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Structure, Innovation, and Diremptive Temporality: The Use of Models to Study Continuity and Discontinuity in Kabbalistic Tradition

Abstract:

This study consists of two parts. The first is an examination of the hermeneutical presuppositions underlying the theory of models that Moshe Idel has applied to the study of Jewish mysticism. Idel has opted for a typological approach based on multiple explanatory models, a methodology that purportedly proffers a polychromatic as opposed to a monochromatic orientation associated with Scholem and the so-called school based on his teachings. The three major models delineated by Idel are the theosophical-theurgical, the ecstatic, and the magical or talismanic. Idel's hermeneutic rests on the assumption that the phenomenon of Jewish mysticism (as the phenomenon of religion more generally) cannot be essentialized, and therefore no one methodological approach should be privileged as the exclusive means to ascertain it. In the second part of this study, I raise the possibility that affirming set patterns of thought and a unified system of symbols that link together kabbalists from different historical periods might not inevitably implicate the scholar in a methodological reductionism. Moving beyond a binary logic, which is still operative in the postmodern dichotomy of truth and dissimulation, I surmise that the polysemic nature of the text that may be elicited from kabbalistic sources is not dependent on the rejection of laying claim to an inherent and original intent that is recoverable through proper philological attunement. Multivocality and essentialism are not mutually exclusive. Kabbalah, I submit, is a cultural-literary phenomenon that illustrates an open system in which each moment is a mix of newness and repetition, each event a renewed singularity. The hermeneutical praxis appropriate to this system displays a temporality linked to the conception of time in its most rudimentary form as an instant of diremptive reiteration, the repetition of the same as different in the renewal of the different as same. The tendency to generalize, therefore, should not be misconstrued as viewing the variegated history of Jewish mystical doctrines and practices monolithically.



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Play is always lost when it seeks salvation in games.

Jacques Derrida

In this study, I will examine the hermeneutical presuppositions underlying the theory of models that Moshe Idel has applied to the study of Jewish mysticism. A journal dedicated to Idel's academic achievements seems to me a most fitting context to undertake this discussion. On a personal side, I can relate that when I began to study with Professor Idel in the autumn of 1982, several years before the publication of his monumental *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, he would often communicate to me that his desire was to advance the field by creating an atmosphere of genuine dialogue and exchange of ideas rather than preserving a cult of personality wherein the reputation and alleged authority of certain figures overshadow or even eradicate the research of others. Indeed, one of the invaluable lessons I learnt from Idel in the early stages of my career as a graduate student was that criticism in the scholarly domain should not be viewed as a personal affront but rather as a sign of intellectual esteem. I am confident that the honoree of this volume would agree that the greatest respect that can be paid him as a scholar is serious engagement with the ideas communicated in his work. What more can a thinker desire than the opportunity for his or her ruminations to serve as stimuli to inspire further speculation? Heidegger notoriously made the connection between thinking (*denken*) and thanking (*danken*), reminding us that thought, in its most elemental nature, is a mode of thankfulness. Surely, thinking in the footsteps of another must be accorded the status of high praise. In that spirit of homage and gratitude, I offer the following reflections.

From Essence to Model: Idel's Phenomenological Method

Of the many contributions that Idel has made to the study of the medieval esoteric and mystical tradition known as kabbalah, one of his most insistent methodological claims is that this phenomenon (even the use of the singular noun is problematic) is a conglomerate of different schools and tendencies and therefore any totalizing or monolithic interpretation must be rejected. Idel has opted for a typological approach based on multiple explanatory models, a methodology that purportedly proffers a polychromatic as opposed to a monochromatic orientation associated with Scholem and the so-called school based on his teachings. According to Idel, what is necessary is a genuinely "variegated phenomenology" of kabbalah that would better attend to the "spiritual polymorphism in Jewish mysticism."¹ Thus, in his *Messianic Mystics*, Idel refers to his approach as *synchronic polychromatism*, for it "emphasizes the multiplicity of messianic concepts and events while attempting a typology that will not only take in consideration diversity in one limited period of time but also organize the much larger spectrum of literatures and events into more unified categories, or models."² The three major models delineated by Idel to study the phenomenon of messianism in Jewish mysticism are the theosophical-theurgical, the ecstatic, and the magical, a triad that will be well familiar to those who have read even a representative sample from his truly massive oeuvre. Idel further notes that synchronic polychromatism, as well as diachronic polychromatism, "should be organized into more unified diachronic conceptual schemes."³ By making this comment, Idel seeks to balance the competing claims to continuity and discontinuity in understanding the transmission and innovation of ideas in the history

of Jewish mysticism. The diachronic conceptual schemes of which he speaks attend to what persists in the flow of time, and thereby neutralize the temptation to exaggerate the degree of novelty accorded the historicist orientation, whereas the synchronic dimension points to the innovative shifts that one can situate in any given historical context. That both “synchronic” and “diachronic” modify the word “polychromatism” suggests that Idel is advocating for multivalency in either temporal framing. That is, even if we presume that there are structures that endure through time, we should not deny on that account the variegated nature of the phenomena either in their synchronic or in their diachronic manifestations. We can posit the continuity of an idea or of a symbol, but this does not bespeak uniformity of an essentializing nature.

Although Idel himself does not frame matters in this way, in my judgment, it is consistent with the orientation he has articulated in numerous writings to correlate his use of diachronic and synchronic with the twofold character of temporality as linear and circular. The diachronic would naturally be linked to that which stretches as a line over different temporal-spatial periods and the synchronic to that which is consolidated as a point affixed in a particular interval of timespace. The convergence of the extended and punctiform modalities of time provides a discourse that would best tolerate multiplicity in a specific historical juncture as well as over a span of different moments. It is worth citing Idel’s precise formulation:

Indeed, the major methodological assumption informing many of the discussions below is that literatures, events, and the experiences expressing and concerning Jewish messianism should be understood as displaying a great variety of ideas, concepts, modes, and models. The multidimensional nature of most of the messianic idea is quite evident, and it should be remembered that traditional concepts, found in the canonical writings, historical circumstances, personal aspirations, and apologetic and polemic stands conspired to produce the wide spectrum of messianic views which cannot be easily reduced to transformations, metamorphoses, or neutralizations of one basic “messianic idea.” I believe that the implicit assumption that one such monolithic idea was in existence and that it is possible to describe it over many centuries, while reducing all its disparate versions to the status of neutralizations and liquidations, is hardly plausible and quite suspect within a nonorthodox mode of discourse, as the academic one is supposed to be.⁴

The “monolithic idea” alluded to by Idel is a reference to the studies of Scholem on the messianic dimensions in the history of Jewish mysticism,⁵ and especially his well-known thesis regarding the neutralization of this ideal in the East-European Hasidism that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶ It is not my concern here to evaluate the accuracy of Idel’s portrayal of the views on messianism offered by Scholem,⁷ let alone the opinions of those who purportedly follow the lead of the latter and to whom membership in his alleged school has been assigned. I will focus rather on the conclusions one can draw about Idel’s own hermeneutic. What is clear and consistent is his reluctance to accept any single idea as a way to explain a multifaceted phenomenon, even though the emphasis on diachrony bespeaks his willingness to entertain continuity and some degree of permanence of structure, which is independent of and

yet always embedded within historical time.⁸ In a second, and somewhat more polemical passage from this work, Idel, proposes his “theory of models” based on “different paradigms of Kabbalistic messianism” as an alternative to the “essentialistic view” and “monolithic phenomenology” of Scholem’s approach.⁹

Even though Idel’s comments deal specifically with messianism, we are justified to expand beyond this particular topic and to elicit a general assertion about the nature of Jewish mysticism. As Idel writes in the introduction to *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation*, “The working hypothesis behind my approach to Jewish mysticism since the Middle Ages is that differing speculative models informed the thought, praxis, and subsequently the writings of various Kabbalists and Hasidic masters. Far from representing a unified or monochromatic line of thought that allegedly has changed throughout history, the diverse Kabbalistic sorts of literature, and to a lesser extent various Hasidic schools, have centered around at least three major models: the theosophical-theurgical one, the ecstatic one, and the talismanic one.”¹⁰ For Idel, therefore, the term “model” is a heuristic device meant to accommodate the confluence of change and stability in understanding the historical evolution of Jewish mysticism but without succumbing to the mistake of other scholars whose “concern with a unified picture of the development of this lore has induced a rather monochromatic view of its phenomenology.”¹¹

