

New Europe College  
*Ștefan Odobleja* Program  
Yearbook 2017-2018



---

HOREA AVRAM  
ALEXANDRA BANEU  
LORIN GHIMAN  
MATEI IAGHER  
DRAGOȘ JIPA  
DUMITRU LĂCĂTUȘU  
MIHAI OMETIȚĂ  
DRAGOȘ SDROBIȘ  
MARIAN ZĂLOAGĂ

---

Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

This volume was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for the Scientific Research and Innovation, CNCS/CCCDI – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-BSO-2016-003

### **EDITORIAL BOARD**

Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Andrei PLEȘU, President of the New Europe Foundation, Professor of Philosophy of Religion, Bucharest; former Minister of Culture and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

Dr. Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Rector, Professor of Musicology, National University of Music, Bucharest

Dr. Anca OROVEANU, Academic Coordinator, Professor of Art History, National University of Arts, Bucharest

Dr. Irina VAINOVSKI-MIHAI, Publications Coordinator, Professor of Arab Studies, “Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University, Bucharest

Copyright – New Europe College  
ISSN 1584-0298

New Europe College  
Str. Plantelor 21  
023971 Bucharest  
Romania

[www.nec.ro](http://www.nec.ro); e-mail: [nec@nec.ro](mailto:nec@nec.ro)

Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74



## LORIN GHIMAN

Born in 1977, in Baia Mare

Ph.D., Faculty of History and Philosophy, "Babeş-Bolyai" University,  
Cluj-Napoca

Thesis: *Politics and culture. Reconstructing Walter Benjamin's concept of the political*

Independent researcher and translator (Walter Benjamin, Günther Anders,  
Hans Urs von Balthasar, Boris Groys, etc.)



# THE SURVIVAL AND RE-BIRTH OF AN IDEA: PROLEGOMENA TO A THEORY AND HISTORY OF ‘MESSIANIC FEELINGS’ WITH CONSTANT REFERENCE TO THE GERMAN-JEWISH MODERN MESSIANISM OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

## Abstract

The major issue in the study of German-Jewish modern messianism of the Weimar era is its survival and ‘rebirth’ in spite of its inner contradictions and the failure of the more obvert political forms it allegedly inform. The assessment of the main explanatory hypothesis, from the perspectives of the ‘history of the spirit’ and philosophical history of ideas (Taubes – Scholem, secularisation theorem), the history of ideas and intellectual history lead to the conclusion that neither one is capable of fully accounting for both the survival and reappearance of the cultural and political phenomena, and prompts to a new hypothesis that accommodates the irruptive character of modern messianism and its sensitivity to historical contingencies, the ‘quasi-transcendental’ character (Derrida) and the multiple attitudes circumscribed by its concrete, historic-intellectual shape as “ethos” (Rabinbach). The concept of “existential feeling” is then proposed as a better fit for the explanation of the modern-messianic methodological conundrum. The equation of (modern) messianism with a particular kind of existential feeling (Ratcliffe) could subsequently lead to progress in the research of the latter type of phenomena, a few issues being briefly discussed.

**Keywords:** modern messianism, political messianism, Weimar, existential feeling, intellectual history

## Babel, time and again

In 1913, the young Walter Benjamin entered a long exchange with Ludwig Strauss that the former sees decisive for the layout of his attitude

towards the sudden revivals of Jewish consciousness and spirituality that sent shockwaves in a community that had strived, for generations, for assimilation. The options that were opposed to the assimilationist politics of enlightened, secular German Jewry by the 1914 generation seek to affirm the Jewish alterity either in a religious, spiritual form, like Buber in those years, or a decidedly political one – Zionism.<sup>1</sup> In search for an definitive argument in favour of his “intellectualist” rebuttal of both options, Benjamin stumbles upon an image instead - a recourse that would later become the trademark of his thought. He writes:

It's the building of the Tower of Babel reversed: The biblical peoples pile up quarry-stones but what they wanted to achieve spiritually – the Tower reaching up to the skies – came not into being. The Jews handle the Idea like stones, and the origin, the matter, was never reached. They build from above, never reaching the ground.<sup>2</sup>

But did they not in fact reach it – the ground, the origin, the *political* goal of Eretz Israel? And from the other direction, the “peoples” didn't they reach to the skies when they developed their political regimes in so many parts of the world as a form of *messianism*? Should we still uphold the conclusion of this new story of Babel, that political messianism is a practical impossibility?

