representative of the new type of man promoted by the nationalist movements at the beginning of the twentieth century. Micha Josef Berdichevsky (1865–1921) declared that, 'Zionism is the continuation of Messianism' (Almog, 1982: 437).

Promethean messianism is readily recognisable in the image, life and writings of Theodor Herzl, the prophet of modern Zionism. David Litvak, the hero of *Altneuland*, explained to his guests that in the national revival, the modern Jews 'could not expect anything from miracle-workers and everything depended on their own efforts' (Herzl, 1960 [1902]: 78). In Herzl there is the idea of a personal messianic calling, which finds expression in a dream that he had at the age of twelve:

> The King-Messiah came, a very splendid and venerable old man, took me in his arms and carried me away on the wings of the wind […]. The Messiah called out to Moses, 'I have prayed for this child!' and he said to me, 'Go and tell the Jews that I will soon be coming, and I shall perform miracles and wonders for my people and the whole world! (Breinin, 1919: 17–18)

The image of the Messiah continued to accompany Herzl wherever he went, whether in admiration or in derision. His

opponents – liberals, Reform Jews, socialists and the Orthodox – viewed Zionism as a pseudo-messianic movement; his friend Max Nordau (1849–1923), the Zionist leader and co-founder of the World Zionist Organization, dissociated himself from seeing an identity between messianism and Zionism (Nordau, 1905); Ahad Ha-Am accused him of 'kindling a false flame', and others compared him to Sabbatai Sevi, to the fourteenth-century false messiah David Reubeni, and to the 'New Christian' who converted back to Judaism, the self-declared messiah, Solomon Molcho (1500–32).

The Herzl legend is enveloped in a messianic halo. Herzl internalised it to such a degree that he made a comparison between himself and Sabbetai Zevi: 'The difference between me and Shabbatai Sevi as I imagine him, apart from developments in technical resources due to the difference in periods, is that Shabbatai Sevi raised himself up to resemble the great ones of the earth, while I find the great ones of the earth to be as small as I am' (Wistrich, 2001: 137). Joseph Bloch warned him against the temptation of presenting himself as a messiah, as all the messiahs 'had brought disastrous consequences upon the Jews'. He said that as soon as a messiah 'puts on flesh and blood, he ceases to be a redeemer' (Bloch, 1958: 158). Herzl, however, did not trip up and did not cross the Sabbataian threshold. When King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy told Herzl, when they met in 1904, that one of his distant relatives had been connected with Sabbetai Zevi, and he asked if there were still any Jews expecting the Messiah, Herzl replied, 'Naturally, Your Majesty, in the religious circles. In our own, the academically trained and enlightened circles, no such thought exists, of course […]. Our movement is purely nationalist.' Herzl added that on his journey to Palestine he refrained from riding on a donkey 'so that no one would embarrass me by thinking I was the Messiah' (Herzl, 2001, vol. 3: 256).

## Varieties of Israeli messianism

Together with the settlement enterprise of the pioneers, there was the historiographical enterprise of the intellectuals of the Hebrew University. The historians Ben-Zion Dinur (1884–1973), Israel's first education minister and a major scholar of the Jews in medieval Spain, Yitzhak Baer (1888–1980), Joseph Klausner (1874–1958), who took an active part in the revival of the Hebrew

language and was the first editor of the Hebrew Encyclopedia and Gershom Scholem, all investigated the development of the messianic idea in Jewish thought and history. The academic interest in the subject bestowed a certain legitimacy on the messianic discourse. The common factor between the pioneering settlement and the academic investigation of messianism was the secular nature of their interest and actions. Among the scholars, Scholem's comprehensive academic achievement stands out: he created a new research discipline with his investigation of Jewish mysticism and Kabbala. This historical and philological examination of the messianic idea cast a critical eye on messianic thought in the history of the Jewish people. Yet at the same time, although he recoiled from connecting the messianic idea with actual history, his comprehensive investigation of the subject, the discussion that it gave rise to and his dominant personality provoked a messianic discourse. Only from this point of view were Scholem and Ben-Gurion on the same side of the barricade: despite their warnings against mixing theology and politics, the thorough investigation of the messianic vision, its language and accomplishments had consequences for the public and academic discourse on the subject. In his article 'Thoughts on the possibility of a Jewish mysticism in our days', Scholem went so far as to envisage a fusion of theology and politics: 'Is there the possibility that in our development we are moving towards a dual path of the secular and sacred?' (Scholem, 1982: 82). From this perspective, the theologising of the political and the politicisation of the theological do not appear incongruous.

A concern with the messianic was not only to be found in the context of pioneering settlement and in the sphere of academic research. It was also the golden age of Eretz Israel utopias. The utopia is one of the features of the messianic enterprise. The first and second *aliyot* (waves of immigration), both of which believed in the historical necessity of the Jewish rebirth, were remarkable for their creation of utopian agendas for the future. Labouring Eretz Israel served as the social laboratory for utopian experiments in the reality of history: the *Gdud Ha-'Avodah* (the 'Labour Corps') and the *Hevrat Ha-'Ovdim* (the 'Workers' Society') are outstanding examples of the socialist utopian imagination and of the audacity in applying it. Many utopian principles found expression in Eretz Israel: return to the ancestral land, conquering the Holy

Land through labour (which in itself was considered a redeeming value), the revival of the Hebrew language and culture. Other examples were the creation of the 'new Hebrew', the various kinds of communal settlements and egalitarian communities and the ethos of the 'model State' (Gorny, 1991: 37–50).

In transcendental messianism, the end of days comes about through supernatural means; in Promethean messianism, the future of mankind is the work of flesh and blood. One should bear in mind that utopias as a literary genre only began to appear in the Renaissance with the decline of religious authority. Until then, the Great Ruler of the Universe ruled over the future of mankind and directed it. In the period of the Renaissance and afterwards, the utopias, despite their revolutionary character, remained within the limits of a traditional discussion of nature or of the structure of the world in which we live. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the utopias moved from the dimension of space, which characterised them at first, to the dimension of time. The creators of utopias wished to change this world *within* this world. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the approaching footsteps of the Messiah were heard in Eretz Israel, and the pioneers of the Second Aliyah (wave of immigration) were his heralds. Moreover, they were the living personification of the World of the Tomorrow. Jewish Palestinian utopias such as those of the thinker and leader of Marxist Zionism, Dov Ber Borochov (1881–1917), the Zionist ideologue and the spiritual force behind practical Zionism, A. D. Gordon (1856–1922), and Ahad Ha-Am were formulations of the dissymmetry between the economic and rational understandings of their authors and their uniquely irrational application in Eretz Israel. It was precisely for this reason that they were seen as messianic.

In Eretz Israel, the messianic discourse was also prominent in the world of poetry. Many of the poets between the two World Wars – Avigdor Ha-Meiri, Avraham Shlonsky, Yitzhak Lamdan, David Shimoni (Shimonovitz), Avot Yeshurun, Yitzhak Ogen, Yehuda Karni, Ezra Zusman, Yonatan Ratosh, Yokheved Bat-Miriam and Shin Shalom – dealt in their works with the messianic theme. The poetics and literature researcher Hannan Hever made a survey of Hebrew culture in Eretz Israel, and came to the conclusion that in this culture there was a lively poetic discourse on the meaning of the messianic element in the Zionist enterprise (Hever, 1995).

Hever pointed out the utopian temptation that existed in the pioneers' self-image as builders of the future, and on the other hand the tendency that existed in a second school of thought to be carried away by thoughts of 'anticipating the end' and resorting to violence. There was the contrast between the symbolist school of Shlonsky that extolled pioneering and sacrifice, and the apocalyptic messianic vision of the radical poet Uri Zvi Greenberg (1896–1981).

The scope, audacity and depth of the messianism in Greenberg's poetry represent the most radical ethos in pioneering Eretz Israel. His poetry is steeped in the Nietzschean philosophy of life, but unlike Berdichevsky and 'the revolt of the young ones' ('mered Ha-Tse'irim', the young generation of Hebrew writers) who sought a Europeanisation of Jewish culture, Greenberg believed that the aestheticisation of power required one to turn away from Europe towards a revival of the messianic idea. Greenberg's aspiration in his poem 'Shir Ha-Ugavar' (The Song of the Organist), which rises up above the heights, is to create the Jewish superman. In 'Hazon Ehad Ha-Legionot' (A Vision of One of the Legions) (1927), Greenberg sings a song of praise to messianism and to political violence in the conquest of Eretz Israel; the messianic Jewish Prometheus is an arms-bearing prophet as against the traditional transcendental conception of the Messiah. In 'Kelef Beit' (The Messianic Secret) (1929), the true Messiah, Shimon Bar-Giora (*c.* AD 1), comes up from the past to rescue the present; in 'Gavrut Ha-'Ola' (The Rising Manhood) (1926), Greenberg cries, 'Come up, Shabbetai Zevi!' In 'Eima Gedola Ve-Yareah' (Great Fear and the Moon) (1924), the Hebrew Jesus is summoned from his prison to help his brethren ploughing in the valley. In all of his poems Greenberg never wearied of searching for the Messiah who would redeem the Jews from their distress. It is hardly surprising if the educationalist Gershom Hanoch warned in 1927 of the dangers of this messianic rhetoric:

> If we could only go away and absent ourselves for just one generation, for a single half-century, from all these eternal messianic ideas, from the liberation of mankind, from redemption and from visions, and take hold naturally and in all simplicity of this plot of land that has been given us to work and to live on – only then, perhaps, would the hoped-for Messiah appear. (Anita Shapira, 1991: 191)

Through the fabric of Revisionist Zionism – from Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880–1940), Uri Zvi Greenberg, Abba Ahimeir (1897–1962) and Joshua Heschel Yeivin (1891–1970) to Israel Eldad (1910–96) – an obsessive preoccupation with the apocalyptic and the Messiah runs like a thread. At the heart of Jabotinsky's outlook and activities was the hope of activating Jewish history, and the means to that end were the aesthetic experience of power, the centrality of ritual and play and the creation of the 'New Man'. As against this, Berl Katznelson (1887–1944), one of the moral and intellectual leaders of the Zionist Labour movement, was not sympathetic to the rightist messianism. He also objected to the 'Labour Zionist messianism' of *Po'alei Zion*, the Movement of Marxist Zionist Jewish Workers in Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century, 'who get enthusiastic about the atmosphere of the eastern revolution which is wholly messianic' (Kolat, 1984: 424).

It would seem that Joseph Haim Brenner (1881–1921), the novelist and pioneer of the Second Aliyah, represented the most radical antithesis to the socialist 'red messianism', the Revisionist 'brown messianism', and certainly the Orthodox 'black messianism'. His vehement secularity, his revolt against rabbinic authority and its representatives, the Nietzschean existentialism of his writings, his animosity towards the exilic mentality, his doubtfulness of all certainties, his ambivalence between personal freedom and participation in the Jewish fate – all these made him the greatest sceptic of the messianic idea. One of his strongest attacks on the messianic philosophy of history was an article with a very banal title, 'Newspapers and literature – notes and observations', which Brenner published in *Ha-Po'el Ha-Tsa'ir* (the journal of the Labour Zionist Party in Palestine):

> The Jewish people have no Messiah. We must strengthen ourselves to be without a Messiah […]. We few, the members of the living Jewish people, must be stronger than a rock, working and producing as much as possible. We must multiply the work of our people and its material and spiritual assets […]. (Brenner, 1910)

The person who at the end of the nineteenth century founded a modern movement of Jews who sought as a group to rebel against their fate was Theodor Herzl. Ben-Gurion made an insightful

connection between the Promethean passion of 'the visionary of the Jewish State' in revolting 'against a passive faith in the eternity of Israel' and his own messianic vision of 'seeking redemption'. The commemorative ceremony for Herzl in 1934 was a good opportunity for Ben-Gurion to describe the messianic faith of the founder of political Zionism:

> Herzl dared where no man before him had dared – within the scope of the vision, the messianic vision, which is the heart of Jewish history – to embrace the world in its fullness, to embrace redemption itself which leaves nothing behind it, the redemption of the people of Israel, the redemption of the world and the healing of the world in the kingdom of God […] but it was not given to Herzl to see his vision come to pass. This, apparently, is the lot of all the great redeemers of our people. Herzl's vision did not prove false, but Herzl's revolt against a passive faith in the eternity of Israel, and the desire to anticipate the end which was the motivating force of Herzl's activities – just as the messianic idea, the soul of Jewish history in exile, was perverted by false messiahs on several occasions – so, after Herzl's death, this splendid name was falsely flaunted by falsifiers of his teaching, and we must learn from Herzl to seek redemption, the great redemption, speedily, in our days. (Ben-Gurion, 1971–86, 2: 117–20)

In 1896, when Ben-Gurion was ten years old, the year of the publication of Herzl's *The Jewish State*, as he accompanied his father to pray in the synagogue, he heard that 'it was being said in the town that the Messiah was on his way, and he was now in Vienna, and he had a black beard and his name was Herzl' (ibid., 1971, 1: 7). It was said that he was 'tall and handsome and had a black beard – an extraordinary man' (Ben-Gurion, 1974: 16). Ben-Gurion looked at his picture and decided 'to follow him immediately to the land of my fathers'. And the founder of the Jewish state wrote about the prophet of the Jewish state: 'Herzl was indeed like a Messiah since he galvanized the feeling of the youth that Eretz-Israel was achievable.' He added, however, that 'it could only come to pass if we built it with our own hands' (Ben-Gurion, 1970: 34).

The young Ben-Gurion's recognition that doing it 'with our own hands' was the sole condition for realising Herzl's secular

messianism was central in moulding his political and intellectual path. In his mythification of Herzl, Ben-Gurion contrasts exile, which is 'slavery' and the 'darkness of the cemetery', with Herzlian Zionism, which epitomises freedom, light and resurrection. In another place, he describes the exile as 'a miserable experience, wretched, bitter, contemptible, nothing to be proud of. On the contrary – it has to be totally rejected' (Ben-Gurion, 1957a). Ben Gurion's negation of the exile was to influence his ideas of 'shortening the path' of history and breaking the continuity of Jewish history (Gorny, 1999: 356; Anita Shapira, 2003: 18).

Zionism was a movement of self-emancipation, the liberation of self together with liberation from exile. Later on, Ben-Gurion maintained that exile was not only a physical place but a state of mind: 'We have taken the Jews out of exile', he said, 'but we have not yet taken the exile out of the Jews.' Ben-Gurion held that the emancipation resulting from the French Revolution and the changes in Europe in the modern era 'required the Jews to obliterate their national image' and almost turned European Judaism into a 'religious sect'. But 'the historical will of the Jewish people prevailed, and emancipation did not lead to absorption but to a new expression of its national uniqueness and its messianic longings' (Ben-Gurion, 1964: 18). Emancipation 'ceased to be self-emancipation – a movement of freeing oneself from the bonds of foreign dependency and alien life – and the first foundations were laid for the renewal of national independence in the ancient homeland'. Self-emancipation, the liberation of self from 'the bonds of dependency' was the essence of Zionism's Promethean passion.

The Promethean will to recreate oneself as the 'new Jew' in his homeland meant first of all the obliteration of the dichotomy expressed in the slogan of the Haskala: 'Be a Jew in your home and a man outside.' Ben-Gurion identified 'the split between the man and the Jew which divided the Jewish soul in exile' (Ben-Gurion, 1964: 200–36). The awareness of the modern Jew of this inner rupture and of an inequality between himself and the others in Europe led him to a critical attitude and to self-criticism. A sense of alienation from exile and of personal alienation came about only in the post-emancipatory world. When the modern Jew began to think for himself and to have his own values, he began to ask himself why he should be enslaved by the national

norms of his neighbours and colleagues. The paradox was that the Jew as a free man in the era of emancipation discovered that he was enslaved. It was this reflective consciousness that derived from the emancipation and not from anti-Semitism that gave birth to modern Jewish nationalism and the revolt of the Zionist Prometheans.

One cannot of course disregard Ben-Gurion's strong expressions concerning exilic Jews and his formulation that 'the exilic Jews as Jews are human dust who struggle against one another, perhaps more than members of other peoples in similar circumstances' (Ben-Gurion, 1964: 221). Perhaps this is an attempt to emphasise the contrast between the passive condition of the Jew in exile where he is only dust – a kind of shadow or pale reflection – and the truly human state that he can only attain in Eretz Israel: 'Only in Israel does sovereignty provide the full possibility of molding a man's life according to his own needs and values' (ibid.: 222). It is neither anti-Semitism nor 'distress', as Ben-Gurion calls it, that can explain the revival of the Jewish people, although of course it cannot be ignored:

> Distress undoubtedly played a part […] but distress alone does not have the power to direct immigrants to the country […]. All that has been renewed in our time […] cannot be understood if one does not see the vision of messianic redemption implanted in the soul of the Jewish people […]. (Ben-Gurion, 1964: 222)

Zionism sought to eradicate the alienation between the Jew and the man and proposed an authentic answer in the form of a homeland: 'In Israel, the partition between the Jew and the man fell and was shattered' (Ben-Gurion, 1964: 222).

Ben-Gurion's messianic terminology did not come from nowhere. David Joseph Gruen (Ben-Gurion's original surname) absorbed the treasures of Judaism on the benches of his *heder* (religious elementary school) and on the knees of his grandfather, who was knowledgeable in Jewish studies from Maimonides to Rabbi Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840), the Galician Jewish philosopher, theologian and historian. Ben-Gurion learned the Hebrew language from his grandfather, and read with him the Pentateuch, the other books of the Bible and the Targum, with Mendelssohn's German commentaries. As he himself said, 'At the age of seven I suddenly

became pious and scrupulous in observing the Commandments' (Ben-Gurion 1974: 28). Up to his bar mitzva, he studied Hebrew, Rashi (the great Talmudic commentator, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki), the Talmud and the commentaries, but already then he preferred the Bible. His father wrote a letter to Herzl in 1901, asking him to intervene on behalf of his son so that he could be accepted into the rabbinical seminary in Vienna, 'for there is also a centre for Jewish studies there, a seminary for rabbis'. When the request was not answered, young David continued on his own for another three years until he went to Warsaw to study Jewish thought, literature and poetry, reading Y. L. Peretz, Avraham Broides, Peretz (Peter) Smolenskin, Y. L. Gordon, Ahad Ha-Am and of course Micha Josef Berdichevsky. He bound together blank sheets of paper and would copy out every new poem by 'the poet Bialik, beloved of my heart'. One book made a special impression on him: Abraham Mapu's *Ahavat Zion* (The Love of Zion), 'which I read when I was nine or ten. This book brought me to Zionism' (ibid.: 32). We see then that the sources from which the young Ben-Gurion was suckled not only derived from the revolutionary ideological atmosphere of Eastern Europe but also from the roots of Jewish culture. Later, in his debate in Israel in the 1950s with Zionist representatives and Israeli intellectuals, he asserted that 'the title Jew is precious and important to me […]. The name Jew not only preceded the name Zionist but says much more than the name Zionist. Judaism is more than Zionism, and the observances of Judaism do not tally with assimilation' (Ben-Gurion, 1957a).

Ben-Gurion tried to locate reference points in the development of the collective Jewish identity. In his article 'Israel and the Diaspora', he said that if a Jew two hundred years previously had been asked what a Jew is, he would have answered, 'A Jew is a son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who observes the Commandments and hopes for the coming of the Messiah.' The French Revolution and the subsequent granting of equal rights in Europe weakened accepted beliefs and religious traditions not only amongst the Jews but also amongst all of the peoples of Europe and America. 'And there are not many Jews today who hope for the coming of the Messiah,' observed Ben-Gurion (Ben-Gurion, 1957b). The next reference point was the Haskala. If the Jews of the Haskala had been asked about their identity a hundred and fifty years ago (before the time that Ben-Gurion was writing), they would have

answered that they were 'a religious community'. A hundred years ago, he said, most Jews in Eastern Europe would have answered that they were, 'a minority-people in exile', and fifty years ago they would have answered, 'The Jews want to return to Zion without waiting for the Messiah and without believing in a Messiah' (Ben-Gurion, 1964).

The affinity between the Jews' desire to return to history and to their space and the transformation of their socioeconomic structure already preoccupied Ben-Gurion at the beginning of the First World War. This triple aspiration could be condensed into one: 'To make Eretz Israel and the Hebrew people into the Eretz Israeli people.' Although this could require various political initiatives such as 'autonomy', 'federation' or 'a sort of independent kingdom', the change would not come about through political or diplomatic action but through a commitment to 'plant the people in the homeland and give the country back to the people' (Ben-Gurion, 1956: 16). The war was a revolutionary opportunity:

> The hour is a crucial one in history as such and in the history of our people. Mighty events are happening, tremendous revolutions are taking place, accepted values are changing, sacred tablets are being hewn, new truths are being revealed, new relationships are being formed. (Ben-Gurion, 1956: 16)

Things that could not be done in normal times could be done at that moment: 'We are now permitted to attempt to force the issue and to hope for a shortening of the way' (ibid.).

A few months later, in the midst of the tempest of the First World War that overtook Europe, Ben-Gurion proclaimed, 'The sound of the Messiah's ram's horn reaches us through the storm' (ibid.: 22). Perhaps, he thought, this opportune moment would bring the peoples of the world to solve the Jewish question in Palestine. Would Palestine consequently become the land of the Jews? Ben-Gurion's answer typified the Promethean nature of Zionism, which was essentially the idea that the modern Jew could forge his national enterprise with his own hands:

> If the people have the right to say, this is my land, my homeland, that is only because the people have created its land. Preparing the land for the needs of the nation through

> labor – preparing the soil and making it fertile, laying roads, creating means of transport, uncovering treasures and natural riches, setting up industries and so on – that is the creation of the homeland. (Ben-Gurion, 1956: 23)

In this, Ben-Gurion was taking part in the Promethean transformation that had taken place in science itself from the time of the Renaissance to the twentieth century: that is to say, the change from the desire to know nature to rule over nature; from the ideal of contemplation and the ambition of knowing the laws of creation to the will-to-power that boasts of changing reality. Here Ben-Gurion touched on the very essence of Zionism and of Labour Zionism in particular: the act of creating the homeland is not declarative or military or diplomatic but a matter of actual social construction. As in the Promethean ethos, the homeland could only be gained through labour and production. The Land of Israel would not be Jewish when the European powers decided on it 'but when we, the Jews, build it' (Tevet, 1997: 1).

The Zionist Prometheus is not only man rebelling against his national fate but the new Jew moulding his national and social reality and refusing to submit to historical determinism or stychic forces: 'The expectation of a "stychic process" is merely a hypocritical excuse for sterility and weakness. History is not determined by destiny, and life is not a matter of blind chance' (Ben-Gurion, 1956: 24). A decade earlier, in Borochov's materialist–determinist style, Ben-Gurion had thought in terms of *stychia* (Greek for 'natural spontaneity'). The idea of *stychia* was that the immigration of Jews to Palestine, which was economically backward, would bring Jewish capital, and this in turn would attract Jewish workers. Ben-Gurion now countered *stychia* with the 'creative active will'.

The 'Hebrew Jews' favoured a revolutionary selective interpretation of history that skipped over the exile and made a daring mythical leap to the remote past of the Hebrew people in the Land of Canaan. This Hebraism, of which the Canaanite movement was later an extreme manifestation, stressed the geographical–indigenous side of the collective identity rather than its historical–abstract aspect. Here one may also find the source of Ben-Gurion's 'Hebraic' approach to the Bible and of his historiographical ideas concerning the affirmation of 'leaps' in history. On his gravestone

he did not ask for his achievements or date of birth to be mentioned, or verses from the Bible, but only the words 'he came to the country and settled there'. The true date of his birth was the year that he immigrated to Eretz Israel; the years outside the land of Israel were prehistory.

Ben-Gurion did not remain forever within the narrow confines of philosophy but lived in a modern secular–revolutionary intellectual climate that sought to create a new reality in a new space. He was far from the integral nationalism espoused by Heinrich von Treitschke based on narrow tribalism and social hierarchy and close to the universalist nationalist tradition that stressed the contribution of each people to the nations of the world. He continued the nineteenth-century European tradition of nationalism that believed in the universal mission of modern nationalism (Talmon, 1965: 209–27). Like the Italian Giuseppe Mazzini, the Hungarian Lajos Kossuth, the Russian Alexander Herzen and the Frenchman Louis Auguste Blanqui, Ben-Gurion believed in the universal messianic mission of his people to be 'a light unto the nations'.

## Red messianism

The year 1917 was a revolutionary turning point. The Bolshevik Revolution and the Balfour Declaration were enthusiastically greeted by the workers in Europe, among the Zionist activists and among many of the world's Jews. As in other critical junctures in his life, Ben Gurion's reaction to the Balfour Declaration was one that tempered the enthusiasm pertaining to his 'messianic' point of view with a good dose of political realism and roused him to activity. On 14 November 1917, he affirmed that, 'The great miracle has happened and is here to stay.' Despite the slight reserve of Ben-Gurion's reaction to the revolutionary British declaration, he was immediately swept up in the general enthusiasm in the pages of the Po'alei Zion journal that appeared in Yiddish, even calling his article, 'The *ge'ula*' (redemption): 'it is a messianic declaration. It is a declaration of *ge'ula* which not only gives the Jews new hope in their history, but much more than that: it reopens their history' (Ben-Gurion, 1917: unpaginated).

The First World War encouraged the polarised ideological camps in Europe to put their ideologies, whether socialist

or nationalist, into practice. Following the war, the October Revolution broke out on the one hand, and the fascist movements sprang up on the other. Ben-Gurion, like many people of his generation, saw the events of the war as furthering the aims of Zionism. He wrote in his diary, 'Pre-Messianic tribulations previous to *ge'ula*' (ibid.).

The total confrontation was seen as the war of Gog and Magog, the negative climax of modernity proclaiming the end of the illusion of the Enlightenment concerning historical progress. It was a sign of the end of the nineteenth-century outlook and an evil omen for the beginning of a new, blood-soaked century. The first mechanised war made a total mobilisation of human resources for the purposes of mutual extermination and a festival of technological slaughter. Out of the European chaos, 'the generation of the wickedness and folly of the war', Ben-Gurion expected that there would arise 'a mightier enterprise of heroism and sacrifice […]. Adversity is a fruitful and productive basis in human life. Without affliction, the human soul sinks lower and lower. The pains of birth are the precondition to creation' (ibid.).

The creation that he had in mind was of course the establishment of the national home of the Jewish people in Eretz Israel. The doctrine of will as taught by Nietzsche, Bergson and Berdichevsky also influenced the future leader, who thought that 'in this great historic moment' it was incumbent on the whole of the Hebrew people to 'reveal its will-to-Eretz-Israel'. The masses of Jews in the exile 'now had to show that they *willed* Eretz-Israel'. This collective will was described by him as 'the manifestation of the national will-to-Eretz-Israel' (ibid.). The messianic inspiration following the horrors of war reflected a desire to give meaning to human existence. This rationalisation was based on the notion that the best must come out of the worst. Thinkers, writers and politicians associated the achievement of a suitable collective national or ideological purpose with the idea that one could only be saved from the apocalyptic depths of the European 'total war' by ascending to messianic heights.

The First World War was the crucible of revolutionary changes in Europe, and first of all the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. As one trained in the revolutionary intellectual climate in Europe, Ben-Gurion too was influenced by the Russian Revolution. Ben-Gurion's view of the Bolshevik revolution, 'The greatest

rebellion in human history,' was coloured above all by its messianic forcing of the issue:

> Many of us have felt an inner sympathy for that forcing of the issue in which the Communist Party has excelled. Tired of waiting for stychic processes to take their course, it has sought, with a tremendous exercise of the will, to bring redemption closer. For we too seek to force the issue of our redemption. (Ben-Gurion, 1917: unpaginated)

This affinity that Ben-Gurion saw between the Bolshevik forcing of the issue and the Zionist one is very important in understanding the development of his social and political thinking. At the start of his political career, he was influenced by the *narodniki* (members of a Russian middle-class social movement) and the Marxists, the Jewish Haskala and the Russian revolutionary tradition, and according to one of his Marxist interpreters, 'Perhaps there is here at one and the same time an encounter and a confrontation between two kinds of messianism, the Jewish and the Russian (the "Third Rome", which now takes the form of world communism)' (Tsirolnikov, 1982: 254). Utopia and violence are the two aspects of the revolutionary-in-action. In the revolutionary atmosphere of the beginning of the twentieth century, the view seemed justified that in order to destroy the old world and build a new national and social order, one had to use force. This was the background against which Lenin and Trotsky, Pilsudski and Ataturk operated, and Ben-Gurion as well (Kolat, 1973: 340–51). Ben-Gurion, like these leaders and founders, was reared on a messianic utopian vision that could only be realised by revolutionary means. His Labour Zionist revolutionism was refined in the Marxist crucible.

The victory of the revolution in Russia was also the failure of Marx's model of a Promethean messianic revolution: the triumph of the revolution in one place put an end to the spread of the revolution throughout the world. Lenin was not a determinist; his aim was to speed up the revolution, and one of the means that he used was to sharpen the class consciousness of a party cadre that would lead the masses. Hence the lesson that Ben-Gurion learned from Lenin: one must give due importance to an understanding of the significance of historical processes and international developments and one must act only after studying them – what he was

referring to was the war. Is war a progressive factor that brings about revolutionary situations? The First World War created a revolutionary situation in Russia that finally engendered a revolution of the proletariat. Ben-Gurion also learned this from Lenin: not every revolutionary situation leads to a revolution, but no revolution can exist without a revolutionary situation. Ben-Gurion took note of this principle, and he was to use it when the time came for him to make revolutionary decisions.

Lenin's decision to make a painful compromise impressed Ben-Gurion much more than Trotsky's ambiguous hesitancy: 'neither peace nor war'. Lenin wanted to overrule the stubborn opposition of Trotsky and others who, drunk with the victory of revolutionary messianism, were willing to risk everything. When Ben-Gurion had to accept painful compromises – as with Hevrat Ha-'Ovdim, the Palestine Partition Plan and the agreement with Jabotinsky – he remembered the *realpolitik* of Lenin and not the *permanent revolution* of Trotsky, the 'red messiah'.

The common factor between Ben-Gurion and Lenin is that despite their messianic vision, they were not constrained by rigid ideological principles. Both leaders paid sufficient attention to the changing conditions of modernity. Lenin was faced with many problems: the struggle within the party, the World War, the institutionalisation of Marxism, the civil war and the threat from the Western powers. Ben-Gurion's problems were no less weighty than Lenin's. At the beginning of the 1920s, he had wanted to impose Lenin's avant-garde Bolshevik approach, thinking that he should take control of the party (Ahdut Ha-'Avodah) in order that it should run the Histadrut (the General Federation of Workers in the Land of Israel) as a labour movement, guide the labour faction within the Zionist movement, and finally steer the state-in-the-making towards national independence. The Jewish leader was drawn to the Russian one because of the fascination of his personality, his grasp of organisation and his capacity to compromise with his Bolshevik messianism. The rising Labour Zionist leader was also drawn to Trotsky on account of his militaristic messianism expressed in a military-type communism.