In an earlier work, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, Idel expended a significant amount of space explicating his use of the term “models.” It is worth our while to explicate this analysis in some detail. In the brief section in the introduction, “Essences, History, Models,” Idel traces his approach to the philosophical phenomenology of Husserl. To be sure, the use of phenomenology, set in opposition to a strictly textological or philological-historical approach, is attested already in Idel’s first major revisionist book, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*.¹² Interestingly enough, however, he begins that study by noting that it “is based upon the assumption that there are two major trends in Kabbalah: the theosophical-theurgical and the ecstatic,”¹³ a taxonomy and terminology that patently betray the influence of Scholem.¹⁴ In the same work, Idel credits Scholem with being the “founder of the phenomenology of Kabbalah,” though he notes that many of his phenomenological (as opposed to historical) studies came later in his career and particularly when he addressed a broader audience at the annual Eranos conferences in Ascona, which were typically attended by historians of religion, scholars of comparative mysticism, and psychoanalysts.¹⁵ Idel thus differentiates his own orientation from that of his predecessor: “Rather than concentrate upon the Kabbalistic schools—or trends, as Gershom Scholem designated them—and their historical sequence, I will take a phenomenological approach that will deal primarily with the major religious foci of the Kabbalah ... Instead of presenting a historical sequence of Kabbalists or of ideas, I adopt an *essentialist attitude* to the contents of Kabbalistic material that places greater emphasis upon their religious countenance than on their precise location in place and time.”¹⁶ From Idel’s perspective, the phenomenological and the historical were bifurcated too sharply by Scholem. In contrast, he envisions his own method—tellingly referred to as an “essentialist attitude,” a locution that reveals a distinctive Husserlian influence, a point that Idel makes clear in a later publication—as one in which the concern with historical contextualization is subservient to the exposition of the “key concepts” of the phenomena as “atemporal modes.”¹⁷

The main approach in this book is phenomenological: my assumption is that the two main foci of Kabbalistic mysticism were the ecstatic-unitive and the theosophical-theurgical. While focusing primarily upon the descriptions of these two cores of Kabbalah, I shall also take into consideration the historical development of these two themes recurring in Kabbalistic literature. Thus, my approach uses phenomenology in order to isolate significant phenomena and only thereafter to elaborate upon the possible historical relationships between them.¹⁸

Idel delineates two main typological trends, which he applies as a grid to explore the whole of the history of kabbalah, but he nonetheless asserts adamantly that his method is polyvalent. He insists, accordingly, that the juxtaposition of the historical and the phenomenological methods does not derive from a “single approach” but rather from “various approaches that may propose solutions” to the difficulties that emerge from the textual sources. Idel even refers to himself as a “pragmatist,” as he is “directed by the problems generated by the texts rather than attempting to superimpose one method upon all analyses.” Idel admits that his analysis is susceptible to a methodological “inconsistency,” but it is the price he is willing to pay in order to shun the “reductionist attitude” that characterizes a “pure” methodology. Summing up his versatile strategy of reading, Idel writes: “Phenomenology, textology, history, and psychology must in principle be used intermittently and combined in order to do justice to all the various aspects of Kabbalistic texts and ideas.”¹⁹

In the monograph on Hasidism, Idel provides a more theoretically nuanced account of his *panoramic approach*,²⁰ casting it specifically in relation to Husserl’s concept of the “invariance of sense,” which presumes that “a certain objective content transcends the contingent aspect of a phenomenon.”²¹ In line with the Husserlian concept of essences—immutable eidetic structures that nevertheless assume varied forms in the flux of time—Idel puts forward “certain models to better understand variegated phenomena that constitute both Kabbalah and Hasidism. ... Historical approaches, with their emphasis on change, must be complemented by phenomenological ones that deal with relatively stable essences.”²² Idel acknowledges that it is not easy to account for “why certain essences recur in historical and cultural circumstances that seem to invite dramatic changes in their expression,” but the one factor that seems best suited to explain this is the “interaction between different types of religious interests, models, and schools. ... Important forms of Jewish spirituality emerged not so much as the result of the confrontation between history, historical crises, or other socioeconomic circumstances with mysticism, but from syntheses between religious aspirations, personalities, ideals, nomenclatures, and fears, and various mystical models.”²³ The method adopted by Idel “emphasizes the existence of mystical and magical models in Jewish thought that predate Hasidism and whose interaction can explain the emergence of certain speculative developments that have been attributed by modern scholars to the impact of historical circumstances.”²⁴ The word “model,” accordingly, refers to “patterns” that are discernible in history but which cannot be explained historically. Idel refers explicitly to his approach as phenomenological, but he notes that he is not loath to embrace the concept of models, since for him these models are elicited from and not imposed upon the observable phenomena. Idel also explains that he speaks of *model* rather than *system*

“because a given system of thought ... can be described ... by more than one mystical, or magical, model. From this point of view, a system is not always a systematic corpus, namely a body of writing that espouses²⁵ a logically coherent way of thought.”²⁶ The term *model*, moreover, is to be distinguished from structure, as the latter “may stand for a more limited concept ... and which is not a matter of imitation. ... Structures, unlike models, are modes of thought that—to paraphrase Ricoeur’s view of the symbol—invite thought but only rarely action.” Alternatively expressed, a structure is a *modus cognoscendi*, a way of knowing, whereas a model is a *modus operandi* and a *modus vivendi*, a way of acting and a way of living.²⁷ Referring to the specific example of Hasidism, Idel offers three ways to explain the ostensible restructuring of the mystical model in relation to historical circumstances. The first, which is associated with Scholem, places the emphasis on historical crises or traumas to explain the shift; the second presumes that the patterns were already in existence and the particular historical conditions of a given time bring them to the surface; the third denies the historical factors and seeks to account for the development exclusively along systemic lines. While Idel is intrigued by the third possibility, he prefers the second alternative, which “attempts to combine some parameters of the historical situation with the complexities of the history of Jewish mysticism according to the panoramic approach.”²⁸

Let me conclude this section by noting that beyond the specific instance of Jewish mysticism, Idel extends his explanatory principle to the study of religion more globally. Thus, he begins the introduction to *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders*, a book based on the Ioan P. Culianu lectures delivered at the Central European University in Budapest, with the recommendation that the scholar of religion adopt a “methodological eclecticism” due to the fact that no one method on its own is sufficient to deal with religion comprehensively. “All methods generate approximations based on insights, on implied psychologies, sometimes even on explicit theologies and ideologies. They assist us in understanding one or more aspects of a complex phenomenon that, in itself, cannot be explained by any single method. .. Since religion cannot be reified as an entity standing by itself, it would be wise not to subject it to analyses based on a single methodology.”²⁹ It is important to distinguish Idel’s appeal to the lack of essence in the phenomenon of religion and the consequent need to study it from multiple perspectives from the view expressed famously by Jonathan Z. Smith that religion “is solely the creation of the scholar’s study” and hence it “has no existence apart from the academy,”³⁰ or, in the comparable language of Talal Asad, there can be no “universal definition of religion ... because the definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes.”³¹ Idel does not accept this constructivist perspective, which has been affirmed by an increasing number of anthropologists and scholars of religion.³² On the contrary, he accords legitimacy to religion as a distinct phenomenon that is independent of scholarly fabrication, but he resists the possibility that it may be defined by any single essence. The anthropological or psychoanalytic reductionism that would deny religion autonomy is as reductionist and substantializing to Idel as any other methodology (even the conventional phenomenology of religion) that ostensibly ascribes a discernible core to religious experience. There appears to be some form of apophatic perspectivism at work here: religion cannot be reified as an entity that stands on its own, and therefore no one mode of discourse is sufficient to discuss it, but there is no suggestion that religion should be sublated into some other disciplinarian category. Be that as it may, the claim made by Idel on behalf of religion more generally conceptually parallels his particular

stance with regard to Jewish mysticism: insofar as the phenomenon cannot be essentialized, no one methodological approach should be privileged as the exclusive means to ascertain it.

