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RABBINIC SEMIOTICS

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The German Jewish philosophers Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig introduced a critique and extension of Kant's transcendental philosophy that looks to us today like the foundations of a rabbinic semiotics. It is a theory about the semiotic character of our knowledge of the world, of other humans and of God. And it is a claim that such a theory is embedded in the classical literature of rabbinic Judaism. More recently, the American rabbinic thinker Max Kadushin presented a more elaborate analysis of the logic of what he called the rabbis' "organic thinking." While influenced in some ways by Charles Peirce, Kadushin did not offer his analysis as a semiotic. In this paper, I suggest that Kadushin's analysis is better served if it is restated more precisely in the vocabulary of Peirce's semiotics. The resulting construction then serves as a complement to the work of the German Jewish philosophers.

The etiology of rabbinic semiotics

This is not an intellectual history of the thinkers who may have anticipated rabbinic semiotics, nor is it an exposition of their thinking. Displaying the hermeneutical methods of rabbinic semiotics itself, this is a typological narration of selected features of the prehistory of rabbinic semiotics as it has emerged out of the German-Jewish philosophy of the early twentieth century. Selected features of the philosophies of Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig are described here in a way that would prepare the student of German-Jewish philosophy to recognize, if not necessarily accept, the rabbinic semiotician's fundamental moves. The descriptions are prompted by careful readings of the philosophers' texts, and they remain subject to the results of new text-critical scholarship on the works of these philosophers. On this occasion, however, these descriptions are shaped by the heuristic goal of exhibiting the logic of rabbinic semiotics, rather than by the historian's goal of identifying the intentionality of the philosophers in their intellectual and socio-cultural contexts. In the interest of that heuristic goal, I present features of each philosopher's texts as if they were signs of types of stages in the etiology of rabbinic semiotics. As I name them in the short space of this essay, these types, particularly those of the earlier and more distant stages, may appear like caricatures of much more complex

interpretive activities. As long as we recognize them for what they are, however, I trust caricatures have their place in the process of hermeneutical self-understanding. They may be more representative of the premises of our actions than the cautious discriminations of our customary scholarship; and, as the reader will see, rabbinic semiotics is a scholar's mode of action. It is not a program for intellection, but an intellectual response to one symptom of the spiritual and social sufferings of the modern academic. Each type is presented in italics, with a discussion following.

Cartesianism: the traditional (scholastic-Church) authority for religious-moral-natural reasoning has shown itself to be unreliable. Either there is no such authority, or else the authority lies within that mode of reasoning that has occasioned this doubt about traditional authority. For this mode of reasoning, however, it is inconceivable that there would be no such authority (that God is a deceiver). Hence, si fallor cogito sum.

In the typological prehistory of his own program for philosophic action, Charles Peirce presented a caricature of the errant tendency of modern, foundational inquiry. He called this tendency "Cartesianism." In Susan Haack's helpful summary, Peirce thought of this as the tendency, on the one hand, to doubt more than one had warrant to doubt; and, on the other hand, to believe more than one had warrant to believe. At first, Peirce identified this unwarranted belief with "intuitionism" - the belief that we have self-validating cognitions of objects outside of consciousness and uninfluenced by previous cognitions.1 Later, he identified it with "a priorism"-the practice of fixing our beliefs on concepts we adopt because they are agreeable to our reason. Informed by deconstructionist criticism, the Christian hermeiieut Hans Frei identified this tendency with the doctrine of self-presence: the postulate that whatever realia there are must make themselves present to us, or that our knowledge is grounded in unmediated self-referential significations. For both Peirce and Frei, Cartesianism or the doctrine of self-presence represents an errant tendency in western thought. As we will see, the rabbinic semiotician portrays Cartesianism as a problematic tendency, or a suffering, rather than as an error.

Kantianism: the Cartesians have rightly situated epistemological authority in the autonomous activity of the ego cogito, rather than in the heteronomous traditions of the Church and of the schoolmen. Recognizing their independence from these traditions, however, the Cartesians must also recognize their independence from the philosophic realism that accompanied these traditions. The claims of the ego cogito are not claims about a reality independent of its own activity. They are claims whose universality, and thus objectivity, is to be located only in the transcendental conditions that make these claims possible. Morality, for example, displays its universality only to a transcendental reflection upon the conditions that enable the ego cogito to ask its questions of morality.

Peirce's early critique of Cartesianism was accompanied by a Kantian reflection on the formal conditions of knowledge. Later, however, he applied this critique to his own Kantianism, as a persistently Cartesian attempt to identify transcendental reflection with the autonomous activity of reason's self-presentation. Peirce did not mean to invalidate the transcendental move, only to criticize egocentric or a prioristic varieties of transcendentalism. The problem is that it is difficult to conceive of a non-aprioristic variety. As Kant introduced it, transcendental reasoning adopts whatever canon of reasoning is agreeable to it and to it alone. It may acknowledge the fmitude of its self-representations, but even then, it must represent to itself the conditions of fmitude or non-fmitude. For this reason, Frei identified both Cartesian and Kantian theologians as "mediating theologians." From Locke to the Neologians to Schleiermacher, these are theologians who believe that the reasoning that interprets scriptural texts must also recommend to itself the criteria with respect to which these texts have meaning and are either true or false. Frei argued that these theologians are unable to demonstrate that the transcendental categories that inform their interpretations are not simply self-referential. For Peirce and for Frei, in sum, the Copernican turn does not relieve us of questions about reference, truth and reality; the questions reappear in new ways.

For the rabbinic semioticiaii, Kantianism brings Cartesianism one step closer to uncovering the conditions of its project of inquiry. Knowledge claims display their truth only relative to the transcendental conditions of knowledge, which are universal to an (as yet unidentified) intersubjective project of inquiry. For the Kantians, Cartesianism has shown that traditional claims about reality display their truth only relative to the transcendental conditions of traditional knowledge. But relative to what do transcendental critics display the truth of their own claims? Relative to the claims themselves? The rabbinic semioticians will argue, against the claims of Cartesianism, that the possibility as well as legitimacy of such self-reference is not self-evident. They will argue, against the claims of Kantianism, that acknowledging the fmitude or merely hypothetical status of self-referential claims does not eliminate the need to answer questions about the referents and truth of those claims. It is not enough to bracket ontic references and claim that one's claims are merely particular to some community of knowledge, especially if this community is extended to the human species. The bracketing fails to quiet ontic questions: what prompts us to make such a claim? will the claim stand?

Hermann Cohen's Prophetic Kantianism: Kantians have correctly relocated the claims of the ego cogito in a transcendental project. However, this relocation is not itself occasioned by the egocentric activity of self-representation, but, rather, by the incursion of alterity into the self-representations of heteronomous traditions. This incursion represents the activity of an Other, whose presence stimulates Cartesian doubt, which doubt stimulates the transcendental project. The transcendental project of moral reasoning is stimulated by the doubt we call Compassion. The act of compassion suspends business-as-usual out of concern for the suffering of a life whose needs are not met within the confines of a given tradition. This is the life of the Other whose sufferings stimulate compassion. Moral reasoning is transcendental reflection on the conditions of compassion. In the West, the paradigmatic representation of compassion is the Biblical prophets' concern for the suffering of other human beings. The ultimate condition for the Kantian project of moral reasoning is transcendental reflection on the conditions of prophetic compassion.