Benjamin maintained for a long time this position, one that precludes any form of theocracy and any intervention with human means in the eschatological history (as famously in his “Theological-political fragment”), only to return again and again to the praxeological aporias of a messianic politics. His friend Gershom Scholem warned tirelessly against the conflation of messianism and politics<sup>3</sup> that nevertheless did not seem to impede him from entertaining a certain messianic tone in cultural politics.<sup>4</sup> And, in the midst of the '68 movements, Adorno too expressed a stern refusal to participate in something that he saw as more of a crash-landing of the ideas into the swamps of authoritarian, crypto-fascist rhetoric than a new form of “organization” of human relations, thus losing, in the eyes of many of his students, the vantage point of a redeemed humanity that lays at the core of his *Erkenntnistheorie*. It looks like the issue is not the persistence of an ontological difference, but rather its disappearance, the ways in which a certain idea (messianism) ‘touch the ground’ (or get off the ground) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. What's at stake here, it seems,

is rather the hypostases of the ideas of the future, the historical-political molding of the hope for a better world.

In fact, there are other elements of the biblical story of Babel that needs to concern us here. Let us take, for instance, the confusion of languages of salvation. The similarities between radical politics and the religious messianism seem to be so blatant that for a long time nobody even bothered to go beyond mentioning them elliptically, like some sort of self-evident truth. In 1850, Engels, for his purposes, simply puts them on the same level, stating that “the chiliastic dream-visions of early Christianity offered a very convenient starting point”<sup>5</sup> for the radical critique of any form of political-ideological domination; more than a century later, J. L. Talmon,<sup>6</sup> while offering a compelling history of the modern forms of political messianism and an incredibly influential conceptual vocabulary in the political theory (and commentary), does little to explain how did the (secular) religions of time communicate, substantially or otherwise, with the Judeo-Christian body of eschatological beliefs. When Ernst Bloch took upon the task to consider them as one in a sweeping metapolitics of hope in his *Geist der Utopie*, the readers responded to his prolix argumentation with a wild array of reactions, reaching from enthusiastic approval, through mistrust, up to outcries of obscurantism and intellectual (and religious) charlatanism.<sup>7</sup>

The two centuries long history of modern messianism is drowned in confusion, controversy, mistrust, and a bewildering number of programmatic and hermeneutical attempts that leave almost entirely aside the simplest question of them all: how do the people build this tower? And, above all: *why do they return, time and again, to its ruins with an inexhaustible passion to bring about a different world?*

Providing the reader with answers to all these questions in the space of an article is a tall order.<sup>8</sup> We intend to concern ourselves here instead only with a particular phenomenon of modern messianism, the one embodied in the German-Jewish intelligentsia of the Weimar Republic. We contend, firstly, that the modern messianism must always be analysed as a trait of human communities or groupings, that is with the means of intellectual history, rather than the explanations of the history of ideas (a couple of shortcomings of the latter approach would hopefully make clear why). Secondly, we react to the fact that in the ‘messianic’ German-Jewish ‘generation 1914’ there are far too many different subgroups to handle properly, and, although the general characterization ‘messianic’ does seem appropriate to many, it obscures the differences and threatens

to lose the most important questions behind a label. Thirdly, we intend to reconstruct their Babel from the ground up, that is to see their messianism not as a characteristic of their thought, imported from the religious realm and repurposed in the realm of the profane, but as the driving force beneath their thought and beliefs, as a concrete, shared, “existential feeling”. The specific methodological problem of this insight is the relationship between the existential feeling and the conceptual thought, and we shall try to at least contribute to a discussion that is still far from reaching its conclusion.<sup>9</sup>