Open System, Novel Iteration, and Polychromatic Essentialism

In the second part of this study, I will scrutinize more closely the issue of typological taxonomy and the implicit assumptions regarding the temporality of the interpretative process. I would like to raise the possibility that affirming set patterns of thought and a unified system of symbols that link together kabbalists from different historical periods does not inevitably incriminate the scholar in a methodological reductionism. Is it not feasible to conceive of traditional kabbalists³³ espousing an essentialism that is polychromatic, which would justify a hermeneutical method that itself embraces a polychromatism that is essentialist? Moving beyond a binary logic, which is still operative in the postmodern dichotomy (in part traceable to the legacy of Derridean deconstruction) of truth and dissimulation, I would surmise that the polysemic nature of the text that may be elicited from kabbalistic sources (from the medieval period to the present) is not dependent on the rejection of laying claim to an inherent and original intent that is recoverable through proper philological attunement. The notion of the infinity of the text engenders a proliferation of interpretations unfolding in time, an idea that, *prima facie*, would seem to accord with Derrida's idea of dissemination, the rejection of one unequivocal meaning in favor of the belief in an ongoing dispersal of meanings; the text, on this accord, changes with each new reading. But there is a critical difference: the unfolding of the text's potentially infinite meaning would not be imaginable to a kabbalist if he did not presume that all of the interpretations were enfolded in the originary text to which a discrete, albeit aporetic, signifier is assigned, that is, the ineffable name, YHWH, the name that declaims in its (non)utterance the nameless that is spoken when unspoken and unspoken when spoken. The name, then, is a transcendental signifier, a sign that points to that to which no sign can point, the essence whose essence it is to have no essence, the signifier without signified, the veil that is veiled in the veil of its own veiling. The originary text is a palimpsest from its inceptual inscribing/erasure—the multiple readings etched on its surface constitute the writing-over, the spectrality of the invisible emerging from beneath the layers of the visible, the disclosure of truth in the concealment of image through the concealment of truth in the disclosure of image. For the kabbalist exegete, the infinite, which is circumscribed in the text, is the theme that cannot be thematized, though it ceaselessly thematizes itself through concealing its concealment, disappearing in the advent of its coming-to-view, the no-showing that is the spectacle of mystical vision. Although a credible case can be made that the kabbalistic and postmodern hermeneutic share the view that there is no core intentionality to the text, the two tactics of reading differ on the question of the possibility of demarcating a “lived domain beyond all textual instances.”³⁴ Kabbalistic hermeneutics (at least in its classical formulation) rests on an ontological assumption that contemporary readers would find objectionable: there is a presence that exceeds the text, a presence, to be sure, that is always a nonpresence, present as absent, and hence it can never be represented, but it is a presence nonetheless, the secret manifest in the non-manifestation of the secret, the nothing about which one cannot speak in contrast to

there being nothing about which to speak, the unsaying of apophasis as opposed to the dissimulation of *dénégation*.³⁵ In my estimation, the medieval kabbalists (as heirs to the Neoplatonic legacy) affirmed a logic that frees itself from the traditional philosophical opposition between presence and absence, an opposition that even Derrida was not able to discard completely in his deconstructing of Western metaphysics.³⁶ The absence implied in the kabbalistic infinite would be deemed on Derridean terms to be a “negative mode of presence.”³⁷ Thinking from the standpoint of the discourse of apophasis, however, it is possible, indeed desirable, to affirm the absence of presence in the presence of absence. In the apophatic logic, there is no dichotomy, no chasm separating absence and presence that needs to be bridged; in the infinite, total absence and total presence are the same in virtue of being different, and, hence, absence is the only way for the presence to be present in the excess of lack that lacks all but the lack of excess.³⁸ To interpret the kabbalah as if it were advocating a total collapse of divinity into the fold of the text, thereby effacing the transcendence of the beyond-being, the form of the formless, is an evocative reading, one to which I myself have occasionally succumbed,³⁹ but it does not mean that it is the most responsible either historically or philologically.⁴⁰

I am in full agreement with Idel that it is imperative that the scholar eschew simplifying the rich diversity of views that have been expressed by kabbalists through the generations. It is apposite here to invoke the sagacious words of Alfred North Whitehead. After acknowledging that the “aim of science is to seek the simplest explanations of complex facts,” Whitehead warned the reader that the “guiding motto in the life of every natural philosopher should be, Seek simplicity and distrust it.”⁴¹ This maxim can be applied to any individual who wants to enter the orchard of kabbalistic gnosis. The task of scientific research in this domain as well is to simplify complexity, but one should never lose sight of the complexity that has been simplified. Any monolithic presentation of kabbalah that levels out difference, whatever its practical or pedagogical utility, is plainly a distortion whose dependability must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt. On this point, there is no dispute. What I wish to pursue, however, is the question as to whether the presumption on the part of the critical scholar that kabbalists have been informed by recurrent structures and repeated symbols cannot account for the complexity in one period of time as well as across generations. Must we assume that multivocality and essentialism are mutually exclusive? Are polymorphism and monochromatism methodological paradigms that are necessarily oppositional? In my judgment, this is not inexorably so, as the very discernment of multiple forms is possible only against the background of remembering what has already been visually apprehended, a point well attested in phenomenological and psychological studies of human perception, memory, and imagination. From that perspective, it seems to me entirely possible, indeed preferable, to classify aspects of kabbalistic mysticism in generic terms, since classification in this manner in no way precludes or repudiates polysemy.⁴² In fact, it seems to me entirely appropriate to think of kabbalists from different historical periods and geographical localities as a confederation of semiotic communities, whose textual/semantic production (whether performed orally or in writing) demonstrates that heterogeneity does not inescapably rest on a presumption regarding the arbitrary nature of signification or on the relativization of linguistic discourse; diversification is not the reverse process of integration but rather a dialectical feature encompassed by it; invariably, the variable becomes apparent through the prism of the

constant. Does not the very model of “models” tendered by Idel implicate one precisely in the paradox of this hermeneutic circle?

To summon Derridean language once again, it is because the truth understood by kabbalists is inherently metaphoric “that it does not escape syntax; and that it gives rise ... to a *text* which is not exhausted in the history of its meaning (signified concept or metaphoric tenor: *thesis*), in the visible or invisible presence of its theme (meaning and truth of Being). But it is also because the metaphoric does not reduce syntax, and on the contrary organizes its divisions within syntax, that it gets carried away with itself, cannot be what it is except in erasing itself, indefinitely constructing its destruction.”⁴³ The differing and deferring, which Derrida referred to by various neologisms, including *dif-férance* and *destinerrance*, subordinate metaphysics to metaphor, privileging thereby absence over presence, but the supplemental differend—the pharmakon, the trace, or the spectral—instable and meandering as it might be, is still established by syntactic rules. The larger logical conundrum that Derrida cannot elude is the fact that for something to be discerned as indeterminate, indeterminacy itself must be determined. Expressed somewhat crudely, his crusade against essentialism is nothing short of essentialist; his sponsorship of heterogeneity is strikingly homogenous.⁴⁴ Derrida’s depiction of metaphor as “indefinitely constructing its destruction” points to the fundamental paradox of deconstruction as a theory of literature: what is scripted is simultaneously, and always, constructed and destructed, destructed in its ongoing construction and constructed in its abiding destruction, producing “its essence as its own disappearance, showing and hiding itself at the same time.”⁴⁵ This account is not far from my own approach to interpreting kabbalistic texts.⁴⁶

Let us recall another crucial discussion of Derrida, as it will shed light on the larger methodological questions being addressed in this essay. Commenting on a passage from Plato’s *Laws* (803b–e) in which the “serious things” that ought to command our attention are contrasted with the “playing of games,” Derrida remarked that one can detect therein “the theological assumption of play into games, the progressive neutralization of the *singularity* of play,” which led him to conclude that “Play is always lost when it seeks salvation in games.”⁴⁷ The contrast of play and game relates to the fact that the latter displays rules, which by nature are subject to generalization, whereas the former is incalculably random and therefore irreducibly singular. This “dialectical confiscation”⁴⁸—the “disappearance of play into games”—ensues when the particular is placed under the stamp of the universal, a move that obscures the playfulness of play:

As soon as it comes into being and into language, *play erases itself as such*. Just as writing must erase itself as such before truth, etc. The point is there is no *as such* where writing or play are concerned. Having no essence, introducing difference as the conclusion for the presence of essence, opening up the possibility of the double, the copy, the imitation, the simulacrum—the game and the *graphē* are constantly disappearing as they go along. They cannot, in classical affirmation, be affirmed without being negated.⁴