Ben-Gurion's attraction to Trotsky has not yet been deeply investigated. In working out his programme for Hevrat Ha-'Ovdim (the Workers' Society), Ben-Gurion could draw on the Bolshevik experience after the Revolution, and especially on Trotsky's

'belligerent communism'. In 1920, Trotsky suggested to the central committee of the party that in order to end the chaos, they should adopt some of his specific proposals, which developed out of the mobilisation of the nation during the First World War (Deutscher, 1965; Wistrich, 1979). His proposals were as follows: that the government had to 'regard the population as a reserve army of labour'; the economy was to be subject to military regulations, and the population had the duty of organising itself into battalions, companies and divisions under the command of army officers who had trained at industrial centres; and every worker would now be a soldier. At the Third Congress of the National Economic Council and at the Moscow Soviet of the Workers' and Farmers' Representatives, Trotsky presented his programme for the military organisation of industry: 'The military establishment must train the economic establishment: industrial areas will be declared military zones. The positions of command will be taken by our technicians, the new engineers, and the people of the enterprise or the administration' (Trotsky, 1967: 102).

Trotsky believed that the nation in the future would resemble a military body, and that accordingly the best preparation would be the total militarisation of society. Discipline, administrative reorganisation, economic planning on a war basis and the constant military preparedness of the entire population would metaphorically speaking turn the Soviet Union into a military camp (Odom, 1976: 34–5). It was Ben-Gurion's communist phase at the beginning of the 1920s that in the final analysis was responsible for his messianic vision of an Israeli socialist republic.

For Ben-Gurion, the messianic vision and social engineering were two sides of the same coin. As the secretary of the Histadrut, he sought to have all of the organisations brought under his authority, to effect reorganisation with the creation of a comprehensive bureaucratic structure, impose the dominance of political over economic factors and favour the general national interest over the particular interest of the civil society of the Yishuv. Because the communist method was also the best way of assuring the security of the whole of the Yishuv, one had to set up a:

> general commune with military discipline of all the workers of Palestine, which would have authority over all the agricultural settlements and urban cooperatives, the feeding and supply of

> the whole Yishuv and the launching and administration of all public works in the country. (Y. Shapira, 1975: 52)

This ambition was reflected in Ben-Gurion's attempt to found a centralised organisation that would permit total control and supervision of all of the members of the Histadrut (Gorny, 1973: 226–34). While this project was in the process of crystallisation, he proposed that the members of Ahdut Ha-'Avodah should join this quasi-military organisation on a voluntary basis, and thanks to this avant-garde army of labour it would become the possession of all of the workers.

The proposals for a 'Workers' Society' (Hevrat Ha-'Ovdim) were published in *Contres*, the Ahdut Ha-'Avodah journal, in readiness for the third congress of the movement, which met in Haifa in December 1922 (Greenboym, 1987: 111–39). This bureaucratic–military programme of the 'army of labour', called the 'general commune' by Ben-Gurion, reflected his constant fear of anarchy. At the beginning of his proposal, he called out to have:

> Instead of anarchy, order and discipline; instead of divisions and oppositions, unity and mutual responsibility; instead of strengthening the parts at the expense of and to the detriment of the whole, the strengthening of the entire working class with our combined forces. (Ibid.)

It was a syndrome characteristic of revolutionary political ideologies: the combination of a militaristic hierarchic structuralism with a messianic mentality (Ohana, 2009; Talmon, 1955; Cohn, 1970). The 'army of labour', like the Gdud Ha-'Avodah before it, was a worthy microcosm of the new society marked by discipline, hierarchy (and at the same time equality), and quasi-military structures. The features of Ben-Gurion's programme resembled Trotsky's: the construction of a rigid labour economy, maximum planning and supervision, concentration, management, standardisation, total ownership of the means of production, communist étatism in place of a free economy. Ben-Gurion and Trotsky were both drawn, in different historical contexts, to the same syndrome of militaristic structuralism that was essentially a Promethean phenomenon. But Ben-Gurion's capacity to retreat from his messianic–proletarian–militaristic programme when he

saw that his colleagues did not accept it is what distinguished him from Trotsky.

A few days before the end of 1923, after his visit to Russia and his time in the laboratory of world revolution where Lenin appeared as 'the man with the iron will', the inspiring model of a leader who transforms reality under the guidance of an idea, a few days before he arrived back, on the ship that sailed from Brindisi to Alexandria, Ben-Gurion indulged in reflections:

> Only the dull of spirit and those of limited perceptions can imagine that the messianic dream of tens of generations filled with suffering and affliction was but a vain illusion. Through hidden channels, from generation to generation, the great and inspiring ideal persisted, and what will a man blessed with hunger and thirst for creativity and redemption not do? Driven by the power of suffering, he will perform the greatest miracle when he turns to the path of creativity, planted in the soil of the homeland, connected by a thousand vibrations to the vision of universal salvation and the great, messianic redemption, the vision which renews Hebrew history. (*Ben-Gurion Diaries* (BGD), 15 December 1923)

Many elements of Ben-Gurion's concept of messianism were already present at this early stage of the political biography of the founder of the State of Israel: a belief in the effective power of the messianic dream of bringing the Jewish people back to history; an acknowledgement of the importance of cultural tradition and historical continuity; the understanding that redemption must be preceded by pre-messianic tribulations; the idea that the realisation of the messianic dream can only take place on the soil of the homeland, and, together with that, an insistence on the necessary connection between the particularistic national vision and the universal messianic redemption, and above all the awareness that the achievement of the messianic vision is the central aim of Jewish and Hebrew history. In this passage and in what follows one finds the kernel of Ben-Gurion's vision, which was destined to grow into a conceptual tree of many branches: the centrality of the Bible, the motherland and Eretz Israel, the attachment to the vision of the prophets and the belief in the task of the Jewish people as a vanguard among the peoples of the world within a universalist nationalist outlook.

For Ben-Gurion, the Zionist challenge was of no less universal significance than the Bolshevik one. He was thinking, perhaps, of young people like the historian Jacob L. Talmon, who related that his youth was 'caught in a cross-fire from two directions: the messianic fire from Eastern Europe and the fire of Zionism from Eretz-Israel' (Talmon, 2000: 17). For these young people, Ben-Gurion sought – in view of the Bolshevik challenge – to transform Zionism into a messianic fire.

In 1924, Ben-Gurion, who was thirty-seven years old, had for two years been secretary general of the Histadrut in Palestine. He envisaged the future Jewish state not only in organisational and political terms as a nation-state, but also in revolutionary terms of the perfection of man and the perfection of the world. In Israel, a 'new society' and a 'new people' were to come into being. This challenge had to be formulated in a suitably revolutionary manner: if one wanted to change human nature, to create an alternative reality, or, in other words, not to go with history step by step, but rather go against it, one had to use meta-historical concepts.

Ben-Gurion's intention as secretary general of the Histadrut was not only to set up a syndicated trade union, but 'to erect a new structure – new from top to bottom [...]. The pioneering workers should together lay a strong foundation for a new society.' He saw the workers in the Histadrut as 'the pioneers of the national rebirth and the social redemption of the Hebrew people' (BGD, 23 April 1934). He believed that the labour movement 'derived its existence from the idea of rebirth and redemption' and its members were the vanguard of the new society to be founded in Eretz Israel. Thus, Eretz Israel was not only a territorial/political solution to the plight of the Jews but a space in which a messianic vision based on moral ideals could be realised:

> Zionism is not only the building of Eretz Israel. One could build Eretz Israel and the hope of Israel would be disappointed. One could create a society that would be a disgrace. There is no magic in Eretz Israel as such. There too one can degenerate; there too there are women-traders. One could create places of Arab slavery which would be a horror for the Jewish people and for humanity. Building up the Jewish people requires money, but not only money. One needs a great moral idea. (BGD, 23 April 1934)

In 1929, Ahdut Ha-'Avodah and Ha-Po'el Ha-Tsa'ir – the two great movements in the Histadrut – merged and founded Mapai (Mifleget Po'alei Eretz Israel, Israel Workers' Party). Both Berl Katznelson and Ben-Gurion, who were the driving forces behind the merger, used ecstatic terminology and described the new socialist political body as 'a movement of national redemption' (BGD, 6 May 1929). After it had gained complete control of the Labour camp, the way was clear for its domination of the Zionist movement. The period in which Ben-Gurion served there as chairman of the Jewish Agency (1935–48) was also the period of the catastrophe of the Jewish people in Europe.

## Messianism and apocalypse

With the emergence of the Revisionist movement, Ben-Gurion immediately discerned the great potential of the Jewish political right, the talents of Jabotinsky, the charismatic leader of this mass movement, its tendency towards an aestheticisation of politics and its messianic rhetoric. According to Ben-Gurion, a gulf separated the concept of redemption of the Labour movement from that of the Revisionist movement, and he wrote that: 'The Revisionist filth is nothing more than a link in the accursed chain of distortions of the idea of redemption' (Ben-Gurion, 1933b: 132–3).

Jabotinsky was Ben-Gurion's bitter rival in the struggle for the hearts of the Jews of Poland in the stormy campaign in 1933 for the election of the leadership of the Zionist Organization. In this struggle, Ben-Gurion did not mince his words, and the opening chapter of his book *The Labor Movement and Revisionism*, published that same year, was entitled 'Jabotinsky in the footsteps of Hitler'. For him, Jabotinsky and his friends were 'false messiahs sucking up the refuse of history and its worthless dross […] try to divert this national movement from its goal of human liberation towards a régime of blood, mire and slavery' (ibid.: 133–4).

In a strongly worded letter of condemnation of 'Revisionismus', Ben-Gurion contrasted the authentic messianic vision of historical Judaism and modern Zionism with the false messianism of the Jewish radical right:

> Zionism is a messianic movement. In their long and terrible days of suffering, which do not have their like in human

> history, the Jewish people cherished a great and lofty vision, a universal vision – the vision of the end of days, the vision of human redemption. From time to time, false messiahs arose who made the vision a fraud and perverted the hope and faith of the people. But the eternity of the people (God) did not lie. The great vision was not a false one, for it sprang from deep needs and primal longings which were refined in the crucible of suffering and heroism. Zionism has taken upon itself the audacious task of turning the ancient dream into a living reality, and our generation has been able to see the beginning of its realization. (Ben-Gurion, 1933b: 133–4)

The suffering of the Polish Jews, Ben-Gurion said, was a fertile soil for the false attraction of Revisionist messianism. When Hitler came to power, Jabotinsky called for the evacuation of the Jews of Europe, and Ben-Gurion saw 'the nightmarish situation of the Jews of Poland, a situation of permanent pogrom, both political, physical, economic and moral, perhaps much worse than in Germany' (BGD, 26 June 1936). In this tragic situation of the year 1936, he perceived the negative potential of the messianic faith to lead to Jewish passivity: 'There is some sort of messianic inspiration, but in a negative way: not the reinforcement of faith by one's own efforts and a strengthening of will, but an abstract delusion' (ibid.).

Ben-Gurion felt frustrated: the exilic Jews were excited by rhetoric but took no concrete steps to escape their predicament. After a public meeting in which he spoke to the Polish Jews about the political problems and the terrible dangers 'there was a boundless enthusiasm in the hall, as though I had announced the coming of the Messiah' (ibid.). Even in that difficult time, he never tired of proclaiming his messianic vision and urging greater 'efforts towards a speedy and full realization of the redemption of our people in its land' (BGD, 8 August 1936). In those years there was a change in the conception of *aliyah* (immigration to Eretz Israel), which he and his movement had had until then. He switched from the idea of a selective, avant-garde, pioneering *aliyah* that would prepare the way for an ideal society to the concept of a mass *aliyah* – an immediate rescue of the Jews of Europe. He recognised the harsh historical reality lurking on their doorstep; he saw its scale and changed his order of priorities. The ideal of the hoped

for utopian society gave way to the rescue of the 'human dust' of the Jewish people. Rescuing the Jews of Europe and bringing most of them to Palestine would also strengthen the main purpose of his entire Zionist career thus far: the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Eretz Israel.

In 1937, the recommendations of the Peel Commission for the partition of Palestine were published. At the twentieth Zionist Congress, Ben-Gurion gave his reasons for supporting an emergency plan to rescue the Jews of Europe and realise the idea of a Jewish state in practical terms, even if it meant compromising the vision of a Greater Land of Israel. He recognised the fatefulness of the hour: 'I see the next congress as no less important than Herzl's first congress' (BGD, 13 June 1937). This was a major crossroads: 'We stand on the threshold of a great disaster or on the threshold of a mighty historical conquest.' Ben-Gurion stood before a fateful decision, and realised that he was faced with a revolutionary situation as Lenin was at the time of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk:

> We are now called upon to make our reckoning, not in accordance with normal considerations but with a revolutionary approach, the sense of a deep historical crisis passing over ourselves and the land. Historical crises have their own logic, fundamentally different from the logic of regular, normal times, and we shall miss our objective if we now measure things by our usual criteria. (Ibid.)

Ben-Gurion pushed for compromise on two binding and commonly accepted imperatives of the Labour movement: the wholeness of the land and selective pioneering immigration. The two things were interdependent: the 'magic solution' of partition, which meant a decision against the wholeness of the land, provided the opportunity to work for a broad, non-selective *aliyah*. It is paradoxical that in practice these two painful compromises made possible the building of the Jewish state. It is not surprising that it was precisely at this decisive moment of historical compromise that Ben-Gurion mobilised all of the messianic rhetoric at his command: the act of compromise was his and the action was messianic. The decision of partition that played an active part in history and moulded it was the messianic act par excellence, as against waiting for the Messiah to appear at the end of history.

In the philosophy of history that Ben-Gurion had developed there were historic leaps forward, revolutionary moments that had to be met with revolutionary means. Ben-Gurion, unlike Yitzhak Tabenkin (1888–1971), a Labour activist and leader of the United Kibbutz Movement on the one hand and Jabotinsky on the other, thought that it was possible and even essential in the crisis that was developing in the 1930s to rescue most of the Jewish people and settle them in even a small part of Palestine. Ben-Gurion believed that the opposition to the partition proposal on the right was motivated by Revisionist adventurism, 'the worst kind of false messianism' (BGD, 11 May 1937). After the failure of his talks with the Arab leaders in 1933, he realised that it would not be possible to sign an agreement with the Arabs, and he hoped to force an outcome by creating facts on the ground. The partition proposal was, so to speak, a partial solution to two problems at once: the distressing plight of the Jewish people in Europe and the blood feud with the Arabs. The Zionist Prometheus had moved from an ideological messianism to political activity.

From 1937 to 1948, Ben-Gurion made crucial decisions with the feeling of engineering a historic breakthrough, from the call for a mass immigration of the Jews of Europe in the 1930s to the opening of the gates of the State of Israel in the first years of the great immigration, and from the acceptance of the partition plan of the Peel Commission to the decision to declare the state. These acts of leadership appear in historical perspective to be acts of assault, of creating a historical direction – 'messianism' in Ben-Gurion's sense of the word. At that time, he refused to oppose the terms that were offered, and in the face of the dramatic events taking place on Europe – the Nuremberg Laws, the Munich Agreement, Kristallnacht – he sought to steer the course of history towards a realisation of the Zionist project in a revolutionary historical situation. A year before the outbreak of the Second World War, he wrote in his diary: 'I believe in the days of the Messiah. Wickedness will not reign forever. Hitler and Chamberlain will not exist forever [...]. Righteousness, now trampled underfoot, will yet appear' (BGD, 3 October 1938).

The meaning of his declaration, 'I believe in the days of the Messiah,' was that in European Jewry's darkest hour the leader placed his trust in the future. When the skies of Europe became overcast, Ben-Gurion did not sink into a state of depression. He

put forward a messianic faith in a better future for humanity and the Jewish people as a value in which one should believe; in the end, human righteousness would overcome human wickedness. Two years later, his friend and colleague Berl Katznelson also spoke in messianic terms, but this time it was in order to express helplessness and despair. In 1940, Berl reported that a woman had said to a friend in the market: 'The Lord of the Universe is wrong in delaying and not sending the Messiah. What will happen if the Messiah comes and no longer finds his Jews?' When the scale of the catastrophe became clear, Ben-Gurion declared in a rough manner: 'previously, we were a people without a state, now we are a state without a people'. That was the whole difference between the two men. At a time when Berl, the warmhearted Jewish intellectual, was in despair concerning the Jews of Europe, was helpless before their suffering and identified with the victims to the point of desperation, Ben-Gurion remained cool-headed and alert and statesmanlike to the depths of his being. He did not feel the horror any less than Berl did and even saw it coming earlier than he and others had done. Already in 1934, on reading *Mein Kampf*, Ben-Gurion wrote, 'Hitler's régime puts the whole Jewish people in danger' (Tevet, 1976: 68–9), and in 1938 he made a grim forecast of the fate in store for the Jewish people: 'Hitler is not only the enemy and adversary of German Jewry. His sadistic and fanatical aim is the extermination of the Jews in the entire world' (Frilling, 1998: 24). His grim forecasts did not render him helpless, and in the face of the approaching disaster he did what was best in the situation: he prepared to found a state. The path that led to independence and the realisation of the vision of the national home in Eretz Israel was to be a tragic one. He did not look back in anger but prepared an infrastructure for the absorption of mass Jewish immigration.

In the face of Dante's inferno, as Ben-Gurion called it, and in the face of the industrial extermination of the Jews carried out by the Nazis, he made a radical decision: perhaps the best thing to do was to save those Jews who could still be saved and not to dwell on what could have been done for those who were lost. At a time when Berl wrote in his diary, 'One has no strength to greet the next day,' Ben-Gurion was working on a political programme for the day after the end of the war. In the Biltimore Program of May 1942, he succeeded in uniting the Zionist movement around a political plan of action that worked towards the creation of a

Jewish state in Palestine after the war and called for the transference of the authority for decisions concerning immigration and settlement to the Zionist establishment. About six months later, he initiated the setting up of a national team to plan the immigration and settlement of mass Jewish immigration from Europe. This team, which eventually came to be known as the *Va'adat Ha-Tikhnun* (the Planning Committee), was occupied for about two years in working out the details of a 'Plan for a Million', which had been presented to the members of Ben-Gurion's party, Mapai, seven years before. This plan envisaged the immigration of a million Jews to Palestine and their settlement there within an extremely short period of time. Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary then that if a million or half a million Jews were to immigrate to Palestine within a year, 'I would see it as the coming of the Messiah' (BGD, 19 November 1942).

In August 1945, Ben-Gurion gave a brief formulation of his Zionist messianic philosophy of history. Its general principle was: 'Nothing Jewish is alien to us.' Then he wondered, 'Are the Jews a nation only in Eretz Israel, or are they a secular political nation throughout the world? Or are they a historical-spiritual unit?' Until a hundred and fifty years before, he said, the Jews were a separate nation 'with a special status in the ghetto, and one central idea – the idea of the Messiah. The chosen nation would be redeemed in its entirety and return to Zion, and all the peoples would flow towards it' (BGD, 17 August 1945). He claimed that with the coming of emancipation, Jewish separateness and the messianic idea were undermined. From that time onwards, two approaches existed among the Jewish people: the dynamic Zionist approach and the static exilic approach. According to Ben-Gurion, the dynamic Zionist approach became a reality when the United Nations recognised the right of the Jews to self-determination in Palestine in November 1947. On that occasion, the hour of redemption was linked to an apocalyptic threat: the international recognition of the Jewish state led to an inevitable confrontation between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine.

## The messianic idea and the new state

After it had come into existence, Ben-Gurion connected the founding of the Jewish state with the catastrophe that had overtaken

European Jewry: 'Fate so desired it that the messianic event – I permit myself to use this awesome, glorious term – of the revival of the Jewish State took place at a time when a third of our people was exterminated' (Ben-Gurion, 1950: 148). Between the two main events in the history of the Jewish people in the twentieth century – the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel – there was a space of only three years, which gives the founding of the state a special importance in the history of nations and makes it a unique case study in historical leadership.

In March and October 1949, Ben-Gurion arranged two meetings with Israeli writers and intellectuals. The question discussed at these meetings was the kind of collective identity that the pioneering elite should have in the face of the mounting waves of immigration, or, more specifically, how a state that had fixed its patterns of identity in the society of the Yishuv could adapt itself to the great immigration of the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. Ben-Gurion, as usual, was intensely focused on his objective, perhaps the most important in the history of the State of Israel: the absorption of the great *aliyah* (the mass immigration wave in 1949). Yesterday's organiser of an army had become the builder of a state. At the centre of his agenda was the great *aliyah* that within three years was to double the number of Jewish inhabitants. Both his colleagues in the political establishment and the intellectuals and writers were worried about the impact of this non-selective wave of immigrants, but Ben-Gurion, for his part, saw it as a development that would make the State of Israel a fact. Here one sees Ben-Gurion's revolutionary understanding that the immigration was not a stroke of fate but an opportunity, in exactly the same way as he had seen the positive potential of the 1937 partition plan.

Tragic circumstances led to the fulfilment of the Zionist prophecy: on the one hand, only the Holocaust survivors were redeemed instead of the entire people, on the other hand, the problem of the 700,000 Palestinians refugees emerged. The immigrants from Europe and from Arab countries did not form part of the pioneering Zionist ethos of the society of the Yishuv. This 'human dust' was supposed to be transformed into the 'New Man'. The messianic myth conceived as the ethos of the new state was identified solely with Ben-Gurion and was seen as his creation. The Ben-Gurion ethos of *mamlakhtiyut* (statism) was accompanied by a messianic ideology (Shavit, 1992: 56–78).

Ben-Gurion saw the messianic idea as a common basis for building the Israeli nation, a means of strengthening it and a goal towards which both the old and the new *aliyah* could strive. The messianic idea, which drew from traditional Jewish sources, could serve as a mobilising myth that enabled different Jewish communities to create a meta-narrative of exile and renewal, of dispersion and independence. According to this narrative, the homeland was Zion, the movement was Zionism, history was the return to Zion; the future was the national and cultural redemption of the Jewish people that was achieved by the establishment of the Jewish realm in Eretz Israel.

Although there were religious Zionist circles, pioneers of the second *aliyah* and major philosophers in the history of Jewish thought for whom the concept of messianism was central to their consciousness and actions, Ben-Gurion was among the first Zionist political leader who made a conscious and significant use of the messianic myth. Founding myths generally have a dramatic connection to the theme of origins and goals: where the society comes from and where it is going. The messianic myth does in fact do this by connecting the historical house of David with the end of days. One can trace the gradual development of this messianic myth into a central idea in Judaism. Zionism translated the myth into secular political terms to such a degree that there were some who saw Zionism as a secular messianism, and it was transformed by Ben-Gurion into a mobilising tool in the building of a modern society renewing its sovereignty in its historical homeland. Ben-Gurion made a dual use of the messianic myth: as a conservative, stabilising element and as a revolutionary, energising element. In 1949, Ben-Gurion used the messianic myth to achieve two goals between which there was a certain dissimilarity: first, to create a social homogeneity through the use of the political and pedagogical practices of the melting pot; and second, to provide inspiration, reinforce sentiment and foster the avant-garde pioneering ethos of the first Israelis. The messianic myth sought to fulfil both these functions at one and the same time.

Ben-Gurion preferred to play down the messianic significance of the Bar-Kokhba revolt, in which there was a combination of messianic pretensions and a lack of political realism, and chose, rather, to emphasise the nation's messianic aspirations and the universal principles inherent in the messianic vision. During Israel's

first decade, Ben-Gurion tried, by means of the messianic myth, to transform the various sociological groups into a single national community. Ben-Gurion tried to resolve the Jewish crisis by providing a 'comprehensive explanation', to use Claude Lévi-Strauss's term, in the form of the messianic myth reflected in the Jewish universal vision, in the founding of the Jewish state and later in the consolidation of its Israeli identity. In Ben-Gurion's political and social understanding, the myth was to bestow renewed vitality on modern Jewish history. Through Lévi-Strauss's concept of 'making a mythological use of history, but in an opposite direction', we can understand Ben-Gurion's use of the messianic myth in contemporary political history. He created a connection between the history of the First Temple and the messianic idea that existed in exile, rehabilitated this idea in order to create the impetus for the preparation of the Third Temple (the State of Israel), and finally, when it arose, used it to fuse different Jewish communities into a single national community. Ben-Gurion saw the messianic idea as a sort of meta-narrative of Jewish history, and also a means of fusing together different Jewish narratives. The idea was embodied and fulfiled in the renewal of Jewish *mamlakhtiyut* in Eretz Israel.

Before 1948, Ben-Gurion had to face the hostility of an internal opposition among the Jewish and Zionist leadership and the leadership of the Yishuv when gaining acceptance for his national agenda. It was in these conditions that the Israeli identity was formed and consolidated. This could not have been done without the powerful myths fostered by Ben-Gurion, such as the return to Zion, the ingathering of the exiles, the model society and 'the chosen people'. In his opinion, all of them derived from one common source, a meta-myth – the messianic myth.

Ben-Gurion understood that only the renewal of Jewish political life in Eretz Israel would permit the rooting of the modern Jews as a permanent avant-garde and the preservation of their 'surplus value' through their universal messianic vision. The messianic idea is thus an ontological principle and not just a metaphysical aspiration. In this there is a similarity between Ben-Gurion's messianic vision and Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*. Bloch (1885–1977), a German-Jewish Marxist thinker, thought that the idea of the human being is a utopian concept, a concept that in his opinion contains many unrealised possibilities (*Homo utopius*) (Bloch, 1986). The human

being is an entity in the process of self-realisation. Bloch secularises hope and believes that it is realised through human actions. The utopian principle has an existential character. The human essence is a consciousness of hope; it is an essence that awaits discovery and realisation. This philosophy of hope is not only theoretical or critical but it is action, achievement and concretisation. The 'principle of hope' (the title of Bloch's book) is similar in many ways to Ben-Gurion's messianic idea, which is more than merely an abstraction and is likewise not exhausted in a single action but is embodied, layer upon layer, in reality.

Ben-Gurion believed that the 'messianic event' of the founding of the state was not the final stop of redemption on the messianic path. Ben-Gurion had a unique approach, according to which redemption was a historical process realised in stages and not the end of history. This approach might be called 'immanent secular messianism'. Ben-Gurion fell outside of Gershom Scholem's well-known distinction between 'restorative messianism', which seeks to revive some political or social model from the past (as in 'Renew our days as of old'), and 'utopian messianism', which appears after some apocalyptic crisis and reaches beyond historical time to another, metaphysical time-dimension. In Scholem's view, messianism, which belongs to the end of history, to a metahistorical time, is beyond humanity. Messianic redemption is transcendental and is connected to an eschatological dimension (the 'end of days') in which 'the world is set right'.

The great religions place man as an individual and in general in a context of faith and redemption, and so history is seen as a human affair and not merely biological. These symbolic systems give meaning to human existence, mould it for long periods of time and even take it beyond time (Arieli, 2003). The great revolution in the historical consciousness and in historical reality took place when human existence was delivered up to Providence. There is a great existential difference in the status of man if he sees himself as living within a system determined by religious criteria, whether monotheistic or pagan, or within a system in which human existence is seen as self-sufficient. From the religious point of view, history is a story that ends with the 'end of days' and with the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of heaven. It is a history with a purpose, and its linear contour leads to a definite end that is the completion of the beginning. In this messianic or prophetic

view of things, history has a lowly status. Until the modern era, it was deposited in Jewish history's exile from history. In the religious approach to history, man examines his actions not from the historical point of view but from the point of view of eternity.

Modernity, the Enlightenment and self-emancipation, which were the historical and philosophical infrastructure out of which Zionism developed, made possible a secular political horizon that the modern Jew could strive for in history. The immanent secular messianism that Ben-Gurion believed in is restorative – the Third Temple is authorised by the precedent of the First and Second Temples – but it is also selective: it selects and takes from the past only the parts that are relevant to its purpose. The immanent secular messianism is utopian, but it is not realised at a single stroke but in an infinite progression.

## The critique of the messianic myth

Only once did Ben-Gurion abandon his usual caution and permit himself to indulge in political rhetoric in connection with his messianic vision. At the end of Operation Kadesh (or the Sinai Campaign), the Israeli military campaign in the Sinai Peninsula against Egypt in 1956, he declared that 'Yotvat, called Tiran, which was an independent Hebrew state until a thousand, four hundred years ago, will now be part of the third Kingdom of Israel' (Ohana, 2010b: 120). On 7 November 1956, he also declared in the Knesset that this, 'the greatest campaign in the history of our people' was like 'the revelation of Sinai' (ibid.). It must be said to his credit that he immediately retreated from these messianic declarations and did not allow the messianic enthusiasm to affect his pragmatic policies.

A year after the Sinai Campaign, Ben-Gurion launched an ideological campaign against the Zionist Organization. He had a golden opportunity to do so when the Zionist Organization invited Jewish intellectuals from Israel and elsewhere to an ideological gathering in Israel in August 1957 (Feldstein, 1998). Ben-Gurion exploited the occasion to declare to the participants that the Zionist ideology had exhausted its historical role and that the decisive factor in the history of the people of Israel was and remained 'the messianic vision first proclaimed by the prophets of Israel'. In that same year, he made pragmatic speeches in the same vein as this declaration,

which involved him in a dispute about messianism with the Israeli intellectuals. Questions of identity that had been deferred with the establishment of the state and the absorption of the great *aliyah* now came to the fore. In 1958, he turned to the Jewish thinkers in Israel and abroad with the question, 'What is a Jew?' (Ben-Raphael, 2001).

Central to the controversy concerning messianism was the intellectuals' fear of the fusion of this grand and elevated idea with the power of the leader (Keren, 1988). They recoiled at the new turn that the prime minister had taken, which embodied political messianism: from dealing with ideas he had gone to dealing with problems of power. The intellectuals saw the dangers inherent in a messianism of state joined to political power. They witnessed the Kibiyeh Operation of 1953 (an Israeli reprisal operation that caused disproportionate casualties and was widely condemned) and the colonialist adventure of 1956 in the Sinai; some apprehensively followed the nuclear project that was coming into being far from the eyes of the crowd; they perceived the increasing strength of the military-industrial complex in Israel; they observed the younger generation of politicians who surrounded the 'old man', Ben-Gurion, casting angry looks at the minister of defence, Pinhas Lavon, who was seen as really representing the civilian sector; they saw the launching of the Shavit rocket at the height of an election campaign. All these facts were visible to the Jerusalem intellectuals who were not at all close to the army. It is against this background that the vicissitudes of the 'Lavon Affair' (a failed Israeli operation in Egypt in 1954, when Pinhas Lavon was minister of defence; Ben-Gurion demanded an investigation into it) may be understood.