Hermann Cohen (1842-1918) was the great philosopher of the Jewish Enlightenment (Samuelson, 1989). Founder of the Marburg school of Kantian philosophy, his work moved from studies of Kant, to systematic works in logic, ethics and aesthetics, to the Jewish philosophy of his later years. He argued that, as enacted in Judaism, "the purpose of religion is to fill in certain necessities of the moral life that are beyond the capacities of philosophy" (164). Grasping only the universal, mere philosophy cannot examine the moral concepts which arise only with respect to the single self, such as guilt and repentance. It is the prophets who first comprehended these, introducing an ethical monotheism in which humans strive "to become like God through moral action rooted in an ideal conception of God" (164). Cohen declared that, by way of Kant, philosophy understands itself to be ethics. While platonic science provides this philosophy its mode of knowledge, the Hebrew prophets, alone, introduce the object of knowledge-humanity encountered in its suffering - and the purpose of knowledge-to end this suffering. He wrote that the prophets

"address [humanity's] heart, which they treasure more highly than [its] mind, and arouse [its] compassion as a mode of awareness commensurate with suffering. The Hebrew language has a unique term for this emotion [rachamim, 'compassion'], derived from rechem or 'womb.' God compassionately takes pity upon the poor; and [human beings] must compassionately discover [their] fellow[s] in the poor" (Cohen, 1971, 71).2

Cohen explained that compassion is not exactly an emotion, but what he called

a spiritual factor, a surrogate of the spirit, one might say. As such, compassion becomes the motivating force of an entire Weltanschauung. One would have to despair of God's justice, goodness and providence were it not for this sense ofcompassion which furnishes [humanity] with whatever strength

[it] needs to fight the skepticism [its] so-called mind produces (71-2).

Returning Kantianism to its prophetic, and not merely platonic, roots, Cohen introduced both the Biblical context of rabbinic semiotics and, anticipating Kierkegaard, the primordial, existential context of Kantian moral reflection. For the prophetic Kantian, transcendental reflection arises only in response to what John Dewey will call a problematic situation or to what Peirce calls real doubt, as opposed to the "paper doubts" of merely intellectual reflection. Something is really wrong in the world of experience, and doubt is the real symptom, or indexical sign, of this wrong. From this perspective, Cartesianism is no merely intellectual exercise, but rather a sign of real problems in the scholastic-Church tradition out of which it emerged. A sign of real problems is a call for help, which is, first, a call for someone to take notice-to hear that someone is suffering. It is, second, a call for understanding - for someone to examine the context of the call and to figure out what is really the matter. It is, third, a call for action - for someone to do something to resolve the matter and alleviate the suffering. The problem with Cartesianism is not that it is an errant claim, for Cartesianism is at bottom not a claim at all, but only a complaint. The problem is, rather, that both Cartesians and anti-Cartesians have misread the Cartesian complaint as a claim, rather than as a sign of suffering. They have therefore misdirected their energies to examining the content of the claim and its logical implications, rather than to hearing the message of the complaint and searching for its source. Until that search is completed, the suffering remains, generating more misdirected energy, which means more Cartesian and anti-Cartesian discourse.

The first formal moment of rabbinic semiotics is, in Peirce's terms, a pragmatic one-to read the claims of Cartesian inquiry as indices of as yet unidentified, real problems. For Peirce, a sign points to its object, or meaning for some context of interpretation, or interpretant. In these terms, the pragmatist reads Cartesian inquiry as a sign whose interpretant is a traditional (for example, scholastic-Church) system of religious-moral-natural discourse, and whose meaning is that some transformation is called for in that system. In Cohen's terms, the first moment of rabbinic semiotics is prophetic - to read the claims of moral inquiry as responses to actual suffering, on the model of prophetic responses to suffering. In Cohen's work, this moment is informed by a logic of correlation, in which the activity of the sufferer as Other is correlated with the activity of the system of traditional discourse within which he or she suffers. In the terms of rabbinic semiotics, the correlative pair is asymmetrical, since the activity of suffering is an indexical sign whose meaning lies in some transformation of the traditional discourse. This asymmetry goes unnoticed as long as the Cartesian complaint is misread as a claim.3 Who, then, reads it as a complaint? The prophetic Kantian may not find his or her place within either the Cartesian activity or its traditional correlative. There must then be some third, interpreting activity with respect to which these correlatives display their asymmetry. Rabbinic semiotics functions as such a third.

Martin Buber's Transcendental Biblicism: Cohen situated the transcendental project in its existential context, but he did not yet disclose the relational or verbal character ofthat context. Cohen correctly resituated the transcendental project in the philosopher's compassionate response to suffering and correctly situated that suffering within the confines of a heteronomous tradition that failed to offer such a response. However, the tradition's heteronomy lies only in that failure, by virtue of which its discourse lacks words to describe what is wrong. Without such words, it cannot take note of the sufferer and it falls out of relationship with him or her. The tradition is thus not heteronomous per se, but heteronomous in its relation to the sufferer. There are two possible forms of relation between a tradition and one who suffers. The tradition may take note of the sufferer only within the terms already available in its discourse. In this case, we say the tradition relates to the suffer as an "I" relates to an "it": that is, to an other who is identified only in terms of a pre-existing vocabulary. Or, the tradition may include in its vocabulary terms whose definition can be completed only by the sufferer, or at least only with respect to the sufferer. In this case, we say the tradition relates to the sufferer as an "I" relates to a

"Thou": that is, to an other in whose presence alone the I acquires its complete identity.

Buber (1878-1965) was a student of Cohen's at the University of Berlin, with interests in Kant, Nietzsche and Jewish mysticism. Co-founder, with Rosenzweig, of Die Freier Judisches Lehrhaus in Frankfurt a.M., he became Professor of the Science of Religion and Jewish Ethics at the University of Frankfurt, before leaving Germany in 1938 to settle in Jerusalem. There, he became Professor of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University and a leading activist on behalf of a bi-national Jewish-Arab state. Buber wrote on Hasidism, on the Bible (with Rosenzweig, he co-translated the Hebrew Bible into German), on Judaism and Christianity, on Zionism and socialism and on philosophy. His most influential work was I and Thou, a philosophy of the "primary words" on which relationship and dialogue are founded.

Buber's examination of the primary words emerged from out of a philosophic complaint of which his loving critique of Cohen is illustrative. Buber continued Cohen's critique of a priori ethics, indicting once again Plato's belief "that he possesses an abstract and general, a timeless concept of truth" (Cohen, 1956a, 238), in favor of Isaiah's conviction of his own inadequacy. Unlike the philosopher, the prophet "always receives only one message for one situation," which is "why after thousands of years, his words still address the changing situations in history" (Ibid.). Buber saw in Cohen "a philosopher who has been overwhelmed by faith" (1956b, 100), yet he feared that, while "renouncing the God of the philosophers in his innermost heart," Cohen did not fully confess this renunciation consciously. Cohen therefore retained a tendency to construct in a philosophy of faith "the last home for the God of the philosophers" (101). Buber identified this persistently "philosophic" tendency with Kant's contradictory attempt to acknowledge God's reality while also identifying God with an idea of reason. In the end, the notion of ideality triumphed; lacking love of God and thus personal relation with God, Kant bequeathed to Cohen a God-idea whose "only place is within a system of thought" (Ibid.). Buber's alternative to Kant was not strictly skeptical or fideistic. It was, rather, to replace the a priori of abstract ideas with "the a priori of relation" (1962, 96), which is to discover both that reasoning about ethics is reasoning about relations and that we reason, in the first place, from out of concrete relations. These relations, furthermore, are engendered by language, and the a priori of relation is the primacy of words. According to Buber, we reason from out of words that establish the relations in terms of which reasoning has meaning. Among these relations are elemental ones, engendered by the primary words, I-Thou, I-It.4

Buber's description of the primary words introduces the second, phenomenological moment of rabbinic semiotics. This is to reconceive the synthetic a priori as what he called an "a priori of relation"("Im anfang ist die Beziehung," 1962, 90; "In the beginning is relation," 1960, 68). In Buber's analytic vocabulary, the terms for the primary words refer to contrasting ways of symbolizing the interpretive activity through which human beings endow the elements of experience with meaning. In the terms of rabbinic semiotics, these terms are redescribed as what Peirce called genuine symbols. In Peirce's semiotic, the symbol refers to one of three ways in which a sign may refer to its object:

An icon is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such Object actually exists or not. . . .

