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**בין הערצה לדחיה: יחסם האמביוולנטי של כותבים יהודים לאחר מלחמה"ע**  
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אלה מובשוביץ

ת.ז. 22520415

מונחת ע"י: פרופ' גיפרי פרל

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Bar Ilan University  
Department of English  
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**The Ambivalence of Postwar Jewish Writers toward Prewar Modernists: A  
Study of Three One-Way Relationships--Cynthia Ozick and Henry James,  
Harold Bloom and T.S. Eliot, George Steiner and Martin Heidegger**

**Ella Movshovitz**

**I.D. 22520415**

**Directed by: Prof. Jeffrey M. Perl**

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## I. Aims

The basic aim of this dissertation will be to examine the complex, often paradoxical relations that certain Jewish writers of the second half of the twentieth century have with certain charismatic and influential critics, thinkers and writers of the wider Euro-American world. These authoritative figures are a source of inspiration and a focus of admiration for the Jewish writers in question but also a cause of their indignation and anger. These negative feelings are often explained as a natural reaction of Jewish writers to the inimical and sometimes anti-Semitic views of their gentile heroes. I will argue, however, that the complexity of the one-way relationships between these Jewish and gentile writers often suggests a deeper conflict that the Jewish writers experience between an urge to assert their Jewishness as a unique identity, an urge strengthened by the trauma of the Holocaust, and a craving to get away from Jewishness and identify with the gentile writers' personalities and ideas. Paradoxically, these Jewish writers often show affinities with the gentile writers of a kind that they would be loath to acknowledge.

My dissertation will focus on three examples of this pattern. The first is that of the literary theorist and critic Harold Bloom, who, as a liberal Jew, fiercely attacks T.S. Eliot for being a "custodian of Anglo-Catholic conservative European culture" yet, at the same time, exhibits a blend of religious sensibility and radical skepticism that is characteristic of Eliot himself. The second case is that of Cynthia Ozick, who claims to raise genuinely Jewish issues by writing, in her novel *Foreign Bodies*, a Jewish version of Henry James's *The Ambassadors* but who, despite her best efforts to do otherwise, ends by herself manifesting the Jamesian moral values associated with the pursuit of self-fulfillment and the veneration of art. The third case is that of the cultural critic George Steiner, His esteem for Jewish monotheist and utopian commitments, learning, tenacity, and cosmopolitan difference— together with his understanding of the Holocaust as both the *telos* and the *eschaton* of

Western civilization and his concomitant attack on T. S. Eliot's tepid response to the genocide—stand in contrast to his celebration of Martin Heidegger's metaphysics, despite its connection to Nazi ideology. Steiner's friendship with Pierre Boutang, a fervent devotee of Pétain's "national revolution" and the author of anti-Semitic polemics, is another related inconsistency. In all three of these cases—Bloom's Ozick's, and Steiner's—my argument will be that there is a problematic discrepancy between how the Jewish writers present themselves in relation to Judaism or Jewishness and what their work "knows" and reveals about them.

## **II. Scholarly Background and Methodology**

Perhaps since the "emancipation" of the Jews in Western Europe and certainly since the end of the nineteenth century, the question of what it means to be a specifically Jewish writer and intellectual has been high on the agenda of scholars and writers who identify themselves as Jewish but are no longer religiously observant or living a Jewish communal life. They have struggled with the question of what Jewish, as opposed to Western (or American or universal humanist), culture or values are and the related but different question of whether Jewish culture or values are compatible with those of the West. Likewise, they have raised and variously answered the questions of what characterizes Jewish contributions to literature and to literary hermeneutics. As a part of this discussion, Jewish intellectuals have tried to come to terms with the negative ways in which Jews and Jewishness have been stereotypically represented in the works of modern European and American writers as different in other respects from one another as Dickens, Wharton, and Pound.