And yet, Derrida must admit, the “(non)logic of play,” as inscription itself is governed by principles of proportionality and structurality. Derrida thus observes that at a critical moment in the *Republic* (368c–e), when theoretical discourse cannot find a way

of formulating the political order, Socrates turns to the grammatical metaphor. "Structure is read as a form of writing in an instance where the intuition of sensible or intelligible presence happens to fail."⁵⁰ We would not be far off the mark if we inverted this key statement: writing is to be read as a form of structure. I shall return to this matter below, but at this juncture what is crucial to underscore is that the play of writing may mark the "disruptive intrusion of otherness and nonbeing, of nonbeing as other in the unity of being,"⁵¹ but the gesture of writing inevitably entails the production of something written, and the production of something written requires rules of grammar. The incursion of writing is a cut that binds, like circumcision,⁵² the event of singularity in which the name is enunciated, the singular event that recurs indefinitely as the gifting of time in the retreat of each moment. Ideally, the task of the writer is to bring forth something utterly unique, but this is not possible, since the words that one will use to communicate can never be unconditionally new.⁵³ Writing, therefore, imbibes the "rule of the impossible" (*la règle-impossible*),⁵⁴ a law that "demands the impossible ... because it is impossible, and because this very impossibility is the condition of the possibility of demand."⁵⁵ That Derrida is aware of this dilemma is evident from the following comment: "The scriptural 'metaphor' thus crops up every time difference and relation are irreducible, every time otherness introduces determination and puts a system in circulation."⁵⁶ Even more transparent is the following remark of Derrida:

A text is not a text unless it hides from the first comer, from the first glance, the law of its composition and the rules of its game. A text remains, moreover, forever imperceptible. Its law and its rules are not, however, harbored in the inaccessibility of a secret; it is simply that they can never be booked, in the present, into anything that could rigorously be called a perception. ... The dissimulation of the woven texture can in any case take centuries to undo its web: a web that envelops a web, undoing the web for centuries; reconstituting it too as an organism, indefinitely regenerating its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading. ... The reading and writing supplement must be rigorously prescribed, but by the necessities of a *game*, by the logic of *play*, signs to which the system of all textual powers must be accorded and attuned.⁵⁷

The indeterminacy of the twofold act of writing and reading—a pairing that "designates neither undifferentiated (con)fusion nor identity at perfect rest"⁵⁸—is condemned to follow a system that is determined by the "necessities of a game" and the "logic of play." Derrida exhibits no ambiguity or ambivalence. He asserts rather emphatically: if one is not serious about this playfulness, then, one is plagued by the same foolishness as one who is too serious.⁵⁹

In the last interview Derrida granted prior to his death, he conjured a familiar topos to reflect on the nature of his own career as a writer: "If I had invented my writing, I would have done so as a perpetual revolution. For it is necessary in each situation to create an appropriate mode of exposition, to invent the law of the singular event, to take into account the presumed or desired addressee; and, at the same time, to make as if this writing will determine the reader, who will learn to read (to 'live') something he or she was not accustomed to receiving from anywhere else."⁶⁰ The goal delineated by

Derrida, to keep the focus on the uniqueness of each reader, is surely laudable, but it is still reasonable to ask philosophically about the feasibility of this aspiration. What kind of law might the *law of the singular event* be? Can law ever be so radically individuated? In an essay dedicated to elucidating Kafka's celebrated parable "Before the Law," Derrida addressed the issue directly: "There is a singularity about relationship to the law, a law of singularity which must come into contact with the general or universal essence of the law without ever being able to do so. Now this text, this singular text ... names or relates in its way this conflict without encounter between law and singularity, this *paradox* or *enigma* of being-before-the-law."⁶¹ Given the fact that the provision of law by definition must exact some form of general applicability, for if a law were applied to only one individual, it would not fulfill the conditions of law and would simply be a matter of habit—as Derrida himself observed in one essay, "law is always a law of repetition, and repetition is always submission to law"⁶²—the insistence on a law of singularity without any relation whatsoever to generality is absurd and incoherent. He speaks of this encounter between law and singularity as the enigma or paradox of being before-the-law, but, by his own understanding (influenced by Heidegger's description of the human experience of death) of the possibility of the impossible,⁶³ this is an impossibility that is not even possible as impossible, an impossible possibility, the experience of which Derrida offers as a definition of deconstruction,⁶⁴ but it is rather an impossible impossibility that is neither possible nor impossible and therefore completely irrelevant. A writing that truly erases itself in its inscription would have to be an invisible writing, a writing that left no traces because it was never written, what Derrida himself (explicating Celan's words from the poem "À la pointe acérée,"⁶⁵ *Ungeschriebenes, zu / Sprache verhärtet*) refers to as the "without writing, non-written, the unwritten" (*sans écrit, anécrit, non-écrit*).⁶⁶ To contemplate the gesture of not-writing (*pas d'écriture*)—the graphic equivalent to the phonic description of apophasis as the voiceless voice (*la voix blanche*)⁶⁷—is quite different from the mandate to think about writing as an ambiguous marking of the trace. The latter may be viewed as a pre-script or as a post-script—the coming before is already a coming after having come before—an inscription of the invisible, which is not an entity that cannot be seen because it is hidden, but seeing that there is nothing to be seen but the unseeing, the white space, the blind spot, the condition for there to be any visibility at all, whereas the former is not an inscription, not a marking, nothing that leaves a trace, not even "the trace of a trace ... without presence and without absence."⁶⁸ As Derrida reminds us, "Trace as memory is not a pure breaching that might be reappropriated at any time as simple presence; it is rather the ungraspable and invisible difference between the breaches."⁶⁹ It is one thing to argue that the imperative of writing is to give space for singular events, to invent something new in every original iteration, but it is quite another thing to say that the singularity of what is to be written can have no relationship to the universal. In what language would such a text be inscribed? Derrida does entertain the possibility of an "inscription prior to writing, a proto-writing without a present origin,"⁷⁰ a motif that he connects to the midrashic idea of a primordial Torah inscribed as white fire upon black fire, a "text written in letters that are still invisible."⁷¹ Even if we grant that the not-writing is identical with this arche-writing, a writing-before-writing, it still would be necessary to account for the translation of invisible letters into a text that can communicate to others. Does not the demand for absolute concreteness in writing elide into (or revert back to) an absolute

abstraction?⁷² In his earlier work, Derrida had it right: *otherness introduces determination and puts a system into circulation*. Indeterminacy itself is determined as indeterminate by the canons of some form of determination that has been determined to be valid relative to a particular economy of socio-political meaning. As one interpreter of Derrida astutely noted, “pure heterogeneity, pure difference, pure becoming ... cannot be apprehended as such: a degree of admixture with their theoretical counterparts (homogeneity, identity, simultaneity) is required for apprehension to become possible.”⁷³

The resistance to definite patterns and the characterization of the scholar’s demarcating those patterns as dogmatically imposing a totalizing interpretation on the material is itself a judgment that reflects a homogeneous reading of heterogeneity impelled by construing the deconstructive hermeneutic in a particular way.⁷⁴ The contention that there is no unifying vision that would account for the rich and wide-ranging views scattered about the landscape of kabbalistic teaching, the insistence that in fact there is no such thing as kabbalah but only what various kabbalists report, the avowal that any affirmation of an inner principle amounts to assuming the existence of a metaphysical postulate of a substantialist identity that effaces difference, and the resolve to refuse any interpretive scheme that would rule out exceptions by already including those exceptions within its purview, are themselves postmodern sensibilities that are imposed on the kabbalistic texts. The kabbalists, I would argue, have been committed to precisely what is here being denied: their eclecticism is a facet of heterosemiotic uniformity, their singularity a consequence of a monological pluralism. The diversity of opinions are not indicative of “various ontological schemes” informing “different hermeneutical modes of interpretation.”⁷⁵ On the contrary, the diversity itself is engendered by a shared ontology that informs a common hermeneutic. Is this assumption not operative in the very use of typology to provide a taxonomic grid to analyze and categorize the material? Even for Abulafia, the kabbalist whence the typological classification is derived, the assertion that there are two types of kabbalah, the sefirotic and the prophetic, must be seen as a polemical rejoinder to the attack on him by Solomon ben Abraham Ibn Adret.⁷⁶ While there are incontestable discrepancies between Abulafia and the so-called theosophic kabbalists, the former repeatedly transgresses his own taxonomy by affirming principles that were common to all kabbalists of his day, for instance, the identification of the Torah and the Tetragrammaton, the assumption that Hebrew is the matrix language of being, and the insistence that if one separates one of the ten *sefirot*, it is as if one were to create a division in the divine. Leaving aside the larger historiographic issue, the critical question is: can one both adhere to the presence of typological models and aver that it is essentialist to presume replication of structure?