An index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object. . . .In so far as the Index is affected by its Object, it necessarily has some Quality in common with the Object, and it is in respect to these that it refers to the Object. . . .

A symbol is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law . . . which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object. It is thus itself a general type, or law. . . . Not only is it general itself, but the Object to which it refers is of a general nature. (CP 2.247-9, 1903)

Examples of symbols, which Peirce called "genuine" signs, are words, propositions and arguments. Peirce labeled "genuine symbols" those whose objects are themselves symbols and, thus, whose interpretants are symbols or laws, such as a law of cognition, or a process of interpretation.

"I-Thou" and "I-IT" refer to two types of genuine symbol, whose difference may be redescribed formally in terms of the completeness of the symbol. According to Peirce, a symbol is determinate "in respect to any character which inheres in it or is (universally and affirmatively) predicated of it, as well as in respect to the negative of such characters,"(CP 5.447) or if its "meaning would leave 'no latitude of interpretation, ' " (CP 5.448 n. 1) or if it "indicates an otherwise known individual". Otherwise, the sign is indeterminate-describing in some way, but not completely, "how an individual intended is to be selected" (CP 5.505). Of indeterminate signs, there are two kinds: the vague, or indefinite, and the general, or hypothetical. For Peirce, the general "turns over to the interpreter the right to complete the determination as [s]he pleases" (CP 5.448, n.l 1906). If the first subject of a proposition of two or more subjects is general, the proposition is called universal: the general indicates the character of a merely possible individual, representing the synthesis of a multitude of subjects (CP 5.155,1903). The vague, on the other hand, "reserves for some other possible sign or experience the function of completing the determination" (CP 5.505). If the first subject of a complex proposition is vague, the proposition is called particular: the vague denotes some of the characters of an existent individual, representing the synthesis of a multitude of predicates (CP 5.155). According to Peirce's definitions, genuine symbols must, then, be indeterminate. We may use the term complete symbol to refer to a genuine symbol which signifies its object generally, that is, non-vaguely. The complete symbol withholds no information from the interpreter, offering rules for the construction of a possible universe which the interpreter may enact as he or she sees fit. We may use the term incomplete symbol to refer to a genuine symbol which signifies its object vaguely. The incomplete symbol withholds essential information from the interpreter and therefore appeals to the interpreter to wait and listen for more, which is either to depend upon the source of the symbol for further instruction or to engage in some action to elicit more information.

In these terms, "I-It" refers to the class of complete symbols, each of which abstracts selective elements of experience and then adopts these elements as predicates of universal propositions, extended over a general class of possible subjects. Consider, for example, the case of the sufferer. A tradition whose discourse was informed only by complete symbols would identify the sufferer as one of a class of possible subjects whose suffering would be recognizable only if its characters fell within the range of universal propositions already available in the tradition. "I -Thou," on the other hand, refers to the class of incomplete symbols, each of which interprets the elements of experience by way of particular propositions, whose vague subjects indicate that experience has some particular meaning but that the meaning is as yet incompletely disclosed. The conditions for disclosure are not yet available, but may become available should the interpreter re-engage the experience in ways that are as yet merely suggested in the particular propositions. In the case of the sufferer, a tradition whose discourse was informed by incomplete symbols would identify the sufferer as an individual whose suffering is not yet fully recognizable. The incomplete symbols would recommend processes of interaction or dialogue with the sufferer through which the characters of this suffering might be displayed. "I-Thou" words are therefore performative as well as representational, linking experience, speaker/text and listener/interpreter in an interpretive relationship which bears meaning rather than merely representing or pointing to it. Thus Buber writes that, by way of the word-pair I-It, I can claim to experience something out there, but by way of the pair I-Thou, I participate in a relationship of which experience is itself an implicit element (Buber, 1962, 80-81 = 1970, 55-56). "I-Thou" words, or incomplete symbols, enable the interpreter to enter into relationship with the sufferer, to hear the sufferer, to learn what the character of suffering may be and, only thereby, to respond to the sufferer. This response engages both the interpreter and the sufferer in the reparative activity that gives definition to their tradition's discourse and, thereby, reforms it.

According to Buber, Cohen correctly recognized that the biblical prophets, and not the philosophers, have introduced "I-Thou" words into the tradition of western philosophic discourse. Prophecy was not the only possible source of such words, but it was a paradigmatic source, as the prophets' responses to suffering transformed the complete symbols of their inherited tradition into incomplete symbols, responsive in their very definition to the testimonies of the sufferers. In prophetic discourse, incomplete symbolization emerged ex nihilo, that is, out of a context-specific negation of traditional discourse, transforming the un-hearing words of a set tradition into the hearing words of a living dialogue. Thus,

Isaiah . . . knew and said [as Plato knew and said] that the unjust are destroyed by their own injustice. And he knew and said that a just man would rule as the faithful lieutenant of God. But [unlike Plato] he knew nothing and said nothing of the inner structure of that dominion. He had no idea; he had only a message. He had no institution to establish; he had only to proclaim. His proclamation was in the nature of criticism and demands.

His criticism and demands are directed toward making the people and their prince recognize the reality of the invisible sovereignty. When Isaiah uses the word ha-Melekh [the king] it is not in the sense of a theological metaphor, but in that of a political, constitutional concept. But this sovereignty of God which he propounded is the opposite of the sovereignty of priests, which is commonly termed theocracy and which has very properly been described as "the most unfree form of society," for it is "unfree through the abuse of the Highest knowable to man" (Stein, 1856). None but the powerless can speak the true King's will with regard to the state, and remind both the people and the government of their common responsibility toward this will. The powerless man can do this because he breaks through the illusions of current history and recognizes potential crises (Buber, 1948).

The Bible thus acquires its significance in western tradition as the paradigmatic record of prophetic utterances, capable of transforming complete into incomplete symbols. As applied to the transcendental project, this would mean not only taking note of compassion as the condition of ethics, but also transforming the universal propositions of a persistently Cartesian ethics into the particular propositions of a prophetic transcendentalism. Thus, for the Cartesian-Kantian, a compassionate response to suffering would have to be described through the conjunction of a determinate and a universal proposition: "This person is suffering," and "I feel moved to (or I ought to) care for people who suffer. " In this case, we have two complete symbols, of a suffering person and of a person who feels for (or who is obliged to act on behalf of) sufferers, but we have no way of accounting for the relation between the two. How does the second person come to perceive the first as sufferer? This is the platonic mystery of participation.5 Following Buber, however, we would have to replace the conjunction of two complete symbols, displayed in determinate and universal propositions, with a single, incomplete symbol, displayed in a particular proposition: "This is an occasion which 'moves-me-to-care-for-the-suffering-I-see.'" The formal move here is to replace the monadic or simple word "suffering" with the relational word "moves-me-to-care-for-the-suffering-I- see." To borrow a term from Peirce's logic of relatives, the particular proposition would then appear as the conjunction of a relational predicate (an occasion which moves-me-to . . .) with an indexical sign (this) that points to the event of encounter in which this predicate is displayed or activated. There is still mystery here, but not one of participation. The mystery is only how the relational predicate enters into the respondent's discourse. Since this predicate is a formal name for the virtue of compassion, we may call this the mystery of how the virtue of compassion may be learned. If Buber answers that the virtue is already available in biblical discourse, we are left with the question: how does biblical discourse enter into the practice of individual members of the tradition of western philosophic discourse?6