### **The revenant ... ... and the dialectics of eschatological hope (Taubes against Scholem)**

There is a problem with modern messianisms, be it religious or profane: they should simply not exist at all. The hope principle, the trust put in a Messiah intervening on the scene of history has always been confronted with the reality principle that shows, time and again, that the Messiahs failed to deliver. The interpretation of the seemingly endless history of false Messiahs is the key point of the ‘debate’ between Gershom Scholem and his disgraced<sup>10</sup> pupil Jacob Taubes. Scholem, on the one hand, maintained a firm separation of the Judaic strand of messianism from the Christian one on the ground of the envisioned ‘nature’ of the messianic event (external, real, public, versus internal, spiritual) and stated that the indissolubility of Jewish messianism is inherent to the idea itself, that intervenes in the life of the community as a “changing form of the changeless hope”, as Rosenzweig famously put it, and leads, consequently, one disappointment after the other, to a ‘life in deferment’ and absence from the stage of history of the Jewish people,<sup>11</sup> Taubes, on the other hand, sees interiorisation as the true career of the messianic idea, since without the relocation in the spiritual of the event, the whole construct is practical “nonsense”:

For consider the dialectics in the Messianic experience of a group at the moment when prophecy of redemption fails. The “world” does not disintegrate, but the hope of redemption crumbles. If, however, the Messianic community, because of its inward certainty, does not falter, the Messianic experience is bound to turn inward, redemption is bound to be conceived as an event in the spiritual realm, reflected in the human soul. Interiorization is not a dividing line between “Judaism” and “Christianity”;



it signifies a crisis within Jewish eschatology itself (...). How else can redemption be defined after the Messiah has failed to redeem the external world except by turning inward?<sup>12</sup>

So the historical career of the messianic idea is, for Taubes, the complete dialecticisation of the messianic experience. With a theoretical ambition that matches Hegel's, Taubes posits his own *Western Eschatology* as the history of the Spirit that leaves little room for the reappearance of older, 'primitive' forms. Once the historical Messiah has been 'historicized' in the Dialectics of the Spirit, any form of historical messianism should be dismissed as nonsensical, dangerous<sup>13</sup> historical farce:

Interiorization, or opening the inward realm, belongs essentially to the career of that "idea", if such an idea should have a career at all in an unredeemed world and not lead 'in each of its manifestations ad absurdum'.<sup>14</sup>

So, from Taubes' perspective, If the simple idea of a messianic intervention in reality has been already sent in the appendix of history, by way of consequence the political messianism, given its dependence on the image of an abrupt, cataclysmic disruption of history, could only be qualified as a *contradictio in adjecto* and a farcical revenant of a resolute form that could only lead to tragic consequences. Thus, modern messianism should simply not exist.

But, alas, it does. So let us turn the reality principle against Taubes' dialectics and ask: How come that something that has passed away returns to life? How are we supposed to explain the survival of a rest of a negativity that was supposed to be consummated in the dialectical process? And, closer to our more modest concerns: how should one explain the modern, profane resurgence of messianism in the German-Jewish milieu of the Weimar Republic?

Since the old-fashioned, Hegelian dialectics doesn't seem to help much here, we are in need of another explanatory mechanism. Fortunately, the older or more recent scholarship does provide with several of them. Let us go through some of the most relevant.