My dissertation will focus on the period from the mid-nineteen forties to the present, when Jewish intellectuals, from Alfred Kazin and Irving Howe to Ozick and Bloom, have had to deal with literary expressions of anti-Semitism in the context of the Holocaust. It is not surprising, therefore, that writers who proudly identified themselves as Jewish while at

the same time craved to find a place for themselves in Western literary discourse were sensitive to any remark that seemed to reject their project of integration on the part of hierarchically minded and classically educated gentile intellectuals. Eliot's observations concerning Jews in both his poetry and prose angered many; similarly, James's remarks on the Jewish immigrant tenants of Manhattan's Lower East Side excited indignation (Geiznar 348-351; Haviland 135-162). Bloom and Steiner especially target Eliot, while Ozick both reveres and targets James. However understandable these quarrels with gentile literary culture, all three of these Jewish writers are what Bloom calls "strong misreaders"—tendentious, self-interested misinterpreters—of the texts on which they have fixed their attention.

Ozick represents James as an Aesthete, ignoring his quite overt moral concerns so as to make room for herself as a novelist. James had made room for himself (and for Turgenev) by accusing Flaubert and other French realists of amorality; Ozick ironically overlooks the strong similarity of her charges against James with his own against the French. She makes her conversion from Jamesian to post- and counter-Jamesian on factitious grounds in order to establish her identity as a Jewish writer faithful to the moral heritage of her people. In much the same way, Bloom's recurrent attacks on the "orthodox" Eliot solidify Bloom's image as a liberal Jew, even as his theory of artistic creation and his heterodox religiosity resemble more than slightly those of Eliot himself. Steiner's attacks on Eliot differ from Bloom's in that Steiner bears little resemblance to the poet, but even as he criticizes Eliot for keeping silent about the Holocaust in the postwar years he writes in support of Heidegger whose silence in the postwar years, given his membership in the Nazi Party, is much more troubling. Eliot had at least supported the Allies during World War II. I intend to argue that Steiner is attracted to Heidegger and Bougang because they enable him to define Jewishness not in religious or national terms but in historical terms that fit Steiner's own version of Jewishness.

Methodologically, my approach will be “contextualist” but in a sense of the term broader than that used, for instance, by historians of the “Cambridge school.” Their kind of historiography has been criticized, even from within the Cambridge History Faculty, as so narrowly defined as to exclude any but interactions—and intellectual interactions exclusively—between contemporaries. As Peter Burke, an independent voice in Cambridge historiography, reminds us, “we need to think of contexts in the plural....to remember to ask, in what other contexts might this word, action, object be placed?” (174). My dissertation will be contextualist in Burke’s broader sense: in addition to examining intellectual interaction between contemporaries, it will also consider the most salient affective context, namely the sensitivity and complexity of relations between Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals in post-Holocaust Europe and America. It will also take account, as Cambridge historiography generally does not, of authorial ambivalence. Not only do concepts like “culture,” “orthodoxy,” “tradition,” and “nationalism,” to name but a few, mean different things to the various authors about whom I will write, but such terms not infrequently mean unconsciously self-contradictory things to each individual involved. Without close attention to the emotional dynamics of these one-way relationships between Jews and their gentile heroes/adversaries, the work of Jewish intellectuals in the post-Holocaust world will remain incompletely understood.

### **III. Chapter Outline**

This project falls naturally into three parts, each describing a similar dynamics together with the specific nuanced characteristics of each of the three pairs on which I focus. After an introductory overview, my first chapter will explore the Bloom-Eliot nexus, illuminating especially those aspects of Bloom’s work that demonstrate affinity between him and Eliot. The second chapter will concern Ozick’s complex relation to James, showing her ultimate

identification with the values he represents rather than with the Jewish values that she claims to advocate. The third chapter will examine Steiner's view of Judaism through the lens of his paradoxical treatment of Heidegger and Boutang.

## Chapter 1

During an interview with Bloom, Robert Moynihan observed that "Tennyson has a well-known attack on Lucretius", to which Bloom retorted: "the attack would evidence how much Lucretian sensibility he feared to find in himself" (15). In this first chapter, I will argue that Bloom's recurrent attacks on Eliot are symptomatic of a fear that he will find in himself a nascent Eliotic sensibility. Bloom's enmity towards Eliot appears to derive from Bloom's experience of the poet as a tyrant who dominated both his own department at Yale and the American literary world as a whole during Bloom's formative years as a scholar: "Neo-Christianity, a literary disease of which Thomas Stearns Eliot was the Vicar of Academies, was a kind of academic faith during the 1950s and 1960s" (*Anatomy* 266). Eliot's predominance was especially troubling if "one's cultural position was Jewish, Liberal and Romantic" (*T. S. Eliot* 1), since these characteristics clashed with Eliot's position, self-described as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-catholic in religion" (*Andrewes* 17).