Franz Rosenzweig's Transcendental Rabbinicistn: Buber correctly situated the transcendental project in the relational and verbal context of the philosopher's compassionate response to suffering. He showed that this response is informed, paradigmatically, by the biblical prophets' transformation of complete

into incomplete symbols. However, the complete symbols of western, or Cartesian, philosophy will not be comparably transformed merely by transcendental claims about the biblical antecedents that are implicit in but also veiled by those symbols. This transformation must find its own context in the individual philosopher's compassionate response to his or her own suffering. This response is predicated on the philosopher's act of faith, warmed by the experience of love and guided by rules of response that are unavailable in the explicit traditions of western philosophy. These rules will be found only in the particular tradition of biblical interpretation in which the philosopher has been socialized. For Jewish philosophers, this is, broadly speaking, the tradition of rabbinic interpretation of Scripture. Through transcendental reflection on the rules of rabbinic interpretation, the Jewish philosopher discovers the rules that will transform his or her philosophic practice.

Cut short by illness (he lived from 1886-1929), Franz Rozenzweig's brief career as Jewish philosopher serves for many Jewish thinkers today as a paradigm of teshuvah, or of "return." Rosenzweig was assimilated in his youth into German cultural life. But, in his 27th year, he claimed to have experienced something at a Yom Kippur service that led him to abandon his plans to convert to Christianity and to return, instead, to the Judaism he had not yet practiced. In Berlin, he studied with Cohen and became a close friend and colleague of Buber's. While in the army in 1918, he composed his magnum opus, The Star of Redemption, a Jewish transformation of Hegelian philosophy, in dialogue with Goethe, Plato, Cohen, Kant, Schelling and many other medieval and modern thinkers. He then directed Die Freier Judisches Lehrhaus in Frankfurt as long as his health allowed and composed numerous works on philosophy, religion and Judaism.

In The Star, Rosenzweig introduced the conditions for transforming transcendental idealism into a transcendental pragmatism - or what I am labelling a transcendental rabbinicism. For Rosenzweig, idealism sought to repair suffering " 'on the spot' so to speak" by redescribing the world, the ALL, in terms of an intelligibility that would preclude such suffering. This, however, is to deny the suffering, rather than repair it. "All cognition of the All originates in death, in the fear of death. Philosophy takes it upon itself to throw off the fear of things earthly, to rob death of its poisonous sting. . . . All that is mortal lives in this fear of death. . . . But philosophy denies these fears" (1971: 3). To deny the fears of death is to deny the singularity of the one who dies. "Philosophy has to rid the world of what is singular" (1971: 4), reducing death to a nothing, rather than redeeming it. This means that idealistic philosophy has to reduce to nothing the singularity of the philosopher him or herself. The philosopher's own suffering, however much it is displayed in philosophy, cannot become the subject of philosophic concern.

"Love," however, "is strong as death" (Song of Songs, cited in 1971: 156). It takes note of the singularity of suffering, rather than denying it, and redeems it on terms that suffering itself delivers. Love comes from an other to the sufferer, entering the finitude of philosophy's totalizing discourse as a revelation. But if the revelation were wholly from an other, how would it speak to the beloved's singularity? For Rosenzweig, love's revelation is a second-revelation. The first revelation was already there at the creation; it is concealed now in the beloved's suffering, and the second revelation comes, without positing anything new, as "the opening of something locked" (161). God's love, which "loves where it loves and whom it loves" (164) is an act, not an idea. It is an act of reawakening a relationship that was concealed by suffering, rather of predicating something new of the sufferer. The primary act of the lover is simply to call for love itself, to say "Love me!" and, through the imperative voice of this call, to elicit a reciprocal act by the beloved: an admission of love (178). This admission is both liberating and painful. It is liberating because it brings the beloved out of his or her separateness; but it is painful because it brings with it the acknowledgement that one was indeed separate: in need of love, but not yet called to acknowledge the need. As Robert Gibbs writes, this acknowledgment is confession:

For Rosenzweig this confession is itself the process of atonement [Versöhnung], which the soul

undertakes in the presence of the lover's love. I can only come to terms with my own false self-reliance, my own illusion of completeness without love, in the presence of my lover's demand to love. And as I speak my way through this process of accepting my past as mine, as myself, even including the self that has heard the command to love, I recognize the past is not being held against me. (Gibbs, 1992, 73).

In the pragmatic transformation of philosophy, it is this confession, alone, that replaces Cartesian anxiety with the expectation of help and thus with a demand for change. It is the discovery that I (as ego cogito) am not I (who speaks "I"), but am rather an indexical sign of some as yet undefined disturbance in some as yet undefined "other" (other, that is, than I thought I was). The discovery of this "new" I, the I as signifier, corresponds to the confessing 'Is surprising trust that this other is "very close to it" (Deut. 30:14), even though the other at this point lacks additional identity. "I" am, therefore, no longer alone, with the infinite burden of finding some new foundation on which to stand and to act, but I am still with others, of some tradition, only not happily so. I have real but finite problems that demand real attention and real, but finite, changes. "I" am an index of real suffering, but not a symbol of ways of really alleviating that suffering. The other's love, on the other hand, is such a symbol, whose intrusion into the privacy of the I may, if it is received (and this receptivity is as contingent as grace) stimulate a process of redemptive interpretation, a reparative semiosis. The engine of this semiosis is a dialogue between the other's love (as symbol) and the I (as interpretant). As the I is transformed through this dialogue, so is the meaning of love transformed with respect to it.

Paradigmatically (and the paradigm, of course, oversimplifies), love first engenders confession and the recognition of one's own inadequacy. For the confessing I, love may then acquire new meaning as a sign of hope: the other may bring assistance. To look for help is to pray. Belief in prayer "comes to rest in the divine proximity of unconditional trust, with whose strength God endowed it in that 'Thou are mine' of his which is grounded in the past. But its life remains in unrest. For that which it possesses as the grounding of its belief in the world is not the whole world, but only a piece of the world" (1971: 184). To pray is, thus, both to trust that help will come from the very tradition in which one suffers and also to complain that that very tradition has caused one's suffering. In prayer, the I is no longer mere I, but also an individual member of a tradition, retaining its individuality as sign of that tradition's own inadequacies. Community is the place where the inadequacies of a particular tradition becomes the subject of dialogue among an assembly of individuals, each of whom knows what it means both to live with that tradition and to suffer in it. The repair of tradition is "the common labor" (343) of such an assembly, and dialogue is the engine of repair. For the individual who prays, love is a symbol of community; for the individual in community, love is a symbol of reparative work.

Rosenzweig completed his Star with a Phenomenology of the works of love in the Jewish community: worship, song, loving kindness, Sabbath - all of them ways in which the "everyday of life" is infused with the law of love. Law is the commanding modality of the other's love, recalling individuals to their membership in community and recalling community to its reparative work.