Let me turn now to the topic of gender construction, which will help put into sharper relief the points of convergence and divergence between the two interpretive paths that emerge from a common root. In *Kabbalah and Eros*, Idel is highly critical of the conclusion I have reached, taking issue with my opinion that traditional kabbalists have uniformly privileged the masculine, viewing the female as ontologically derivative from the male. I am accused of assuming (following the lead of Isaiah Tishby) that kabbalists operated with a “pansymbolic approach ... based on a common psychic structure.”⁷⁷ Idel is skeptical of such an approach, as it supposedly promotes a metaphysics (or ontology) that is “homogenous” and a psychology that is “collective.” Championing diversity and heterogeneity, Idel contends that kabbalistic writings, even from the same historical period, “may display a metaphysical complexity emerging from the accumulation of

earlier and divergent stands, exposed in different forms of organization of knowledge, and functioning together.”⁷⁸ Ostensibly ignoring this diversity, I have concocted a “unified kabbalistic metaphysics which is phallogocentric,” a “monistic” approach that glorifies “androcentric exclusivity.”⁷⁹ Even worse my approach “reduces medieval cultural worlds to modern or postmodern theories, and it may transform scholarship into an exercise in projecting the modern into the medieval; in short, this approach is prone to become an anachronistic game.”⁸⁰ Reiterating the point at the summary of a more sustained, though by his own admission not a comprehensive, criticism of my theory of gender construction and the metamorphosis implied thereby, Idel writes:

In my opinion, any attempt to articulate a comprehensive system that operates upon premises which reflect modern gender studies may constitute an anachronistic projection if there is no specific assessment of the gendered underpinning of the system itself. Assumptions concerning the esoteric nature of the underlying gender theories may reflect more a modern psychoanalytical approach than a disclosure of a hidden dimension of medieval mystical texts. We should not reduce life in the Middle Ages to some simplistic clichés reflecting a conservative attitude; neither should we read those texts as adumbrating the details of the modern theories of gender.⁸¹

I will refrain from responding to the allegation that I have offered “simplistic clichés” based on contemporary psychoanalytic and gender theories instead of providing a “specific assessment of the gendered underpinning of the system itself.” Needless to say, I beg to differ, but my concern here is to address two other issues at the heart of Idel’s critique, the issue of generalization and that of anachronism, insofar as these are more pertinent to the main concern of this essay, the hermeneutical presuppositions related to the question of continuity and discontinuity in the study of kabbalistic lore.

I have already noted Idel’s charge that I am guilty of adopting a pansymbolic approach, ignoring the diversity of the sources. Idel even takes issue with my referring to the “zoharic kabbalah” or the “zoharic authorship,” since these terms suggest that I may have conflated “the basic differences between the various layers of the *Zohar*.”⁸² Idel is implicitly invoking here the research of Yehuda Liebes, who has argued for multiple authors of the zoharic text.⁸³ Liebes is mentioned explicitly in a second passage as the basis for the assumption that “theosophical diversity is recognized as a hallmark of Zoharic thought.”⁸⁴ The positing of multiple strata in the zoharic text should sensitize the scholar to the fact that “even within the same theosophical system, we must be aware of the existence of genealogically and phenomenologically different forms of narrative, which have different forms of inner logic, different histories, and different patterns of literary treatment, and which therefore should not be merged in a harmonistic or homogeneous explanation.” My approach, by contrast, is based on a “totalizing reading” of “different theosophical narratives as if they are part of one unified pattern.”⁸⁵ I readily admit that I have assumed a unified pattern for the zoharic literature. But this supposition does not equal a rejection of the hypothesis proffered by Liebes. One can posit several authors of a treatise and continue to speak on hermeneutical grounds of a unifying factor that allows for difference; the weave of the textual fabric does not disrupt the possibility of iteration that renews itself indefinitely. Scholars of *Zohar* can ben-

efit from the wisdom and experience of biblicists who do not deny the form-critical approach but who nevertheless discern repeating thought-patterns.⁸⁶

I would propose that plurivocality and fragmentariness need to be kept distinct. Too often, it seems, they are confused, and one assumes that the former automatically implies the latter. To argue for a plurality of voices, however, does not necessarily mean that all we have are fragments. The overarching sense of the whole may, in fact, reverberate only through a polyphony of voices. In the case of the zoharic text, it is possible, in my opinion, to apply a “holistic analysis,”⁸⁷ even if we entertain the possibility of multiple layers at the compositional level. The poststructuralist approach that I have adopted both allows for these different strata and maintains that there is an overall system that engenders the particulars. The tendency to generalize, therefore, should not be misconstrued as viewing the variegated history of Jewish mystical doctrines and practices monolithically. The belief that it is justifiable to speak in general terms does not come at the expense of ignoring specific details and historical contingencies. On the contrary, the generic claims are rooted in and must be tested against textual particularities. I do think, however, that it is plausible, indeed mandatory, to speak of kabbalistic lore in terms of structures of thought that persist through time. Repetition of these structures does not presuppose an ontological condition of presence that suppresses difference in the name of sameness. The history of kabbalism as a religious phenomenon illustrates that it is precisely the presumed immutability of system that occasions novel interpretation. In the wisdom of the tradition, if a teaching is old, it is because it is new, but it is new because it is old. The simultaneity of truth as novel and erstwhile is a fundamental axiom of interpretation—linked to the conception of time in its most rudimentary form as an instant of diremptive reiteration, the repetition of the same as different in the renewal of the different as same—legitimated not by reason but by prophetic experience that confirms in cultural memory the presumed unbroken chain of the oral tradition.⁸⁸ System, consequently, is precisely what accounts for interruption of order by chaos, the intervention of the moment that renders the flow of time continuously discontinuous and discontinuously continuous. The recognition of multiplicity does not negate unity if we understand the latter as a system that comprises multiple subsystems, an economy of meaning that incorporates manifold economies.

The notion of system that I am affirming is indebted to the thinking of Franz Rosenzweig expressed especially in a letter to Rudolf Ehrenburg (dated 12 December 1917).⁸⁹ According to Rosenzweig, system does not denote an architectural structure that is formed by assembling individual stones whose meaning is determined only by the sense of the whole, but rather it bespeaks a striving on the part of all individual entities qua individual for relationship and interconnectivity; the viability of system is related to affirming a unity perpetually in the making, a sense of the whole that is not order but chaos, a totality that must always lie “beyond a conscious horizon.” Rosenzweig notes that, in the Hegelian system, each individual position is anchored only in the whole and is thus related exclusively to two others, the one that immediately precedes it and the one that immediately succeeds it. In the system affirmed by Rosenzweig, the genuine novelty of each temporal moment is not determined by its occupying a median position in a linear sequence between what came before and what comes after. On the contrary, to the extent that the moment is authentically novel, it is experienced as the constant resumption of what is always yet to be, the return of what has never been, the vertical intervention that opens the horizontal time-line to the spherical fullness of

eternity.⁹⁰

In the 1925 essay “Das neue Denken,” in which Rosenzweig offers the reader a guide to reading his theopoetic masterpiece, *Der Stern der Erlösung*, he remarked that the latter is not a “Jewish book” or a “philosophy of religion,” but it is a “system of philosophy,” which sought “to bring about the total renewal of thinking.”⁹¹ The system propounded by Rosenzweig is situated in the interstice between philosophy and theology,⁹² but it emerges from the “intuitive knowledge of experience” (*anschaulichen Wissen der Erfahrung*) of God, human, and world,⁹³ which serves as the epistemic basis for the vision to come of the All, a seeing of the eternal star in the countenance of the configuration that is truth.⁹⁴ An allusion to this vision, whence the path goes forth and to which it returns, can be found in another passage in “Das neue Denken.” Reflecting on the nature of the philosophic book, of which the *Star* is exemplary, Rosenzweig notes that “the whole (*Ganze*) becomes surveyable at a glance (*Blick*).” This momentary glimpse of the whole in the new thinking is to be contrasted with the conception of totality in the old thinking, insofar as the time of its occurrence “cannot be predicted” and it is not “at exactly the same point for two readers.”⁹⁵ It is nevertheless an integral part of the system that Rosenzweig constructed from his own vision, a “beholding the ‘world-likeness in the countenance of God’ (*Weltgleichnisses im Gottesantlitz*),” a “seizing of all being in the immediacy of a moment (*eines Augenblicks*) and blink of an eye (*Augen-blicks*)” in which “the limit of humanity is entered.”⁹⁶ The broken All is reconfigured in this immediate sight of the whole, the whole that, like the moment in which it is seen, the blink of the eye, is the not yet that has already been and therefore is always still to come.