The intellectuals were alarmed by the Promethean golem that the state seemed likely to become, and no less by its leader who did not shrink from using the power of the state. Ben-Gurion, for his part, was determined in the stand that he took and was not frightened of joining political power to Promethean messianism. Although he thought that atomic weaponry might be a two-edged sword, he was not afraid of linking power and ideology as such. It should be remembered that he was a product of Zionism, which sought to give the Jews the power to shape a reality in their own image. This was Ben-Gurion's sphere of action, and in this arena of power wedded to ideas he was an outstanding player. He did

not fail in the potentially adventurist enterprise of joining the vision of 'redemption' to 'doomsday weapons' (Raz-Krakotzkin, 2002: 87–112), but the intellectuals who now emerged into the daylight of the young civil society felt that they had lost their innocence.

The founding fathers had laid a time bomb in their use of messianic terminology; the intellectuals of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem wanted to dismantle it as soon as possible. They had travelled a great distance from the days when they had the pretension of educating the great *aliyah* to the time when they understood that their task as intellectuals was to abandon the monopolistic discourse in which they themselves had taken part, that the role of the intellectual is to reveal the problematic nature of the obvious, to distinguish the reality from the idea and realities from 'values', and to promote the view that all is contingent and possible rather than natural and self-evident. In the first decade of the state, Israeli intellectuals evolved from creating and mapping out the hegemonic field of power to clearing the philosophical field of mines (Gramsci, 1971; Bourdieu, 1986). At the centre of this field lay the messianic terminology.

It was not only the religious intellectuals who warned about a political theology infiltrating the State of Israel and threatening to grow into a 'territorial messianism'. The secular historians Yehoshua Arieli, Jacob L. Talmon and Uriel Tal also saw the connection between the post-Six Day War of 1967 political theology and a Canaanite messianism.

The idea of universal equality deriving from the Enlightenment, like the right to self-determination, was a guiding principle for Yehoshua Arieli in his approach to the Israeli–Palestinian blood feud. From the day after the Six Day War, he was among the first to warn of the dangers of the messianic and Canaanite inspiration of the Greater Land of Israel movement, and thus founded the first dovish organisation after the war – the 'Movement for Peace and Security'. In his opinion, there were two main schools of thought in Zionism, resulting in two different approaches to the territories captured in the war: the national universalist school and the national integralist school (Arieli, 2003: 11–39).

Arieli warned against the territorial messianism of the Greater Land of Israel movement, which combined the Revisionist ideology with the type of messianic religiosity of Rabbi Isaak Kook.

To this school of thought, one principle – the affinity of the people to the land – became an absolute demand requiring full realisation. The duty of redeeming the land had replaced the duty of redeeming the people. Arieli stressed the importance of avoiding deceptive messianic delusions and ideologies based on nationalist myths. In these myths, the past and future of the nation fused in fulfilling the drama of redemption: the return to Zion, the revival of the Kingdom of Israel and the sanctification of the land and the world through the advent of the Messiah. According to Arieli, an old-new aspect of Judaism was revealed once more as a result of the 1967 war. It seemed as though events had shown the hand of Providence. Judaism appropriated for itself the physical side of Zionism and the biblical promise of settlement and became a 'tribal' religion. Nationalism was sanctified by religion and religion was sanctified by nationalism. In this 'tribal religion' a new people was created, different from the Jewry outside of Israel, which lived according to the norms of Halacha and modern life.

Arieli thought that, together with the fetishistic messianic vision, there had developed among the adherents of the Greater Land of Israel movement a Canaanite attitude to the land. Everything connected with the Land of Israel – nature, the physical space, the seasons of the year, customs and memories – had been raised to the level of sanctity. The original Zionist approach had been the superimposition of the Jewish people's desire for national independence and the people's distress as a minority scattered among the nations of the world. The new integralist approach sanctified the place as the sole source of legitimacy. Only when the historical attachment to the Land of Israel contended with the ideal of a national home, only then was there a need to choose between national territorial independence in part of the Land of Israel and an attachment to the whole of the Land of Israel. The majority in the Zionist movement continued to prefer national independence to an attachment to the whole of the Land of Israel, and thus the order of priorities was fixed.

Many in the Greater Israel camp wanted to grant citizenship to all of the Palestinians and to include them in the state. Arieli perceived in this a Canaanite principle:

> These are former 'Canaanites', who rightly see the Greater Land of Israel project as *the* historical Opportunity with a capital 'O' to

> implement their ideas and vision. But their attitude reflects the fact that they have always rejected the aims of the Zionist movement and its definition of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. Their hope that, with the inclusion of the large Arab minority, the Jewish and Zionist character of the State of Israel would disappear, is a hope that is not unfounded. (Arieli, 2003: 37).

The 'Canaanite' supporters of the Greater Land of Israel believed that with the society's abandonment of its Jewish and Zionist character there could be a full assimilation of all of the inhabitants of the land in a single state, but Arieli found it hard to understand the logic of the members of the Greater Land of Israel movement who were willing to destroy the Jewish character of the State of Israel in the name of the boundaries of the biblical promise.

In his analysis of Jewish messianism, Uriel Tal discerned two different schools of thought: the political messianic school of thought that saw present-day historical phenomena as a realisation of mystical realities, and the school of thought that held that in social and political matters one should act with caution and self-restraint as God alone is an absolute authority and one should therefore avoid intervening in His name. Both schools of thought accepted Halacha as normative and as a binding authority. The adherents of the political messianic school of thought claim that the only difference between the messianic period and other periods is that in the former, the Jews are once again free from subjection to foreign rule. In this period, redemption has begun, and it will eventually be realised on a worldwide scale. This claim brings symbols down to the level of reality: that is to say, a stone or a plot of land are not *symbols* of something sacred but they are sacred in themselves. Against this, there are those who believe that one of the functions of Halacha in the history of the Jewish people has been to liberate it from emotionality and mystification that could hold it back from important achievements like making peace. The emphasis on ethics and consideration for others in this approach is contrasted with the militancy of the active messianic school of thought. 'Truth and peace in your gates,' to quote the Prophet Zechariah, must be the basis of ethics and democracy. In the sayings of the Sages, there is a specific injunction always to search for wisdom; this search, it is held, will eventually lead to the coming of the Messiah. This approach rejects a political romanticism

based on personal religious experience and rejects the intrusion of the sacred into politics (Tal, 1984).

From this perspective, Ben-Gurion's Promethean messianism is fascinating. He believed that, on the one hand, man must be sovereign and set up his universal human kingdom in this world, and on the other hand, that man should not seek to achieve the kingdom of heaven on earth. It is better that he should not achieve the messianic kingdom here and now but that he should strive for it with all his might:

> If God is man's belief in the Absolute, in the sublime, in the Creator of all things, or the highest concept of mercy, justice and love, the raising of man is the aspiration to resemble God as far as possible. And if that is 'the kingdom of the Almighty', the messianic vision is a striving towards the rule of the kingdom of the Almighty on earth. This striving has no end, for one can get close to the kingdom of the Almighty but I fear one cannot reach it, for it is, as it were, an idea of the infinite. (Ben-Gurion, 1957b: 29)

This Promethean messianism formulated by Ben-Gurion is incompatible with transcendental messianism such as that of Gush Emunim. The Kabbala scholar Rivka Schatz, one of the intellectuals who have supported Gush Emunim, thought that the messianic phenomenon is:

> greater than can be understood with the tools of scholarship we possess […]. Rather than a principle that can be described, it is a language through which hidden desires are revealed, it is the ultimate depth, it is the sanctuary of awe and hope where the dreams are stored which are not revealed in history […]. (Schatz, 1990: 24–8)

In other words, messianism is a language that reveals the 'ultimate depth' of humanity, and it is something greater than those who create it or those who use it. This concept is a retreat from the Promethean messianism of Zionism that depends on the free will of sovereign human beings, and a return to non-human structures, to transcendental messianism. Baruch Kurzweil at an early stage analysed this phenomenon of a return to transcendental systems greater than man or than man's capacity to explain them.

In his expression 'the structure of the archetype', Kurzweil, a product of European culture, was referring to the transcendental school of thought that interpreted history in terms of deterministic, non-human forms. One of its theorists was Ludwig Klages, who developed an anti-rational approach focused on the conscious creation of myths and the belief that reality itself, and not its representations, consists of 'symbols' or 'expressions'. The worldview of Oswald Spengler was characterised by this interpretation of reality as a symbol: in his opinion, the significance of morphological forms is that forms rule over life by means of symbols and metaphors; it is they that create the social reality and not human beings with free will. This aesthetic and metaphysical approach to history includes Georges Sorel's 'myth', Klages's 'aura', Spengler's 'morphology', Ernst Jünger's 'Gestalt', and mythical non-human concepts of the postmodernist era such as Lévi-Strauss's 'structure' and Michel Foucault's 'episteme' (Ohana, 2000b).

The messianic myth as a non-human structure was in Kurzweil's opinion also likely to lead to a negation of human decisions and actions. He disliked the idea that human actions are directed by mythical constructs, that a 'system', a 'structure', an 'arche', an 'episteme' should have priority over man and condition his actions in history. The messianic myth that Kurzweil warned against represented a moral and cultural relativism in which values changed in accordance with historical circumstances. The messianic end justifies the means. Kurzweil was critical of postmodernist relativism of which its paradoxical possible result could be an affirmation of fundamentalism. The transcendental messianic language cast aside the Promethean messianic heritage that was based on the sovereignty of man; critical observation was abandoned for a passionate defence of the irrational, the mythical, mystery. Kurzweil's intention, similar to the Israeli philosopher and biblical scholar Yehezkel Kaufmann's (1889–1963) with regard to the Bible, was to eradicate myth. The danger was not an intellectual but a concrete one: playing with concepts of sparks and husks in the realm of politics could lead to a nihilistic theology.

## Conclusion

In the postmodern era, transcendental messianism has come back into our lives through the front door. It is active in the world of the

post-Enlightenment: that is to say, in the world after the attempt to raise man to the level of God. Fundamentalism has internalised the Promethean initiative in order to increase its strength. In the pre-modern era, men waited with longing for the appearance of God, but they waited patiently and passively; in the modern era, they took their fate into their own hands and obliterated the traces of God; in the postmodern era, they have lost their humility and want God to be summoned immediately. This era has armed fundamentalism with the Promethean self-consciousness and the power of technology and the media. This reversal can take place if the secular is sanctified: only the secular can bring God closer. Fundamentalism has reconnected transcendental messianism with Promethean messianism; the theological has once again been joined to the political. Will the Zionist Prometheus return the fire to the gods?

# 3

# The Myth of Nimrod: 'Canaanism' between Zionism and Post-Zionism

## The appearance of *Nimrod*

The Nietzschean idea of the self-creating overman fused with the Nimrodian of the 'new Hebrew' utopia that existed in Palestine at the end of the 1930s. Nimrod, the nativistic symbol of self-construction, was seen as a challenge to exilic Judaism that, it was held, could not serve as a basis for building a national community in a new space. The Nimrods, the 'new Hebrews', rebelling against the tradition of their fathers, exuded youthful energy, self-confidence and primitive strength. They sought to instil in the native-born generation a *Lebensphilosophie* and fighting spirit in place of studiousness, experience in place of reasoning, aesthetics in place of ethics and myth in place of historical knowledge. 'Nimrodism' meant authenticity, Nietzschean Hebraism and self-construction.

One of the most radical manifestions of the *Nimrod* sculpture may be found in the subtitle to an article by the author and artist Binyamin Tammuz: 'Nimrod, the beginning of the Israeli rebirth'. The subtitle was: '1939: Yitzhak Danziger gave birth to Nimrod, symbol of the new Israeli. 1939: the old Jew taken to Auschwitz' (Tammuz, 1996). Despite the dramatic dichotomy and the fact that it was only three years later that the Jews were taken to Auschwitz, these words succeed in conveying the revolutionary message that many people drew from this sculpture and the tragic significance of its timing. It was as though this was a turning point in which the old world was razed to the ground and from which a brave new world that the 'new Hebrew' bore within him would spring

forth. Was it true that, as was written in a catalogue concerning Danziger's sculpture: 'Nimrod the ancient hunter turned into a fighter of the Palmach (as Danziger himself was), a monument to the rebellious spirit of the generation of 1948'? (Manor-Friedman, 1996). In 1942, *Nimrod* was in fact hailed by the press of the period as expressing the spirit of the generation:

> *Nimrod* is not only a piece of sculpture: it is flesh of our flesh, spirit of our spirit; it is a milestone and a monument. A quintessence of vision and boldness, of monumentality, of youthful rebelliousness. With all its archaic restraint, there is in it a youthful audacity that characterises a whole generation.
>
> The Canaanite worldview is reasonable only in one sphere, the sphere of sculpture and vision – Nimrod. But it is also forbidden to clothe Nimrod in the shackles of Canaanism. *Nimrod* was created when our people was being destroyed. It symbolises the will-to-live of the primaeval, tense Hebrew. The legendary figure of Nimrod served the artist as a tool to express the wonderful meaning of the name: Let's rebel – let us not be conformist, let us not be submissive, let us not be without an identity! (Maliniak, 1981)

Since then, for more than three generations, Danziger's sculptural creation has served as a mirror in which the spectrum of Israeli identity is reflected, a kind of Rashomon of the forms and metamorphoses of the Israeli self-consciousness. *Nimrod* became an axis, at one end of which was the attempt to promote the 'new Hebrew', the fighter, in the tradition of the Canaanite Zionism exemplified by Avraham Melnikoff's sculpture at Tel Hai in 1936, and at the other end of which was the post-Zionist challenge that sought to expose the nakedness of the Zionist–Hebrew–Israeli god of the hunt, and to propose the counter-image of a Jewish Nimrod wrapped in a prayer shawl, a wandering scholar, an anti-hero with respect to the Zionist ethos of heroism.

The myth of Nimrod is an inseparable part of the Mesopotamian civilisation and Mediterranean culture, and of Jewish culture and Israeli art as well. Just as there is a hermaneutics of texts and of works of art, so there exists what might be called a 'hermaneutics of space'. When the written text, the work of art or sanctified space are detached from their time and cultural context, they present

the challenge of a new reading and a different interpretation. The primary task of hermaneutic commentary in the historical context is to bridge the gap between the historical reality of the past to which the texts, the works of art and sanctified spaces belong, and the modern reader living in the present.

*Nimrod*'s starting point was apparently the commissioning of the sculpture by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem for the decoration of the entrance to the Department of Archaeology on Mount Scopus (Omer, 1996a: 96). The architect Richard Kaufmann's recommendation of Danziger for this task was rejected on account of the opposition of religious and academic circles. For the religious, the title and form of the sculpture were an expression of the most radical anti-Jewish sentiment. The head of the department Eleazar L. Sukenik, was also ill-disposed towards the idea of a 'Canaanite' work as the symbol of a Jewish institution. *Nimrod* did not fit in with Sukenik's Zionist scheme of creating a 'Jewish archaeology' by treating the history of the Jews as a Hegelian thrust towards Zionism. The last two thousand years of Jewish history were only a bridge, in his eyes, between the loss of national independence in the first century and its renewal in the twentieth.

Zionist ideology envisaged a 'synthetic' approach to history that saw an affinity between the biblical past and the new Israel, and the 'Canaanite' movement, for its part, saw a resemblance and historical continuity between the Canaanite past and modern Israel (Feige and Shiloni, 2008). Biblical archaeology in Israel, focusing on digs in Jerusalem, Nablus, Jericho, Beit El, Beit She'an and Lachish, was 'a tool used by the Zionist movement, a way of demonstrating the connection between the ancient history of the Land of Israel and the historical event of the rise of the State of Israel' (Geva, 1992: 93).

In contrast to the Zionist approach to archaeology, the Canaanite ideologists focused on archaeological finds in early Ugaritic, which provided a quasi-scientific cover for their theory of a cultural and national unity of the Ugaritic people and the Israelites in ancient Mesopotamia (Horon, 2000). The Canaanite archaeological historiography adopted by the scholar of the ancient East Adia G. Horon and the poet Yonatan Ratosh, aiming at a spatial interpretation of the Hebrew past, stood in contradiction to the Jewish archaeological historiography of the school of Sukenik and his successors. The two archaeological approaches, the Zionist

and the Canaanite, seized upon the different archaeological finds to support their claims. Archaeology became ideology. *Nimrod*, which was adopted by the Canaanite movement as an artistic representation of their outlook, constituted the antithesis of the spiritual concept underlying the founding of the university of the Jewish people in Jerusalem. The sculpture *Nimrod*, which was given the name of the biblical character and of the capital of the Assyrian Empire, was obviously not an authentic archaeological find but a modern creation accepted as such, whose form and content were, according to Danziger, intended to fuse 'the history and archaeology of the place' (Scharfstein, 1977).

*Nimrod* made its first public appearance at the Habima Theatre in 1944 at the 'Eretz Israel Artists' Annual Exhibition'. About two hundred paintings, drawings and sculptures were shown at the exhibition, which one critic described as an expression of 'the deficiencies of a culture-in-the-making' (Landau, 1944). At a later stage of his career, Danziger revealed his frustration at the way that his work had been received: 'When the work was first exhibited at Habima, I was fiercely attacked. They wrote that *Nimrod* expressed impurity, that it was an idol' (Barzel, 1977). But there were also other, enthusiastic opinions. The work stirred up a refreshing gust of wind and stood out from its surroundings. Despite his criticism in the newspaper *Al Ha-Mishmar* that the exhibition lacked a tradition and a common purpose, the critic S. Landau was duly impressed: 'Yitzhak Danziger's *Nimrod* shows an original talent. The image of the "mighty hunter" is conveyed in a suitably primitive form' (Landau, 1944). The critic Haim Gamzu immediately perceived in his criticism of the exhibition in the newspaper *Haaretz* that the young Danziger was an artist outside the mainstream:

> The sculpture *Nimrod* is a work full of interest, especially because its creator did not submit to any conventions. Its distance from convention and fidelity to inspiration are the salient qualities of this work [...]. Its primitiveness of expression and general appearance testify to the artist's talent. *Nimrod*'s profile is like that of a hawk ready at any moment to swoop down on its prey. (Gamzu, 1944a)

This was not all that the celebrated critic had to say about the work. In that same year, 1944, Gamzu examined *Nimrod* in his

*Painting and Sculpture in Israel* in the broader context of spatial identity and the search for archaeological roots:

> With its return to its soil, it also returns to its geographical environment [...].
>
> It is also reasonable to suppose that the remains of primaeval art that bear silent witness to what once existed here can be a source of inspiration for the contemporary Israeli artist. Danziger has sought an inspiration of this kind [...]. (Gamzu, 1944b: 75)

Three years later, the critic wrote a personal letter to the artist, asking him not to sell *Nimrod* in view of the fact that he had promised to lend the work to Tel Aviv Museum for a couple of years. Eventually, as we know, the work was acquired by the Israel Museum. In his *The Art of Sculpture in Israel* (1957), Gamzu decribed *Nimrod* as 'a major milestone in Israeli sculpture' (Gamzu, 1957: 'Yitzhak Danziger'). The sculpture was in his opinion the product of the youthful Yitzhak's search for the authenticity of the Bible and the inspiration of heroic figures. The young artist beginning to find his way was at a crossroads between East and West, a crossroads at which his studies in the Western capitals of London and Paris and his scrutiny of civilisations of the ancient East such as Tyre and Sidon, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Canaan came together. The new Eretz Israel, with its exiles from the Islamic diasporas together with the ancient life to be found in the tales of the Bible, led Danziger to concretise in stone the biblical figure of Nimrod. Although it was 'one of the first original works of Israeli sculpture', Gamzu concluded, 'the dimensions of the stone were not sufficient to make *Nimrod* a real masterpiece' (ibid.).

Gamzu saw Danziger as the logical continuation of the path taken by Avraham Melnikoff. A friendship formed between the two artists when Melnikoff – who left Palestine two days after the unveiling on 25 February 1934 of the monument that he had erected at Tel Hai – met Danziger, who in the years 1934–37 was attending the Slade School of Fine Art at the University of London. Both of them were attracted to Sumerian and Canaanite art and were commited to the Jewish national revival, and there are some who claim that Melnikoff and his style had an influence

on Danziger earlier on in his career and on his works *Shabazia* and *Nimrod* (Fuhrer, 2002: 70).

There is an obvious resemblance between the monument *The Lion of Judah*, as Melnikoff called his sculpture commemorating the eight people who fell at the battle of Tel Hai in the Galilee, and the Assyrian lion from Khorsabad exhibited at the Louvre in Paris. The choice of the lion as the heroic–aesthetic symbol of the Zionist renaissance in Eretz Israel, here commemorating the heroic battle at Tel Hai, was not a new one and was to be found in other Zionistic works of art (Ortar, 1982: 19; Ofrat, 1993: 966–9).

Already in 1922, six years before Melnikoff began his work, Boris Schatz, the initiator of Zionist art in Eretz Israel, created in relief an image of Joseph Trumpeldor with a lion roaring because of an arrow embedded in his flesh. From the late 1920s, allegorical representations like Melnikoff's at Tel Hai changed the mode of commemoration through portraiture that Schatz brought to Palestine (Mishory, 2000: 64–5). Unlike previous Jewish symbols, that of the lion represented power and authority. In Schatz, Melnikoff and Danziger, we do not see the intellectualisation through ritual that is characteristic of Jewish culture, but an aestheticisation of Hebrew culture through sculptures resembling the pagan art of the region in the distant past (Zach, 1982: 9). The Jewish artists in Palestine were influenced by a time factor and a space factor: the Jewish national revival drew its inspiration from the monumental civilisations of the Fertile Crescent, resulting in a revival of the Assyrian or Canaanite style, a return to the old-new space of the East symbolising the emergence of the 'new Hebrew' who had turned his back on the exilic European character of the 'old Jew'.

## The genealogy of Nimrod

Nimrod is the first king to be mentioned in the Bible, the first person that a kingdom is named after. He was not so much an actual ruler as a Mesopotamian model of kingship, a model of the rulers of Assyria in the first millennium BCE. According to Max Weber, this progenitor of kings, Nimrod, represented an 'ideal' type of kingship. Thus, the exact genealogy of Nimrod is irrelevant, nor does it matter if his name can be associated with a specific Assyrian or Babylonian king. The first king was both a reality and

a symbol. He was not an imaginary monarch or a hero of legend, nor was he a literary figure. He was the existential portrait of an archetypal ruler and an ideal model of the kings that would follow (Avramsky, 1980: 237–55).

Unlike Gilgamesh, for instance, a hero-king who was ascribed a divine origin, the biblical Nimrod represented a king who was a man, not a god or a hero. In the tale of Nimrod, the mythical elements are missing, and traces of the pre-biblical Mesopotamian source, a distant echo of the historical memory, are prominent. We do have a kind of myth here, but in the sense given to the concept by Martin Buber: a narrative at the heart of which is a historical concept handed down from generation to generation. Seen in this way, a myth is a memory and not mere imagination, and it is woven around a historical event. According to Buber, this 'mythologization of history' (Buber, 1960: 80–8) has also taken place in modern times. Modern history has become a mythical space, an arena in which myths are constructed. The gods of Mesopotamia have been transformed into modern myths that are secular and historical. The secularisation of myth by modern nationalism has not spared Nimrod.

In the Jewish exegetical tradition, Nimrod has usually been seen as representing the idolatrous polytheistic tendencies of the will-to-power, hubris, and an itemisation of the human race strengthening the division into strong and weak – principles opposed to the universalistic message of Jewish monotheism (Cassuto, 1953: 92, 98–100). Nimrod's tyranny, like all tyrannies – like that of Pharaoh – was accompanied by a *folie de grandeur*, reflected in towers and monuments (Leibowitz, 1977: 68). But his greatest sin of all was his obliteration of human equality. The figure of Nimrod has a number of characteristic features: kingship, heroism (he is a hero of the hunt and not of war), rebelliousness, conquest, construction and cruelty. Nimrod is a hero of the hunt in a utopian kingdom of which its ruler was not an architect of victories but a hunter of animals, proud of his cruel profession. Among all the characters in the Bible, the only ones described as hunters are Nimrod and Esau (Shevet, 1999: 14).

The borders of the 'land of Nimrod' were identified as those of the Mesopotamian region. This Mesopotamian hero was not content with his kingdom in Babylonia and a few cities in Shinar, but went off to take possession of Assyria as well. To the city and

tower later called Babel, whose construction our sages ascribed to Nimrod, he added seven other towns. Our sages strengthened their negative perception of Nimrod as a rebel against God and as the progenitor of the Tower of Babel by identifying him with Amar-Pel who was said to have cast Abraham into a furnace. According to the sages, Abraham was opposed to Nimrod because the latter wanted to replace the religion of the Ruler of the Universe with a human religion of his own (Biberfeld, 1987: 79). In his promotion of monotheism, abstraction and the universality of mankind, Abraham represented a turning point in the history of humanity, whereas Nimrod represented an earlier stage of idol worship, division of the human race and consecration of polytheistic myth.

'Nimrod' – the root of which is *mered*, rebellion – is a title that his contemporaries or their successors gave him on account of his rebelliousness, or one that he chose himself as a kind of declaration of intent. The voluntary choice of a name rather than being delegated a name reveals a capacity to create one's own identity. This capacity was also demonstrated in the Hebraisation of European names by the 'new Hebrews' – an outcome of the first pioneering waves of immigration and of the Canaanite influence on the inhabitants of the land (Shamir, 1993: 182).

It was the idea of a Nimrod inciting mankind against God that gave him his negative image from the end of the biblical period and at the time of the Mishna and Talmud. Joseph Ben Mattityahu (Josephus, the controversial first-century Jewish historian) described him as causing the generation of the Tower of Babel to rebel against their god, and the Talmud makes him responsible for acts of deceit and rebellion. Nimrod's kingdom, the first one in history, exemplified the wickedness of Assyria and Babylonia. Biblical theology saw in the will-to-power-and-conquest manifested by kings and kingdoms a challenge to the uniqueness of the God of Israel. The very existence of human monarchy was viewed as an act of rebellion against the King of Kings.

The biblical scholar Yehezkel Kaufmann, developed a theory that biblical religion was revolutionary in seeing the world in a non-mythical way, or in other words, that the idea of God in the Israelite religion was something beyond myth (Kaufmann, 1952: 419–24). This being the case, the function of the biblical religion was to oppose manifestations of idolatry that were relics of mythical beliefs. According to Kaufmann, no evidence exists that

the Israelites mingled with the Canaanites and were influenced by their religion, or that they were absorbed by them. Symbolic sculpture as such is not in itself idolatrous and does not contradict the idea of unity or abstraction. There was popular idolatry in Israel, but it did not amount to a real polytheistic idolatrous cult with temples and priests (ibid.: 255–85). Kaufmann was a radical representative of the school that claimed that the Israelite idolatry was cultic, magical, fetishistic, but never something creative, producing a culture in Israel.

A view of the relationship of the Israelites to the people of Canaan completely opposite to that of Kaufmann was put forward by the scholar of the ancient East, Adia G. Horon. Danziger created *Nimrod* in 1939, the year in which Yonatan Ratosh returned from his stay in Paris, where his Canaanite outlook was formed under Horon's influence. Horon saw his life's work as uncovering the Hebrew origins of Jewish history and demonstrating that there was once a single country, people and language in the area between the Egyptian border and the River Euphrates (Horon, 2000: 17–27). The archaeological finds at Ebla near Aleppo in Syria, in Mari on the Euphrates and in Ugarit on the Syrian coast strengthened Horon in his view of a common Canaanite–Israelite spatial identity (ibid.: 29–32). In Paris he was the assistant and student of Professor Charles Virolleaud, who had taken part in the excavation of the royal city of Ugarit. Horon regarded these excavations as proof of the Canaanite–Israelite cultural unity in Mesopotamia.

Horon sketched a historiographical portrait of the early Hebrews who lived in the country before the Jewish worldview became established. He distinguished between 'Hebrews' – a national–territorial definition – and 'Jews', the definition of a community whose existential space was dispersion. The 'idol worshippers' were thus the 'Hebrew' ancestors of the Jews in the Land of Canaan before the exile in Babylon. Jewish monotheism was born in that exile and Ezra was the founder of that new religion. Horon saw the Fertile Crescent – in the Jewish tradition *Gvul Ha-'Avot*, the borders promised to the Patriarchs – as a single entity in which there were many political units and a single language with many different dialects. He pointed to the manipulative approach of the editors of the Bible who concocted a mythical tale about Nimrod ben Cush (Horon, 2000: 156). As he saw it, these editors inserted

this mythical tale about Nimrod ben Cush in a list of peoples despite the fact that Nimrod had no connection with Cush (Ethiopia). Horon's own genealogy of Nimrod was in his opinion an additional proof of his belief that already at the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age, the land of the Hebrews, despite its political divisions and gradations, had achieved a clear ethnic unity in which all parts were fused into a network of relationships through language and a common cult of idols (ibid.: 35–9).

Apart from Kaufmann's biblical interpretation and the 'Canaanite' interpretation of Nimrod's origin and character, the archaeological remains of the Assyrian kingdom unearthed in excavations from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards by teams of French, English and Germans are also of interest. The pioneer in this field was Paul-Émile Botta, who in 1842 was the French consul in Mosul and devoted himself to locating the origins of the Assyrian kingdom. Many of the finds that he made in Khorsabad in 1846 found their way to the Louvre in Paris and the British Museum in London. A year later, Austen Henry Layard and his colleagues began excavations in Khorsabad, Nineveh and Nimrud. Nimrud was the Assyrian capital for a hundred and fifty years and then Nineveh was the capital for about a hundred years (Reade, 1998: 6–41).

Small sections of the city of Nimrud survived in the Assyrian city of Kalhu, mentioned in the Bible as Calah. Nimrud would undoubtedly have been forgotten had Ashurnasirpal II not chosen it in 879 BCE as his administrative capital. Its excellent location at the heart of the Assyrian kingdom and its relative distance from the major cities of Ashur and Nineveh enabled the king to build a splendid new city there without having to take into account historical monuments or other considerations. Nimrud was situated near the Tigris in a huge area close to the river, and its construction took about fifty years. In 710 BCE, the capital moved to Khorsabad, and some forty years later a process began of returning to Nimrud. In the final century of the Assyrian Empire, Nimrud ceased to serve as a capital, although it remained a major city. The excavations of the palaces of Ashurnasirpal II, Tiglath-Pileser, Sennacherib and others resulted in finds of extraordinary beauty and outstanding importance (Kenyon, 1940: 36–9; Rassam, 1897; Russell, 1997). In the colonial era, many of the sculptures, walls and inscriptions from the palaces in the city were taken to the

capital of the British Empire. Danziger was exposed to these works during his stay in London at the beginning of the 1930s, and it was these that to a large extent moulded his sculpture *Nimrod*.