A less apparent source of Bloom's enmity, though, is a deep affinity with Eliot that, as I hope to show, threatens Bloom. In a time when the ideas of a limited canon of literary classics, and the idea of the critic as its arbiter and defender, are regarded as undemocratic and indeed reactionary, Bloom is no less devoted to these principles than Eliot was. Bloom's disagreement with Eliot concerns exactly which authors and works constitute the canon. Affirming Eliot's canon would have meant discipleship; altering it here and there would have meant minority status as a critic. Bloom instead undertook to invert Eliot's canon, which is a



classically oedipal move against a father figure, and one simpler than any of the revisionary ratios that Bloom attributes to the pairs of poets about which he writes. Where Eliot excluded Milton, the Romantics, and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from his canon or from its upper reaches, Bloom exalts, above all, those poets and texts. Moreover, as Bloom's Yale colleague Paul Fry points out,<sup>1</sup> while the outstanding difference between Bloom and Eliot is in their perception of how poetic influence operates, for both critics it is a dynamic relationship that is mutually transforming for both the precursor and the successor poet. The precursor's text cannot be read as if the successor's did not exist, and vice versa. Bloom's emphasis on oedipal struggle appears to contradict Eliot's notion that the belated poet extinguishes his personality in order to join a tradition, but, as Fry again observes, Bloom's third revisionary ration, *kenosis*, involves the later poet emptying "himself of his own afflatus, his imaginative godhood" and seeming "to humble himself as though he were ceasing to be a poet." (*Anxiety* 14-15). Similarly, in the fifth ratio, *askesis*, the belated poet undergoes a revisionary movement "of curtailing; he yields up part of his own human and imaginative endowment, so as to separate himself from others." (*Anxiety* 15).

In this first chapter, I will explore Bloom's personal as well as his professional struggle with Eliot. Bloom's tireless assaults on Eliot's high church religiosity prove to be richly paradoxical in the context of Bloom's own ambition to be, in the Shakespearean James Shapiro's words,<sup>2</sup> the "high priest" of what Bloom himself has termed the "secular religion" of "Bardolatry". The high priest of a secular religion might not be so different from the "Vicar of Academies": Bloom assumes the grand style of a hierophant (or heresiarch) and defines himself in religious terms: "[Milton's Satan] declines the role of vulgarian proposed

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<sup>1</sup> Fry, Paul, "Influence" (14) "Introduction to literary Theory" (300), *Open Yale Courses*. n.d. Web. Lecture. May 15 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Shapiro, James, "Soul of the Age" *New York Times Book Review* November 1, 1998. *New York Times Book Review*. n.d. Web. April 20 2013.

for him by T. S. Eliot and C. S. Lewis. Satan did not attend Harvard or Yale, Oxford or Cambridge. Doubtless he assiduously studied Talmud until expelled by furious rabbis, compelled to recognize another *Acher*, the Stranger they rejected in Elisha Ben Abuya, with whom I have identified for more than sixty years” (*Anatomy* 96). Bloom, then, is both Satan and Elisha Ben Abuya, ambitious figures who, despite their expulsion from the institutional center, remain within the religious discourse of orthodoxy.