At the heart of Rosenzweig’s conception of systematicity is his view that understanding occurs always in the present, “time in the most temporal sense” (*Zeit im zeitlichsten Sinn*).⁹⁷ This insight runs parallel to Rosenzweig’s account of revelation in the *Star* based on the premise that “God’s love is always wholly in the moment.”⁹⁸ The knot of divine love takes an infinity of time to unravel, but at the center of that love is the utterance of the divine commandment that “knows only the moment: it waits for the outcome right within the moment of its growing audible. ... The commandment is thus—pure present (*reine Gegenwart*). ... Revelation is in the present (*gegenwärtig*), and indeed it is the present par excellence ... the presently lived experience.”⁹⁹ Revelation, therefore, is an experience (*Erlebnis*) that imbibes the paradox of being “always new only because it is immemorially old” (*Die Offenbarung ist also allzeit neu, nur weil sie uralt ist*).¹⁰⁰ The eruption of the revelatory event (*Ereignis*) must “begin already at the same moment, in the sinking away it must already begin again; its perishing must be at the same time a beginning again. ... So this moment must have more as its content than the mere moment. The moment shows something always new to the eye every time it opens.”¹⁰¹ This moment, which has the potentiality to be perpetually renewed, and thus it carries within itself the “diversity of the old and new,” is identified by Rosenzweig as an “hour” or the “fixed moment” in which “its end can flow again into its beginning because it has a middle, or rather many moments of the middle between its beginning and its end. With beginning, middle and end, it can become what the mere sequence of single ever new moments can never become: a circle that flows back in itself. ... In the hour, the moment is therefore turned into that which, when it should have perished, always newly begins again and thus into the imperishable, the *nunc stans*, eternity.”¹⁰² Compressed in the “single moment” is “pure temporality” (*reinen Zeitlichkeit*)—signifi-

cantly, this is demarcated as the “purely temporally lived life of Goethe”—whereby “life has become entirely temporal, or, put differently, time has an entirely living, an entirely real river flowing through the vast space above the crags of the moment; no sooner can eternity fall upon time. Life, and all life, must be entirely living (*ganz lebendig*) before it can become eternal life (*ewiges Leben*).”¹⁰³ In the moment, the blink-of-the-eye, time is fully temporal, and hence eternal, a time beyond the calibration of ordinary time, but a time nonetheless, indeed the fullness of time.

The conception of time underlying my own hermeneutic is in accord with Rosenzweig’s perspective according to which the old and the new are dialectically intertwined. To assume, as I do, that structures of thought may be recovered philologically, structures influenced but not causally determined by historical factors, does not subject kabbalistic texts to a standard of rigid homogeneity that ignores the specificity and inimitability of actual texts. Structure accounts for heterogeneity, system for unpredictability; it is precisely by seeing the recurring pattern that the changes become most visible. The perspective that I have culled from Rosenzweig may be compared profitably to the thinking of Derrida.¹⁰⁴ Let us recall the aforementioned insight of his regarding the inevitability of otherness putting a system into circulation. What can we make of this juxtaposition, the ideal of system and the movement of circulation? The deportment of the former will be discerned from the manner of the latter. To circulate is to venture toward an exit that is a return, a turning-around, a recycling, not, however, as a closed circle whose beginning is fixed in its end and its end in its beginning. On the contrary, the return that comes by way of exit is an open circle that brings one back to where one has always been as never having been before, a place strangely familiar, not an exit to return nor a return to exit, but a return that is an exit, an exit that is a return.¹⁰⁵ “Circulation will always be circulation of the truth: toward the truth. Cause and effect of the circle, *causa sui*, proper course and destiny of the letter.”¹⁰⁶ In this circulation, cause and effect are interchangeable, and everything occurs together, “at the same time,” which is, ontically speaking, no time, an insight that Derrida flags as the absurdity “that constitutes the aporia as aporia.”¹⁰⁷ Distinguishing the views of Husserl and Levinas, Derrida wrote: “A system is neither finite nor infinite. A structural totality escapes this alternative in its functioning. It escapes the archaeological and the eschatological, and inscribes them in itself.”¹⁰⁸ The meaningfulness of the system is not determined by reference to an ultimate beginning or to an ultimate end. There is no beginning and there is no end. The creative process is such that one imagines that one is always starting anew, but what appears as new is, in truth, a mix of newness and repetition, each event is a renewed singularity.¹⁰⁹

Kabbalah, I submit, is a cultural-literary phenomenon that illustrates a system of this sort, a structural totality for which beginning cannot be remembered nor end anticipated. It is conceivable to imagine the contours of this system as a totality without presuming a fixed terminus at the start or at the finish. In the open system, where the whole always was and is in the making, and hence can never be subject to being broken, since brokenness is part of its very constitution, the only time that is real is the time of the present. In the hermeneutical praxis, accordingly, originality and repetition are not mutually exclusive, but well forth from the spot where the novel is recurrently ancient and the ancient interminably novel. As Gilles Deleuze put it:

We produce something new only on condition that we repeat—once

in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis. Moreover, what is produced, the absolutely new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition: the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return. ... The order of time has broken the circle of the Same and arranged time in a series only in order to reform, a circle of the Other at the end of the series. ... The form of time is there only for the revelation of the formless in the eternal return. ... In this manner, the ground has been superseded by a groundlessness, a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return.¹¹⁰

The merging of novelty and repetition in the Deleuzian interpretation of Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence well suits both the kabbalistic material and the appropriate scholarly apparatus to study it. The production of something new—equally for the kabbalist and for the scholar of kabbalah—comes about through the mechanism of repeating that proceeds from the formlessness of time's form; indeed, the *absolutely new* is nothing but *repetition*, albeit the repetition of what is yet-to-come. Following the logic of this temporal comportment, we come to the conclusion that the distinction between conservative and innovative orientations, at least if treated in a binary fashion, is not a faithful translation of the complex hermeneutical interplay that characterizes the creativity of the kabbalist.¹¹¹ On the face of it, some kabbalists may have preferred the rhetoric of conservatism to the rhetoric of innovation, but in the last analysis, one as the other would have maintained that the expansion of the tradition is itself part of the perpetuation of the tradition, just as the perpetuation of the tradition is part of its expansion. Kabbalists singled out as most representative of the conservative orientation, for example, Nahmanides, conceal the innovativeness of their thinking in the guise of a received wisdom, whereas kabbalists singled out as most representative of the innovative orientation, for example, Abraham Abulafia and Moses de León, repeatedly affirm the antiquity of the ideas they transmit.

Operating with this diremptive conception of time, the charge of anachronism itself becomes anachronistic. As the contemporary philosopher David Wood observed: "The recognition of multiplicity amidst apparent unity illustrates the importance of models in guiding interpretation but does not tell us anything specific about time."¹¹² The matter of time is to be determined independently of the models we elicit from or inflict upon our sources—I do not think this distinction is very useful, as the circularity of the hermeneutic experience dictates that eisegesis and exegesis cannot be separated categorically. With this alternate conception of temporality in mind, one can argue credibly for the use of current theories to explicate older structures that provide the parameters within which the discontinuous continuity of the kabbalah continues to evolve. The contribution of scholars, especially when dissenting opinions are respectfully expressed, is an integral part of the process.

Notes

¹ Moshe Idel, "Kabbalah-Research: From Monochromatism to Orphism," *Studia Judaica* 8 (1999): 15-46, esp. 27-32.

² Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

⁵ The locution “messianic idea” is derived from the first two essays in Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 1-48.

⁶ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1954), pp. 329-330; *idem*, *Messianic Idea*, pp. 176-202. As Idel rightly points out (see following note for reference), Scholem’s views accord with the position of Buber. See Martin Buber, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), pp. 107-112.

⁷ For a more extensive discussion, see Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 16-17; and *idem*, *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 212-213, 237-238.