## Nimrod, Danziger and the Canaanites

From the first issue of *Alef* – the organ of the 'Young Hebrews' movement – which appeared in 1948 with a picture of *Nimrod* on the cover, to the special issue of the newspaper *Haaretz* that appeared on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel and contained the article by Aharon Amir, 'In expectation of the crystallisation of identity', which also included a photograph of *Nimrod*, this sculpture has never ceased to symbolise for many people the Canaanite movement and its ideas (Amir, 1998).

In the years 1934–37, Danziger studied sculpture at the Slade School of Fine Art at London University, where he signed his works Yitzhak Ben Baruch and accompanied his drawings with verses from the Bible. He henceforth had a dual identity: in Europe he chose a Jewish identity, and on his return to Palestine he preferred a Hebrew identity (Omer, 1996a: 15). Under the guidance of his teacher of sculpture in England, Alfred Horrace Gerrard, Danziger carefully studied the works of the ancient kingdoms of Mesopotamia, India and Africa and began to show an interest in primitivism:

> The primitive world and the classical world had two points of view: the instinctive and the philosophical. Both of these viewpoints co-existed in harmony. Primitive man recognised through his well-developed senses three causative factors: himself, the elements around him, and the animal world. One can see the wonderful works of primitive man in anthropological museums: arrows, fishing boats, oars. His tools are made with a superb precision and are almost flawless. Primitive man understood wood because he lived with it. He understood the laws of nature instinctively since he used them at every turn. Primitive man had a clear goal for every act he performed. Mass served a definite purpose. He sculpted a pregnant woman with a big belly and tiny legs because he had an aim which he wanted to emphasise. Greek culture was already on the decline. Style disappeared, and the artist entered the realm of pure, intimate

> experience. The Middle Ages appear dark and emotional, but only at first glance, since religion also served as science and the artist lived in concepts of full harmony. On the other hand, during the Renaissance the two began to separate, and the decline of European art began. (*La-Merhav*, 1959)

What Danziger learned from the British Museum – and apart from its influence on his early works like *Nimrod* and *Shabazia* – was an important lesson on the role of the artist in primitive societies and on the power of art in society. At the beginning of the twentieth century, modern artists and schools of art with primitivistic inclinations – such as Gauguin, Van Gogh, Modigliani, the cubists and so on – sought to return via ancient Egyptian art, the Mesopotamian cultures or pre-Columbian art to a primaeval and pre-modern past and to escape to remote geographical regions such as Africa or the Far East. This romantic escape to a different time and place provided sources of inspiration and models for imitation. This primitivistic spiritual climate, 'the conscious return to the art of an undeveloped condition', also influenced the young Danziger.

In 1939, the young sculptor Binyamin Tammuz witnessed the birth of *Nimrod* in the courtyard of the hospital of Danziger's father in Tel Aviv: 'Danziger swung aloft his hammer and chisel until there was an obvious danger that all that would remain of the stone was a piece the width of a pencil' (Tammuz, 1996). Tammuz, who was his student, together with the painter and architect Shalom Sebba, forced Danziger 'to stop working and declare the sculpture *Nimrod* finished' (ibid.). For his part, Danziger, who described *Nimrod* as 'a meeting of heroic myth with the place', gave the following account of its creation:

> I saw him as a mixture of man, animal and hawk, and made the sculpture out of red sandstone. Sandstone is grainy, and if you rub or grind it, it crumbles and turns back into sand. Sand to sand, you might say. I was interested not only in the grainy texture, sandiness, and ruddiness, but also in its geographical origin. It came from Petra, the ancient city surrounded by hills of red sandstone, in which the Nabataeans carved tombs and shrines. The stone embodies something of this desert sculpture. Thus, I sought to arrive at an emotional

> and material integration of the hunter, the hawk, the self in its struggle to pursue its path within a system seeking to obstruct it; the landscape, the sandstone, Petra, and the Nabataeans; a meeting of heroic myth with the place and the sandy desert rock. (Scharfstein, 1977)

Tammuz said about Ratosh's meeting with Danziger:

> When I came to Yitzhak Danziger with the news of 'Canaanism', I didn't tell him anything new. He didn't know he was a 'Canaanite' but he was one. And when I introduced Danziger to Ratosh for the first time, it was a meeting of people who had known one another for many years. They knew each other, but they did not resemble one another. They were two opposite sides of the same coin: the son's return home. (Tammuz, 1996)

Gideon Ofrat, who together with Dorit Levita and Tammuz edited *The Story of Israeli Art* (1980), described the enthusiastic band of supporters of the Canaanite movement and ideas organised by Tammuz, and which included the poet Aharon Amir, the painter Daniel Eliram and the sculptor Yitzhak Danziger (Tammuz et al., 1980: 129–50).

From his meeting with Danziger, Tammuz concluded that Canaanism and sculpture could go together, and Danziger learned that his art could henceforth have the support of a politico-cultural ideology. Similarly, Amir, in an article/lamentation entitled 'Dantz', Danziger's nickname, adopted the young sculptor as a Canaanite, relating that:

> in those days we two – and not only we two but a handful of other young men of the locality – worked together with the group known as 'the Committee for the Formation of Hebrew Youth', which, after a time, people called the 'Young Hebrews', the members of the journal *Alef* of the early years of the State of Israel – in other words, the Canaanites. (Amir, 1977)

Amir's insistence on Danziger's partnership with the Canaanites was not, however, supported by the person in question. In the last interview that he gave before his life was cut short by an accident

in 1977, Danziger denied that he had been a Canaanite: 'My connection with Yonatan Ratosh was the result of *Nimrod*. He asked to meet me […]. My political confrontation with the group happened early on […]. They didn't accept me because of Canaanism, and I wasn't a Canaanite. I was the son of a bourgeois who joined the left' (Barzel, 1977).

The critic Haim Nagid expressed well the difference between Ratosh and Danziger where the Canaanite vision was concerned:

> The soil of Eretz Israel clung to the soles of the shoes of Yitzhak Danziger and Tuvia Kushnir, but not to the soles of Yonatan Ratosh. His soles were covered in appearance, if at all, by the dust from the pavements of Paris and Tel Aviv. (Nagid, 1983: 38)

What he was trying to say was that the motivating force of Danziger's work was nature and the actual place, an unmediated feeling for Eretz Israel, whereas Ratosh's view of the country was an abstract ideology imported from Europe. At any rate, 'Danziger's closeness at a certain stage of his life to the "Canaanite" cultural ideal was a result of his own internal development, and was totally unconnected with any inspiration from "the father of the Canaanite doctrines", Ratosh' (ibid.). The critic Tamar Manor-Friedman also thinks that:

> Danziger's relationship with the people of the movement was essentially social and did not develop into any political or party commitment. It is likewise clear that his sculpture *Nimrod*, which is often seen as a symbol of identification with idolatry and opposition to Judaism, was not created in the context of his acquaintance with Tammuz and Ratosh, but as a natural continuation of his previous works and of his interest in the art and mythology of the ancient East. *Nimrod* was not the product of a doctrine, but on the contrary served it as the symbol and ideal of the vision of the renascent Hebrew culture. (Manor-Friedman, 1996: 104)

The curator Mordechai Omer, who has been responsible for many publications on Danziger and exhibitions of his work, is of a similar opinion: 'Today, looking back, it is possible to disconnect *Nimrod* from all the "Canaanite" associations that have been attached to it' (Omer, 1996a: 17–18).

At the same time, it is *not* possible to disconnect *Nimrod* entirely from all of the Canaanite associations that have been attached to it. The historian Yaacov Shavit claims that although before he knew Ratosh, Danziger was already interested in the heritage of the ancient East, only when he returned from his studies abroad did he 'find in Ratosh's Canaanite idea a coherent cultural doctrine, surprising in its novelty, calling for an authentic Eretz Israeli art' (Shavit, 1984: 155). Even in the 1980s, the Canaanite image continued to stick to Danziger, and late criticisms persisted in ascribing Canaanism to him. The review of a Danziger exhibition at the Israel Museum in 1981 said, 'More than he was a "Canaanite", Danziger was adopted by the Canaanites' (*'Olam Ha-Omanut*, 1981). The critic spoke of the development of Canaanism, which eventually took a more abstract and conceptual form and found expression in groves of sacred oaks or in garden design. He concluded that: 'Danziger remained a "Canaanite" to his dying day in the close connection he felt with his surroundings.' Another review of the same exhibition reached a similar conclusion: 'The sculpture became a first stage in the creation of a Hebrew–Canaanite culture […] a symbol of yearnings for roots, for a true Hebrew culture as against the heritage of the exile' (Blitental, 1981).

At a certain period, Danziger exemplified the type of the ideal artist in its 'Canaanite' form. In his personality, his idiom and the landscape of his soul, he embodied the Canaanite utopia, whose components were the 'new Hebrew', the 'healthy son of the homeland', the 'resurgent Hebrew people' and so on. It was not without reason that his work served as a symbol of the renewal of Israelite culture in general and of the Canaanite movement in particular. The paradox is that Nimrod, who represents the Canaanite polytheistic faith, gained this symbolic meaning from a Jewish source:

> *Nimrod* is perhaps Canaanite in origin, but the accumulated culture and values of the people and the historical–cultural memory which infiltrates our consciousness together with these will not allow us, even if we wanted, to liberate him from his Judaism. (Zissman, 1996: 60–1)

A well-known Talmudic Midrash makes a Canaanite symbolisation of Nimrod in contrast to Abraham's belief in the One God.

The dichotomy between the monotheistic Jewish tradition represented by 'Abraham' and the heroic and aesthetic spirit of the Hebrew rebirth exemplified by Nimrod found expression in the revolt of the *Tse'irim* (young intellectuals) at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The awakening of the Jewish national consciousness at the end of the nineteenth century that resulted in the birth of Zionism also changed the attitude of many Jews to the ethos of heroism. The progenitors of the Hebrew rebirth no longer concerned themselves with the intellectual traditions of the rabbis and scholars, Hassids and Kabbalists but were inspired by heroes, brandishers of the sword who cultivated a 'muscular Judaism'. The culture of the Hebrew rebirth was nurtured by the romantic nationalist spiritual atmosphere that reached its climax in the nineteenth century in Thomas Carlyle's glorification of the heroic ethos in nationalist Europe. Micha Josef Berdichevsky, the most outstanding writer and cultural critic among the Tse'irim, rebelling against the evolutionary historical culture of the Ahad Ha-Am school of thought, extolled heroism as follows:

> There is a time for men and nations who live by the sword, by their power and their strong arm, by vital boldness. This time is the hour of intensity, of life in its essential meaning […]. The blade is not something abstracted and standing apart from life; it is the materialisation of life in its boldest lines, in its essential and substantial likeness. (Berdichevsky, 1922: 55)

The poet Haim Nahman Bialik, who was unenthusiastic about the Europeanising tendencies of Berdichevsky and the Tse'irim who sang hymns of praise to power and heroism, wrote, 'I learned to refrain from violence.' But in that same year, 1894, he wrote, 'Happy the man who lives by his sword' (Bialik, 1983: 246–47; Bitan, 1996: 184–5). And six years later, in 'Metei Ha-Midbar' (The Dead of the Desert), he described 60,000 people 'with their hands on their swords', who cried out, 'We are heroes! We are the last generation of enslavement and the first generation of redemption!' (Brinker, 2002: 137). The heroic myths of Jewish history cherished by the writers and poets provided inspiration for the revolutionary Hebrew ethos in the early stages of Zionism.

The figure of Nimrod, the rebellious fighter, was nurtured by the Canaanites as a metaphor for their revolt against Zionism,

which still preserved the Gordian knot connecting Judaism and Hebraism. The critic Boaz Evron, who at the beginning of his career was a Canaanite, speculated that, 'the rebel after all grew up in the conceptual framework in which he rebelled, and his thinking was pre-conditioned by that framework' (Evron, 1988: 354). Canaanism was a kind of revolt against Zionism precisely because it took it to its ultimate conclusion: the return to Zion and the definition of nationhood solely in terms of attachment to the country. The territorialisation of Judaism, which passed through the stations of Berdichevsky, Saul Tchernichovsky and Ben-Gurion, who wished to change the 'Jew' into a 'Hebrew', reached its final destination in the Canaanite ideology. At this point, the connection between the 'Jew' and the 'Hebrew' – the indigenous inhabitant who spoke the Hebrew language and lived in the Hebrew country – was completely severed. The Zionist revolution, which translated the German *Nibelungen* and adopted the pagan Greek epics, adapting them to early Hebrew concepts, was in Evron's opinion a form of collective assimilation. When it internalised this tendency, Zionism lost its self-confidence, and from then onwards 'ceased to be a revolutionary political and national ideology. "Canaanism" was in a certain sense an attempt to continue from the point where Zionism stopped' (ibid.). The completion of the Zionist revolution required cutting the people off from its exile and the definition of the new Jew – in other words, the Zionist – solely in the geographical context of his country. Moving from the old community–ethnic definition to the new national–territorial definition required breaking the ethnic umbilical cord.

## The 'Hebrew time'

After his dramatic meeting with Horon in Paris, the poet Yonatan Ratosh returned to Palestine in 1939 and began to form an intellectual circle that adopted Horon's historical and intellectual concepts as the basis of a political movement. One of the first people to be enlisted was the young sculptor Binyamin Tammuz, who also brought into the circle his teacher of sculpture Yitzhak Danziger, who had just returned from his stay in England and France and had produced *Nimrod*.

The critic Sarah Breitberg-Semel was correct when she saw *Nimrod* in terms of identity: '*Nimrod* was and remains the ideal of

the new Hebraism' (Breitberg-Semel, 1988). Very caustically, she attacked 'the strange spiritual suggestion of the best of the Hebrew youth in the period of what is generally called "the beautiful Land of Israel"'. She was scornful of the 'Nimrod option', which she called a 'great schism', 'separating Hebraism from Judaism to the point of identifying with its opposite'. In a somewhat schematic fashion, she contrasted secular, German-speaking, non-Nimrodic Jews like Kafka, Einstein, Freud and Walter Benjamin – 'the greatest spiritual and human observers' of their time – with their contemporary, the young Hebrew in Mandatory Palestine 'whose sword is in his spinal column and who has a hawk growing out of his head'. She then marvelled at 'the great mystery. What happened here in this country in those years to create this metamorphorsis, to cause the youth to take leave of its senses at the sight of *Nimrod* […]?' (ibid.).

The question is still valid. For an explanation, we shall now briefly examine the contemporary context – the 'Hebrew time'. The enlistment of some members of the Canaanite circle in the Palmach was a result of a decision by the 'Committee for the Formation of Hebrew Youth' in 1942 to broaden its base and consequently to participate in other, already existing groups and organisations (Porath, 1988: 188). At the beginning of the 1940s, the Palmach and the youth movements were the laboratory and melting pot of the 'indigenous' Eretz Israel experience, and it is hardly surprising if there were points of similarity between the spirit of the Palmach and the Canaanite spirit. But it should be borne in mind that the indigenous experience was not a direct result of the Canaanite movement but, from the Second Aliyah onwards, was due to the continuous development of an unmediated relationship with the landscape and history of the country that found expression in the literature of the Palmach generation. According to the writer and artist Amos Kenan, the 'Hebrew time' reached its climax in the relationship between *Nimrod* and the Palmach:

> Danziger's *Nimrod*, whether he intended it so or whether it just turned out that way, was the ethos of the new Hebrew man. *Nimrod* was the expression in stone of what eventually came to be known as the 'Palmach generation'. (Kenan, 1998: 168–9)

As a member of the Stern Group, Kenan liked to see his fellow members as the most typical embodiment of the Hebrew–Canaanite ethos. Kenan relates that in 1946, there was a rumour that Ratosh was a member of the Stern Group and the editor of *Ha-Ma'as*, the mouthpiece of the group. Ratosh made no attempt to deny it. This way of thinking influenced Kenan: 'It is an interesting fact that conclusions I came to on coming into contact with the Canaanite idea made me join the Stern Group. It eventually transpired that I was not the only one.' The militaristic Canaanite spirit was exemplified by the reaction of one of the members of the group to whom Kenan imparted the Canaanite ideas: 'The way to form the Hebrew youth is war.' Kenan was sent out to enlist people to join the Stern Group, and one of these was Boaz Evron, whose conversations with him, 'which made him join the organisation, were without a shadow of doubt coloured by the Canaanite idea'. Kenan finds the link between the Stern Group and the Canaanites to be the idea of self-expression and a new life: there was an attempt to disconnect the new cultural–social life from all other forms of existence and to formulate it in a new and independent way. He added that: 'my friends joined the Stern Group for Canaanite reasons, just as I did' (ibid.).

According to Kenan, the Stern Group repudiated Zionism and declared that it was non-Zionist, that the purpose of the war was not to solve the Jewish problem but to liberate the homeland:

> This was the Stern Group's main thesis, which in fact was anti-Zionist and Canaanite par excellence. For instance, if one said to us in the Stern Group at that time that our struggle against the British endangered the life of the Jewish community in Britain, we would have said that this had nothing to do with us. We did not care in the least what happened to the Jewish community in Britain. (Kenan, 1977: 5)

Kenan saw a contradiction between Canaanite sterility, which derived from the excessively theoretical nature of the movement, and the Stern Group'ss struggle against the British that had a spirit of revolt and action.

Kenan, however, was not always so critical of Canaanite ideas. The short article 'Hebrews, not Sabras', which he published in October 1949 in the Canaanite journal *Alef*, repeated the usual

Canaanite slogans as if they were lines from Ratosh's 'Address to Hebrew Youth' (1944):

> If the rebirth is not connected with the land, its soil and its landscape, and with the legacy of the memories which it evokes, it will finally encounter a crisis and expire in its prime. The rebirth we are waiting for is not Zionist or Jewish; it is Hebrew. It will be brought about by the Hebrew, not the Sabra youth. Yusuf Abu Ghosh is not a Sabra or a Zionist, but perhaps he is a Hebrew. (Kenan, 1949: unpaginated)

The postwar atmosphere of protest that characterised many of the demobilised soldiers, who went from lofty ideals to a confrontation with everyday life, did not spare Kenan after 1948. One finds criticism of the heroic spirit of the Palmach generation in his play *Ha-Arieh* (The Lion) (1956) and in his sculpture *Ha-Gibor* (The Hero) (1959). After he left *Alef*, Kenan presented *Ha-Arieh* at the Hatsira Theatre. The play, he said:

> deals one by one with all the Israeli myths […]. It contains a criticism of the stereotype of the Israeli hero: he is represented as a sick driver who does everything he is told. If I were a literary critic I would even see the play as an allegory of the younger generation and the Zionist movement. (Kenan, 1977: 8)

Three years later, Kenan produced in Paris the sculpture *The Hero*, a kind of Canaanite sculpture, a parody of *Nimrod*. The sculpture – of a crippled ancient warrior, thickheaded and one-eyed – mocks the fighters of 1948 and depicts them in their wretchedness, broken representatives of the new state, its values and its heroes.

'*Nimrod* died at the end of 1947,' declared Keenan in the last chapter 'From *Nimrod* to the Pyramid of the Holocaust' of his book *The Rose of Jericho* (Kenan, 1998: 278). '*Nimrod* is a monument to the ideals of 1948, to the Palmach generation, to the "golden generation" of the Hebrew Yishuv which lasted thirty years until the War of Independence. It is a memorial to the "Hebrew time".' The sculpture, in his opinion, was:

> the revolutionary soul-vibration of the beginning of the nineteen-forties […] *Nimrod* was a revolution, and a revolution

> that was received enthusiastically by the younger generation, which found its expression in it. The truth is that it was the expression of a state of mind, the feeling of a new creation, the longing for a Hebrew expression in everything: in song and dance and in the connection with the soil. There was a longing for a Hebrew farmer and a Hebrew fisherman, sailor, soldier, thinker, producer. *Nimrod* expressed this longing. (Kenan, 1998: 173)

This longing died at its peak, in 1947.

The journalist, publicist and former fighter Uri Avneri, wrote an article describing this moment – 'The death of *Nimrod*'. Describing the development of the 'new Hebrew' culture from its birth in the 1930s to its death in the late 1940s in terms of the theories of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, he depicted this culture as a living organism that sprang up, withered and passed away. In the same way as other cultures had done, the 'new Hebrew' culture in Mandatory Palestine 'put down roots, flowered and died' (Avneri, 1988: 25).

According to Avneri, the immigrant society in Eretz Israel created a culture out of nothing. What one had here was not a historical continuum or a renaissance in the sense of the rebirth of an old culture. This generation of immigrants came to an unfamiliar Mediterranean landscape, nurtured a second generation that changed its mode of life, and gave birth to a nation in a new geographical reality and new climatic conditions. As in the United States, Brazil, Australia and Argentina, a new society grew up here that grappled with a new geopolitical reality for which it sought appropriate cultural expressions. Like the Americans and the Australians who brought with them the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the Zionist immigrant brought with him Jewish religious symbols and European secular nationalism. A polarisation was created between the supposedly degenerate and abject existence of the Jews in exile and the myth of the Sabra, which adopted many elements of the 'Aryan' model in Europe. The modern 'Hebrew' was rooted in the landscape of the country, and adopted the Bible, the events of which took place in his land and that was written in the Hebrew language, common to all. The revival of the Hebrew language was the outstanding creation of the new culture. The 'Canaanites' went beyond the biblical stratum to ancient Canaanite history. In place of history, archaeology was in the ascendant.

The Hebrew culture was born in the 1930s because only then could it see itself as a historical phenomenon with drive and a hunger for cultural expression. The formation of the Hebrew language and the development of the Hebrew nation were interdependent. To the question: 'What was the nature of the "new Hebrew" culture and in what was it expressed?' Avneri answered: 'One can speak of new beginnings in literature, poetry and art. Some people see Yitzhak Danziger's sculpture *Nimrod* as the symbol of that culture, although the sculpture was also influenced by foreign styles' (Avneri, 1988: 28).

Like Kenan, Avneri saw *Nimrod* chiefly as a symbol of the collective creativity, whose main flowering was in the 'heroic period', of which the Palmach was the outstanding embodiment:

> In this period, the Palmach was created – one of the major creations of the new Hebrew culture – for the Palmach was not only a military organisation in the technical sense but a youth movement and a workshop for the creation of a lifestyle, a way of speaking, forms of behaviour, a general outlook. (Ibid.)

In the same way as in the Palmach, the 'new Hebrew' culture was embodied in the kibbutzim, in the underground organisations and especially in the Stern Group, in folk dancing, in political thought from Ratosh to the ideologue Israel Eldad, and of course in the Hebrew language. The common factor in all of them, wrote the scholar of art and literature Ariel Hirschfeld, was that:

> they were all the creations of a whole collectivity, a whole culture. He [Avneri] deliberately combines different spheres: language, military organisation, folk-dancing and outstanding artistic creativity. In all this there was a dual aspect: on the one hand, they were 'creations', inventions, bursts of inspiration, and hence fabrications. And on the other hand, they were all concerned with destiny, with the tensions that affected an entire people, with a comprehensive historical process rather than the fate of the individual. And for that reason it all represents an existential tension that is so alien to the intellectuals of our time, who do not understand that works involving historical evaluations are not 'mobilised art' but proceed from some special location of the 'ego' that creates from the midst of a social dynamic surrounding it. (Hirschfeld, 1997)

The community of experience, the unmediated creativity bound up with the *ex nihilo* myth made the fusion of the political and the aesthetic into a single indivisible whole. The aesthetic aspiration that created something new, something out of nothing, did not reconstruct or restore the past but formed the conceptual jargon and symbols that constituted the modern nationhood. To the Hebrews of Eretz Israel, the sphere of discourse and experience associated with the myth was not philosophical or ideological but aesthetic, political and anthropological. They did not consider the 'New Man' or 'new Hebrew' as a concept of Jewish theology, Zionist ideology or rationalist philosophy, but a fabrication of the modern consciousness, the language and one's physical being and a construction of the time and place. Because the form – the experiential model, the fusion of the individual and the collective, the avant-garde consciousness – was of primary importance and not the ideological content, Marshall McLuhan's aphorism that 'the medium is the message' was accepted as true (McLuhan, 1959: 339–48). The *ex nihilo* myth was thus not a vehicle for values beyond it – history, Judaism, Zionism – but was an object in itself. The existential, native experience of Eretz Israel – in short, Hebraism, here, at the present time, in *this* landscape, in *this* place – was the essence and content of the message of the 'new Hebrews' in Palestine.

The 'new Hebrew' culture, according to Avneri, was anti-intellectual, heroic, active. It established itself through a sort of:

> revolt against the fathers, the people of the second and the third *aliyot* [waves of immigration], who preserved the Zionist fiction that the Hebrew Yishuv was only a section of the Jewish people without any special uniqueness. It was a vanguard that went before the camp, but the camp would follow. For certain leaders, Zion was simply a problem of transport. (Avneri, 1988: 25)

The revolutionary 'new Hebrew' characteristics were seen as mere native Sabra qualities: the cult of the native of the land replaced intellectual consciousness. 'It was a banalisation, almost a biologisation, that was also to be found in the writings of Yonatan Ratosh' (ibid.).

Twenty years after Ratosh's death, Avneri once again assailed 'the biological definition which made him and his followers an

exception to the rule' (Avneri, 2001). But on the same occasion, Avneri described Ratosh, without irony, as 'the man who discovered America':

> When he said that a new Hebrew nation had arisen in the country, he changed the outlook of his generation and of the generations that followed [...]. All of them have thought since that time, and still think, in different terms. (Avneri, 2001)

Avneri revealed that Binyamin Tammuz showed him a secret memorandum that Ratosh wrote for Avraham Stern (Ya'ir, the leader of the Stern Group), in which he tried to persuade him to turn the group into a Hebrew revolutionary movement. Avneri and Ya'ir, however, were also partly influenced by Canaanite ideas.

Like many others, but to an exceptional degree, Avneri made a conscious use of myths in order to support and disseminate his personal interpretation of Hebrew nationhood. In contrast to the elitist literary approach of the poet Ratosh and his circle, the young Avneri was from the beginning politically minded and internalised the practices of modern propaganda in order to disseminate his version of the 'Hebrew myth'. In semi-fascist terminology, he wrote about the 'Hebrew storm generation' that would impose 'the new Hebrew suzerainty' that was to 'change the structure of the national body, and then stride in a victorious revolution towards the marvellous resurrection of the eternally ancient and young Hebrew race' (Avneri, 1988: 25).

Uri Avneri went through many stages in the course of his 'Canaanite journey'. His relationship with Ratosh was and remains ambivalent, beginning with the article, 'Shem: the expression of Hebrew action', which he published in the summer of 1942 under his original name of Helmut Ostermann in the journal *Ha-Hevra*. Then there was the pamphlet *Ha-Ma'avak* in May 1947, in which he attacked the racism and mysticism of the Canaanite concept; then his pamphlet *Peace or War in the Semitic Region* of October 1947, in which he developed his Semitic approach; and finally the series of articles of the 1950s 'And the Canaanite was then in the Land', which were published in *Ha-'Olam Ha-Ze*. Avneri eventually wrote that his group

*Be-Ma'avak* (In Struggle) also believed that a new Hebrew nation had arisen in the country, but he arrived at opposite conclusions to those of Ratosh:

> Instead of severing the connection with the Jews, we recognised the mutual affinity between the new Hebrew nation and the Jewish people in the world-at-large, similar to the relationship that exists between Australia, for example, and the British mother-country and mother-culture. (Avneri, 2001)

Instead of denying Arab nationalism, he proposed forging an alliance with it; instead of a Hebrew empire in the 'land of Canaan', he proposed 'integration into the Semitic region'. Avneri changed his ideas, and said that:

> Ratosh was a man of his time […]. Ratosh's direct influence never extended beyond a small group of followers. The Canaanite romanticism did not mean much to the Palmach generation that was so practically minded, and his ideological exaggerations were not in keeping with the anti-intellectual spirit of the younger generation – that 'Hebrew' younger generation in which he placed all his hopes. (Ibid.)

What happened to that 'Hebrew' culture in its different versions? asked Avneri, and he answered, 'It died a violent death. Perhaps it was murdered, perhaps it had an accident. Perhaps it was too weak to grow up and develop. And perhaps all these explanations are true' (Avneri, 1988: 29). He said that in the 1940s and 1950s, several different processes were taking place: the 'denial of the exile' characteristic of the Hebrew Yishuv ceased to be the dominant ethos when the scale of the Holocaust began to be known. The anti-Jewish atmosphere in the Yishuv gave way to pangs of conscience in identification with the victims from the Jewish ghettos. There was a 'Jewish reaction' to the Hebrew mood expressed in nostalgia for the parental home: 'Judaism came back to the workshop at the expense of the Hebrew consciousness. Instead of a Hebrew State, a Jewish State arose.' The War of Independence exacted a heavy price in blood, especially from the young Hebrews; a mass immigration began, chiefly of Orientals – traditional, alien to 'the mythical fair-haired, blue-eyed Sabra, who was like Nietzsche's blonde beast' (ibid.).

*Nimrod* was for Avneri a symbol of the Hebrew culture in its various manifestations. In his words, the sculpture symbolised:

> a living culture, emerging and developing. But it should be understood that it was not a continuation of what existed before. In its death it only left behind a few books and works in stone: one of them was Danziger's *Nimrod*. A tragic symbol. (Ibid.)

The critic Shlomo Sheba, however, did not see *Nimrod* as the tragic symbol of a vanished culture, but as one of:

> the burgeonings of what was dimly taking place in the hearts of a few young people who wanted to return to the ancient beginnings hinted at in the earliest parts of the Bible and inscribed on stones and clay tablets all over the Middle East. (Sheba, 1988: 21)

To the children of the immigrants to Eretz Israel, the sense of possessing a homeland or belonging to a place was not self-evident. Their parents in exile 'had felt themselves to be strangers, transient wanderers. They had no connection with the landscapes in which they lived.' When they arrived in Palestine, they felt that they had been reborn: they discovered a 'love of the place, of the region, the country, the homeland'. When they wondered how they would be able to live in this old-new place, they were told that they had to integrate the antiquity of Eretz Israel into Hebrew art and culture, to take a shortcut and recapture the ancient life of the land. Thus, the Canaanites were born, the paradoxical product of Jewish zeal (ibid.).

Sheba is one of the few cultural critics who have attempted to describe the dialectical process of a recreation through a return to antiquity. The relationship of the Canaanites to Eretz Israel was the story of the longing of the Jews 'who did not know a home, land or nature for a land and nature. Out of this Jewish longing was also born the most anti-Jewish movement of all, Canaanism.' In Danziger, 'the indigenous Eretz Israeli and foreigner', who sought the ancient land, 'one can see how a work of art came to be created in the form of an ancient work' (Sheba, 1988: 21).