As displayed in Rosenzweig's work, the third, formal moment of rabbinic semiotics is a semiotic one, per se. Here, the transcendental work of philosophy is transformed by the philosopher's own conversion: from individual inquirer to member of a community of inquirers for whom the individual's cognition of "the All" is an index of suffering and thus of the community's obligation to repair it. The reparative work of this community remains transcendental, as a search for the conditions and rules of its own work. But the transcendental project is now reinterpreted as a context-specific dialogue, whose discourse is "universal" only with respect to the class of possible members of the community itself. In Rosenzweig's terms, the logical thinking of the community of western philosophers is thereby transformed into "speech thinking" (Sprachdenken), whose rules are displayed in the "grammar" of a reparative dialogue, rather than in the a priori categories of a universal canon.7 But if the western philosophers have previously done their thinking logically, from where will they learn the rules of

speech thinking?

In The Star, the oiice-idealist philosopher, in this case Rosenzweig, adopts the categories of Jewish communal life as interpretants with respect to which idealist discourse, as a sign of suffering, will find its reparative meaning. Rosenzweig's own speech-thinking thus emerges in a dialogue between a philosophic sufferer and a Jewish, or rabbinic, redeemer. If, as suggested earlier, however, the redeeming or loving other belongs to the sufferer's tradition, then the sufferer must be, at bottom, a Jew or, more generally, a Jew-or-Christian: philosophic idealists are Jews or Christians who have forgotten that the tradition they are complaining about, and thus reforming, is not "philosophy" (which is not a tradition but an event within a tradition), but Judaism or Christianity. The business of The Star is to help idealists remember who they are. Until they remember, their idealism remains ineffectual, because it is disconnected from its reparative context. For Jews, idealist philosophy becomes reconnected when it contributes to the work of repairing the categories of Jewish communal life. In effect, then, Rosenzweig's speech-thinking must bring into dialogue two sufferers and not just one. The rabbinic redeemer reminds the philosopher of his or her communal identity. But the philosophic sufferer must also remind the redeemer that all is not well in that community: Cartesian doubt emerged in the first place from out of the Jewish-or-Christian community as a sign of its inadequacies. The categories of Jewish communal life need to be repaired as well as remembered. The Star introduces those repairs in the very act of remembering. But, attentive more to the philosopher's suffering than to the rabbis', The Star may not describe these repairs self-consciously. Rosenzweig thus places a Phenomenology of Jewish communal life in the service of a reparative semiotic, but he has not yet offered a semiotic ofthat communal life itself. Technically, this means that he has abstracted categories of the a priori possibility of Jewish communal life, but these categories remain mere icons ofthat life and not yet genuine signs, or symbols. (see above, on Buber). Only symbols, as opposed to icons or indices, can serve adequately as interpretants of a reparative semiotic. To transform his icons into symbols, Rosenzweig would have to perform for the Jew the service he performed for the philosopher: identifying the intellectual assertions of Jewish scholars as indices of as yet unrepaired problems in Jewish communal life and locating, in rabbinic semiotics, a method of reading those indices as signs of a reparative dialogue.

Max Kadushin's Rabbinic Semiotics: Rabbinic literature of the Talmudic period has generated the paradigmatic discourse of Jewish communal life. The discourse is paradigmatically midrashic, which means that it presents judgments about everyday conduct as interpretations of the performative implications of Scriptural discourse for life in some contemporary J eivish community. For the rabbinic interpreter, Scriptural texts function as genuine, or incomplete, symbols that acquire definition only in their performative interpretations. Each such interpretation is occasioned by some crisis within the community, which crisis functions as an indexical sign of some inadequacy in the community's rules of conduct. For the rabbinic interpreter, these rules constitute "Jewish tradition" as it is realized in this community at this time. The work of interpretation is to recommend some way of repairing the communal crisis by reforming some aspect of the tradition.

The method of repair is, in its first moment, to reassert the authority of Scripture - the Torah in particular-as the source of all rules of repair. The second moment is to reassert the privileged function of rabbinic literature (the Mishnah, Talmuds and Midrash)8 as the paradigmatic illustration of how Scripture is to be interpreted as a source of such rules. The third and definitive moment is to identify those specific rules of repair that are displayed in the rabbinic literature and that will contribute successfully to repairing the present crisis. Within the rabbinic literature, these rules are usually signified (technically speaking, they are iconized) by any of a collection of rabbinic value-terms, each of which refers to a particular rabbinic "value concept," or virtue. The fourth moment is to apply these rules to making appropriate judgments about how to reform the communal tradition. In such judgments, the rabbinic interpreter substitutes the rabbinic value concepts for whatever existing value concepts have, in the interpreter's opinion, inadequately served the contemporary community. (Technically

speaking, the interpreter substitutes contextspecific tokens of the rabbinic value concepts. Were the resulting judgments to be parsed in a predicate calculus, the tokens would appear as relative predicates of the judgments; specific contexts of action would appear as the subjects or indices of the judgments.)

At the time of his death, Max Kadushin (1895-1980) was "Visiting Professor in Psychology of Religion" at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Educated in the United States in the traditions of both rabbinic Judaism and the western University, Kadushin emerged from the latter dissatisfied with contemporary, Orthodox Judaism's resistance to reform (or what the German Jewish philosophers might call heteronomy). Searching within modern social science and philosophy for the intellectual tools which would enable him to identify Judaism's capacity for reform, he allied himself with Mordecai Kaplan and was one of the early exponents of Kaplan's Reconstructionism. With Kaplan, he was attentive to the powers of change and process within rabbinic Judaism and argued for radical reformation within the context of the Conservative variety of observant Judaism.

Like the German-Jewish philosophers before him, however, Kadushin was also suspicious of essentialist or a priorist tendencies in modern social science and philosophy, which tendencies he considered symptoms of dogmatic individualism. He believed that rabbinic Judaism was in its indigenous patterns anti-dogmatic, social and particularly attentive to the integration of ethics into the details of everyday life and experience. He was thus attracted to some of his contemporaries' pragmatic and organicist criticisms of classical and modern apriorisms. At the same time, he observed that pragmatists and organicists also displayed these a prioristic tendencies. He judged that, at a certain point, Kaplan went this way, betraying his organicist commitments in favor of a dogmatic and idiosyncratic philosophy of organism. Eventually, Kadushin parted company with Kaplan's Reconstructionist movement and sought to construct a place for himself within Conservative Judaism, with its dual allegiances to rabbinic Judaism and to modern, but non a prioristic modes of reform.

Through five book-length, studies, authored between 1932 and 1969,9 Kadushin sought to identify rabbinic Judaism's indigenous rules for reform. He argued that these rules constitute Judaism's "non-philosophic" (by which he meant non-a prioristic) rationality, which he labeled the rabbis' "organic thinking." "Organic thinking" functioned in Kadushin's work as an analogue of what Rosenzweig called "speech thinking":

Our theory of organic thinking bears the same relation to the concrete complex of rabbinic theology as grammar does to a language, and, like grammar, can best be grasped through the actual analysis of a good sample ofthat literature. The analogy-it is probably much more than that -goes even further. Just as the rules of grammar always have reference to a specific language, so the implications of the theory of organic thinking have reference to a particular organic complex. (1938, 14-15)

This "organic complex" is what Kadushin considered the collection of rules of reform that constitutes the religion of rabbinic Judaism, lending rational order and performative force to rabbinic literature and, thereby, to the discourses of Jewish communal life. Lacking the vocabularies of pragmatism and semiotics, Kadushin struggled somewhat to identify the following stages of his analysis and to convince his readers that he was not engaged in some idiosyncratic form of eisegesis.