⁸ The point is missed by Byron L. Sherwin, *Kabbalah: An Introduction to Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), who appropriates Idel’s theory of models for his own attempt to provide an account of Jewish mystical teachings and practices. The method he adopts from Idel is crudely distinguished from the historical approach of Scholem: “Though keenly aware of major trends in Jewish mysticism, Idel has presented Jewish mystical teachings and experience by identifying certain phenomenologically based models of Jewish mysticism. ... The presentation of Jewish mystical ideas, experience, and practices in the present book follows Idel’s approach by focusing on models rather than by presenting Jewish mysticism primarily as an unfolding historical phenomenon in Judaism characterized by certain movements or major historical trends” (p. 26 n. 1). The relationship between history and phenomenology is more complex in Idel’s early typological categories and in his later theory of models. A more felicitous and sophisticated use of a model approach can be found in the work of Idel’s student, Jonathan Garb, “Kinds of Power: Rabbinic Texts and the Kabbalah,” *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 6 (2001): 45-71, and in greater detail in *idem*, *Manifestations of Power in Jewish Mysticism: From Rabbinic Literature to Safedian Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), pp. 14-23, 47-71 (Hebrew).

⁹ Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, p. 33

¹⁰ Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: Kabbalah and Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹² Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 22-25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. xi. The source for the typological distinction that has dominated critical scholarship on medieval Jewish mysticism can be traced to Abulafia himself, who introduces the “two types of kabbalah” in his epistle to Judah Salomon, the *Iggeret Zo’t li-Yehudah*, a polemical response to the attack on him mounted by Solomon ben Abraham Ibn Adret. See Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p. xii; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Abraham Abulafia—Kabbalist and Prophet: Hermeneutics, Theosophy, and Theurgy* (Los Angeles: Cherub, 2000), pp. 94-99.

¹⁴ The expression “major trends” is obviously derived from the lectures that

served as the basis for Scholem's influential work *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Moreover, describing the literary production of Abraham Abulafia and the *Zohar* (op. cit., p. 124), Scholem writes: "It is no exaggeration to say that each marks the culminating point in the development of two opposing schools of thought in Spanish Kabbalism, schools which I should like to call the ecstatic and the theosophical. ... For all their differences, the two belong together and, only if both are understood, do we obtain something like a comprehensive picture of Spanish Kabbalism." Idel's own scholarly essays and books have considerably sharpened the differences between these two trends and he has even challenged the accuracy of referring to Abulafia's mysticism as a form of Spanish kabbalah. More to the point, in his typology, trends denote primarily phenomenological as opposed to historical currents. Nevertheless, there can be little question that his typological calculus is indebted to Scholem. See my review of *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* in *The Journal of Religion* 72 (1992): 137-139.

¹⁵ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p. 11.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. xii (emphasis added).

¹⁷ Ibid., p. xiii.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. xviii-xix.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. xix.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 9-15.

²¹ Idel, *Hasidism*, p. 20.

²² Ibid., p. 21.

²³ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁵ In the printed text the word is "expouses," an obvious typographical error that I have taken the liberty to correct.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 48.

²⁹ Moshe Idel, *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), p. 1.

³⁰ Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1982), p. 11.

³¹ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 29.

³² For other studies that promulgate the constructivist approach, see the entries by Willie Braun and William E. Arnal in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, edited by Willie Braun and Russell T. McCutcheon (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3-35; Russell T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); idem, *The Discipline of Religion: Structure, Meaning, Rhetoric* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003); Tomoko Masuzawa, *In Search of Dreamtime: The Quest for the Origin of Religion* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993); idem, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology*, translated by William Savers (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Timothy Fitzgerald, *The*

Ideology of Religious Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). To date, the one scholar of Jewish mysticism who has explicitly aligned his thinking with this orientation is Boaz Huss, “The Mystification of Kabbalah and the Myth of Jewish Mysticism,” *Pe’amim* 110 (2007): 9-29 (Hebrew). The principal agenda on the part of Huss, with which I am in accord, is to take seriously more contemporary expressions of Jewish mysticism that have been largely ignored by scholars, although this is starting to change with the appearance of more essays and monographs on the topic. See Boaz Huss, “Ask No Questions: Gershom Scholem and the Study of Contemporary Jewish Mysticism,” *Modern Judaism* 25 (2005): 141-158; idem, “All You Need Is LAV: Madonna and Postmodern Kabbalah,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 95 (2005): 611-624.

³³ This taxonomy is not historically determined for me, but refers rather to kabbalists, in the past and in the present, who accept certain beliefs and practices as normative. I use this term to acknowledge that there are others who more recently have forged newer forms of spiritual expression in the name of “kabbalah.” I do not exclude the latter because they are in any sense less authentic or even less traditional, but only because they are not pertinent to a critical evaluation of Idel’s scholarly methodology.

³⁴ I am responding to the words of Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, Translated, with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Barbara Johnson (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 251: “The fold, then, and the blank: these will forbid us to seek a theme or an overall meaning in an imaginary, intentional, or lived domain beyond all textual instances. ... One does not see this because one thinks one is seeing themes in the very spot where the nontheme, that which cannot become a theme, the very thing that has no meaning, is ceaselessly re-marking itself—that is, disappearing.”

³⁵ For fuller discussion of Derrida’s notion of secrecy compared to the traditional kabbalistic view, see Elliot R. Wolfson, “Assaulting the Border: Kabbalistic Traces in the Margins of Derrida,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70 (2002): 502-504.

³⁶ It is of interest to recall here a comment of Derrida in an early essay “Form and Meaning; A Note on the Phenomenology of Language,” included in *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, Translated, with an Introduction by David B. Allison, Preface by Newton Garver (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 107: “Phenomenology has criticized metaphysics as it is in fact only to restore it. It has informed metaphysics about its actual state of affairs in order to reawaken it to the essence of its task, to its original and authentic purpose.” It is worth pondering the extent to which these words could be applied to the deconstructive method developed by Derrida in the course of his life.

³⁷ Derrida, *Margins*, p. 65.

³⁸ In “Form and Meaning,” pp. 127-128 n. 14, Derrida gives an account of the trace in language that is close to the spirit of the kabbalistic apophysis, which was informed by Neoplatonic currents of thought, a point underscored by the fact that Derrida relates his own views to Plotinus: “Form (presence, evidence) would not be the final recourse, the last instance, to which every possible sign would refer In a sense—or a non-sense—that metaphysics would have excluded from its field, while nonetheless being secretly and incessantly related to it, the form would already and in itself be the *trace* (*ichnos*) of a certain non-presence, the vestige of the formless, announcing and recalling its other to the whole of metaphysics—as Plotinus perhaps said. The trace would not be the mixture or passage between form and the amorphous, between presence and

absence ... but that which, in escaping this opposition, renders it possible because of its irreducible excess” (emphasis in original). It is noteworthy that in this earlier essay, Derrida was still willing to speak of the trace as “non-presence” or as a “vestige of the formless,” an “excess” that escapes the opposition of presence and absence. See *ibid.*, p. 156: “The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself. The trace has, properly speaking, no place, for effacement belongs to the very structure of the trace.” And compare *idem*, *Of Grammatology*, Translated by Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 61: “The concept of arche-trace ... is in fact contradictory and not acceptable within the logic of identity. The trace is not only the disappearance of origin—within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. From then on, to wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme, which would derive it from a presence or from an originary nontrace and which would make of it an empirical mark, one must indeed speak of an originary trace or arche-trace. Yet we know that that concept destroys its name and that, if all begins with the trace, there is above all no originary trace.”

³⁹ For instance, see Elliot R. Wolfson, “From Sealed Book to Open Text: Time, Memory, and Narrativity in Kabbalistic Hermeneutics,” in *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age*, edited by Steven Kepnes (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 145.

⁴⁰ See Wolfson, “Assaulting,” pp. 505-508; and Moshe Idel, “Jacques Derrida and Kabbalistic Sources,” in *Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida*, edited by Bettina Bergo, Joseph Cohen, and Raphael Zagury-Orly (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), pp. 116-117. For a contrast of the kabbalistic and Derridean conceptions of the trace, see also Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 52-53.

⁴¹ Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 163.

⁴² I am here expanding the earlier discussion in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), pp. 88-94.

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, Translated, with Additional Notes, by Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 268.

⁴⁴ Christopher Johnson, *System and Writing in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 44.

⁴⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume I*, Edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 284.

⁴⁶ See especially Elliot R. Wolfson, “Suffering Eros and Textual Incarnation: A Kristevan Reading of Kabbalistic Poetics,” in *Toward a Theology of Eros: Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of Discipline*, edited by Virginia Burrus and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), pp. 341-365.

⁴⁷ Derrida, *Dissemination*, pp. 157-158.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵² Wolfson, "Assaulting," pp. 494-500.