## Secular or religious?

As part of his attack on 'modern idolatry', on making a modern sculpture the essence of Israeli identity, the art critic Adam Baruch

asked, 'How did it happen that Danziger's sculpture *Nimrod* became the most representative image of Israeli modernism? Is not *Nimrod* an idolatrous, erotic, primitive, regional, libellous image?' (Baruch, 2001b). Baruch contrasted the idolatrous *Nimrod* with the Israeli modernism that aspired to 'abstraction, internationalism, the harmonisation of humanistic ethics with a spare aestheticism'. 'Why', asked Baruch, 'did the local modernism adopt *Nimrod*?' (ibid.). In his bewilderment, Baruch put his finger on one of the greatest enigmas of Israeli art and identity.

The Israeli sculptors who sought to influence the society and culture created symbols that were mainly embodied in monuments of various kinds. Danziger was involved in this tradition of 'environmental sculpture' from the planning of Mount Herzl in 1950 to his assistance in creating the memorial site of the 'Egoz', a northern reconnaissance unit, near Kalaat Nimrud in 1977. Baruch's basic assumption was that there was no tradition of Israeli sculpture apart from monuments, which were 'the heart of Israeliness' (Baruch, 1988: 7). Full of pathos, forceful and conscious of being a vanguard, the sculptors believed in the power of the symbol. Like the Israeli founding fathers, they were characterised by their continuous use of rhetoric and a desire to perform a social service, qualities that gave both politicians and artists spiritual satisfaction and public recognition. But the monumental symbol became a myth of the 'object', the glorification of a fetish. There was a mythologisation of the symbol, or in other words, a reification of the social idea.

The Israeli modernists engaged in intensive monumental activities. Many artists were enlisted to decorate the president's residence, the Knesset (parliament), Yad Vashem (for the commemoration of the Holocaust), the airport, army camps, kibbutzim, urban spaces and monuments to the fallen (Shamir, 1996). 'Monumental activity', wrote Baruch, 'is an act of conquest, the creation of artistic facts, an invading presence' (Baruch, 1988: 9). Baruch's claim that not a single monument became a sanctified place does not stand the test of reality. What of the following monuments and graves: the sculpture of the roaring lion at Tel Hai, the tombs of the poetess Rachel and Naomi Shemer on the shores of Lake Kinneret, Ben-Gurion's burial plot in the Negev Desert, and, allowing for all differences, the grave of the murderer Baruch Goldstein at Kiryat Arba in the Occupied Territories? These

became monuments to the Israeli discourse, a public space, the pilgrimage to which is seen as a sign of identity in which there is already a categorisation, from the collective myth of settlement and security embodied at Tel Hai to the special character of the grave of Yitzhak Rabin on Mount Herzl or that of the Baba Sali at Netivot.

Israeli sculpture, claimed Baruch, did not offer a solution to the question of Israeli identity because few Israeli traditions were embodied in it. The Israeli monumental tradition was not connected to sculpture as such but was only a medium for the spiritual need to commemorate. Israeli sculpture did not adopt the Canaanite option: Canaanite sculpture failed to gain hegemony in Israel owing to the brevity of its existence, its small output and its small number of sculptors. Danziger was the exception to the rule: 'Danziger, who created the great Israeli talisman *Nimrod*, won the surprising praise of the Canaanites without actually being a Canaanite, or, at any rate, without continuing to be a Canaanite' (Baruch, 1988: 12). His later enterprises like garden design and the restoration of quarries were no longer Canaanite but at most a 'Canaanite echo', a single burst of inspiration, 'a creative touch' (ibid.).

The development of the Tefen Museum in the Galilee under the artistic curatorship of Amos Kenan that nurtured the concept of an indigenous sculpture ('myth/place'), provided an occasion for Baruch to attack the Canaanite option for the Israeli identity as 'cultural fascism':

> the sin of the monument, which is also the sin of cultural fascism. The sin of mouldy myths, the sin of reaction. The sin of the fetish soaked in nostalgia. The sin of the symbol, the sin of the tribal talisman. (Baruch, 1988: 12)

After warning of this danger of fascistic fetishism, Baruch in his book *Be-Tom Lev* (In Good Faith) (2001a) discussed the contemporary tendency to give a religious interpretation to Israeli modernism. He was referring to curator Mordechai Omer's religious interpretation of *Nimrod*, and also to later works by Danziger. In the 1950s, Israeli modernism had a non-religious character: it was a spare Israelism that looked towards the West. 'Modernity adopted, as a formal and spiritual expression of itself, Danziger's *Nimrod* – the idolatrous, regional, ancient, dense, figurative, physical,

primitive-erotic, thing-like *Nimrod* – that is to say, the opposite [to] anything religious' (Baruch, 2001a: 21). In the course of Baruch's lengthy discussion of Nimrod, two questions were asked: questions that were interconnected. One was: 'Why did the local modernism heap such praise on the archaic Nimrod?' And the other was: 'How did that same *Nimrod*, the symbol of secularism and modernity, become the embodiment of religious longings?' The question that needed to be clarified was that of 'religiosity in place of Nimrod'. Baruch thought that the emergence of the religious interpretation could be explained by tactical considerations. Minimalism was one of the aesthetic and ethical high points of Israeli art and culture: it provided a counterbalance to pathos and folklore, to political propaganda and to the heroisation and idealisation of the past. But this minimalism suffered from repetition and thus lost its validity. When the 'aesthetic surprise' diminished, the proponents of minimalism wished to restore it to life by a retroactive artificial respiration and to raise it to metaphysical heights through a religious conceptualisation. That, thought Baruch, was the reason for the present anachronistic juxtaposition of minimalism and religiosity.

But one should remember that Canaanism and religiosity are by no means contradictory. Yehuda Liebes already demonstrated in his article 'The myth of the restoration of divinity; the Cabbala of the *Zohar* and the poetry of Ratosh', the affinity between the religious narrative of the Kabbala and the Canaanite national ideology (Liebes, 1993). In speaking of 'the sin of mouldy myths', Baruch was overlooking the recent researches of scholars of Judaism who continue not to see myth as something anti-Jewish but discovered its necessity for the preservation of the Jewish faith.

Many scholars disagree with the view that Jewish monotheism is an anti-mythical religion. Liebes thinks that 'the uniqueness of Judaism can be preserved without separating it from myth, which is a life-source for the religious instinct' (Liebes, 1994: 243–97). Moshe Idel finds the contrast seen by Gershom Scholem between the non-mythical Bible and the mythical Kabbala as 'too simplistic', and Eliezer Schweid has documented the constant vitality of myths in Jewish studies, the philosophy of the Jewish religion and contemporary literature (Ohana and Wistrich, 1996: 11–41).

Besides being a symbol of religious revival or representing a secular modernism, '*Nimrod* is the one and only "talisman" that

has arisen in Israeli art [...] the only logo that the local art has come up with in more than sixty years' (Baruch, 1990). A logo, explains Baruch, is 'an automatic and instinctive representation'. In becoming a logo, *Nimrod* ceased to be relevant, a fruitful basis or a vital factor in the culture and society. Or perhaps, as Mordechai Omer has said, 'the very controversies and harsh criticisms the sculpture has provoked demonstrate its relevance' (Omer, 1996b: unpaginated). There is no doubt that the persistence of *Nimrod* as a living logo makes it a symbol in which the Israeli countenance and the Israeli identity are reflected in all of their metamorphoses. Its vitality, its ever-renewed chameleon-like character, the contradictions within it, save the work from the anachronistic fate of anachronistic symbols.

A number of thinkers and critics have seen the Hebrew Canaanite radicalism as a fascist option for the local Israelite identity. Already in 1953, in examining the Canaanite ideological principles, the scholar of political theory Shlomo Avineri thought that it was 'only a paraphrase of fascism as we know it in various countries'. He located 'the place of the Canaanites' as being 'among the other branches of Israeli fascism' (Avineri, 1953: 8–9). The cultural critic Dan Miron for his part described Yonatan Ratosh as 'a reader and a thinker who remains stuck in the decades between the two World Wars. It is from there that he derived his fascist political ideas' (Miron, 1990). Although *Nimrod* was not exhibited by its creator as an expression of the Canaanite movement, the sculpture has been seen by major art critics as revealing fascist tendencies. The art critic Sarah Breitberg-Semel detected 'a hidden fascism' in the young sculptor (Breitberg-Semel, 1988); Adam Baruch said that 'the sin of cultural fascism' was implied by the sculpture (Baruch, 1988: 13); and the painter Rafi Lavie, on seeing its blend of 'German expressionism and primitivism', warned against this 'arrogant, almost nationalistic option' (Lavie, 1981). Many people have pointed out the timing of the sculpture, but it was Breitberg-Semel who thrust a sharp dagger into *Nimrod*'s heart and Danziger's back: '*Nimrod* was created, it should be recalled, in 1939, the year in which the Second World War broke out.' The critic stressed the biographical background of the artist who 'was born in Germany [...], spoke German with his family and visited Germany again in his youth' (Breitberg-Semel, 1988). She quoted from an interview with Danziger's mother, who spoke

about 'Black Peter', the child who was enraptured by the dark spell of the Black Forest. From the moment that he entered the forest, 'he was paralyzed, did not move and did not say a word in the hours they rode between the trees. After an initial fright, we understood it was his nature. He was bewitched by the forest.' Breitberg-Semel went so far as to put forward a 'wild idea', as she called it, by suggesting that if Danziger, whom she called 'the man of the dark spell', had 'remained in the Black Forest region where he was born, his paganism would have found perfect sculptural expression, but another people would have gloried in it as the symbol of its ancient indigenous character'. The critic left nothing to the reader's imagination:

> There in Germany or here in Eretz Israel, the young Danziger the German Hebrew or Hebrew German and the pagan aesthetic he created express a combination of archaism and bestiality – a combination that reveals the true face of fascism. It was not a matter of a youthful adventure but of the choice of an existing option. *Nimrod* was not an accidental episode but represented a persistent phenomenon. It could be excused as a youthful hidden fascism […]. (Breitberg-Semel, 1988)

Mordechai Omer, a secular curator of art, detected religious qualities in this very same sculpture. It is interesting to examine Omer's interpretation of *Nimrod* from the end to the beginning: that is, from his interpretation of the late Danziger, with his 'cosmological' orientation, to his interpretation of the early existentialist Danziger. In his analysis of late projects like the rehabilitation of the 'Nesher' quarry from 1971 onwards or the tree-planting ceremony in memory of the fallen of the Egoz unit in 1977, Omer understood the desire of the late Danziger to harmonise with the cyclical concept of time associated with the periodicity of nature (Danziger, 1982: 11–55). These works of the 1970s are out of measurable chronological time and seek to blend with the cyclical nature of cosmic existence. In giving this explanation, Omer based himself on what the scholar of religions Mircea Eliade called 'rituals to revive time': human rituals of which their task is to redeem time from the beginning in order to link up with mythological time, or in other words, with the cosmos.

Studies of archaic societies have found that mythological time is regarded as significant among them and chronological time is seen as banal. These societies, according to Eliade, wish to return to the mythological time of the beginning, to the 'great days', and tend to disregard historical, concrete time. A metaphysical dimension is given to historical existence by anchoring it in an archetypical order. The dread of the chaos of history finds an anchor in myths that link the transient to paradigmatic events in the remote past. Myths – archetypical forms of human existence – give a valid perspective to reality because they disregard secular, continuous time and thus provide a supra-historical meaning and experience. The ritualisation of the events of the past reconnects the transient to the time of founding in the past and thus bestows sanctity upon it. The perpetual return of paradigmatic actions transforms historical time into mythological time (Eliade, 1954).

A modern consciousness of archaic religiosity is revealed in the desire to recreate: an existential passion expressed in works of art, as in Danziger, or in a national will-to-power realised through a cultural imperialism, as in Ratosh. The desire of the late Danziger to identify with the cosmic cycle of creation is a response to the desire of the early Danziger, the creator of *Nimrod*, to rebel against his fate. The rebellious man finally accepts his fate: *amor fati*, to use the Nietzschean expression. Omer conceives *Nimrod* as the manifesto of a Nietzschean rebel who seeks to break out of the conceptual barriers that enslave him, a Prometheus of art who casts off his conceptual chains and seeks to transcend them and create his own personality:

> Naked and bare, carrying only his bow, Nimrod sets forth to confront the believer in the vast wasteland of meaningless conventions. Laden with a strength that drives and enslaves him *à huis clos*, his only choice is to sharpen his senses, wherein the foundation of his security lies: his eyes scanning great distances, his attentive ears, his broad nose and sensual mouth representing the final guarantee of the continuation of his existence. The hawk, the bird of prey, the hunter's companion (a symbol of the soul in ancient Egypt and an allegory of the evil sinner in mediaeval tradition) is also inhibited and closed, caught up in his own world like his master. (Danziger, 1982: 18)

*Nimrod*, in Omer's opinion, is like a Sartrian hero destined 'to live the suffering and the death of God until the very end' (Omer, 1996a: 18). To a similar degree, these Nietzschean notes accompanied Albert Camus's hero, Sisyphus, who continually struggled against his fate, and Prometheus, the hero of Romanticism and the European Enlightenment.

Nimrod, Sisyphus and Prometheus are not archaic figures but modern heroes at the service of existentialist philosophy, modern mythology and national ideologies (Ohana, 2004: 73–94). Omer depicts the existentialist Nimrod in Nietzschean terms:

> Danziger's *Nimrod* may be viewed as a manifesto, a testimony that far outweighs the uproar it has provoked ever since its completion in 1939. This sculpture represents the creativity of rebellion, of the rebel who is embroiled in a succession of unavoidable errors and is carried from one extreme to the other in an insuppressible effort to become his own truth. (Danziger, 1982: 96)

Omer is not the only critic to suggest that *Nimrod* needs to be understood in terms of Nietzschean concepts. David Gal, who designed the Danziger exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum (of which Omer was the curator) in 1966, stated that:

> Danziger is a tremendous aesthete by any standards. Danziger has created on the basis of an outstandingly aesthetic approach. If one looks at *Nimrod* and sets ethics opposite aesthetics, what does one feel more: the culture of morality or the great atmosphere? When you look at this sculpture, you see searching. What emerges clearly is that here you have aesthetics in the full sense of the word. (Samoha, 1996)

Gal put his finger on the decisive factor in Danziger's work, and that is the dominance of aesthetics over ethics. The Nietzschean basic principle of the justification of the world as a purely aesthetic phenomenon raised the aesthetic principle to a point beyond which one cannot go. Before Nietzsche, the aesthetic education of mankind as envisaged by the Enlightenment and the Romantics was closely connected with moral and intellectual improvement. Nietzsche was the first figure in modern thought to destroy any possible bridge between aesthetics on the one

hand, and reason, morality and truth on the other (Ohana, 2009: 20–6). In Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), one finds for the first time a formulation of the starting point of the Nietzschean revolution that was to pass beyond ethics to aesthetics (Nietzsche, 1967: section 5).

Following Danziger's first exhibition at the Israel Museum in 1981, the playwright and critic Yosef Mundi wrote concerning the creator of *Nimrod* that 'there was something Apollonian about him in the Nietzschean sense of the term' (Mundi, 1981). Nietzsche's contribution to the modern interpretation of tragedy was the perception of the Apollonian principle as taming, moulding and organising the Dionysian chaos. And indeed, among the pupils of the Herzliya Gymnasium in Tel Aviv, Danziger 'amazed his friends with ideas taken from Nietzsche's works' (Maliniak, 1981). Nietzsche's influence in the Yishuv in the 1930s was quite widespread, and many young people were drawn to his brand of existentialism. At the heart of the existentialist approach to history is the Nietzschean assumption that the empowerment of man is self-creating and is open to various interpretations. Historicism, romanticism, determinism and the cult of progress depicted man as a creation of history formed by tradition and culture; Nietzsche, however, put forward an original anthropological idea whereby man affirms his fate (he called this *amor fati*), but moulds it himself as a creative principle through his will-to-power. It was no longer inherited characteristics, the fruit of the legacy of the past, that was the deciding factor, but the identification of the reality with the ego, a perspective that is not enslaved by the Lord of History, and which looks beyond conventional ethical distinctions of good and evil, truth and falsehood to new distinctions of creativity and degeneracy. This existential approach to history was a revolutionary turning point that meant a focus on the creative act that is at the heart of myth. It was precisely this that delighted the 'Nimrods' of the Yishuv: the possibility, in modern times, of forsaking the heritage of the past and with a new body and a new space to establish themselves and their culture.

## The rebirth of myth

In myths, from those of Nietzsche to Danziger (I say this with all due caution), there has been an attempt to create a unity in

history: not a rational or chronological unity but an aesthetic and existential unity. Nietzsche claimed that 'only when the cultural horizon is one of myth does the emergence of a culture reach an inner crystallization' (Nietzsche, 1957: paragraph 23). Nietzsche – and Danziger – believed that accounts of historical events that had no significance for their vision were not relevant for them, and there was no point in preserving them in the collective consciousness. Nietzsche – and Danziger – were only interested in the pragmatic elements of the past, for in their opinion the pragmatic was the truth. The reconstitution of heroic myth became a pragmatic tool for criticism of the present, a kind of distancing of evidence to earlier civilisations.

Two forms of consciousness confront each other: the harmonious consciousness and the consciousness of the reality of conflict. In the latter, the traditional view of the historical process is set aside: instead of a linear understanding of history that sees a positive correlation between the advance of time and moral and intellectual progress, and unlike the religious concept of historical retreat, which sees a negative correlation between the advance of time and a lost garden of Eden, one has a cyclical concept of history. This concept, from the Greeks to the existentialists, sanctified war through the idea of *telos* (purpose). The content is unimportant; it is the form that matters. Evaluation and commentary are not considered content but creative mythical activity. The mythical form of 'Nimrod' remains, while the content – Canaanite, Hebrew, Zionist, secular, religious, post-Zionist – is constantly replaced, and thus changes.

Danziger's quasi-archaic discourse was directed against the historical culture of the bourgeoisie, not as a class (he came out of it), but as an idiom, a norm and a consciousness. This historical culture was seen as imposing a rationalist mentality that stifled human vitality. As against this, myth is the very heart of the existentialist approach in its endeavour to achieve at one stroke, through an aesthetic and existential experience, the unity of man and his world. *Nimrod* was seen by many as being, in a new and revolutionary way, an attempt to forge a mythical connection between history and Hebrew nationalism through an existential act. It was an exemplary model of art in the service of the national existentialism.

The recreation of the biblical Nimrod is seen as the essence of Danziger's mythology. Did Danziger deliberately create the myth

surrounding *Nimrod*? The question presupposes that myths are created by artists, cultural critics and politicians, but is that really so? (Barthes, 1957). Perhaps there is more truth in Claude Lévi-Strauss's suggestion that we do not think up or create myths, but myths are thought into existence through us (Friedlander, 1985: 22–31). *Nimrod* has been identified as a myth announcing the birth of the 'new Hebrew' culture.

The mythical rebirth of this culture in the modern era was possible only when secularity had reached a high degree of development. Modern myth is a manifestation special of its kind of what could be called the 'pseudo-sacred', which comes into being only when traditional religion has disappeared. The 'New Man' or 'new Hebrew' recognised that his creation was purely subjective and was not rooted in any structure, meta-narrative or order outside of itself such as Jewish history or Zionist ideology. With the emergence of the modern aesthetic myth – that is to say, the myth of *ex nihilo* – secularism reached its apogee. Myth became a substitute religion, a kind of active and radical secularism. In this emotional climate, Danziger began to create a modern mythology: a series of myths beginning with *Nimrod* and proceeding to works in honour of sacrifice or commemorative works and the creation of sacred spaces. These symbolised a different option from those offered by secular or religious Zionism.

What was special about Danziger's modern mythology? The answer lies in his creation of a special kind of myth that did not seek to describe something like a utopia or a perfect future society but to provide inspiration and arouse the fighting spirit of a group. The myth was not intended for everyone, but for a chosen group, an order, that would be a model for the whole society. *Nimrod* cannot be regarded as a reformist manifesto or a programme for the future; it has to be taken in itself or rejected in itself. Utopians and social scientists try to foresee or correct the future, but myth is an act of creation, not of prophecy (Cohen, 1973: 337–53).

Lévi-Strauss believed that myth was the structure of an action, not a construction in view of an action (Wysling, 1969; Lévi-Strauss, 1963: 216). If so, *Nimrod* was not a construction in view of some ideological or moral action but the structure of a metaphorical action, an experience in itself. What matters is the form, not the content. Here, Marshall McLuhan's aphorism that 'the medium is the message' is correct. The myth of *Nimrod* is not an

agent for values that lie beyond it but is sufficient unto itself. The 'Nimrod experience' or 'Nimrodism' is the substance and main point of Danziger's statement. Danziger belongs to the tradition of the 'anti-intellectual intellectuals' who replace reason with experience, ethics with aesthetics, progress with periodicity, the general with the particular, the objective with the subjective, truth with culture and historical consciousness with myth. They believed that the soul of a living culture is to be found in its myths.

The 'Hebrew' built his modern world not on a basis of rational progress but of myth, and in this case, the myth of *Nimrod*. The creator of the myth did not receive his world from an inherited culture but identified with the world that he created and so remained authentic. This authenticity was not expressed in an ideology or by the choice of the left or right political camp but was fidelity to the structure of one's consciousness, to a guiding principle or an ahistorical metaphor. In order to detect a coherent pattern in Danziger's various political tendencies, one needs to distinguish between the idea and the medium of the idea. The idea with him is first and foremost a sort of 'Hebrew authenticity' or 'Nimrodism' and the medium of the idea varies: apprenticeship as a youth in the Revisionist youth movement, *Betar* (the name of the last fortress to fall in the Bar Kokhba revolt), together with peace activities with the humanist Orthodox educator Akiva Ernst Simon; sculpting the head of the Revisionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky, together with protest against nationalism and clericalism after the Six Day War; support for projects in the Occupied Territories like founding the Alon Shvut College and the initiative for a memorial site for the Egoz unit on the Golan Heights, together with protest, according to Yosef Mundi, 'against the occupation. Not because he thought we have no right as Jews to live in Eretz Israel, but […] because this occupation is turning the Jewish people into thieves without a conscience' (Mundi, 1981). The main thing was the Nimrodic idea of 'Hebrew authenticity'; the ideological positions were secondary and therefore changed.

## The post-Zionist Nimrod: the Jewish Nimrod

The 1990s was the decade that brought the post-Zionist discourse to the forefront. The post-Zionist critique of the Zionist ideology and of the hegemonic Israeli–Jewish discourse concerning the land

took two directions – a split that testifies, more than anything else, to the unresolved ambivalence of the critics themselves. On the one hand, the post-Zionist critics transfer the focus of identity from history to geography, from time to space, and identify the Israeli *place* as the factor that establishes the Israeli identity. And on the other hand, some of them see Israel as another Jewish Diaspora and call for a rejection of the 'denial of the exile', for education in exilic life and for a legitimation of the exile (Anita Shapira, 2003; Raz-Krakotzkin, 1993: 23–56; Gur-Zeev, 2004).

If post-Zionism had presented itself as simply a critical position, one could say that it had a history, an ideology and a methodology (Silberstein, 1999). The iconoclastic post-Zionist intellectual climate that has been reflected in a destruction of the Zionist symbols has naturally not spared *Nimrod*. But the demythologisation of heroic, 'Canaanite' Zionism has not given birth to a critical debate but to a new mythicisation. If *Nimrod* in its beginnings embodied the myth of the 'new Hebrew' in his old-new land, yearning for rootedness and harmonisation in the territory, in the 1980s and 1990s, the work began to symbolise a longing for vagrancy, for the exile. From being the 'Hebrew', *Nimrod* became the 'wandering Jew'. The mythical form is what matters and the content changes. The myth of *Nimrod* as a structural form overshadows the changing Zionist or post-Zionist content.

In the exhibition 'Routes of Wandering: Nomadism, Voyages and Transitions in Contemporary Israeli Art' presented at the Israel Museum in 1992, the curator Sarit Shapira took down the sculpture *Nimrod* from the pedestal where it had stood and placed it on the floor. He was no longer a heroic figure raised above the people but a wanderer, a labourer close to the soil, perishable like the sand from which he was made. The exhibition followed the stations of wandering, migration, nomadism and transition in Israeli culture in accordance with the concepts of thinkers like Robert Deleuse, Felix Guattari, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig and Edmond Jabès (Sarit Shapira, 1992b). The favourable view of the Jewish vagrant and the myths about the wanderers derives from the critique of Zionism, perceived as an inward-looking ideology with its view of Zion as the sole national home and homeland of the Jewish people.

In a review on the exhibition entitled 'Nimrod the Jew', it was said that the sculpture *Nimrod* 'was created and viewed as the

absolute antithesis of the wandering Jew, of the exilic figure bearing his load of misery' (Sarit Shapira, 1992a: 9). And now he was presented as a displaced figure who was given a completely opposite significance to that which had been accepted until then in the Israeli view of the Jewish experience. Nomadism, which was idealised by the exhibition, was put forward as the authentic identity of the Jew and the Israeli. Shapira claimed that hunters (and Nimrod, as one may remember, was a 'mighty hunter') lived in a nomadic society, and thus Danziger's visits to the bedouin were interpreted as journeys to the early forefathers of the nation. *Nimrod* and Arieh Aroch's painting *Agrippas Street* were presented at the exhibition as close to each other despite the confrontation between them seen by Breitberg-Semel. To the question, 'Is it not going too far to make the sculpture *Nimrod*, the ultimate in fantasy and the longing for rootedness, the ultimate in the desire to be assimilated into the area, into a reflection of the wandering Jew?' the curator replied:

> This is a reading I propose of Danziger, as a figure that symbolises the view of the local culture taken by the generation of the desert [...] Danziger speaks of a view of other cultures. One should look at his book *Makom* [place] which, as far as I am concerned, is the elementary textbook of post-modernism: it speaks of vagrancy not as something amorphous and impotent but as an energy that obliterates borders. (Sarit Shapira, 1992b: 110)

The art critic Smadar Tirosh continued in the Jewish vein initiated by the exhibition 'Routes of Wandering' (Tirosh, 1994: 17–19). In her article 'The Canaanite hero is a wandering Jew', Tirosh explained that by stressing the motif of temporality as a mood in Israeli art, 'the curator has cast light on the experience of vagrancy as a Jewish component of the Israeli identity' (ibid.). In her comparison of one of the preparatory drawings for *Nimrod* – made during the year that the sculpture was created – with the finished sculpture, Tirosh noticed that the sculpture underwent a transformation from the image of a giant with huge limbs, the image of Canaanite macho – an image that grew weaker as the sculpture progressed. Her conclusion was: 'Despite his declared intention, in the process of creating the biblical father of hunters, the wandering Jew unintentionally sprouted forth!' (ibid.). Tirosh

also drew attention to the upside-down bird carved on Nimrod's thigh and identified a dead hunted bird in certain specific parts of his body: 'The image vacillates between the predator and his victim, between the hunter and the hunted' (ibid.). Looking at *Nimrod* from the back, she noticed the disproportional nature of his body that means that he cannot be an image of power. According to her, he has no muscles, his chest is narrow, his back is bent, his look is frightened and anxious, and his whole deportment is far from the posture of a hero. 'His distasteful cunning in concealing his weapon and his worried look, together with the pronounced Semitic nose, suggest a Jewish stereotype in a disturbing way' (ibid.).

Tirosh cast doubt on the myth of authenticity-to-the-place that has been attached to *Nimrod*. Its creator, who until the age of twenty-three had lived for a longer period of time in Europe than in Eretz Israel, possessed a quality of alienness that was expressed in a search for a local authenticity that was longed for, but that could not be taken for granted. The problematic nature of authenticity-to-the-place in the case of Danziger was demonstrated in several ways: he called the bird perched on *Nimrod*'s shoulder a hawk although it is really a falcon, which shows his lack of knowledge of nature in the country; the formation of *Nimrod*'s lips are influenced by the sculptures on Easter Island; and the mixture of East and West was inspired by Indian exotica. These things, in Tirosh's opinion, reveal the 'colonialist approach' of the artist, who in Mandatory Palestine brought from London a Western view of the East.

A critical, ironic, cynical and mocking view of *Nimrod* has existed ever since Amos Kenan sculpted *The Hero* in 1959. Kenan's hero was a sick, one-eyed warrior, exiled in Paris and disillusioned from the day that the state was established, as though ridiculing the heroic myth of Moshe Dayan, the commander-in-chief of the 1956 Sinai Campaign. As Kenan himself said,

> My *Hero* was completely opposite to the spirit that prevailed in the country at that time. It was not a parody of *Nimrod* but a parody of the hero. In Israel in the 1950s, it was Moshe Dayan and all of the security people of various kinds who thought we could dominate half the world. This was my reaction to the cult of heroism. (Kelner, 1996)

After Kenan, one cannot avoid the suspicion that the two ultimate heroic figures of the Israeli narrative, the one-armed hero of Tel Hai (Trumpeldor) and the one-eyed hero from Nahalal (Dayan) were disabled-as-heroes.

In 1985, Asad Azi painted *The Madman* as part of a series that he produced in the 1980s dealing with the subject of madness. The figure in the painting was portrayed with expressionist distortion in the manner of Chaim Soutine; his mouth was crooked, his eyes for some unknown reason were filled with fear, his face revealed terror and a lack of concentration, and on his shoulder was an unidentified bird. In her review entitled 'I am not Nimrod', the critic Shlomit Steinberg stated that, 'It is difficult not to see a striking similarity of form between Azi's *Madman* and Danziger's sculpture *Nimrod*. It is also difficult to imagine that Azi did not know the sculpture *Nimrod*.' And indeed it is impossible not to compare the holistic creation of *Nimrod* and the hawk with that of the *Madman* with the bird. One is a sword-bearing hero of the hunt and the other is a wretched-looking fellow whose whole appearance is one of fear and trembling. Azi acknowledges that his source of inspiration was Franz Hals's *Malle Babbe van Haerlem* or *Witch of Haarlem* (1630–33). At the centre of that picture is a woman whose glance – it is not clear if she is crazy or laughing – is turned to one side; she is holding a bottle of beer, and on her shoulder is an owl. The owl symbolises madness and idiocy, which was its significance in the Netherlands, contrary to its more usual image as a symbol of wisdom and its association with the goddess of wisdom, Minerva. Azi himself identifies with Hals's painting and not with Danziger's sculpture, with the insane 'other' and not with the Canaanite hero. When he said about himself, 'I work outside the framework of the tradition of Israeli culture. My feeling is for the no-man's-land,' he gave a good description of the gulf that lay between him and Danziger, the 'prince charming' of Israeli art (Steinberg, 1994: 20).