He argued that, while the rabbis displayed their rules of reform through all of their literary and institutional productions, they displayed them most self-consciously in the homiletical literature of rabbinic Midrash. This literature is comprised, for the most part, of collections of homiletical exegeses of Scriptural texts,10 of which one example is this interpretation of a passage in Jeremiah:

In the school of R. Ishmael it is taught, "[Behold my word is like fire, declares the Lord,] and like a hammer that shatters rocks (Jer. 23.29). Just as a hammer breaks into several shivers, so too one

scriptural passage issues as several meanings (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 34a).

Illustrating the theme of this particular exegesis, a given collection of Midrash might include several, often conflicting interpretations of particular Scriptural verses. Kadushin noted, for example, that in the midrash Mekhilta,

there are numerous consecutive opinions accounting for the crossing of the Red Sea. Following is a partial list of these opinions and their authors: Because of Jerusalem -R. Ishmael; God only fulfilled the promise He had made their fathers (the Patriarchs) - anonymous. . . ; because they observed the rite of circumcision - Simeon of Teman. . . ; because they (Israel) trusted in MeRabbi (Judah the Prince). . . . (1972: 74-75).

To uncover the grammar of rabbinic practice, Kadushin undertook the equivalent of a pragmatic analysis of these exegeses. He reinterpreted them as performative utterances which displayed the ultimate behavioral norms of rabbinic Judaism through the occasion of Scriptural exegesis.

He labeled each discrete exegesis a "haggadic statement,"11 by which he meant a discrete performative utterance. Without using these terms, he conceived of the haggadic statements as propositions whose relative predicates are collections of what he called "value-concepts" and whose subjects are what he calls "cognitive concepts." He defined "cognitive concepts" as the referents of "terms we use in order to describe whatever we perceive through the senses," such as "death," "table" or "angel."12 He defined "value-concepts"13 as the referents of terms used to represent fundamental or irreducible elements in the valuational life of the rabbinic community. Examples are "God's justice"(middat hadin), "God's mercy" (middat harakhamim), "Acts of lovingkindness" (gemilut hasadini), and "God's spoken word" (dibbur). Kadushin's definitive claim was that the logic of rabbinic thinking is displayed in the manner in which these concepts relate to one another and in the way each one of them exhibits what he calls its "drive to concretization" - that is, the way it guides specific acts of judgment. He said that acts of midrashic interpretation, culminating in haggadic statements, are paradigmatic of such acts. In these statements, the cognitive concepts indicate the occasions with respect to which the Midrash exhibits some aspect of the complex of value-concepts. In Kadushin's illustration from the Mekhilta, for example, the rabbinic accounts of the crossing of the Red Sea are haggadic statements which may be analyzed, performatively, as propositions in which various value-concepts are predicated of an occasion called "the crossing of the Red Sea." We would thus have such propositions as "The crossing. . . exhibits the Merit of the Fathers (zekhut avot)" (anonymous), or "The crossing . . . exhibits Divine Justice (middat hadin) in response to Observances (mitzvot)" (Simeon), and so on.14

Kadushin's analysis of the value-concept requires a slight modification before it can serve the purposes of rabbinic semiotics. Kadushin has been justifiably criticized for interpreting the rabbinic literature non-diachronically and thus exaggerating the stability of the rabbinic value-concepts (see Cohon, 1954; Fox, 1964; Sarason, 1990; Avery-Peck, 1990). Another way to state the criticism is that Kadushin minimized the performative character of his own analysis: as if, contrary to his own methodology, the value-concepts represented "essences" of the rabbinic mind, rather than ways through which he, as a rabbinic semiotician, may conceptualize the performative force of rabbinic exegesis. Once corrected, Kadushin's claim could be restated as follows. According to the interpretations of rabbinic semioticians, rabbinic exegesis conceptualizes the performative force of the Scriptural word, and the value-concepts are icons or selective representations ofthat activity of conceptualization. According to this claim, semiotic interpretation of rabbinic exegesis describes itself as analogous to rabbinic interpretation of the Scriptural word, and it describes the Scriptural "word" itself as an interpretive activity, of which semiotic inquiry as well as rabbinic exegesis are interpretants. What Kadushin called the "value-concept" would then represent the product of an attempt to arrest this interpretive activity -to conceptualize it, to iconize it, or to write down for a particular community at a particular time the

performative force of the Scriptural word, which is what the word is urging the community to do or what, therefore, God wants of it. Described this way, value-concepts are incomplete symbols. They symbolize incompletely, for one, because they exhibit only selective features of the Scriptural word and thus display its complete meaning only with respect to those features not yet exhibited; for two, because their meaning is not independent of what this meaning prompts the interpreting community to do in the future.

As displayed in Kadushin's work, the fourth, formal moment of rabbinic semiotics is a hermeneutical one. This is to depart, for a "moment," from self-consciously philosophic concerns, to address the context-specific concerns of one's Jewish community. Here, the transcendental project of moral reasoning functions as a way of responding compassionately to those members of a Jewish community who suffer because their needs are not met within the confines of the community's practices. To respond to this suffering, the philosopher-rwm -rabbinic semotician divides the community's practices into two classes of possible rules of conduct: heteronomous rules, so named because they fail to respond to individual needs; and redemptive, or pragmatic, rules, so named because they offer ways of reforming the heteronomous rules, by bringing them into dialogue with the individual sufferers. For the rabbinic semiotician, the redemptive rules are symbolized by words of Scripture, interpreted, by way of the rabbinic midrash, as "I-Thou" words or incomplete symbols. In the semiotician's performative interpretations of midrash, these symbols function as value concepts, or as the relative predicates of context-specific judgments about how to reform rules of conduct in the Jewish community. To reform these rules of conduct is, in some finite way, to reinterpret the performative meaning of Jewish tradition as well as to redefine the reparative force of the redemptive words of Scripture. It is, thus, to contribute to the semiotic process that links the Bible's descriptions of virtuous activity (as symbol) to the repair of some context-specific suffering (as the symbol's meaning), by way of the mediating discourse of rabbinic Scriptural interpretation (as the symbol's interpretant).

In these terms, Kadushin devoted most of his writings to describing the relation between Biblical symbol and rabbinic interpretant. Kadushin was therefore less attentive to the pragmatic force of rabbinic interpretation, or how it reformed rules of conduct in some particular community, and more attentive to the hermeneutical form or logic of rabbinic interpretation -how it preserved the textual character of its symbols in the process of reforming their meaning. Peirce argued that a sign relates to its interpretant in one of three ways:

A Rheme [appearing, for example, in a relative predicate] is a sign which, for its Interpretant, is a Sign of qualitative possibility. . . .

A Dicent Sign [for example, a proposition] is a Sign which, for its Interpretant, is a Sign of actual existence. . .

An Argument is a Sign which, for its Interpretant, is a Sign of law. . . . The Interpretant of an Argument represents it as an instance of a general class of Arguments, which class on the whole will always tend toward the truth. . . .("Syllabus," CP 2.250-253, c. 1903)

Peirce's classification helps make sense of the fact that Kadushin devoted most of his efforts to describing the rabbinic value concepts (the rhemata, or relative predicates of rabbinic judgments) and the rabbis' value-conceptual rule of interpretation (the logic of rabbinic arguments). In Peirce's terms, Kadushin was interested, selectively, in the cognitive aspects of rabbinic interpretations as signs of qualitative possibility and of law: in other words, how it is possible to formalize rabbinic rules of conduct and the rules of interpretation that the rabbis employed to identify and legitimate these rules.