⁵³ Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, Edited by Giacomo Donis and David Webb, Translated by Giacomo Donis (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. 47: "Every time I write something, I have the impression of making a beginning—but in fact that which is the same in texture is ceaselessly exposed to a singularity which is that of the other (another text, someone else, another word of the language). Everything appears anew: which means newness and repetition together. ... In the actual writing, of course, I'm well aware of the fact that at bottom it all unfolds according to the same law that commands these always different things. ... I can only hope that what I say about philosophy, literature, the event, the signature, the iterability (altering-altered repetition) is consistent with our encountering this ever renewed singularity."

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Mars: Éditions du Seuil, 1991), p. 181.

⁵⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Signéponge/Signsponge*, Translated by Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 14-15.

⁵⁶ Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 163.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 64: "The same foolishness, the same sterility, obtains in the 'not serious' as in the 'serious'."

⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Learning To Live Finally: An Interview With Jean Birnbaum*, Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, With a Bibliography by Peter Krapp (Hoboken: Melville House Publishing, 2007), p. 31.

⁶¹ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, edited by Derek Attridge (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 187. For further discussion of this passage, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond: Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 257-259.

⁶² Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 123.

⁶³ See, for instance, Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, Edited by Thomas Dutoit, Translated by David Wood, John P. Leavey, JR., and Ian McLeod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 44.

⁶⁴ Derrida, *On the Name*, p. 43.

⁶⁵ *Poems of Paul Celan*, Translated by Michael Hamburger (New York: Persea Books, 1972), pp. 196-199.

⁶⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, edited by Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), p. 3.

⁶⁷ Derrida, *On the Name*, p. 35.

⁶⁸ Derrida, *Margins*, pp. 66-67.

⁶⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Translated, with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 201.

⁷⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 146.

⁷¹ Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 343. See Wolfson, "Assaulting," p. 478, and references to Idel cited below, n. 74.

⁷² Hent de Vries, "The Shabboleth Effect: On Reading Paul Celan," in *Judeities*, pp. 175-213, esp. 205-209.

⁷³ Johnson, *System and Writing*, p. 19.

⁷⁴ Here it is important to recall that Idel notes some basic affinities (while also demarcating important differences) between the "semantic radicalism" exemplified in the kabbalah of Abulafia and the radical hermeneutics in Derridean deconstruction. See Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, pp. 416-423. Idel has engaged Derrida and kabbalah in other studies as well. See Moshe Idel, "Infinities of Torah in Kabbalah," in *Midrash and Literature*, edited by Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 149-150; idem, "White Letters: From R. Levi Isaac of Berdichev's Views to Postmodern Hermeneutics," *Modern Judaism* 26 (2006): 169-192, esp. 182-187; idem, "Jacques Derrida and Kabbalistic Sources," pp. 111-130. For my own interventions in this matter, see Wolfson, "Assaulting," pp. 475-514.

⁷⁵ Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 129.

⁷⁶ See reference to my study on Abulafia cited above, n. 13.

⁷⁷ Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, p. 100.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 100-101.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 130-131.

⁸² Ibid., p. 129.

⁸³ It should be pointed out that the conjecture of Liebes regarding a circle of kabbalists responsible for the composition of the text is an argument that has not been confirmed conclusively nor is it accepted by every scholar. I myself am partial to this approach (see, for instance, the reference below at n. 87), a point that Idel does not concede, but I would nevertheless challenge his presentation of the hypothesis as if it were proven beyond any doubt.

⁸⁴ Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, p. 100.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 129-130.

⁸⁶ I have here offered a condensed version of my argument in *Language, Eros, Being*, p. 48, which anticipated Idel's critique.

⁸⁷ I appropriate this expression from Seth D. Kumin, *The Logic of Incest: A Structuralist Analysis of Hebrew Mythology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 278. The full text is cited in *Language, Eros, Being*, p. 48.

⁸⁸ Elliot R. Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 64-65.

⁸⁹ Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe*, selected and edited by Edith Rosenzweig (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1935), p. 263 (emphasis in original). An English translation is found in Franz Rosenzweig, *Philosophical and Theological Writings*, Translated and Edited, with Notes and Commentary, by Paul W. Franks and Michael L. Morgan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000), pp. 51-52 n. 11. On Rosenzweig's notion of system, see Stéphane Mosès, *System and Revelation: The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig*, Foreword by Emmanuel Levinas, Translated by Catherine Tihanyi (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 36-45; and the extensive analysis in Benjamin Pollock, "Knowing the

All': Franz Rosenzweig's System of Philosophy," Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, 2006. I thank the author for sending me a revised version of the dissertation, *Franz Rosenzweig and the Systematic Task of Philosophy*. A useful collection of essays that provides something of the historical and ideational background for Rosenzweig is found in *System and Context: Early Romantic and Early Idealistic Constellations*, edited by Rolf Ahlers (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), and see Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁹⁰ Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, pp. 50-52. See also Karl Lowith, "F. Rosenzweig and M. Heidegger on Temporality and Eternity," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 3 (1942): 53-77; Mosès, *System and Revelation*, pp.150-173, and Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 185-205.

⁹¹ Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking," p. 110. For the original German, I have consulted Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1937), pp. 373-398. According to his own account ("The New Thinking," pp. 111-112), the system in the *Star* comprises three of the four elements usually found in a philosophical system, logic, ethics, and aesthetics, the only element missing is a philosophy of religion. Towards the end of the essay (p. 131), Rosenzweig does accept the designation of the *Star* as a "Jewish book." He explains, however, that this does not imply that it deals with "Jewish things," but that the "old Jewish words" are deployed to express what it has to say. "Like things in general, Jewish things have always passed away; yet Jewish words, even when old, share the eternal youth of the word, and if the world is opened up to them, they will renew the world."

⁹² Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking," p. 129, and compare the description of the "new philosopher" in Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, translation by Barbara E. Galli (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), p. 116: "Philosophy today requires ... that 'theologians' do philosophy. But theologians in a different sense, of course. For ... the theologian whom philosophy requires for the sake of its scientific character is himself a theologian who desires philosophy—out of concern for integrity. What was a demand in the interests of objectivity for philosophy will turn out to be a demand in the interests of subjectivity for theology. They complete each other, and together they bring about a new type of philosopher or theologian, situated between theology and philosophy."

⁹³ Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking," p. 118 (*Kleinere Schriften*, p. 380).

⁹⁴ Rosenzweig, *Star*, p. 441. For a more elaborate discussion of this vision, see Elliot R. Wolfson, "Facing the Effaced: Mystical Eschatology and the Idealistic Orientation in the Thought of Franz Rosenzweig," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 4 (1997): 39-81, esp. 74-80. I have reexamined the topic from a different perspective in a hitherto unpublished essay, "Light Does Not Talk But Shines: Apophasis and Vision in Rosenzweig's Theopoetic Temporality." My analysis here is, in part, drawn from that study, which I hope to publish one day.

⁹⁵ Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking," p. 114 (*Kleinere Schriften*, p. 377).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 136 (*Kleinere Schriften*, p. 397).

⁹⁷ Rosenzweig, "The New Thinking," p. 131 (*Kleinere Schriften*, p. 391).

⁹⁸ Rosenzweig, *Star*, p. 177.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 191, 200. Reference to the German is based on *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1990), pp. 197, 207.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 121 (*Der Stern*, p. 123).

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 307.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 308.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 306 (*Der Stern*, p. 320).

¹⁰⁴ Several attempts have been made to place Derrida and Rosenzweig in conversation. See Robert Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 95-97; Yudit Kornberg Greenberg, *Better Than Wine: Love, Poetry, and Prayer in the Thought of Franz Rosenzweig*, Foreword by Elliot R. Wolfson (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), pp. 86-88; Gérard Bensussan, "The Last, The Remnant ... (Derrida and Rosenzweig)," in *Judeities*, pp. 36-51; Zachary Braiterman, *The Shape of Revelation: Aesthetics and Modern Jewish Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 118-119, 161.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger*, pp. 174-182, discusses the circular structure of Rosenzweig's *Star* in comparison to Heidegger's phenomenological account of the circularity of life-experience. A more detailed comparison of Rosenzweig and Derrida on this topic is surely warranted.

¹⁰⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card : From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, Translated, with an Introduction and Additional Notes, by Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 462 n. 34.

¹⁰⁷ Derrida, *Margins*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁸ Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 123. For a detail analysis of this theme, see Johnson, *System and Writing*.

¹⁰⁹ See reference above, n. 53.

¹¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, translated by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 90-91.

¹¹¹ For instance, see Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 212-213, 216-217.

¹¹² David Wood, *Time After Time* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), p. 15.