The artist and playwright Eldad Ziv in 1988 put out the yearly poster announcing the Israel Festival. He produced the image of a pinkish and sweetish *Nimrod*, so provoking the anger of many, including the Danziger family, which claimed that he had the audacity to desecrate the sculpture. 'When they asked for a poster for the festival', he said,

> I painted *Nimrod* as a symbol of Israeli art. When they asked me why it had to be *Nimrod*, I explained that if one can make fun

> of King David and Moses, *Nimrod* is also fair game […]. As with many things in this country, we take everything too seriously and lose all sense of proportion. (Gillerman, 2003)

The artist Uri Galkin also used a kitschy pink to paint the installations of a hundred *Nimrod*s, which he set up at an exhibition at the Avni Institute in 1997. Some of the dolls of PVC, thirty centimeters high, were called *Nimrod, Man of Peace* and *In Memory of the Dreams*, and in them *Nimrod*, together with the dream that he evoked, was caught in a spider's web of steel threads. Galkin's provocation was aimed at all that *Nimrod* represented for him: 'It took me years to build up my language, of which the basic letter is *Nimrod*, and with these *Nimrods* I can, despite the stammering that is natural to me, build installations that can sometimes say a whole sentence' (Rozen, 1997). He sees the *Nimrod*-like Israeli as a displaced, wretched and pathetic figure – in his words, 'nebbish potz'.

In the spring of 2000, *Nimrod* was transferred from its fixed place in the Israeli Painting Wing of the Israel Museum and was put for some time in the Restoration Department. In white overalls, as in an operation room, the members of the department worked for several weeks, producing a negative of the original and two plaster copies. The work was then wrapped in nylon, which was spread over with plasteline. At the end of the process of reproduction, *Nimrod* was casually placed in the storeroom of the museum. Was the duplication and reproduction of the work a sign of its banalisation, as Walter Benjamin would have argued? Things reached such a pass that the verdict of the judge of the Jerusalem District Court against the owners of the reproduction of Danziger's sculpture was described in a newspaper heading as '*Nimrod* destroyed' (Goldberg, 2002; Gillerman, 2001 and 2002).

In the year 2003, *Nimrod* starred in three exhibitions of women artists who wanted to dip their brushes in Zionist 'machismo'. Efrat Gal-Nur presented her painting *Eyes Look Towards Nimrod* (this is a parody of the line in the Israeli national anthem, 'Eyes look towards Zion') in the exhibition 'The Return to Zion: Beyond the Principle of the Place', arranged by Gideon Ofrat in the Zman Le-Omanut (Time for Art) Gallery in Tel Aviv. In the painting, there were quotations from the Zionist narrative: the wall of the Old City and the letters symbolising Tsahal (the Israel Defense Forces) and adorned with palm trees. In the top left- and right-hand corners were the

skulls of dolls, and at the bottom of the painting five medallions of Zionist zoological and botanical symbols, and beneath them the Israeli national anthem in English. These, says the curator, 'are the heroic place-symbols of the great Zionist myth and narrative. All of them are "souvenirs" repainted from a distance of doubt, alienation, sarcasm and rejection' (Ofrat, 2002: 68).

In the second exhibition, in the Zomer Gallery, Tel Aviv, Michal Helfman made fun in her painting *The Star of Ya'ir* of three outstanding features of the original *Nimrod*, with an imitation of Nubian sandstone, an owl of rubber foam and an up-to-date Canaanite *maqama* (prose poem).

The third exhibition displayed a series of copper reliefs of a duplicated *Nimrod* by the artist Drora Dominey. She named her hero, or to be more precise, her anti-hero, *Nimrod the Homo*, *Black Nimrod* and *Stuffed Nimrod*, scrutinising his image with a critical eye: 'It seems that he himself is surprised or laughs at the superior status he has been given since he was made.' Parallel with curator Mordechai Omer's aggrandisement of Danziger at the Tel Aviv Museum, Dominey displayed at the Artists' Workshop a *Nimrod* with a tattooed chest, a moustache, pubic hairs and a female frog crouching on his shoulders. 'When I was working on it', said the artist,

> I thought a great deal about the feminine prototype it represented and how it compared with Nimrod. In my fantasy, I wed the two, and that is why I gave her a pink belly. Later, my attitude towards Nimrod took on an erotic hue. I examined him as a sculpture. I allowed myself to touch all parts of his body, even his penis. One could characterise it as a demythologisation, but I still think he is attractive and charming. The source of his attractiveness is not necessarily the sculpture itself, but its creator, Danziger. (Gillerman, 2002)

The aim of the three women artists Gal-Nur, Helfman and Domini, was to effect a deconstruction of the masculine erotic myth of *Nimrod*. As one critic said,

> *Nimrod* above all represents the image of the omnipotent Israeli male, the conqueror, the Don Juan, as Danziger created him. To doubt that image is also to cast doubt on its creator as the representative of a masculine, patriarchal culture. (Gillerman, 2002)

Did Danziger in fact symbolise a masculine Zionism whose extreme conclusion is a Canaanite cultural imperialism that expands, conquers, penetrates?

Hirschfeld provided a fascinating erotic perspective on the subject in his article '*Nimrod*, the secret of the youth made of sand'. He declared,

> He's got a penis, has Nimrod! Not a sexual organ but a penis [...] Nimrod's potency is bound up with his strength and speed, but his pose and his downwards glance make his sexual organ the centre of movement of the sculpture. (Hirschfeld, 1997)

If with Danziger the matter of sexuality was self-evident, in the public discourse 'it was a reference to an experience repressed by a whole civilization' (ibid.). The complex dialogue of Jewish culture with physical prowess, sexuality and the human body had not changed much since the beginning of the twentieth century (Boyarin, 1997; Biale, 1986).

The year 1988 was a turning point in the view taken of *Nimrod*. In that year, as we mentioned, Breitberg-Semel threw stones at it and declared war against Danziger; Binyamin Tammuz kissed it on rediscovering it in the Israel Museum; Eldad Ziv coloured him pink in his poster for the Israel Festival; and that very same year the mural *The Dream and Its Rupture* was inaugurated at the University of Haifa. On the twenty-one-metre-long western wall of one of the buildings on the campus, among all of the allegorical scenes of the Israeli narrative, Avraham Ofek dealt with the aspects of knowledge and science (Ofek, 2001: 47). On the right-hand side was a geometry lesson, and on the left-hand side an art lesson in which the lecturer presented an Israeli work, *Nimrod*, and a Jewish work, Chagall's *Jew Laying on Phylacteries*. Here, Ofek touched the very heart of the Israeli–Jewish, Nimrodic–Chagallic dialectic. The painter Michael Sgan-Cohen also pointed out this duality when he wrote:

> It is interesting that this Canaanite hero has a biblical name, and yet the Canaanite-pagan interpretation is correct. Rashi says that the hero from the Book of Genesis incited people against God. That is to say, the Nimrod of the Sages was a rebel against God. (Sgan-Cohen, 1996).

Gideon Ofrat, in his essay 'Nimrod in phylacteries', gave a good formulation of this dilemma of identity: 'Nimrod in phylacteries is a paradox, a soul torn between its contrasting elements: between its Israelism and its Judaism, between setting down roots and wandering' (Ofrat, 1996: 315–23).

No doubt Sgan-Cohen had in mind Tchernichovsky's poem 'Facing the Statue of Apollo' (1899), in which a Jewish rebel was bound with the straps of phylacteries, or the stabbing of the Torah scrolls dripping with blood by Berdichevsky's rebellious hero in his novel *Ha-'Ozev* (The Man Who Leaves) (Emmanuel Ben-Gurion, 1980: 197). The same motif appears in the Jewish legend in which Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian and destroyer of the Second Temple, entered the Temple and struck the curtain of the Ark with his sword until blood ran out of it. In connection with this juxtaposition of blood, Torah and phylacteries, it is also impossible not to call to mind the figure of the writer Zeitlin 'the Saint', a Nietzschean Jew wrapped in phylacteries going to his death in Auschwitz, and – to return to Ofek's painting – the two arms of Joseph Haim Brenner, the Jewish author in Palestine, a defiant atheist, wrapped in the leather straps of phylacteries, clasping the wooden beams of scaffolding on which workers are engaged in building the land, and in the background of the painting one sees *Nimrod*.

*Nimrod* passed through the entire gamut of identities. At first he was a king and a hunter, two things alien to the spirit of Jewish tradition. Later, in the time of the national revival in the modern era, the 'new Hebrew' wished in the Diaspora to be 'like all the nations', and in Israel he sought indigenousness and a regional identity. And finally (at least at this stage), with the critique of the secular Zionist ethos, there was born Nimrod the post-Zionist, the wandering Jew. And, parallel with this, there was also the option of 'Nimrod the crusader' at Kalaat Nimrud. Here we see the dialectic of 'the Jew' and 'the Hebrew', two fraternal rival identities, in the historical development of one cultural image. When 'the Jew' prevails there is an emergence of the Hebrew–Canaanite opposition, and when 'the Hebrew' prevails there is a rebirth of Jewish identity.

This was the protracted 'distress of identity' well described by the poet Haim Gouri, and which it seems will be with us for many years to come. Canaanism, by driving one aspect to an extreme, exacerbated this split in our identity: 'There was also great charm in this challenge', said Gouri,

> but I knew that the rejection of any connection or any affinity between the Jew and the Hebrew would be self-defeating. It would totally efface any possible explanation for our being here, and would also destroy lofty cultural values that we have seen as our possession. (Gouri, 1983)

## 'Nimrod – Youth Against the Current Establishment'

In 1972, a group of students and high school pupils formed an organisation, giving it the name, 'Nimrod – Youth Against the Current Establishment'. It called for a change in the curriculum in the spirit of Canaanite principles, and demanded an Israelisation of education, which in their opinion reflected all of the defects of Israeli society with its Jewish roots: religious coercion, ghetto-mindedness, stress on the Holocaust, an assumption of superiority and introversion. In addition to a reduction or elimination of Jewish consciousness, they demanded an increase in Eretz Israel studies and in the study of the history of the neighbouring peoples, as a change in the character of the syllabus would necessarily lead to a healthier society. At the head of this group were members of the second generation of the Canaanite movement, and prominent among them were Margalit Gur, the daughter of the scholar Adia G. Horon, and Ami Snir – both of them students of architecture at the Technion in Haifa – Yigal Ben-Nun, one of the heads of the Black Panther movement in Tel Aviv, and a young professor of mathematics, Saharon Shelach, son of Yonatan Ratosh. Uri Avneri was the first to point out the affinity between Danziger's creation and this neo-Canaanite youth group:

> 'Nimrod' is not an acronym of *No'ar Mored* [the Hebrew name of the group was *No'ar Mored Be-Mimsad Ha-Kayam*]. However, *Nimrod* was the name of the sculpture made by Yitzhak Danziger thirty years ago. This sculpture became the symbol of the group that arose at that time and received the name 'Canaanites'. (Avneri, 1972)

And elsewhere, he wrote, 'Their name "Nimrod" hints at *mered* (rebellion), and also recalls (unintentionally?) the biblical "Nimrod, the mighty hunter" who brings with him a mass of associations with pugnacious and healthy *zlobs* [louts]' (Koren, 1972).

Through their journal and through notices, lectures and discussions in schools, the young people of 'Nimrod' appealed to high school students to fight against 'outworn exilic values', to work for a separation of religion and state, to return to 'Hebrew' values, and to demand the conscription of yeshiva students into the armed forces and the authorisation of cultural activities on the Sabbath. The tone and character of their appeal to youth they inherited from their parents, who grew up in the atmosphere of futuristic ideas, manifestos to youth and youth movements of the Europe of the 1920s and 1930s. The existing programme of studies reflected, in their opinion, the mentality of the people of the Third Aliyah who came from the shtetls of Eastern Europe, and their desire to impose on the young Israelis a spiritual universe that was alien to them and to the country. They claimed that the reality of the students, who were born and raised in the country, was indigenous and Israeli, and as such conflicted with the exilic reality of the educators.

They felt that the education of the modern Israeli required a change in the approach to the subjects of history, literature and the Bible. While in their opinion the natural sciences were the heritage of the whole world, the humanities reflected the particular culture of each country. For instance, history required the study of the past of Eretz Israel and not the personal past of the pupil. The existing division in high schools between general history, which is mainly the history of Western Europe, and Jewish history, which is mainly the history of the Eastern European Jews, left the pupils without a basic knowledge of Israel. To the question, 'Didn't this criticism, of which its starting point was anti-exilic, reflect a totally Canaanite point of view?' the young 'Nimrodim' replied that almost all of the literary works studied centred around a single axis: the exilic trauma, the degeneracy of the Jewish shtetl, the abandoned house of study and feelings of alienation towards the gentiles and towards the country in which the Jews lived. It was therefore necessary to break out of the exilic trauma and to create something new:

> They make a cult of the Holocaust. If we had to experience the consciousness of all the holocausts that happened to the Jewish people, we would spend our lives in ceremonies, weeping and

> remembering. They load us with huge amounts of Jewish consciousness […]. (Koren, 1972)

The young Nimrodim therefore asked for Jewish consciousness to be replaced by the study of the landscape of their country. Ami Snir insisted that:

> We don't need the Jewish and Zionist consciousness with which they stuff us. We have grown up here in this country and not in a Jewish shtetl between one pogrom and the next. The educational system must draw its view of the world from the State of Israel and all that surrounds it. (Arieh Avneri, 1972)

Ido Ilan, a student from Kiryat Ono, said he that was more interested 'in hearing about the struggle that preceded the rise of the state than about the exilic Jew, and we want to replace all the writers and poets studied today with other, more modern ones' (ibid.).

The members of the Nimrod youth group presented themselves as something original and special among the movements and parties in the country (Stein, 1972). The movement prided itself on being self-created, and not just one more example of 'the young people of such and such […]'. The trouble with the left-wing movements, as they saw it, was that they were anti-national, and as a result those youth with any nationalist feelings could not find a place in them. Margalit Gur, who described herself as belonging neither to the right nor the left, thought that the distinguishing characteristic of the Jews in exile was that of lacking a territory. Zionism claimed that if they returned to their territory, they would become a normal people. The solution, where the Nimrodim were concerned, was making Israel into a state-of-all-its-citizens, 'the creation of a single nation out of all of the different inhabitants of the land'. This solution would nullify all religious and national differences and found 'a new, reinvigorated Israeli race and [provide] a total release from the remains of all the exiles' (Koren, 1972).

The Nimrodim felt that viewing the Crusaders in a Jewish rather than an Israeli perspective led people to make false analogies:

> When they teach about the Crusades, they deal almost exclusively with what happened in Europe at that time, and one hardly learns anything about the Crusaders in this country.

> This is not by chance, but derives from the general outlook of people looking at the country from the perspective of the Eastern European Jews. And so it happens that a pupil born in this country asks by what right he is here.
>
> The question of our right to be here haunts the people to whom we are opposed like a nightmare. They do not feel they have roots in this country and see themselves as conquering crusaders. In our case, the question is not relevant, just as a Frenchman does not ask himself why he lives in France. Any man from any people or community living in this territory belongs to it, just as we do. (Koren, 1972)

The Nimrod group drew criticism from both the left and right. The 'Abraham' group, which was made up of Jerusalem students and high school pupils, arose as a movement in opposition to the Nimrod. The Jerusalem group asserted that the Tel Aviv Nimrodim cut themselves off from the past of the Jewish people, rejected it, buried it without a second thought, and, 'well – that was their past!' The members of Nimrod, they said, only lived in the state because of the determination of their forebears to settle in Eretz Israel whatever the cost. In a letter to the minister of education Yigal Allon, they acknowledged that the founding of Abraham was a reaction to organisations like Nimrod. The rise of such movements, they said, permitted only one conclusion: 'This youth, most regrettably, has lost its values owing to the major failures of education in this country' (Lifschitz, 1972). The representatives of 'Abraham' wrote, 'We want Jewish Israeli schools in this country and not Western Israeli schools.' And they ended the letter as follows:

> We take a very serious view of the organization which calls itself 'Nimrod', for its implications are far more complex and dangerous than it seems at first sight. The matter should also be a cause of alarm for you as Minister of Education. (Lifschitz, 1972)

Cool responses to the Nimrod group were also not long in coming from the secular side. Uri Avneri explained to the readers of his journal *Ha-'Olam Ha-Ze* that it was an imitation of the original Canaanite movement: 'All "Nimrod's" formulations without

exception are word-for-word repetitions of Ratosh's slogans of thirty years ago.' Nimrod, *Alef* and the Canaanite group, he said, 'are merely different names for the same phenomenon, in accordance with the principle, "Change your name and change your luck." In his view, the Canaanites' capacity to raise a commotion from time to time was due to the fact that the existing education aroused indifference or opposition: 'Much of the Canaanites' criticism – I am not speaking of their political programme – is perfectly justified' (Avneri, 1972).

Medad Schiff, a right-winger, attacked them frontally: 'Why do you have to reject the history of the Jews? Because you have heard this from the "big shot"? Go to him at once and get him to answer' (Schiff, 1972). By the 'big shot', he of course meant Ratosh (Porath, 1988: 353–4). Ratosh initially gave his blessing to the Nimrod organisation and encouraged his son Saharon's participation in the group because he hoped to make it into the kernel of a 'Canaanite' youth movement. But when he realised that the young people would not accept his domination and would not follow his version of the 'Hebrew' ideology exactly, he abandoned them.

## From *Nimrod* to Kalaat Nimrud

*Nimrod* has been identified, through no intention of the artist, with the Canaanite metaphor. Will the memorial site to the fallen of the Egoz unit, of which Danziger was the chief sponsor and executor, be identified in the future with the crusader metaphor? The site is situated near Kalaat Nimrud (Nimrod's Fortress) on the Golan Heights, which was captured in 1967.

In his Foreword to his booklet in memory of the fallen of Egoz, Danziger related that when he saw Kalaat Nimrud, he 'had the feeling that the landscape itself would be enough to express their memory' (Danziger, *The Commemoration*: Foreword). When he was killed in 1977 in a car crash, close to the time that the commemorative booklet was published, it was written about Danziger:

> When the idea of creating the site took hold, he became a beacon that lit up the way for others. The idea of the site, of which he was one of the developers and interpreters, enchanted him; the place enchanted him, and he was among those that chose it. (Ibid.)

Here, on the Golan Heights, he had written, 'the power of Kalaat Nimrud up to and beyond the grove of sacred oaks gave a focus and intensity to the character of the place' (ibid.). Did the expression 'the character of the place' reflect a feeling of affinity with a Muslim–Crusader site? Was Danziger thinking of the Crusaders, the colonialists of the Middle Ages, alien to the place, when he considered locating a commemorative site in an area captured by the Israelis in the Six Day War? Be it as it may, this is how he explained his connection with Kalaat Nimrud in an interview:

> I came to the conclusion that because of the closeness of the place to Mount Hermon, it was advisable to lay as much stress as possible on the natural scenery and not set up there a monument of concrete or anything of that nature. When I saw the sacred grove to the east and Kalaat Nimrud to the west and Mount Hermon in the background, I had a new concept of the idea of commemoration: we would create a 'place', not a monument. (Ibid.: Foreword)

The natural and historical environment gave the adjudicators the idea of the character the commemorative site on the hill near Kalaat Nimrud should be given. No sculpture or monument could in their opinion have competed with the mountain ridge, the rocks, the grove of oaks, the natural amphitheatre. The 'place', explained Danziger, was not a monument, nor a series of structures that would only harm the landscape. The 'place' was a genuine fusion of the existing landscape with human requirements. Its importance lay in its power of attraction beyond the visual:

> and its purpose, where we were concerned, was to serve as a memorial site for the Egoz unit. Its fulfillment would be if the deeds of the unit were to blend in the most concrete manner with the general design. (Ibid.)

Danziger's aim was to create out of the materials available a sacred space that would connect death with life:

> In contrast to and together with the boundless pain of death, we wished the visitor to sense the awesome splendour with all that it implies: reality, sanctity, elevation, and, together

> with that, concreteness and utility. It is the sort of place that changes life and gives life to all who come to it.
>
> Essentially, the memorial and its physical and human surroundings, death and life, were bound together as a single fabric, radiating heroism, faith and vitality. (Scharfstein, 1977)

If the place was to be given a heroic character, its purpose had to be defined. The emphasis was placed on the fallen of the unit on an individual basis rather than commemoration of the unit through a monument (Danziger, *The Commemoration*: Foreword). It was decided to create a memorial to each one of the fallen, giving his name and the date and place that he fell, 'in such a way that an identification with the fallen would come through nature'; and it was decided that the upper part of the hill overlooking Kalaat Nimrud would be made into a stepped amphitheatre that would serve as a meeting place for soldiers and a site for parades and swearing-in ceremonies and gatherings. A spot would be set aside for lighting symbolic fires so that the flame would be seen from a distance, and a place would be provided for overnight accommodation. 'The very fact that this is done at a memorial site results in the elimination of any feeling of strangeness creating a barrier between the fallen and the living' (ibid.: unpaginated). The Hill of Memory was intended to connect the transcendental and the immanent, the sacred and the profane, death and life. The writer Yoram Kaniuk plumbed the depths of the affinity between Nimrod and Kalaat Nimrud, making the following statement about Danziger:

> He began by fashioning the sculpture *Nimrod* in which the ancient hunter is seen to be both delicate and strong, and attached to his bird of prey which is also his weapon and also the creature that will lick his blood. He ended by levelling the slopes of the Carmel that had been damaged by the 'Nesher' quarry and making a huge area of the Golan Heights into a site commemorating the fallen of the Israel Defense Forces: a commemoration not through setting up a memorial, which would at most be a decoration, but by bringing in three hundred bereaved parents, each of whom planted an oak tree at the site. Together, they connected with the landscape, sanctifying it, because they did not plant an institutional, anonymous tree as

> in the forests of the Keren Kayemet [the Jewish National Fund], but a personal tree in a restricted area in a magical landscape at the foot of Mount Hermon, whereby the deeds of the parents came to fill the empty spaces left to them by the sons. It was as though their tragic death had been exchanged for the life created here. (Kaniuk, 1984)

The site was inaugurated with a tree-planting ceremony on the Jewish 'New Year of Trees' in February 1977, with the participation of graduates of the Egoz unit, the bereaved families, pupils of the sponsoring Danziger School in Kiryat Shmona and the artists Danziger, Joseph Zaritzky and Avigdor Steimatzky. The planting of three hundred saplings on Hill 883 on the Golan was the first act of personal involvement in the place. The intention, said Mordechai Omer, was not to create a monument as a commemorative site, but to stress:

> the landscape itself, to respect the 'place' with its flora and fauna, to set up a place for the families of the fallen and their friends, who would feel the tranquility of the spot and be with themselves and the surrounding landscape. That was the aim of the memorial site as developed by Danziger. (Omer, 1996a)

Egoz is the regimental unit of the Northern Command. It was established after the Sinai Campaign in 1956, when the commander-in-chief Yitzhak Rabin decided to create a group of Druze volunteers in the Israel Defense Forces whose task would be to operate beyond the northern frontier. At the beginning of the 1960s, the unit was reformed and engaged in the protection of the national water carrier, in protecting the borders with Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and in active combat. Within a short period of time, Egoz became the elite unit of the Northern Command. It was most active during the period between the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War of 1973 (Erev and Edelist, 1983: 45–74).

The memorial site for the thirty-seven fallen of the original unit (later on, the names of the fallen of the recreated unit were added) is a garden with paths meandering over a rocky hill where there are corners where people can gather, with isolated rocks commemorating each of the fallen. To these sites in memory of the fallen was added a corner in memory of the initiator of the

project. There, a rock is inscribed, 'Professor Yitzhak Danziger, of blessed memory. Through his spiritual vision and steadfast faith he helped to create this place.'

A commemorative ceremony for the fallen of Egoz unit members takes place every year on one of the intermediate days of Succoth (the Feast of Tabernacles). The arrangements for the ceremony are as follows. About a month before the festival of Succoth, the pupils of the Danziger high school at Kiryat Shmona (the name of the school has no connection with Yitzhak Danziger, but the coincidence is nevertheless interesting) go up to the site for four days to carry out cleaning and maintenance work. These days of work are coordinated with the new Egoz unit, and during that time the pupils learn about the history of the unit and its special character. Graduates of the unit, who visit the school close to the day of remembrance and give the pupils accounts of the unit's legacy, are assisted by the inhabitants of Neve Ativ, members of the unit who founded the settlement that operates a ski site on Mount Hermon bearing the name of four soldiers of the unit. Following the adoption of the Egoz site by the pupils from Kiryat Shmona, the Ministry of Education initiated an educative project in which every school adopts a commemorative site to the fallen in its neighbourhood.

The graduates of the unit and their relatives, the soldiers of the new unit and the families of the fallen assemble at the commemorative corners where there is a memorial tablet in two parts, on which is inscribed the name of the fallen, his personal details and a brief profile of the individual. At the end of the gathering at the corners, the military ceremony begins in the amphitheatre. After a choir of soldiers or pupils has made an appearance, the remembrance prayer 'Yizkor' is said by the military rabbi and speeches are made by the former commanders of the unit, the chairman of the commemorative association and a bereaved parent. A platoon of soldiers fires a salvo in memory of the fallen and the ceremony is concluded. The military–civilian ritual brings together hundreds of people each year, and it takes place opposite the extraordinarily beautiful site of the fortress of Kalaat Nimrud.

Kalaat Nimrud or Nimrod's Fortress, one of the most impressive medieval castles in the Middle East, dominated the main road from Tyre through Banias to Damascus. The fortress is about 400 metres in length, up to 150 metres in breadth, and covers

about thirty-three dunams on one of the lower slopes of Mount Hermon. This is how Mark Twain in his book *Innocents Abroad* (1869) described Kalaat Nimrud: 'The stateliest ruin of that kind on earth […]. It is of such high antiquity that no man knows who built it or when it was built […]' (Twain, 1869: 469).

The cause of the debate about who built Nimrod's Fortress is the fact that systematic archaeological excavations were never conducted there. After the British Palestine Exploration Fund and the French scholar Charles Clermont-Ganneau surveyed the site in the nineteenth century, the opinion expressed by Paul Deschamps in 1936, based on a survey and mapping of the ruins, gained acceptance, and his conclusion was that the fortress was built by the Crusaders and rebuilt by the Ayyubid (Deschamps, 1939: 144–74). For many years, scholars supported this thesis, which explained its construction by the Crusaders by the need to protect the town of Banias and to fortify their kingdom against a possible Arab invasion from Damascus (Ellenbaum, 1992: 13–30).

Today, however, the conclusions of the scholar Ronnie Ellenbaum are accepted, and these are that there was no mention of Nimrod's Fortress before 1228, and it was built in that year by the ruler of Banias, Al-'Aziz Al-Malik 'Othman, as an Arab defence against a Crusader incursion into Damascus. In the twelfth century, the site was not settled, and its construction was due to a state initiative of the Ayyubid, who had gained experience after the fifth Crusade. The rapid construction of Nimrod's Fortress on the eve of Frederick the Second's journey to Palestine was the result of a strategic decision to destroy the fortresses in western Palestine and fortify a different line of defence on the Golan Heights. It eventually fell to the Crusaders, and finally, the downfall of the network of fortifications in the Golan, including Kalaat Nimrud, was due to the Crusaders' failure to plan in advance and the characteristic faults of their colonialist regime: too great a distance from the European centre, exploitation of the local population, alienation from the Oriental Christian population in Palestine, and difficulties in manning the forts owing to a lack of manpower and insufficient settlement. The many names and legends connected with the fortress show how abundant a source of myth it has been for various cultures. The name Kalaat Nimrud is not very old, and it has had various other names since its foundation. The previous name of 'Al-Sabayba' appears to be derived from the word

*sabib*, Arabic for 'cliff'. It was the 'Cliff Fortress'. The fortress has been called Kalaat Nimrud in recent centuries after the biblical 'mighty hunter' and builder of the cities in Mesopotamia, who according to the legend set up his palace there, from where he stretched out his hand to draw from the waters of the Banias. Another legend recounts that this mythical hero left the imprint of his shoe on one of the ridges on the slopes of Mount Hermon. The inhabitants of the area also relate that Allah put a fly in Nimrod's brain to drive him mad as a punishment for his arrogance, and this took place at Kalaat Nimrud.

With Danziger's last 'work', his involvement in the planning of the memorial site to the fighters of Egoz near Kalaat Nimrud, an artistic life-cycle was concluded. It began three generations earlier with three works devoted to Hebrew fighters: the design for a monument to David Nishri (1938) the member of the Haganah (Jewish Defence organisation during the British Mandate), and *Nimrod* (1939), and the draft of a monument to the twenty-three *Yordei Ha-Sira* (Haganah members lost at sea on a sabotage mission) (1942). *Nimrod* was created in a form resembling an archaeological artifact in order to express the longing for a heroic indigenous Hebrew soul; and the memorial site near Kalaat Nimrud expressed a similar hoped-for connection between archaeology, heroism and a collective identity. In this way, the mythicisation of archaeology in Israel has served as an outstanding tool for the creation of an indigenous national image. Are the metaphors 'Canaanite' and 'crusader' in Danziger's aesthetic artistic signposts or warning signs in the Israeli identity card? Are they an ideal, a source of longing, or a threat lying in wait? Does the memorial site near Kalaat Nimrud conceal an analogy between 'the recent past' (the conquest of the territories in the Six Day War) and 'the distant past' (the Crusader conquest)? Is the Israelisation of Kalaat Nimrud a Canaanite response to a fear of meeting the fate of the Crusaders, together with a certain empathy towards them? Is it a symbolic attempt to strike roots in the place by proclaiming the victory of the fallen, a reaction to the oblivion that has overtaken the Crusaders?

## Conclusion

Whatever the case, Nimrod is a dialogic structure and medium of a Jewish and Israeli language whereby Jews and Israelis have spoken

to each other generation after generation, one culture to another, about their identity, their beliefs, and the main issue at the heart of the myth, a sort of 'narrative philosophy', to use Schelling's expression: where they come from, where they are going to. The protracted discourse about the myth of Nimrod is one more sign that it is not to be dismissed out of hand by being questioned after the event, but should be examined closely, insisting on its vitality and attempting to ascertain its place in the making of the Israeli consciousness: where this myth has come from and where it is going to.

# Bibliography


Adamson, L. Walter, *Avant-Garde Florence: From Modernism to Fascism* (Cambridge, MA, 1993).

Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, CA, 1998).

Agamben, Giorgio, *The State of Exception*, trans. by K. Atell (Chicago, IL, 2005).

Almog, Shmuel, 'Zionism and messianism', *Zionism and History* (Jerusalem, 1982): 42–8 (Hebrew).

Alter, Robert, 'The achievement of Gershom Scholem', *Commentary*, 55 (1973): 69–77.