Bloom could accuse the orthodox Eliot of being among the expellers and inquisitors of skeptics like himself, but Eliot’s own philosophical skepticism and religious syncretism (Buddhist as well as Christian, Protestant as well as Catholic) are well documented in his prose and evident even in his post-conversion verse. And just as the poet hopes not “to turn again” back into the agnostic materialist he was in his early life and career (see the opening lines of “Ash-Wednesday”), so Bloom has developed a heresiarch’s faith in which he, as the son of Orthodox Jewish parents, cannot wholly believe. As William Deresiewicz writes<sup>3</sup>: “Beneath the jargon and self-inflation, there is in Bloom an undersong of yearning, of spiritual hunger, a lonely person’s need for solace and belief....The pathos of his thought, as he wrestles the poetic angels for their blessing, lies just in the fact that he both believes and disbelieves his fables of redemption. The ecstatic certainties of Blake or Whitman—imagination’s infinitude, the soul’s immortality—are not for such as him. He is condemned, instead, to Stevens’s melancholy skepticism”. Eliot had the consolation that in two religious traditions that he admired, the Renaissance Fideist and the Madhyamika Buddhist, skepticism is considered, as Eliot put it, “the machinery of faith.” (Perl *Skepticism* 52-56). Bloom has no such consolation. For him, “skepticism” must always mean apostasy. Thus, Eliot represents for Bloom a way of life that he craves, cannot himself arrange, and thus resents.

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<sup>3</sup> Deresiewicz, William “The Shaman”, *New Republic*, September 14 2011. *New Republic* .n.d. Web. March 20 2013.

Furthermore, Bloom wants to regard himself as, like Eliot, a poet: “I have been increasingly demonstrating or trying to demonstrate,” Bloom says, “that every possible stance a critic, a scholar, a teacher can take towards a poem is itself inevitably and necessarily poetic. That it is tropological, that no matter how humble, earnest, devoted, on his knees the critic or scholar or teacher is, that is just as much a fiction as any other stance towards a poem, as say, my stance towards a poem is” (Moynihan 18). Having in mind the novel, *The Flight to Lucifer*, that Bloom published in 1979 but a short time later withdrew from circulation, we can say that he is as skeptical about his argument that criticism is an art form as he is that his “gnostic” beliefs are believable. I will try to show in this chapter that Bloom’s enmity towards Eliot results, at least in part, from disappointment and envy.

## Chapter 2

Ozick, like Bloom, is disappointed and angry: as Adam Kirsch writes, “It is out of her rage and disappointment with literature—with the specifically Anglo-American tradition of the novel, associated by her with Henry James—that she turns to Jewishness as a subject, an identity, and a vindication” (23). In saying so, Kirsch is following the path of earlier critics who have praised Ozick for her “uncompromising indictment of the Jewish surrender to Gentile America”<sup>4</sup>. It is true that, after the failure of her overtly Jamesian first novel, *Trust*, Ozick sharply turned to concentrate on such themes as the relations between nature, art and Jewish law (“The Pagan Rabbi”), the Holocaust (“The Shawl,” *The Cannibal Galaxy*, *The Messiah of Stockholm*), and anti-Semitism, secularization and assimilation (“Puttermesser Her Work History”). Despite her ever-increasing attention to Jewish themes, however, her work has become only more Jamesian as it progresses. To a degree, she is aware of this

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<sup>4</sup> Bell, Pearl K. “New Jewish Voices”, *Commentary*, June 1 1981. *Commentary*. n.d. Web. July 10 2012.

paradox, witness her publication in 2010 of a novel, *Foreign Bodies*, based as much on James's *The Ambassadors* as, say, *Ulysses* is indebted to the *Odyssey*.

At first glance, it seems that Kirsch is right in saying that “[*Foreign Bodies*] is Ozick’s latest overturning of the Jamesian scale of values” (23). First, in contrast to the Jamesian notion of Europe and Paris in particular as places of refinement and high culture, Ozick renders them as post-traumatic sites where displaced Holocaust survivors wander in search of a new home. In contrast to the white American Protestants and Frenchwomen populating *The Ambassadors*, *Foreign Bodies* displays an array of flawed Jewish characters. Marvin is a caricature of James’s Mrs. Newsome. Marvin’s family life is a failure; his daughter Iris deceives him, his son ignores him and his wife Margaret falls mentally ill. (Unlike Iris, Sara Pocock in *The Ambassadors* is loyal to Mrs. Newsome, her mother; and her brother Chad goes back home to fulfill family responsibilities or at least to remain in the line of inheritance.) Julian is not at all charming or successful in the way that Chad is (the first time we see Julian, his nose is dripping). Lili is a homeless survivor who lost her whole family in the Holocaust and whose body is deformed by a gun wound. She is not beautiful and culturally accomplished like Madame de Vionnet, though she plays a parallel role. While Strether does not fulfill his task—he declines to bring Chad home—Bea Nightingale, who plays the Strether role of “ambassador” in Ozick’s novel, actively hides facts from her brother, meets with his wife behind his back (indirectly causing Margaret’s death), hosts Julian and Lili against her brother’s will and finally burns the money that Marvin sends for Julian. Clearly, Ozick is attempting to “correct” James’s genteel, gentile view of the world and of the place of European high culture in it.