Although I have no room to elaborate here, readers may want to read this cognitive emphasis as a sign

of Kadushin's own Cartesian tendencies. Like a Cartesian, he may have masked the pragmatic context of his inquiry: his own suffering within a heteronomous practice of Jewish tradition. If so, his inquiry may serve as a mere index, but not yet as a symbol, of the reforms that might have repaired his suffering. His study of value concepts suggests that the rabbinic tradition offers ways of identifying its own rules of conduct. His study of value-conceptual analysis suggests that it is possible to formalize the ways in which the rabbinic tradition derived these rules from antecedent rules. But why do we want to know these things about the rabbinic tradition?

In this section, I have attributed to Kadushin the pragmatic theory that the rabbis identified their rules of conduct for the sake of reforming them and that they reformed them for the sake of responding to the needs of those who suffer within their communities. In fact, the pragmatic theory is only implicit in Kadushin's writings, and it is my own claim, and not his, that his value conceptual theory works best when this pragmatism is made explicit (and when, thereby, his Cartesianism is repaired). The rule for making implicitly pragmatic claims explicit is not to be found in his work in any overt way,15 but only in the confessional dimension of the German-Jewish tradition of philosophy. Reread in terms of that tradition, Kadushin's theory of value concepts offered him a way of redeeming his Cartesian doubts by resituating his transcendental rationality within rabbinic tradition. He discovered that, rather than excluding such rationality in the manner of a strictly heteronomous tradition, rabbinic Judaism opened up a place for it within its indigenous hermeneutic. If he masked the philosophic dimension of his thinking,16 it was most likely out of fear of reintroducing Cartesian dichotomizations along with his philosophy. The German-Jewish philosophers sought to purge their inquiry of such dichotomizations, but, as suggested above, their efforts called for a moment of hermeneutical inquiry of the kind Kadushin undertook but they did not. They may have identified the pragmatic force of hermeneutical inquiry, but he identified the hermeneutical interpretant of transcendental inquiry: the intraconimunal and intratextual setting of reparative or redemptive reasoning.

The rule of rabbinic semiotics

As practiced today, Jewish philosophy is emerging from the transcendental (Kantian-Cartesian) paradigm of its German-Jewish antecedents to test out a variety of hermeneutical paradigms, based broadly in the interpretation of texts and of communal practices. My own hunch is that, after an extended period of experimentation, American Jewish philosophers will tend to settle on a family of related paradigms that are neither strictly texthermeneutical nor transcendental, but something in-between. The purpose of this essay has been to experiment with one such paradigm, labeled "rabbinic semiotics." The paradigm is constructed to provide a rule for bringing transcendental and texthermeneutical discourses into dialogue. Each of what I have labeled the "moments" of rabbinic semiotics provides a way of defining this rule from the perspective of a given philosopher, whose work is at the same time redefined in the interest of this rule.

From the perspective of Cohen's "prophetic Kantianism," the rule of rabbinic semiotics is to uncover the pragmatic context of transcendental inquiry: compassionate response to Cartesian doubt. The doubt is redefined as the suffering of an individual within a heteronomous tradition, and the response is relocated in the biblical tradition of prophetic responses to suffering. From the perspective of Buber's "transcendental Biblicism," the rule is to provide a phenomenological description of the form of relationship which allows for such a response to suffering. This is the form of "I-Thou," as illustrated in the interactive relationship between a tradition of incomplete symbols and the individual who is to interpret those symbols. From the perspective of Rosenzweig's "transcendental Rabbinicism," the rule is to reassign this very activity of transcendental inquiry to the community served by such a tradition of incomplete symbols. This is to redescribe the philosopher as one whose individuality, displayed in doubt or suffering, is an index of the community's need to repair its tradition and as one whose transcendental inquiry serves as a logic (or, now, a semiotic) of the rules of repair. Is this, however, to

be a semiotic of Jewish communal life in particular or of a community of philosophers rediscovering the Jewish (-or-Christian) context of their transcendental inquiry? The paradigm of rabbinic semiotics is constructed to respond affirmatively to both sides of this disjunction. Its rule serves, at once, as a prophetic-cum-rabbinic method for repairing the burdens of idealist philosophy and as a transcendental method for repairing the inadequacies of rabbinic communal life. Kadushin's work contributes the final elements needed for defining the rule of rabbinic semiotics in both these ways.

From the perspective of Kadushin's "rabbinic semiotics," the rule is to redescribe the tradition of Jewish practice as a two-tiered collection of complete symbols ("I-It" words or heteronomous rules of conduct) and incomplete symbols ("I-Thou" words or redemptive rules). The latter are to be identified with the value concepts that serve, in rabbinic midrashim, as relative predicates of the rabbis' judgments about the performative meanings of Scriptural texts. These value concepts then serve as icons of the rules that repair both rabbinic communal life and the burdens of idealist philosophy. By what method, however, does the rabbinic semiotician isolate these judgments and abstract their relative predicates? Is the method explicit in the midrashim or does it belong to some extrinsic discipline of philosophic or social science?

It will come as no surprise to the reader that I have adopted Peirce's semiotic as the most precise language for identifying the rule that mediates between rabbinic hermeneutics and transcendental philosophy, contributing human agency to the former and a communo-textual context to the latter. The time has come for me to offer a rationale for privileging Peirce's semiotic in this way. I hope the reader's imagination will serve to extend this sampling of reasons into a more satisfying statement:

1) Kadushin's value conceptual analysis was directly influenced by his readings in Peirce's semiotics and pragmatism, even though, for reasons we can only imagine, he rarely cited Peirce's work directly. Although he framed his analysis in terms of the organicist philosophies of his day, I have found that Kadushin's theory is more clearly defined in the terms of Peirce's semiotic.

2) Peirce's semiotic represents one analytically precise version of the semiotic transformation of Kant's transcendental method that we have also observed in the tradition of German-Jewish philosophy. Peirce and Rosenzweig, in particular, draw on comparable readings of Schelling and of Kant. This is not to suggest that Peirce's semiotic merits a privileged status as interpretant of the German-Jewish tradition, but only that there are warrants for putting it to this use.

3) The hermeneutical tendency of the German-Jewish tradition is to refer transcendental inquiry to its context in a scriptural tradition of prophetic responses to suffering. To the degree that Peirce offered his semiotic as a transcendental logic, this would be to redescribe semiotics as a possible interpretant of the prophetic responses. To see how it could serve as such an interpretant, consider this passage from Exodus:

A long time after that, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites were groaning under the bondage; and their cry for help from the bondage rose up to God. God heard their moaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them. (Ex. 2-3)

According to the midrash, this passage suggests that ". . .God realized he must redeem the [Israelites] for the sake of his name" (Exodus Rabbah 36). In other words, for the redeemer God of Israel, Israel's sufferings were a sign of God's being moved to care for Israel. Or, in semiotic terms, divine compassion appears as the interpretant for which Israel's suffering is a sign whose redemptive meaning is God's-being-moved-to-care-for-this-suffering. One need not, of course, diagram the Scriptural passage in this way. But it would not be unreasonable to diagram it in this way, nor would it be unreasonable,

conversely, to view the passage as a prototype of the rule of semiotics itself. Israel's cry elicits a compassionate response from God. To the extent that the biblical reader comes to expect that cries like this will elicit divine responses like this, then the reader's expectations will display three irreducible elements: an indicative utterance, a response, and the rule of compassion which relates the one to the other. Do these elements not suggest the elements of a triadic semiotic? Given the centrality of the Exodus passage in Jewish and Christian tradition, would we not expect such a semiotic to reappear in at least some traditions of Jewish or Christian philosophy?