Amir, Aharon, 'Dantz', *Ma'ariv*, 29 July 1977 (Hebrew).

Amir, Aharon, 'The expectation of a crystallisation of identity', Independence Day Supplement, *Haaretz*, 29 May 1998 (Hebrew).

Amir, Aharon, 'Horon in the Land of the Hebrews', in Adia G. Horon, *East and West: A History of Canaan and the Land of the Hebrew* (Tel Aviv, 2000) (Hebrew), pp. 17–27.

Aran, Gideon, 'A mystic–messianic interpretation of modern Israeli history: the Six Day War as a key event in development of the original religious culture of Gush Emunim', *Studies in Contemporary Judaism*, 4 (1988): 263–75.

Arieli, Yehoshua, *History and Meta-History*, edited by David Ohana (Jerusalem, 2003) (Hebrew).

Aschheim, Steven E., 'The metaphysical psychologist: on the life and letters of Gershom Scholem', *Journal of Modern History*, 76 (2004): 903–33.

Aviad, Janet, 'The messianism of Gush Emunim', in Jonathan Frankel (ed.), *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era*, Series, *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 7 (Oxford, 1991), 197–213.

Avineri, Shlomo, 'The Canaanite episode', *Ha-Po'el Ha-Tsa'ir*, 26–7 (25 March 1953): 8–9 (Hebrew).

Avineri, Shlomo, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York, 1981).

Avneri, Arieh, Interview with members of 'Youth Against the Current Establishment', *Yediot Aharonot*, 13 October 1972 (Hebrew).

Avneri, Uri, 'Between Hebraism and Judaism', *Ha-Hevra,* 9–20 (1942): 300–1 (Hebrew).

Avneri, Uri, 'On "Nimrod: Youth Against the Current Establishment"', *Ha-'Olam Ha-Ze*, 25 October 1972 (Hebrew).

Avneri, Uri, 'The death of Nimrod', in Amos Kenan (ed.), *The Art of Sculpture in Israel: The Search for Identity*, The Open Museum (Tefen, 1988) (Hebrew), pp. 25–30.

Avneri, Uri, 'The model of another Israel: forty years after the "Hebrew Manifesto"', *Haaretz*, 10 January 1997 (Hebrew).
Avneri, Uri, 'The man who discovered America', *Haaretz*, 6 April 2001 (Hebrew).
Avramsky, Shmuel, 'Nimrod and the Land of Nimrod: understanding the beginnings of kingship in the Book of Genesis', *Beit Mikra,* 25, 3 (1980): 237–55 (Hebrew).
Bachar, Jacques, 'L'Antigoyisme en Sion', *Le Siècle*, 20–25 March 1898 (French).
Bahar, Aharon, *Concerning Uri Avneri* (Tel Aviv, 1968) (Hebrew).
Bar Or, Galia and Gideon Ofrat, *The First Decade: A Hegemony and a Plurality* (Ein Harod, 2008) (Hebrew).
Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (Paris, 1957) (French).
Baruch, Adam, 'Combinations', in Amos Kenan (ed.), *The Art of Sculpture in Israel: The Search for Identity*, The Open Museum (Tefen, 1988) (Hebrew), pp. 7–13.
Baruch, Adam, 'Amos Kenan, that simply won't go', *Shishi* (1990) (Hebrew), unpaginated.
Baruch, Adam, *In Good Faith: The Garden of Meandering Jewish–Israeli Paths* (Jerusalem, 2001a) (Hebrew).
Baruch, Adam, 'Nimrod: how did it happen?', *Ma'ariv*, 27 April 2001b (Hebrew).
Barzel, Amnon, 'Landscape as a work of art', interview with Yitzhak Danziger, *Haaretz*, 22 July 1977 (Hebrew).
Barzilay, David, *Homo Dialogicus: Martin Buber's Contribution to Philosophy* (Jerusalem, 2000) (Hebrew).
Bauman, Zygmunt, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals* (Cambridge, 1987).
Beck, Ulrich, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge, 1994).
Bell, Daniel, *The Coming of Postindustrial Society* (New York, 1973).
Ben-Gurion, David, 'Deh Ge'uleh', *Der Yiddischer Kampfer*, 16 November 1917 (Yiddish).
Ben-Gurion, David, 'Earning a homeland', *Mi-Ma'amad Le-'Am* (1933a) (Hebrew), pp. 13–174.
Ben-Gurion, David, *The Labour Movement and Revisionism* (Tel Aviv, 1933b) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, *The Labor Party and Revisionism* (Tel Aviv, 1939) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, *Vision and Path* (Tel Aviv, 1950) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, 'Toward the future', *Mi-Ma'amad Le-'Am* (Tel Aviv, 1956) (Hebrew), pp. 13–21.
Ben-Gurion, David, 'An answer to the debaters', *Davar*, 9 October 1957a (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, 'Classification and designation', *Hazut*, 3 (1957b): 7–11 (Hebrew).

Ben-Gurion, David, 'Israel and the Diaspora', *Netzah Israel* (Tel Aviv, 1964) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, 'In defence of messianism', *Midstream* (12 March 1966), 64.
Ben-Gurion, David, *Recollections* (London, 1970).
Ben-Gurion, David, *Memoirs*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv, 1971) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, *Memoirs*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1971–86) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, *My Father's House* (Tel Aviv, 1974) (Hebrew).
Ben-Gurion, David, *Ben-Gurion Diaries*, (BGD), available at: http://www.bgu.ac.il/ben-gurion/center.htm
Ben-Gurion, Emmanuel, *Private Property* (Tel Aviv, 1980) (Hebrew).
Ben-Raphael, Eliezer, *Jewish Identities: Fifty Intellectuals Answer Ben-Gurion* (Sde Boker, 2001) (Hebrew).
Benjamin, Walter, 'On language as such and on the language of man', *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913–1926, edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 62–74.
Benjamin, Walter, 'Paralipomena to "On the concept of history"', *Selected Writings*, vol. 4, 1938–1940, edited by Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. by Edmund Jephcott and others (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 401–11.
Berdichevsky, Micha Josef, 'In two directions', *On the Way*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1922) (Hebrew).
Bernfeld, Siegfried, *Das Jüdische Volk Und Sein Jugend* (Vienna and Berlin, 1920) (German).
Bertz, Inka, 'Jewish Renaissance: Jewish modernism', in Emily D. Bilski (ed.), *Berlin Metropolis: Jews and the New Culture 1800–1918* (New York, 1999–2000), pp. 164–87.
Biale, David, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, MA, 1979).
Biale, David, 'The threat of messianism: an interview with Gershom Scholem', *New Review of Books*, 14 August 1980.
Biale, David, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York, 1986).
Bialik, Haim Nahman, *Poems*, vol. 1, edited by Dan Miron (Tel Aviv, 1983) (Hebrew).
Biberfeld, Zvi, 'Nimrod: Amarpel', *Ha-Mayan*, 23, 1 (1987): 79 (Hebrew).
Biemann, D. Asher, 'The problem of tradition and Reform in Jewish Renaissance and Renaissance', *Jewish Social Studies*, 8 (2001): 58–87.
Bitan, Dan, 'Myths of warlike heroism at the beginning of Zionism (1880–1903)', in David Ohana and Robert Wistrich (eds), *Myth and Memory: Transfigurations of the Israeli Consciousness* (Tel Aviv, 1996) (Hebrew), pp. 169–88.
Blitental, Alice, 'The sculpture that evoked a forgotten culture', *Ma'ariv*, 1981 (Hebrew).
Bloch, Charles, 'Theodor Herzl and Joseph S. Bloch', *Herzl Year Book*, 1 (1958), pp. 154–64.
Bloch, Ernst, *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution* (Munich, 1924) (German).

Bloch, Ernst, *The Principle of Hope* (Cambridge, 1986).
Blumenberg, Hans, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1983).
Bourdieu, Pierre, *Raison pratique* (Paris, 1994) (French).
Boyarin, Daniel, *Unheroic Conduct* (Berkeley, CA, 1997).
Breinin, Reuven, *The Life of Herzl* (New York, 1919) (Hebrew).
Breitberg-Semel, Sarah, 'Agrippas versus Nimrod', *Yediot Aharonot*, 1 September 1988 (Hebrew).
Brenner, Michael, 'From self-declared messiah to scholar of messianism: the recently published diaries of young Gerhard Scholem in a new light', *Jewish Social Studies*, 3 (1996): 177–82.
Brenner, Yosef Haim, 'Newspapers and literature: notes and observations', *Ha-Po'el Ha-Tsa'ir*, 24 November 1910 (Hebrew).
Breslauer, S. Daniel, *Martin Buber on Myth: An Introduction* (New York, 1990).
Brinker, Menahem, 'Nietzsche and the Hebrew writers: an attempt at a synoptic view', in Jacob Golomb (ed.), *Nietzsche and Hebrew Culture*, (Jerusalem, 2002) (Hebrew), pp. 131–59.
Brinker, Menahem, 'Nietzsche's influence on modern Hebrew literature", in Bernice Glalzer Rosenthal (ed.), *Nietzsche and Soviet Culture, Ally and Adversary* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 393–413.
Buber, Martin, 'Ein Wort über Nietzsche und die Lebenswerte', *Die Kunst im Leben*, vol. 1 (December, 1900) (German). Courtesy of Margot Cohen, Buber Archives (trans. by G. G. Schmidt).
Buber, Martin, 'Das Gebet' (1901), *Die Welt*, 5, 10 (8 March 1901): 13 (Yiddish).
Buber, Martin, 'Zionistische Politik', in Martin Buber, *Judische Bewegung* (Berlin, 1916a) (German).
Buber, Martin, 'Von jüdischer Kunst', *Jüdische Bewegung*, first series, 1900–1914 (Berlin, 1916b) (German).
Buber, Martin, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin, 1936) (German).
Buber, Martin, *The Problem of Man: Reviewing its Origins* (Tel Aviv, 1943) (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *Haaretz*, 8 December 1944 (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *Moses: The Revolution and the Covenant* (Oxford, 1946).
Buber, Martin, *Selected Writings on Judaism and Jewish Affairs*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1950a) (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *The Way of Man According to the Teachings of Hasidism* (London, 1950b).
Buber, Martin, 'Jewish myth', *Documentation and Assignment* (Jerusalem, 1960) (Hebrew), pp. 80–8.
Buber, Martin, 'Judische Renaissance', *Judische Bewegung*, 1900–1914 (Berlin, 1961a) (German).
Buber, Martin, *People and Universe* (Jerusalem, 1961b) (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *Selected Writings on Judaism and Jewish Affairs*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1961c) (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *The Way of the Ancient Script: Reviews in the Style Patterns of the Bible* (Jerusalem, 1964) (Hebrew).

Buber, Martin, *Olelot* (1966) (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *A Believing Humanism: Gleanings 1902–1965*, trans. by Maurice Friedman (New York, 1967a).
Buber, Martin, *Encounter: Autobiographical Fragments*, trans. by Maurice Friedman (La Salle, IL, 1967b).
Buber, Martin, *I and Thou*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1970, [1923]).
Buber, Martin, 'The messianic mystery', trans. by T. Dreyfus, *Da'at*, 5 (1980): 117–33 (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, *Between Nation and its Land*, edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr (Tel Aviv, 1985) (Hebrew).
Buber, Martin, 'Zarathustra', handwritten manuscript (1898–1900) (Jerusalem, National Library, Buber Archives, Ms. Var. 350 B/7b), unpaginated. Trans. by Gilya Gerda Schmidt, *Martin Buber Formative Years* (Tuscaloosa, AL, and London, 1995).
Cassirer, Ernst, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven, CT, 1957).
Cassirer, Ernst, *Symbol, Myth and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer, 1935–1945*, edited by Donald Phillip Verene (New Haven, CT, 1979).
Cassuto, Moshe David, *From Noah to Abraham* (Jerusalem, 1953) (Hebrew).
Castoriadis, Cornelius, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Cambridge, 1987).
Cohen, C. Percy, 'Theories of myth', *Man* (1973): 337–53.
Cohn, Norman, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London, 1970).
Court, Elsbeth, 'Africa on display: exhibiting art by Africans', in Emma Barker (ed.), *Contemporary Cultures of Display* (New Haven, CT, 1999), pp. 147–52.
Dan, Joseph, 'Gershom Scholem and Jewish messianism', in Paul Mendes-Flohr (ed.), *Gershom Scholem: The Man and His Work* (New York, 1994), pp. 73–86.
Danziger, Yitzhak, Foreword, *The Commemoration of the Fallen of the 'Egoz' Unit*, commemorative booklet, 'Introduction' by Haim Adar (No date or place of publication given) (Hebrew).
Danziger, Yitzhak, *Place*, edited by Mordechai Omer (Tel Aviv, 1982) (Hebrew).
de Vries, Hent and Lawrence E. Sullivan, *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York, 2006).
Decombes, Vincent, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. by L. Scott Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge, 1980).
Derrida, Jacques, *The Gift of Death*, trans. by D. Wills (Chicago, IL, 1995).
Deschamps, Paul, *Les Châteaux des Croisés en Terre Sainte, II: La défense du Royaume de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1939) (French).
Deutscher, Isaac, *The Prophet Armed* (New York, 1965).
Donner, Batia, 'The development of applied graphics in the Yishuv', in Moshe Lissak and Zohar Shavit (eds), *The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz Israel since 1882* (Jerusalem, 1998) (Hebrew), pp. 535–56.

Efrat, Zvi, *The Israeli Project: Construction and Architecture, 1948–1973* (Tel Aviv, 2005) (Hebrew).
Eisenstadt, N. Shmuel, *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities*, vols 1 and 2 (Leiden, 2003).
Eisler, Edmund, *Ein Zufunftsbild* (Vienna, 1885) (German).
Elboim-Dror, Rachel, *The Hebrew Education in Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem, 1986) (Hebrew).
Elboim-Dror, Rachel, *Yesterday's Tomorrow*, 2 vols (Jerusalem, 1993) (Hebrew).
Elboim-Dror, Rachel, '"Free from the national Chovinismus": on Herzl through post-Zionism', *Iton 77*, 208 (1997): 17–19, 42 (Hebrew).
Eliade, Mircea, *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*, trans. by W. Trask (Princeton, NJ, 1954).
Elior, Rachel, 'Jacob Frank and his book, *The Sayings of the Lord:* religious anarchism as a restoration of myth and metaphor', *The Sabbatian Movement and Its Aftermath: Messianism, Sabbatianism and Frankism,* edited by Rachel Elior, *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, 16, 1 (2001): 471–548.
Ellenbaum, Ronnie, 'Who built Nimrod's Fortress?', *Eretz Israel in the Mamluk Period*, edited by Yosef Drori, Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and the Society for the Study of Eretz-Israel and its Antiquities (Jerusalem, 1992) (Hebrew), pp. 13–30.
Erev, Yaakov and Ran Edelist (eds), *IDF: Encyclopedia of the Army and Security Services* (Tel Aviv 1983), pp. 45–74.
Eshel, Hanan, 'Archaeological finds and the life work of A. G. Horon', in Adia G. Horon, *East and West: A History of Canaan and the Land of the Hebrew* (Tel Aviv, 1970) (Hebrew), pp. 29–32.
Evron, Boaz, *The National Reckoning* (Tel Aviv, 1988) (Hebrew); English trans.: *Jewish State or Israeli Nation?* (Bloomington, IL, 1995).
Feige, Michael and Zvi Shiloni (eds), *Archaeology and Nationalism in Eretz Israel* (Sde Boker, 2008) (Hebrew).
Feiner, Shmuel, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness* (Jerusalem, 1995) (Hebrew).
Feiner, Shmuel, *The Origins of Jewish Secularization in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, PA, 2010).
Feldstein, Arie, 'David Ben-Gurion, The Zionist Organisation and the United States' Jews, 1948–1963' (PhD dissertation, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1998) (Hebrew).
Fichmann, Yaacov, 'East and West', *Illustration Juive*, 1 (25 March 1929a).
Fichmann, Yaacov, *Language and Book Aleph Bet* (Tel Aviv, 1929b) (Hebrew).
Friedlander, Shaul, 'The presence of myths: dialogue with Claude Lévi-Strauss', *Zmanim,* 17 (1985): 22–31 (Hebrew).
Frilling, Tuvia, *Arrow in the Dark: David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv Leadership and Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust* (Sde Boker, 1998) (Hebrew).
Fuhrer, Ronald, *Yitzhak Danziger and Yigal Tumarkin: Encounters* (Tel Aviv, 2002) (Hebrew).

Funkenstein, Amos, 'Gershom Scholem: charisma, kairos, and the messianic dialectic', *History and Memory*, 4, 1 (1992): 123–39.
*Gal-Ed*, *Testimony: Monuments to the Fallen in Israel's Wars* (Tel Aviv, 1989) (Hebrew).
Galili, Ze'ev, Interview with Gershom Scholem, 'Messianism, Zionism and anarchy in the language', in Gershom Scholem, *Continuity and Rebellion: Gershom Scholem in Speech and Dialogue*, edited by Avraham Shapira (Tel Aviv, 1994) (Hebrew), pp. 56–64.
Gamzu, Haim, 'Observations on the General Art Exhibition', *Haaretz*, 2 May 1944a (Hebrew).
Gamzu, Haim, *Painting and Sculpture in Israel: Art in Eretz Israel in the Last Fifty Years* (Tel Aviv, 1944b) (Hebrew).
Gamzu, Haim, 'Yitzhak Danziger', *The Art of Sculpture in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 1957) (Hebrew), unpaginated.
Gelber, H. Mark, '"The Jungiüdische Bewegung": an unexplored chapter in German-Jewish literary and cultural history', *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 31, 1 (London, 1986).
Gelber, Yoav, *Nation and History*: *Israeli Historiography between Zionism and Post-Zionism* (Edgware, 2011).
Gentile, Emilio, *Politics as Religion* (Princeton, NJ, 2006).
Geva, Shulamit, 'Israel: biblical archaeology at its beginnings', *Zmanim*, 42 (1992): 93–102 (Hebrew).
Gillerman, Dana, 'Two casts of Yitzhak Danziger's sculpture *Nimrod* have the same numbering', 'Galleria', *Haaretz*, 29 February 2001 (Hebrew).
Gillerman, Dana, 'A law court orders a cast of the sculpture *Nimrod* to be destroyed', 'Galleria', *Haaretz*, 4 February 2002 (Hebrew).
Gillerman, Dana, 'Nimrod is as small as that', 'Galleria', *Haaretz*, 24 February 2003 (Hebrew).
Goldberg, Michal, 'Nimrod will be destroyed', *Yediot Aharonot*, 4 February 2002 (Hebrew).
Gordon, Aharon David, 'Our reflections', in *The Nation and the Work* (Tel Aviv, 1957) (Hebrew).
Gorny, Yosef, *Achdut Ha-'Avoda, 1919–1930: The Ideological Principles and the Political System* (Tel Aviv, 1973) (Hebrew).
Gorny, Yosef, 'Utopian elements in Zionist thought', *Studies in Zionism*, 5 (1984): 19–27 (Hebrew).
Gorny, Yosef, 'Utopian realism in Zionism', in *Reshafim: A Collection in Memory of Professor Shimon Reshef* (Tel Aviv, 1991): 37–50 (Hebrew).
Gorny, Yosef, 'The negation of the Diaspora and the return to history', in Moshe Lissak and Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (eds), *Zionism and the Return to History: A Reappraisal* (Jerusalem, 1999) (Hebrew), pp. 349–60.
Gouri, Haim, 'The challenge of the Hebrews', *Davar*, 12 August 1983 (Hebrew).
Gramsci, Antonio, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York, 1971).
Greenboym, Yitzhak, *From Worker's Society to Worker's Economy: Evoloution of the Hevrat Ha-'Ovdim Idea, 1920–1929* (Tel Aviv, 1987) (Hebrew).

Griffin, Roger, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke, 2007).
Gur Zeev, Ilan, *Towards a Diasporic Education* (Tel Aviv, 2004) (Hebrew).
Habermas, Jurgen, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. by F. G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA, 1987).
Hacohen, Devora, 'Introduction', *Israel*, 16 (2009): 1–8 (Hebrew).
Herf, Jeffrey, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1984).
Herzberg, Arthur, *The Zionist Idea* (New York, 1959).
Herzl, Theodor, *Altneuland* (New York, 1960 [1902]).
Herzl, Theodor, *Diaries*, 3 vols (Jerusalem, 1997–2001) (Hebrew).
Hever, Hannan, *Captives of Utopia: An Essay on Poetry, Messianism and Politics in Eretz Israel between the World Wars* (Sde Boker, 1995) (Hebrew).
Hirschfeld, Ariel, 'Nimrod, the secret of the youth made of sand', *Haaretz*, 11 May 1997 (Hebrew).
Hirschfeld, Ariel, 'Kadima: on the concept of the East in the Israeli culture', in *To the East: Orientalism in the Arts in Israel*, edited by Yigal Zalmona and Tamar Manor-Friedman (Jerusalem, 1998) (Hebrew), pp. 11–31.
Horon, Adia G., *Eretz Ha-Kedem* (Tel Aviv, 1970) (Hebrew).
Horon, Adia G., *East and West: A History of Canaan and the Land of the Hebrew* (Tel Aviv, 2000) (Hebrew).
Horwitz, Rivka, 'Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem on Zionism and the Jewish people', *Jewish History*, 6, 1–2 (1992): 99–111.
Howe, Irving, Interview with Gershom Scholem: 'The only thing in my life I have never doubted is the existence of God', *Present Tense*, 8, 1 (1980): 53–7.
Inglehart Ronald and Chrisitian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy* (New York, 2005).
Ish-Shalom, Benjamin, *Rav Avraham Itzhak HaCohen Kook: Between Rationalism and Mysticism*, trans. by Ora Wiskind Elper (New York, 1993).
Jabotinsky, Ze'ev, *Samson the Nazarite* (London, 1930).
Jacobson, Eric, *Metaphysics of the Profane: the Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem* (New York, 2003).
Jonas, Hans, 'Gnosticism and modern nihilism', *Social Research*, 19 (1952): 430–52.
Jonas, Hans, *Mortality and Morality: A Search for Good after Auschwitz*, edited by Lawrence Vogel (Evanston, IL, 1966).
Jonas, Hans, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago, IL, 1984).
Kaniuk, Yoram, 'The celebration of life and death', *Ma'ariv*, 17 August 1984 (Hebrew).
Kantorowicz, Ernst H., *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ, 1957).
Karl, Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago, IL, 1958).
Katz, Jacob, 'Israel and the Messiah', *Commentary*, 73, 1 (1982): 34–41.

Kaufmann, Walter, 'Buber's failure and victory', in Yohanan Bloch et al. (eds), *Martin Buber: Hundredth Anniversary* (Tel Aviv, 1981), pp. 21–36.
Kaufmann, Yehezkel, *A History of the Israelite Faith from the Earliest Times to the End of the Second Temple*, vols 1–3 (Tel Aviv, 1952) (Hebrew).
Kelner, Vered, 'How long can one be eternal?', *Kol Ha-'Ir*, 8 March 1996 (Hebrew).
Kenan, Amos, 'Hebrews, not Sabras', *Alef* (October 1949) (Hebrew), unpaginated.
Kenan, Amos, 'And the Canaanite was then in the Land', Dan Omer talks to Amos Kenan, *Prosa*, 17–18 (1977) (Hebrew).
Kenan, Amos, *The Rose of Jericho – The Land of Israel: Space, Identity, Culture* (Tel Aviv, 1998) (Hebrew).
Kenyon, Frederick, *The Bible and Archaeology* (London and New York, 1940).
Keren, Michael, *Ben-Gurion and the Intellectuals: Power, Knowledge and Charisma* (Sde Boker, 1988) (Hebrew).
Klossowski, Pierre, 'The Marquis de Sade and the Revolution', *The College of Sociology, 1937–1939*, edited by Denis Hollier and trans. by Betsy Wing (Minneapolis, MN, 1988), pp. 218–33.
Kohn, Hans, *Martin Buber. Sein Werk und seine Zeit* (Cologne, 1961) (German).
Kolat, Israel, 'Ben-Gurion: the figure and the greatness', *Molad*, 4 (1973): 340–51 (Hebrew).
Kolat, Israel, 'Zionism and messianism', in Zvi Baras (ed.), *Messianism and Eschatology* (Jerusalem, 1984) (Hebrew), 419–32.
Koren, Ruth, 'Nimrod versus the exilic', *Al Hamishmar*, 8 October 1972 (Hebrew).
Kraushaar, Alexander, *Franke: i Frankiści Polscy, 1726–1816*, vols 1–2 (Cracow, 1895).
Kuhlken, Julie, 'Nietzsche's dabbling in the political', available at: http://www.docstoc.com/docs/21592/Nietzsches-dabbling-in-the-political.
Kurzweil, Baruch, *In the Struggle for Jewish Values* (Tel Aviv, 1969) (Hebrew).
*La-Merhav*, Dictated by Yitzhak Danziger to A. Zurit, 2 October 1959 (Hebrew).
Landau, S., 'The Annual Exhibition of the Artists of Eretz Israel', *Al Hamishmar*, 9 April 1944 (Hebrew).
Lavie, Rafi, 'Art is not stamp-collecting', *Ha-'Ir*, 14 August 1981 (Hebrew).
Lazier, Benjamin, *God Interrupted: Heresy and the European Imagination between the World Wars* (Princeton, NJ, 2008).
Leibowitz, Nehama, *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem, 1977) (Hebrew).
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 'The structural study of myth', *Structural Anthropology*, vol. 1, trans. by Clair Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Shoepf (New York, 1963), pp. 206–31.
Levin, Michael, 'Architecture of the modern movement', in Oded Heilbronner and Michael Levin (eds), *Israeli Modernism or Modernism in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 2010) (Hebrew), pp. 197–216.

Liebes, Yehuda, 'The myth of the restoration of Divinity: the Kabbala of the Zohar and the poetry of Ratosh', *Alpayim*, 7 (1993): 8–26 (Hebrew).
Liebes, Yehuda, 'De Natura Dei: on Jewish myth and its development', in Michal Oron and Amos Goldreich (eds), *Massuot: Studies in the Literature of the Kabbala and in Jewish Philosophy*, In Memory of Professor Efraim Gottlieb (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, 1994) (Hebrew), pp. 243–97.
Lifschitz, Eytan, 'Jerusalemites set up an organization against the "Nimrod" Movement', *Haaretz*, 3 October 1972 (Hebrew).
Löwith, Karl, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago, IL, 1958).
Maliniak, Nitza, 'Studio next to the morgue', *Haaretz*, 1981 (Hebrew).
Malinowski, Bronislaw, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (London, 1926).
Mannheim, Karl, *Ideology and Utopia* (London, 1936).
Manor, Dalia, *Art in Zion*: *The Genesis of Modern National Art in Jewish Palestine* (London, 2005).
Manor, Dalia, 'Israeli modernism in art: East or West, locality or universalism – beginning of controversy', in Oded Heilbronner and Michael Levin (eds), *Israeli Modernism or Modernism in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 2010) (Hebrew), 67–98.
Manor-Friedman, Tamar, *Danziger's Sculpture as a Source of Inspiration*, Israel Museum (Jerusalem, 1996) (Hebrew).
Markham, Felix Maurice (ed.), *Saint-Simon: Selected Writings* (Oxford, 1952).
McLuhan, Marshall, 'Myth and mass media', *Daedalus* (1959): 33–48.
Mendes-Flohr, Paul, *From Mysticism to Dialogue: Martin Buber's Transformation of German Social Thought* (Detroit, MI, 1989).
Mendes-Flohr, Paul, '"The stronger and the better Jews": Jewish theological responses to political messianism in the Weimar Republic', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, 7 (1991): 159–85.
Mendes-Flohr, Paul (ed.), *Gershom Scholem: The Man and his Work* (New York, 1994).
Mendes-Flohr, Paul, 'Zarathustra's apostle: Martin Buber and the Jewish Renaissance', in Jacob Golomb (ed.), *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture* (London, 1997), pp. 233–43.
Miron, Dan, 'Yonatan Ratosh as a cultural hero', *Haaretz*, 15 April 1990 (Hebrew).
Miron, Dan, *H. N. Bialik and the Prophetic Mode in Modern Hebrew Poetry* (Syracuse, NY, 2000).
Mishory, Alec, *Lo and Behold: Zionist Icons and Visual Symbols in Israeli Culture* (Tel Aviv, 2000) (Hebrew).
Mitter, Partha, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850–1922* (Cambridge, 1994).
Mosès, Stéphan, 'Scholem and Rosenzweig: the dialectics of history', *History and Memory*, 2, 2 (1990): 100–16.
Mumford, Lewis, *The Story of Utopia* (New York, 1922).
Mundi, Yosef, 'Another aspect', *Kol Ha-'Ir*, 21 August 1981 (Hebrew).
Nagid, Haim, 'And the name of the place was Canaan', *Moznayim*, 26 (1983): 38–42 (Hebrew).

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, trans. by Adrian Collins (New York, 1957).
Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1967).
Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York, 1995).
Nir, Rafael, 'The function of the institution of the Yishuv in the Hebrew revival', in Moshe Lissak and Zohar Shavit (eds), *The Construction of Hebrew Culture in Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem, 1999) (Hebrew), pp. 107–22.
Nordau, Max, *The Conventional Lies of our Civilization* (Chicago, IL, 1895).
Nordau, Max, *Zionism: Its History and its Aims* (London, 1905).
Odom, W., 'The militarization of Soviet society', in *Problems of Communism*, 25 (1976): 34–51.
Ofek, Abraham, *From Wall to Wall*, Curator Ruti Ofek, Catalogue of the Open University (Tefen and Omer Industrial Parks, 2001) (Hebrew).
Ofrat, Gideon, 'Who was the lion roaring at?', *Al Haaretz*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1993) (Hebrew), 966–9.
Ofrat, Gideon, *Nimrod in Phylacteries* (Jerusalem, 1996) (Hebrew).
Ofrat, Gideon, *The Return to Zion: Beyond the Principle of Place* (Tel Aviv, 2002) (Hebrew).
Ohana, David, 'The role of myth in history: Friedrich Nietzsche and Georges Sorel', in Hedva Ben Israel et al. (eds), *Religion, Ideology and Nationalism in Europe and America* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 119–40.
Ohana, David, 'The "anti-intellectual" intellectuals as political mythmakers', in Zeev Sternhell (eds), *The Intellectual Revolt Against Democracy, 1870–1945* (Jerusalem, 1996), pp. 87–104.
Ohana, David, 'The Leviathan opens wide its jaws: Carl Schmitt and the origins of legal fascism', Daniel Gutwein and Menachem Mautner (eds), *Law and History* (Jerusalem, 1999) (Hebrew), pp. 273–304.
Ohana, David, *Humanist in the Sun: Albert Camus and the Mediterranean Inspiration* (Jerusalem, 2000a) (Hebrew).
Ohana, David, *The Promethean Passion: The Intellectual Origins of the 20th Century from Rousseau to Foucault* (Jerusalem, 2000b) (Hebrew).
Ohana, David, *Messianism and Mamlakhtiyut: Ben-Gurion and the Intellectuals Between Political Vision and Political Theology* (Jerusalem, 2003) (Hebrew).
Ohana, David, 'Why not shatter myths? The case of the myth of Prometheus', in Ithamar Gruenwald and Moshe Idel (eds), *Myths in Judaism: History, Thought, Literature* (Jerusalem, 2004) (Hebrew), pp. 73–94.
Ohana, David, 'Fascism as a political community experience: following Walter Benjamin's political phenomenology', *Democratic Culture*, 9 (2005): 7–48 (Hebrew).
Ohana, David, 'J. L. Talmon, Gershom Scholem and the price of messianism', in Arie Dubnov (guest ed.), *Jacob Talmon and Totalitarianism Today: Legacy and Revision*, Special Issue, *History of European Ideas*, 34, 2 (2008a): 169–88.
Ohana, David, 'Secular messianism as political theology: the case of David Ben-Gurion', in Cristoph Schmidt and Eli Shenfeld (eds), *Jewish Modernity and Political Theology* (Tel Aviv, 2008b) (Hebrew), 204–25.