Still, I want to argue, these differences are all superficial. What matters ultimately, in both *The Ambassadors* and *Foreign Bodies*, is a moral vision that Ozick shares with James. The line that all readers cite as the most crucial in James’s novel is “Live all you can, it’s a

mistake not to,” spoken by Strether to his young protégé Bilham. Ozick may wish to misread the line so that its real significance can be *her* book’s moral exclusively and in contradiction to James’s, but no competent reader of James can allow that maneuver. As the philosopher Robert Pippin rightly notes: “the advice [“Live all you can”] is not at all the call for romantic immediacy it might seem to be, as if simply to dive into experience, risk, gamble, avoid constancy or familiarity or whatever. Just the opposite. One would not be leading a life in such cases of immediacy, but...either blindly existing or living, openly or furtively, in subjection to someone else. *Live by not simply living out a role* seems the full practical import of the advice” (161). Strether of course takes his own advice, but Bea follows it too. Confronted with choices predicated on business ties and family loyalties—on mere roles that they were “living out” in someone else’s scenario—both find they have a deeper loyalty to their own self-fulfillment. Strether finds he is more committed to Paris’s richness of possibilities than to Woollett’s provincialism. Bea breaks out of her youthful belief that she would “make her mark in the world” by enabling the musical achievements of Leo Coopersmith (30-31), her ex-husband. She learns in the end to appreciate her own vocation: “Music the universal language, vibrations that speak – what a lie. Words, the sovereignty of words, their excluding particularity, *this was language*” (254). It is this late discovery of one’s commitment to self-expression and self-fulfillment, rather than a critique of James’s condescension to immigrants and their traumas, that is at the heart of *Foreign Bodies*.

Ozick distracts attention from this basic agreement with James by emphasizing, in the context of the Holocaust, that the elevation of aesthetics above all other concerns is idolatry<sup>5</sup>: “‘Eine Kleine Nachtmusik’ was played at the gates of Auschwitz. It was just as beautiful there as it was in the concert hall. There is no difference”. Like Steiner (though unlike

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<sup>5</sup> Rothstein, Mervin. “Cynthia Ozick’s Rabbinical Approach to Literature” *The New York Times*, March 25, 1987. *The New York Times Archive*. n.d. Web. August 23 2012.

Bloom), Ozick stresses the cruel amorality of art, but if she were truly convinced, would not logic require that she cease to write fiction at all? Rimbaud gave up poetry when he decided that his aesthetic values were unsound. And, in any case, James never asserted, as Ozick famously says that he did (*Art & Ardor* 292), that art is the only worthy goal of life. Indeed he was very critical of writers (like Flaubert and the Goncourts) who did make such claims. Ozick's approach to the conflicts between ethics and art are no less elitist than James's. She summarizes her views in an interview with Elaine Kauvar as follows: "I tend to view quality as more important than quantity, and there has always been the concept of the 'saving remnant', the educated, the committed, the passionate. Who wouldn't prefer half a dozen serious and learned scholars to a hundred run-of-the-mill minor minded chatterers, profoundly acculturated to philistinism..." (387). The swift shift she makes, as though it were obvious, from "saving remnant"—a concept central to Isaiah and other Jewish prophets—to "the educated" is problematic in itself and, at any rate, at odds with the talmudic injunction against intellectual snobbery: "Do not scorn any man, and do not discount any thing. For there is no man who has not his hour, and no thing that has not its place" (Mishnah Avot 4, 4).