4) For Peirce, the scriptural rule of compassion appears as the rule of semiotics or as the pragmatic maxim; for Kadushin, it appears as the rule of value conceptual analysis; for the German-Jewish philosophers, it appears as the rule of relationship, of dialogue or of love. A hermeneutical circle may, then, emerge here, binding some semioticians, some rabbinic hermeneuts and some transcendental philosophers to a single, scriptural rule.

[Footnote]

NOTES

1 Peirce argued that "there is no evidence that we have this faculty [of knowing that we have intuitions uninfluenced by previous cognitions], except that we seem to feel that we have it." Were this feeling to serve as our Archimedean point, then it would itself have to deliver information about its authority as well as about whatever it is about. The very simplicity of feeling, however, precludes its fulfilling such a dual function. For Peirce, the claim that a feeling or an intuition is authoritative must therefore belong to subsequent interpretation, and not to the feeling or intuition itself. (CP 5.214, 1868).

2 I have introduced gender neutral language into Cohen's text.

3 According to Seeskin (1990, passim) Kant veiled the Biblical-Jewish-compassion that introduced the conditions for his moral project.

4 Ich-Du, Ich-Es: Of which word types the tokens are exemplified by such pre-grammatical forms as displayed in the Zulu sentence-word for what we call "far away": "where one cries,'mother I am lost' " (1970, 69-70 = 1962, 90).

5 In each of the propositions, we have a subject and predicate referring to a substance with attributes: the objective substance who suffers, and the subjective substance who feels or is obliged. And in each case, the attribution expresses a subjective intuition: a particular one of feeling or a universal (and in that sense, objective) one of obligation. If the subject possesses a faculty of reasoning, we would also have a third proposition, representing the conclusion of a practical syllogism: "I feel moved to care for this person"; then a fourth proposition, "If moved to act, I will act," and so on, in an infinite regress.

6 Buber's philosophy itself represents one response to this question. I simply find it more helpful to frame the response in terms of Rosenzweig's philosophy.

7 Rosenzweig promoted his speech-thinking as a new paradigm in which "the method of speech replaces the method of thinking maintained in all earlier philosophies." ("An die Stelle der Methode des Denkens, wie sie alle fröhere Philosophie ausgebildet hat, tritt die Methode des Sprechens," 1937, 386). The norms of this new thinking are "grammatical" rather than "logical" (1937, 287-1971, 200), dependent on the temporal, historical, social and personal contexts of speech. This, he asserted, is also the new thinking of Cohen and Buber, as well as of Feuerbach and others. In a fashion reminiscent of Peirce, Rosetizweig noted that this new thinking "actually . . . employ[s] the method of sound common sense as a method of scientific thinking." ("Die neue Philosophie tut da nicht andres, ah daβ si die 'Methode' des gesunden Menschenverstandes zur Methode des wissenschaftlichen Denkens macht," 1937, 384 = 1971, 196.) He did not press his empiricism further, however, to note those everyday or traditional practices in which this thinking is a common-place. Instead, in the manner of modern, Cartesian philosophies, he constructed his model of this thinking out of the elements of what approximates a phenomenological field; the method of argumentation remains transcendental and, ironically, a priori. In other words, he tends to contemplate the possibility or form of speech-thinking more than he examines historically situated cases of it.

8 In Kadushin's work, "Rabbinic Judaism" refers to the system of religious practice recommended by the classic texts of post-Biblical Judaism. These are the Mishnah, the compilation of legal traditions that first appears in the second century of our era; the Talmud, the scholarly-juridical commentary on Mishnah, one version of which appeared in Palestine in the fourth century and another in Babylonia in the fifth century; and the numerous editions of Midrash that appear throughout the rabbinic period, from roughly the first century bce through the sixth century of our era. The term "Midrash," derived from the root d-r-sh, "to search out a Scriptural passage, expound it," denotes interpretation in general, specifically interpretation of the meaning of Scriptural passages.
The term is also used as the title for the literary compilations in which . . . separate interpretations, many of them originally oral, were eventually collected and preserved for us today. (Stern, 1987)
9 Two of these are studies of specific midrashic texts. The three of interest to a general audience are Organic Thinking (1938), Worship and Ethics (1964) and The Rabbinic Mind (1972).
10 Or Midrash aggaaah, as distinguished from legal interpretations, or Midrash lialakhah, as well as from non-exegetical pronouncements and argumentations. Halakhah, denotes "practice, adopted opinion, rule" in general, but specifically, "traditional law"(Jastrow, 1950, 353). Haggadah, from the denominative higid, "to show, to announce, tell,"(871) denotes communication or evidence in general, but specifically, "homiletics, popular lecture." Usually, Haggadah refers to Scriptural interpretation exclusive of legal, i.e., halakhic material.
11 "Haggadic statements are independent entities, containing ideas or describing situations that are complete in themselves. This does not preclude a later author or editor taking an earlier Midrash and adding to it an idea of his own; the earlier Midrash, the original statement, is still, of course a complete entity in itself. On the other hand, when an editor or copyist has left us only a fragment of the Midrash, that fragment, though it may make sense, seldom conveys the point of the Midrash. Only when research has restored the whole passage. . . . does the Midrash yield its real meaning" (1972, 60).
12 These have "the function of rendering object, and qualities too, separable elements in a total situation" thus "enabling us to perceive the objective relations of things and persons to each other" (1972, 69,68). Today, a semiotician might call these indexical and iconic symbols: symbols which merely depict qualities or point to objects but do not represent definite rules of interpretive behavior.
13 "The component 'concept' tells that the values referred to are communicable ideas, that is, ideas that may be shared by the group as a whole; whilst the component 'value' tells that these ideas are nevertheless also, in a degree, personal and subjective, and that they are ideas warmly held" (1972, 68).
14 In the midrashic collection on Genesis (Breshit Rabbah),we find this interpretation of the Scriptural passage, "And God saw everything that He had made; and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1.31):
(a) In the copy of R. [Rabbi] Meir's Torah (Pentateuch) was found written: 'And behold, it was very (me'od) good': and behold, death (maweth) was good. . . .
(c) R. Johanan said: Why was death decreed against the wicked? Because as long as the wicked live they anger the Lord, as it is written, 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words' (Mal. 2.17); but when they die they cease to anger Him as it is written, 'There the wicked cease from raging' (Job 3.17), which means, there the wicked cease from enraging the Holy One blessed be He. . . . (Freedman, 1961)
These are two haggadic statements, whose meaning is disclosed first through a philological and then a value-conceptual analysis. From the text's modern editor we read, "This may mean either that Rabbi Meir's manuscript read maweth ("death") instead of me'od ("very") or that this was inserted as a marginal comment" (Ibid., I, 66-67). In either case, Rabbi Meir has interpreted a textual idiosyncrasy in a way that poses the question, "How can death be good?" As suggested by the second statement, his rabbinic readers infer the answer, "Death is a potent force for repentance" (Ibid.). Discussion of a textual idiosyncrasy, in other words, becomes an occasion for displaying features of a number of value-concepts, among them, Repentance (the wicked repent through their death), The Wicked, Creation (God's creation includes death), God's Justice (the wicked are punished through death), God's Mercy (that punishment removes God's wrath).
15 The rule is implicit in Kadushin's early, reformatory work with Kaplan; in his theory of what he calls

the value concepts' "drive to concretization"; in the way his rabbinic hermeneutic provides a rule for reforming contemporary Jewish communal life; and, finally, in his interest in Peirce's pragmatism and semiotics (see below).
16 Kadushin encountered pragmatic theory by way of his work with Kaplan, but he appears to have to omitted most references to both Kaplan and pragmatism in his published writings. And he made the critique of all forms of philosophizing one of his major themes.

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