Ohana, David, *The Dawn of Political Nihilism*, vol. 1, in *The Nihilist Order* (Brighton, 2009).
Ohana, David, *Homo Mythicus,* vol. 2, in *The Nihilist Order* (Brighton, 2010a).
Ohana, David, *Political Theologies in the Holy Land: Israeli Messianism and its Critics* (London, 2010b).
Ohana, David, *The Futurist Syndrome*, vol. 3, in *The Nihilist Order* (Brighton, 2010c).
Ohana, David, *The Origins of Israeli Mythology: Neither Canaanites nor Crusaders* (Cambridge, 2012).
Ohana, David and Robert Wistrich, 'The presence of myths in Judaism, Zionism and Israeliness', in David Ohana and Robert Wistrich (eds), *Myth and Memory: Transfigurations of Israeli Consciousness* (Tel Aviv, 1996) (Hebrew), pp. 11–41.
*'Olam Ha-Omanut*, Yitzhak Danziger', Israel Museum, 15 November 1981 (Hebrew).
Omer, Mordechai, *Itzhak Danziger*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, The Open Museum, Industrial Park (Tefen, 1996a) (Hebrew).
Omer, Mordechai, 'Yes, we go back to Danziger once more', *Shishi* (1996b) (Hebrew), unpaginated.
Ortar, Ilana, 'Round about the lion', *Melnikoff, Judah Awakening: A Guide to Abraham Melnikoff, Pioneer of Sculpture in Eretz Israel: Sculptures, Drawings and Watercolours*, Catalogue, exhibition at Haifa University Art Gallery (Haifa, 1982) (Hebrew).
Oz, Amos, *All the Hopes* (Jerusalem, 1998) (Hebrew).
Pachter, Henry, 'Masters of cultural history: Gershom Scholem, the myth of the mythmaker', *Salmagundi*, 40 (1978): 9–40.
Parsons, Talcot, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York, 1967).
Pevsner, Nikolaus, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (Harmondsworth, 1936).
Plattel, Martin G., *Utopia and Critical Thinking* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1972).
Podhoretz, Norman, 'Redemption through politics', *Commentary* (January 1971): 5–6.
Porath, Yehoshua, *The Life of Uriel Shelah* (Tel Aviv, 1988) (Hebrew).
Rassam, Hormuzd, *Ashur and the Land of Nimrod* (New York, 1897).
Ratosh, Yonatan, *The Opening Discourse: In Executive Session with the Agents of the Cells [First Meeting]* (Tel Aviv, 1944).
Ratzabi, Shalom, 'The Jewish state in Buber's political thinking, 1942–1965', in Anita Shapira (ed.), *Independence: Fifty Years* (Jerusalem, 1998) (Hebrew), pp. 195–214.
Ratzabi, Shalom, *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brit Shalom, 1925–1935* (Leiden, 2002).
Ravitzky, Aviezer, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, trans. by Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago, IL, 1996).
Ravitzky, Aviezer (ed.), *The Land of Israel in the Modern Era: Jewish Thought* (Jerusalem, 2004) (Hebrew).

Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon, 'Exile within sovereignty: towards a critique of the "negation of exile" in Israeli culture', *Theory and Criticism: An Israeli Forum*, 4 (1993): 23–56 (Hebrew).

Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon, 'Between "Brit Shalom" and the Temple: the dialectics of redemption and messianism following Gershom Scholem', *Theory and Criticism: An Israeli Forum*, 20 (2002): 87–112 (Hebrew).

Reade, Julian, *Assyrian Sculpture*, British Museum (London, 1998).

Reines, Yitzhak Yaakov, *New Light on Zion* (Vilna 1902) (Hebrew).

Ricoeur, Paul (ed.), *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1986).

Rosenberg, Shalom, 'Redemption and history', *Alon Le-Moreh Ha-Historia*, 6 (1997) (Hebrew).

Rozen, Rami, 'Nimrod is only a doll', *Haaretz*, 9 May 1997 (Hebrew).

Russell, John Malcolm, *From Nineveh to New York* (New Haven, CT, 1997).

Samoha, Ram, 'The yellow colour of Danziger: selling *Nimrod*', *Globes*, 15 November 1996 (Hebrew).

Sartre, Jean-Paul and Benny Levy, *Hope Now: The 1980 Interviews* (Chicago, IL, 1996).

Schaeder, Grete, *The Hebrew Humanism of Martin Buber*, trans. by Noah Jacobs (Detroit, 1973).

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami, 'Alone, together, in the place', Conversation with Yitzhak Danziger, *Yediot Aharonot*, 22 July 1977 (Hebrew).

Schatz, Rivka, 'Zionism is messianism', *Nekuda*, 145 (1990): 24–8 (Hebrew).

Schiff, Medad, 'They are rebelling, so what?', *Yediot Aharonot*, 14 October 1972 (Hebrew).

Schmidt, Gilya Gerda, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897–1909* (Tuscaloosa, AL, and London, 1995).

Scholem, Gershom, 'Religious authority and mysticism', *On the Kabballah and its Symbolism,* trans. by Ralph Manheim (New York, 1969), pp. 5–31.

Scholem, Gershom, 'Redemption through sin', *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1971a [1937]), pp. 78–141.

Scholem, Gershom, 'The messianic idea in Judaism', *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1971b), 35–6.

Scholem, Gershom, 'Toward an understanding of the messianic idea in Judaism', *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1971c), pp. 35–66.

Scholem, Gershom, *Sabbatai Sevi*, *The Mystical Messiah, 1626–1676*, revd English edn, trans. by R. Zvi Werblowsky (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1973 [1957 in Hebrew]).

Scholem, Gershom, 'Messianism: a never-ending quest (1977)', *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time and Other Essays* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 102–13.

Scholem, Gershom, *Du Frankisme au Jacobinisme*, Marc Bloch Lectures (Paris, 1981) (French).

Scholem, Gershom, 'Reflections on the possibility of Jewish mysticism in our time', in Avraham Shapira (ed.), *Explications and Implications: Writings on Jewish Heritage and Renaissance* (Tel Aviv, 1982) (Hebrew), pp. 71–83.

Scholem, Gershom, *Additional Thing* (Tel Aviv, 1989) (Hebrew).
Scholem, Gershom, 'On our language: a confession', *History and Memory*, 2, 2 (1990): 97–9.
Scholem, Gershom, *The Sabbataian Episode*, a series of lectures recorded by Rivka Schatz (Jerusalem, 1955); quoted in Avraham Shapira, 'Introduction', in Gershom Scholem, *Continuity and Rebellion* (Tel Aviv, 1994) (Hebrew), pp. 7–24.
Scholem, Gershom, 'Der Nihilismus als Religiöses Phänomen', *Eranos Jahrbuch,* 43 (1974): 1–40 (German).
Scholem, Gershom, *Briefe* (Munich, 1994–99).
Scholem, Gershom, *A Life in Letters, 1914–1982: Gershom Scholem*, edited and trans. by David Anthony (Cambridge, MA, 2002).
Scholem, Gershom, *Lamentations of Youth: The Diaries of Gershom Scholem, 1913–1919*, edited and trans. by David Anthony (Cambridge, MA, 2007).
Schwartz, Yosef, 'Paper tiger', *Haaretz*, 21 April 2009 (Hebrew).
Schweid, Eliezer, 'Jewish messianism: metamorphoses of an idea', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 36 (1985): 1–19 (Hebrew).
Segev, Tom, 'Herzl: the first post-Zionist', *Haaretz*, 3 March 1996 (Hebrew).
Sgan-Cohen, Michael, 'Nimrod as it is in '96', *Globes*, 3 April 1996 (Hebrew).
Shamir, Ilana, *Commemoration and Memory* (Tel Aviv, 1996) (Hebrew).
Shamir, Ziva, *To Begin from Scratch: The Poetry of Ratosh, its Originality and Sources* (Tel Aviv, 1993) (Hebrew).
Shapira, Anita, 'Uri Zvi Greenberg: apocalypse now', *Zion*, 56, 2 (1991): 173–92 (Hebrew).
Shapira, Anita, 'The myth of the new Jew', in Jacob Golomb (ed.), *Nietzsche, Zionism and Hebrew Culture* (Jerusalem, 2002) (Hebrew), 113–30.
Shapira, Anita, 'Whatever happened to the negation of the Diaspora?', *Alpayim*, 25 (2003): 9–54 (Hebrew).
Shapira, Avraham, 'On those who anticipate the coming of the Messiah and their predecessors', *Shdemot* (1977): 76–82 (Hebrew).
Shapira, Avraham, 'Political messianism and its place in Martin Buber's perception of redemption', *Lectures in Remembrance of Martin Buber* (Jerusalem, 1987) (Hebrew), pp. 34–50.
Shapira, Sarit, 'Review' of 'Routes of Wandering', *Studio*, 29 (January 1992a): 9.
Shapira, Sarit, *Routes of Wandering: Nomadism, Voyages and Transitions in Contemporary Israeli Art*, Israel Museum Catalogue (Jerusalem, 1992b) (Hebrew).
Shapira, Yonatan, *The Historical Achdut Ha-'Avoda: The Might of a Political Organization* (Tel Aviv, 1975) (Hebrew).
Sharon, Arieh, *Kibbutz + Bauhaus, An Architect's Way in a New Land* (Stuttgart and Tel Aviv, 1976).
Shavit, Yaacov, *From Hebrew to Canaanite* (Tel Aviv, 1984) (Hebrew).
Shavit, Yaacov, 'Messianism, utopianism and pessimism during the 1950s: notes on the criticism of Ben-Gurion's Israel messianity', *Iyunim Be-Tkumat Israel*, 2 (1992): 56–78 (Hebrew).

Shavit, Yaacov, 'The status of culture in the process of creating a national society in Eretz Israel: basic attitudes and concepts', in Moshe Lissak and Zohar Shavit, (eds), *The Construction of Hebrew Culture in Eretz Israel* (Jerusalem, 1999) (Hebrew), pp. 9–30.
Shavit, Zohar, *Poetics of Children's Literature* (Athens and London, 1986).
Shavit, Zohar, 'The new Jew's habitus of the Haskalah', *Israel*, 16 (2009): 11–38 (Hebrew).
Sheba, Shlomo, 'A place in the sun', in Amos Kenan (ed.), *The Art of Sculpture in Israel: The Search for Identity*, The Open Museum (Tefen, 1988) (Hebrew), 19–25.
Shevet, Yitzhak, 'Nimrod, righteous or wicked? A new suggestion concerning the sin of the generation of the Tower of Babel', *Tlalei Orot*, 8 (1999): 14 (Hebrew).
Shimoni, Gideon, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hannover, NH, 1995).
Silberstein, J. Laurence, *Martin Buber's Social and Religious Thought: Alienation and the Quest for Meaning* (New York, 1989).
Silberstein, J. Laurence, *The Post-Zionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York, 1999).
Simon, Akiva Ernst, 'Buber or Ben-Gurion?', *New Outlook*, 9 (1966): 9–17.
Simon, Akiva Ernst, *Targets, Crossroads, Ways: The Thought of Mordekhai Buber* (Tel Aviv, 1985) (Hebrew).
Stein, Zvi, Interview with members of 'Youth Against the Current Establishment', *Ma'ariv*, 24 July 1972 (Hebrew).
Steinberg, Shlomit, 'I am not Nimrod', *Mishkafayim*, 22 (1994) (Hebrew).
Stern, Fritz, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Berkeley, CA, 1961).
Strauss, Leo, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Genesis*, trans. by E. M. Sinclair (Chicago, IL, 1975).
Tal, Uriel, 'Hermeneutical aspects of social theology according to Jewish sources', *Sidic*, 12 (1979): 4–15.
Tal, Uriel, 'The foundations of political messianism in Israel', *Haaretz*, 26 September 1984 (Hebrew).
Talmon, Jacob L., *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1955).
Talmon, Jacob L., *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (Tel Aviv, 1965) (Hebrew).
Talmon, Jacob L., *The Riddle of the Present and the Cunning of History*, edited by David Ohana (Jerusalem, 2000) (Hebrew).
Tammuz, Binyamin, 'Between Eden and Ophir', first published in *Alef* and a second time in Nurit Graetz's collection, *The Canaanite Group: Literature and Ideology* (Tel Aviv, 1986) (Hebrew), pp. 201–4.
Tammuz, Binyamin, 'Nimrod, the beginning of the Israeli rebirth', *Globes*, 3 April 1996 (Hebrew).
Tammuz, Binyamin, Dorit Levita and Gideon Ofrat, *The Story of Israeli Art from the Days of 'Bezalel' in 1906 to Our Time* (Givatayim, 1980) (Hebrew).
Taubes, Jacob, 'The price of messianism', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 23, 1–2 (1982): 595–600.
Taubes, Jacob, *Die Politische Theologie des Paulus* (Munich, 1993) (German).
Tevet, Shabtai, *David's Envy*, *The Young Ben-Gurion* (Tel Aviv, 1976) (Hebrew).

Tevet, Shabtai, *Ben-Gurion: The Burning Ground, 1886–1948* (New York, 1997).
Tirosh, Smadar, 'The Canaanite hero is a wandering Jew', *Mishkafayim* (October, 1994): 17–19 (Hebrew).
Tönnies, Ferdinand, *Community and Civil Society*, edited and trans. by Jose Harris (Cambridge, 2001).
Touraine, Alain, *Critique of Modernity* (Oxford, 1995).
Trachtenberg, Graciela, *Between Nationalism and Art* (Jerusalem, 2005) (Hebrew).
Trachtenberg, Graciela, 'Between modernism and gender in Israeli art, 1920–1970', in Oded Heilbronner and Michael Levin (eds), *Israeli Modernism or Modernism in Israel* (Tel Aviv, 2010) (Hebrew), pp. 99–156.
Trotsky, Leon, 'Exposition of the principles of compulsory labor', in J. Bunyan (ed.), *Origin of Forced Labor in the Soviet State 1917–1921: Documents and Materials* (Baltimore, MD, 1967).
Tsirolnikov, Shlomo, *The Dialectic of Israel Revolution* (Tel Aviv, 1982) (Hebrew).
Twain, Mark, *Innocents Abroad* (Hartford, CT, 1869).
Tzur, Muki, 'With Gershom Scholem: an interview', *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis: Selected Essays*, edited by Werner J. Dannhauser (New York, 1976), pp. 1–48.
Voegelin, Eric, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago, IL, 1952).
Voegelin, Eric, 'A review of the origins of totalitarianism', *Review of Politics* (January 1953): 68–76.
Wallerstein, Emmanuel, *The Modern World System* (New York, 1974).
Wasserstrom, Steven M., *Religion after Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade, and Henry Corbin at Eranos* (Princeton, NJ, 1999), pp. 215–24.
Werblowsky, R. Zvi, 'Introduction', in Zvi Baras (ed.), *Messianism and Eschatology: A Collection of Essays* (Jerusalem, 1983) (Hebrew), pp. 21–6.
Werblowsky, R. Zvi, 'Reflections on *Sabbatai Sevi* by Gershom Scholem', *Molad*, 9, 42 (1985): 6–22 (Hebrew).
Wistrich, Robert, *Trotsky: Fate of a Revolutionary* (London, 1979).
Wistrich, Robert, 'Herzl following the Messiah', in David Ariel-Yoel et al., *The War of Gog and Magog: Messianism and Apocalypse in Judaism – In the Past and Present* (Tel Aviv, 2001) (Hebrew), pp. 125–41.
Wistrich, S. Robert, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York, 2010).
Wistrich, Robert and David Ohana, *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma* (London, 1995).
Wolin, Richard, 'Reflections on Jewish secular messianism', *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* (Amerherst, MA, 1995), pp. 43–54.
Wysling, Hans, *Mythos und Psychologie bei Thomas Mann* (Zurich, 1969) (German).
Young, Julian, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* (Cambridge, 2010).
Zach, Natan, 'A prophet in his own city', in Ilana Ortar (ed.), *Melnikoff, Judah Awakening: A Guide to Abraham Melnikoff, Pioneer of Sculpture in*

*Eretz Israel: Sculptures, Drawings and Watercolours*, Catalogue, exhibition at Haifa University Art Gallery (Haifa, 1982) (Hebrew), pp. 7–9.
Zalmona, Yigal and Tamar Manor-Friedman (eds), *Orientation in the Arts in Israel* (Jerusalem, 1998) (Hebrew).
Zipperstein, Steven, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley, CA, 1993).
Zissman, Joseph, 'Nimrod, the Canaanite ideal', *Moznayim*, 70, 7 (1996): 60–1 (Hebrew).

# Index


Abu Ghosh, Yusuf, 141
Aharonovitch, Joseph, 7
Ahimeir, Abba, 7, 89
Al-Malik, Al-'Aziz, 176
Alkalai, Judah Hai, 83
Allon, Yigal, 170
Alter, Robert, 60, 64
Amir, Aharon, 134
Apollinaire, Guillaume, 72
Apollo, 166
Arieli, Yehoshua, 116–18
Aroch, Arieh, 160
Asher, Saul, 82
Ashurnasirpal II, 131
Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal, 98
Avineri, Shlomo, 151
Avneri, Uri, 142–7, 167, 170
Azi, Asad, 162

Baba Sali, 149
Baeck, Leo, 66
Baer, Yitzhak, 69, 85
Bar-Giora, Shimon, 88
Bar-Kokhba, 27, 65, 82, 111, 158
Baruch, Adam, 147–51
Bat-Miriam, Yokheved, 87
Bataille, Georges, 72
Ben Hillel Hacohen, Mordechai, 7
Ben Mattityahu, Joseph (Josephus), 129
Ben Sira, Yaakov, 25
Ben-David, Lazarus, 82, 83
Ben-Gurion, David, 8, 47, 51–3, 57, 74, 75, 86, 89–115, 119, 138, 148, 166; *see also* David Joseph Gruen
Ben-Nun, Yigal, 167
Ben-Yehuda, Eliezer, 14
Benjamin, Walter, 48, 56, 70–3, 77, 139, 163
Berdichevsky, Micha Josef, 12, 55, 84, 88, 93, 94, 137, 138, 166
Bergson, Henri Louis, 97
Berlin, Zvi Yehuda, 12
Biale, David, 70, 76
Bialik, Haim Nahman, 10, 93, 137
Blanchot, Maurice, 72
Blanqui, Louis Auguste, 96
Bleichrode, Yitzhak, 55
Bloch, Ernst, 56, 77, 112, 113
Bloch, Joseph, 85
Borochov, Ber Dov, 11, 87, 95
Botta, Paul-Émile, 131
Brandes, George, 12
Breitberg-Semel, Sarah, 18, 138, 151, 152, 160, 165
Brenner, Joseph Haim, 89, 166
Brenner, Michael, 57
Broides, Avraham, 93
Buber, Martin, 7, 10–11, 26, 29–57, 59, 62, 68, 71, 78–9, 128, 159
Burckhardt, Jacob, 2, 43

Caillois, Roger, 72
Camus, Albert, 51, 154
Carlyle, Thomas, 84, 137
Cassuto, Moshe David, 40
Chelnov, Benjamin, 23
Clermont-Ganneau, Charles, 176
Cohen, Aaron, 47
Cohen, Hermann, 40, 56, 57
Corbin, Henri, 72
Cronius, Zeus, 37

Danziger, Yitzhak, 22, 28, 123–7, 130, 132–6, 138, 139, 143, 147–9, 151–8, 160–5, 167, 171–5, 177
David, King, 163
Dayan, Moshe, 161, 162
de Gobineau, Arthur, 43
de Lagarde, Paul, 62
de Rougemont, Denis, 72
de Sade, Marquis, 72
Deleuse, Robert, 159
Deschamps, Paul, 176

Dinur, Ben-Zion, 69, 85
Dominey, Drora, 164
Dreyfus, Theodor, 48

Efrat, Zvi, 25
Eichmann, Adolf, 47
Einstein, Albert, 139
Elboim-Dror, Rachel, 14
Eldad, Israel, 89, 143
Eliade, Mircea, 62, 152, 153
Eliram, Daniel, 134
Eloul, Kosso, 23
Engelman, Paul, 23
Esau, 128
Evron, Boaz, 138, 140
Ezra, 130

Feiwel, Berthold, 30
Fichmann, Yaacov, 21
Foucault, Michel, 120
Freud, Sigmund, 62, 139
Friedlander, David, 82

Gal, David, 154
Gal-Nur, Efrat, 163, 164
Galkin, Uri, 163
Gamzu, Haim, 125, 126
Gandhi, Mahatma, 52, 53
Gauguin, Paul, 133
George, Stefan, 43, 55
Gerhardt, Paul, 59
Gerrard, Alfred Horrace, 132
Glicksberg, Haim, 22
Goldstein, Baruch, 148
Gordon, A. D., 7, 11, 87
Gordon, Y. L., 93
Gottfried, Johann, 62
Gouri, Haim, 166–7
Greenberg, Uri Zvi, 7, 88, 89
Griffin, Roger, 2
Gropius, Walter, 23
Guattari, Felix, 159
Gur, Margalit, 167, 169
Guttman, Nahum, 22
Guttmann, Julius, 40

Ha-Am, Ahad, 10, 12, 30, 43, 48, 74, 83–5, 87, 93, 137
Ha-Meiri, Avigdor, 87
Hals, Franz, 162
Hanoch, Gershom, 88
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 44, 50, 57
Heidegger, Martin, 62
Helfman, Michal, 164
Herzen, Alexander, 96
Herzl, Theodor, 8, 11, 15, 30, 43, 57, 58, 74, 84, 85, 89–91, 93, 106, 148, 149, 155
Hess, Moses, 83
Hirschfeld, Ariel, 143, 165
Hitler, Adolf, 50, 104, 105, 107, 108
Hofmannsthal, Hugo von, 55
Horon, Adia G., 124, 130, 131, 138, 167
Howe, Irving, 73, 76

Idel, Moshe, 150
Ilan, Ido, 169

Jabès, Edmond, 159
Jabotinsky, Ze'ev, 11, 89, 99, 104, 105, 107, 158
Janco, Marcel, 23
Jesus, 55
Jonas, Hans, 66, 72
Josephus *see* Joseph ben Mattityahu
Judah, 58
Jung, Carl Gustav, 63
Jünger, Ernst, 62, 120

Kafka, Franz, 62, 139
Kahana, Aharon, 23
Kalischer, Zvi Hirsch, 83
Kaniuk, Yoram, 173–4
Kant, Immanuel, 32
Karni, Yehuda, 19, 87
Katznelson, Berl, 89, 104, 108
Kaufmann, Richard, 24, 124
Kaufmann, Yehezkel, 40, 120, 129–31
Keller, Gottfried, 59
Kenan, Amos, 139–41, 143, 149, 161, 162
Kierkegaard, Søren, 55, 59
Klages, Ludwig, 44, 120
Klausner, Joseph, 69–70, 85
Klossowski, Pierre, 72

Kook, Rabbi Abraham Hacohen, 12, 52
Kook, Rabbi Isaak Hacohen, 7, 74, 116
Kossuth, Lajos, 96
Kraushar, Alexander, 54
Krochmal, Rabbi Nachman, 92
Kurzweil, Baruch, 48, 119, 120
Kushnir, Tuvia, 135

Lamdan, Yitzhak, 87
Landau, S., 125
Langbehn, Julius, 62
Lavon, Pinhas, 115
Layard, Austen Henry, 131
Lazier, Benjemin, 59
Le Corbusier, Charles Édouard Jeanneret, 18, 23
Leibowitz, Yeshayahu, 48
Lenin, Vladimir, 98, 99, 102, 106
Levanon, Mordechai, 22
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 26, 112, 120, 157
Levita, Dorit, 134
Liebes, Yehuda, 150
Lilien, Ephraim Mose, 9, 30, 41, 42, 56, 82–4
Lilienblum, Moshe Lieb, 83
Litvak, David, 11, 84
Litvinovsky, Pinhas, 22
Loos, Adolf, 23
Löwenberg, Friedrich, 8
Lubin, Arieh, 22
Luria, Yitzhak, 64, 66, 77
Lyotard, Jean-François, 78

Maimon, Solomon, 82
Maimonides, 28, 65, 77, 82, 92
Malinowski, Bronislaw, 65
Mann, Thomas, 41
Manor, Dalia, 19
Manor-Friedman, Tamar, 135
Mapu, Abraham, 93
Marcuse, Herbert, 77
Marshall McLuhan, 144, 157
Marx, Karl, 50, 57, 98
Mazzini, Giuseppe, 84, 96
Melnikoff, Avraham, 21, 123, 126, 127
Mendelssohn, Moses, 82, 92
Mendes-Flohr, Paul, 34, 43
Meyer, Hannes, 23
Mickiewics, Adam, 84
Minerva, 2, 162
Miron, Dan, 151
Modigliani, Amedeo, 133
Mohilever, Samuel, 12
Mokady, Moshe, 22
Moses, 41, 42, 56, 82–4, 163
Mundi, Yosef, 155, 158

Nagid, Haim, 135
Neumark, David, 40
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 2, 3, 11, 12, 26, 29, 40, 42–8, 53–7, 59–62, 65, 66, 88, 89, 97, 122, 146, 153–6, 166
Nimrod, 4, 22, 28, 122–33, 135–9, 141–3, 145, 147–73, 175–8
Nishri, David, 177
Nordau, Max, 11, 43, 85

Ofek, Avraham, 165, 166
Ofrat, Gideon, 134, 163, 164, 166
Omer, Mordechai, 135, 149, 151–4, 164, 174
Otto, Rudolf, 62
Oz, Amos, 7

Pachter, Henry, 61, 63, 66, 68, 69
Pann, Abel, 17
Paul, Jean, 59, 81
Paulhan, Jean, 72
Peretz, Y. L., 93
Pharaoh, 128
Pilsudski, Jozef, 98
Pinsker, Leon, 83
Plato, 3, 59, 175
Podhoretz, Norman, 73
Prometheus, 37, 80, 154

Rabban, Ze'ev, 17
Rabin, Yitzhak, 149, 174
Ranke, Leopold von, 57
Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki), 93, 165
Ratosh, Yonatan, 87, 124, 130, 134–6, 140, 141, 143–6, 150, 151, 153, 167, 171

Ratzabi, Shalom, 51
Reines, Rabbi Isaac Jacob, 11
Reubeni, David, 85
Rodchenko, Alexander, 20
Rosenzweig, Franz, 55, 62, 70, 71, 77, 159
Rubin, Reuven, 19

Sartre, Jean-Paul, 81
Schatz, Boris, 17, 127
Schatz, Rivka, 119
Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph, 43, 44, 178
Schiff, Medad, 171
Schmitt, Carl, 62, 69, 78
Scholem, Gershom, 15, 26, 29, 40, 48, 53–79, 81, 86, 113, 150
Scholem, Werner, 56, 57
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 33, 37, 55
Schweid, Eliezer, 82, 150
Sevi, Sabbatai, 54, 60, 65, 72, 73, 84, 85
Sgan-Cohen, Michael, 165, 166
Shalom, Shin, 87
Shapira, Sarit, 159
Sharon, Arieh, 23–5
Shaul, Mordechai Avi, 19
Shavit, Yaacov, 136
Sheba, Shlomo, 147
Shemi, Menahem, 19, 21, 22
Shestov, Lev, 12
Shimoni, David, 87
Shlonsky, Avraham, 87, 88
Shochat, Eliezer, 7
Silberstein, J. Laurence, 40
Simmel, Georg, 12, 56, 67
Simon, Akiva Ernst, 30, 46, 47, 71, 158
Simon, Yohanan, 23
Sisyphus, 154
Smolenskin, Peretz (Peter), 93
Snir, Ami, 167, 169
Socrates, 44
Sorel, Georges, 120
Soutine, Chaim, 162
Spengler, Oswald, 2, 120, 142
Spiegel, Shalom, 19
Spinoza, Baruch, 45
Stalin, Joseph, 73
Steimaztky, Avigdor, 22, 174
Steinberg, Shlomit, 162
Stern, Avraham, 140, 145
Stern, Ya'ir, 140, 145
Streichman, Yehezkel, 23
Sukenik, Eleazar L., 124
Syrkin, Nahman, 11

Tabenkin, Yitzhak, 107
Tajar, Ziona, 22
Tal, Uriel, 116, 118
Talmon, Jacob L., 73, 77, 81, 103, 116
Tammuz, Binyamin, 122, 133–5, 138, 145, 165
Tchernichovsky, Saul, 138, 166
Tirosh, Smadar, 160, 161
Titus, 166
Tolstoy, Leo, 68
Toynbee, Arnold, 142
Treitschke, Heinrich von, 57, 67, 96
Trumpeldor, Joseph, 127, 162

Unger, Kurt, 23

van den Bruck, Moeller, 62
Van Gogh, Vincent, 133
Verlag, Jüdischer, 30
Vespasian, Emperor, 166
Victor, Emmanuel III, 85
Virolleaud, Charles, 130
Voegelin, Eric, 72

Wagner, Richard, 33, 34, 37
Weber, Alfred, 2
Weber, Max, 127
Werblowsky, R. Zvi, 74

Yeivin, Joshua Heschel, 89
Yeshurun, Avot, 87

Zarathustra, 25, 29, 31–7, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53–7, 59–61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 77, 79
Zaritzky, Joseph, 19, 22, 23
Zechariah, Prophet, 118
Zeitlin, Hillel, 55, 166
Ziv, Eldad, 162, 165
Zusman, Ezra, 87