### **Chapter 3**

The focus of my third chapter will be the paradox that, while Steiner cannot seem to understand or forgive Eliot's few remarks about the Jews, he insists that Heidegger, a member of the Nazi Party, and Boutang, a French collaborator and vociferous anti-Semite, were great men. Steiner's immediate family escaped the Holocaust, but barely, and as early as 1965 he revealed his deepest fears: "when I see my children in the room, or imagine that I hear them breathing in the still of the house, I grow afraid. Because I have put on their backs a burden of ancient loathing and set savagery at their heels. Because it may be that I will be

able to do no more than the parents of the children gone to guard them” (*LaS*, 164-65). This deeply felt Jewish vulnerability to eruptions of hatred and violence might explain his attitude toward Eliot if Steiner were equally or even more critical of Pound, Heidegger and Boutang. In his collection of lectures *In Bluebeard’s Castle*, Steiner criticized Eliot for ignoring the Holocaust in his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, a claim that Jeffrey Perl has refuted (135)—and Craig Raine<sup>6</sup> has refuted Steiner’s assertion<sup>7</sup> that “Eliot’s anti-Semitism was far deeper than Pound’s....Nothing in Pound’s black silliness equals the footnote in the *Notes towards a Definition of Culture* in which Eliot, *after* Auschwitz, suggests, with feline caution, that the Jews did have some historical responsibility for the fate just visited upon them.” While Raine cogently shows that Eliot said no such thing and went out of his way to make certain that the interpretation that Steiner eventually made would be impossible, it is interesting, in a paradoxical way, that Steiner himself has argued that the Jewish people did have “some historical responsibility” for the Holocaust. It is indeed among his most powerful arguments that absolute monotheism, Sermon on the Mount Christianity, and messianic socialism—all of them Jewish impositions on the European mentality—were far too demanding and resulted in “a lunatic retribution, a lashing out against intolerable pressures of vision, and a large measure of self-mutilation” (*IBC* 41-42).

Meanwhile, Steiner defends and excuses Heidegger’s involvement with Nazism: “Like millions of other German men and women, and a good many eminent minds outside Germany, Heidegger was caught up in the electric trance of the National Socialist promise....It was Heidegger’s error and vanity....Many eminent intellectuals did far worse” (*MH* 121). Steiner is willing to admit that “there were instrumental connections between the language of and vision of *Sein und Zeit*, especially the later sections, and those of Nazism”

<sup>6</sup> Raine, Craig. “Conrad and Prejudice”, *London Review of Books*, Vol. 11, No 12, 22 June, 1989. 16-18. *London Review of Books*. n.d. Web. November 11 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Steiner, George. “Modernity”, *London Review of Books* Volume 10 No 9, 5 May 1988. 11. *London Review of Books*. n.d. Web. November 11 2013

(121), but he never discusses them, saving his intellectual energy for the explication and promotion of Heidegger's ontology. Moreover, in *Dialogues: Sur le Mythe d'Antigone, Sur le sacrifice d' Abraham*, based on televised conversations between Steiner and Boutang, readers are confronted by, in the words of Jeffrey Mehlman, "the confession of a Jewish intellectual's subservience to the intimidating strengths of the former fascist militant become metaphysician....That subservience, moreover, is an act of love" (103). Indeed Steiner refers in the dialogues to Boutang as a "soul mate."

In chapter three of my dissertation, I will suggest two complementary explanations for Steiner's inconsistency, the first psychological and the second ideological. At the end of "Postscript," Steiner writes, "In the Warsaw ghetto a child wrote in his diary: 'I am hungry, I am cold; when I grow up I want to be a German, and then I shall no longer be hungry, and no longer cold.' And now I want to write that sentence again: 'I am hungry, I am cold; when I grow up I want to be a German, and then I shall no longer be hungry, and no longer cold.' And say it many times over, in prayer for the child, in prayer for myself. Because when that sentence was written I was fed, beyond my need, and slept warm and was silent" (*LaS* 193). Steiner is horrified by the fate that would have awaited him, had his family not escaped from Europe in time. This primordial existential trauma stands behind his intellectual work. Part of "coming to terms" with the trauma is, paradoxically, his "befriending" the aggressor, approaching him by striving to see reality through the enemy's eyes. By doing so, Steiner distances himself from the plight of the helpless victim.

As for his revulsion from Eliot, rather than from than Heidegger or Pound, the difference appears to be that Eliot was religious and that he had a positive interest in Judaism, whatever his attitude may have been toward "Jewishness" or the culture of secular Jews. In the 1962 edition of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Eliot explains the note in the 1948 edition that would one day outrage Steiner: "Much culture-contact in the past has



been within those neutral zones of culture in which religion can be ignored, and between Jews and Gentiles both more or less emancipated from their religious traditions. The effect may have been to strengthen the illusion that there can be culture without religion”(70). This explanation suggests that any culture, be it Christian or Jewish, is based on religion. It is, curiously, Steiner’s rejection of both Jewish religion and Zionism, along with his ambivalent attitude towards Jewish ethics, that stand behind his rejection of Eliot. Steiner’s Jewishness, in which he takes great pride, is limited to the remarkable intellectual activity of emancipated Jews steeped in a European culture that, in its modern secular version, they had taken a leading role in shaping. Eliot’s assertion that there can be no culture without religion would, if accepted, strip Steiner of his Jewish identity.

Heidegger, like Steiner and unlike Eliot, approached the subject matter of theology from a perspective entirely secular. As Steiner writes in his book *Martin Heidegger*: “Heidegger has been differentiating between the authentic and the inauthentic life in terms whose resonance is almost emphatically theological. Heuristic Angst has been set against mundane fear; ‘speech’, implying logos, has been contrasted with ‘talk’; the hunger for mere novelty has been opposed to genuine wonder” (96). Steiner’s transcendental yearning is appeased by Heidegger’s substitute for theology which recognizes none of the ethical demands that monotheism makes—indeed, no demands at all, apart from “authenticity.” In Steiner’s words: “Again and pre-eminently, the tonality is theological. It was as if Heidegger’s whole diagnosis of inauthenticity amounted to a quasi-secular version of the doctrine of fallen men” (97). Steiner finds in Heidegger exactly what he was looking for – metaphysics without ethics. Man’s fall is no longer to be understood as a failure to obey moral obligations; rather, it is fallenness from authenticity. This doctrine locates Steiner not locally as a Jew but universally as a human being. His rejection of Jewish religious and national identity, and his embrace of Heideggerian concepts and arguments, go hand in hand

in Steiner's thought. For example, Steiner's claim that Jewish existence in the Diaspora is meant to teach gentiles the value of hospitality is inspired by Heideggerian metaphysics: "It may be that the Jew in the Diaspora survives in order to be a guest – still so terribly unwelcome at so many shut doors. Intrusion may be our calling, so as to suggest to our fellow men and women that all human beings must learn how to live as each other's 'guest in life'" (*Errata* 56). Steiner does not frame the matter in Jewish terms, which are ethical and depend on a divine injunction and a national and historical basis for it ("for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt"). Steiner's terms are Heideggerian. He has no problem overlooking the dangerous implications of Heideggerian metaphysics, reserving his anger for Eliot, who will not allow Steiner to alienate himself from his religious identity.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In the conclusion to my dissertation, I intend to focus on differences between my three case studies. I will argue that Ozick and Bloom, whose knowledge of and commitment to Jewish tradition are stronger than Steiner's, remain "closer" to Jewish values than Steiner does. Ozick chooses, after all, to embrace a moral principle ("Live by not simply living out a role") and Bloom chooses to remain within the religious discourse, albeit in an oppositional way. Steiner, on the other hand, distances himself from any ethical or religious system of thought; he appreciates Heidegger's metaphysics above all because it is overtly unethical and secular. Moreover, while both Ozick and Bloom make use of various sources in halakha, aggada, and kabbala in their writing, Steiner, despite his vast erudition in European literature and philosophy, is comparatively untrained in the Jewish religious canon. In other words, while Ozick and Bloom see their Jewishness as a valuable resource that they must actively reshape for their own purposes, Steiner regards Jewishness as a given fact. For him, Jewishness is a

package deal, comprising intellectual elitism, an outsider's point of view and, unfortunately, a perilous existence. It is a destiny rather than a vocation, a fate rather than a calling.

## **V. Table of Contents (dissertation)**

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