### **... and the shortcomings of the secularization hypothesis (siding with Blumenberg)**

The first we must take into account is the powerful secularization theorem. When Carl Schmitt formulated his famous version of the secularization theorem, he was merely employing (and expanding the reach) of an all-encompassing explanatory mechanism of historical processes, that saw in every 'new', 'modern' social form or political idea "an aggregate of specifiable and transitively qualitative transformations in which in each case the later phase is possible and intelligible only in relation to the earlier phase assigned to it." Everything modern was thus a "product of secularization".<sup>15</sup> If "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts", so Schmitt, this pertains not only to their historical development in which "they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state", but also their "systematic structure", that expands by means of analogy the secularization to the entire conceptual edifice.<sup>16</sup> Following this logic, Karl Löwith could then unproblematically describe communism, the goal of the Marxist "transparent historical messianism" as a "Kingdom of God, without God and on earth"<sup>17</sup>

Now this has huge implications for our question. If we are to accept the secularization theorem – and it seems we have to, since the whole presentation of modern, political messianism that we attempted here seems to presuppose it at every level, from the ontological difference right through the *termini* themselves, and, moreover, there is enough evidence that the representatives of the generation were quite aware of the secularization theories and explanations and make use of the term and the meaning almost routinely – so, if we are to accept the secularization theorem, then their modern Jewish messianism is the secularization of the Jewish messianic idea of their own making. The reappearance of this religious *Gedankengut* has nothing mysterious and is in no way 'special' either. The mystery lies in the process of secularisation itself that speaks for the same ontological difference between the sacred and the worldly realm that cannot possibly be bridged, while the modern effort to do so only confirms the dependence of the mundane order to the sacred.

The specific evaluation of secularization as simultaneously a degradation of the substance of the historical process (i.e. the religious, theological content) and a reassertion of its force seems to apply here as well. Indeed, "only where the category of substance dominates the

understanding of history are there repetitions, superimpositions and dissociations – and also, for that matter, disguises and unmaskings.”<sup>18</sup> Are we then compelled to unmask this modern messianism as being not only morphologically analogous but also substantially identical to the religious one and to see, in all of its theoretical expressions, mere superimpositions to or dissociations from other, perhaps less convincing political programs of salvation (as the idea of progress towards an enlightened humanity, or the classical Marxism, for instance)?

While there are solid reasons to see the modern Jewish messianism in the context of the other modern political projects,<sup>19</sup> it appears that the explanation of the intellectual phenomenon is dependent upon a description of the concrete ways in which a religious content (here Judeo-Christian messianism) made its way into the thinking of for the most part secular Jewish intellectuals, in a completely different worldview. After all, it is not like these ideas simply fell into their heads from the transcendence. In the sober term of Hans Blumenberg, the adept of the secularization explanation bears the “burden of proof”: it has to *show how secularization takes place*.<sup>20</sup> Otherwise, the result of secularization would be rendered illegitimate by the fact that “the result is not allowed to secularize the process itself from which it resulted.”<sup>21</sup> This kind of effort, though, seems to be typical for another explanatory mechanism, the theory of cultural and historical influences.

### **... as dialectical secularization of the sacred and the profane (Goldstein)**

Responding to both the linear historical dialectics of redemption in the great Hegelian tradition and, on the same time, to the secularization theorem is the so-called “dialectical theory of secularization”. One of the representatives of this approach, Warren S. Goldstein, deems “unilinear theories of secularization inadequate explanations” of the historical phenomena of modern messianism, and also refutes the role of synthesis as the motor of history and renders it effective only horizontally, as some form of amalgamation as it were. Consequently, the question of the survival of messianism in a secular world turns into a discussion about the compatibility between the messianic speculations and the modern political theories (Goldstein concerns itself here with classical Marxism, since the importance of German-Jewish messianism is at least

in part associated with its critique and rework of the Marxist theory, in what became, thanks to the efforts of the Frankfurt School, Western Marxism). Many of the commentators that investigated the inner logic of the theoretical systems of modern political messianism seem to agree that Jewish messianism and Marxism (or historical materialism) are incompatible and irreconcilable, while some still maintained that, their relative incompatibility notwithstanding, they are complementary.<sup>22</sup> Trying to respond to a variant of our own main question - how can one justify the existence of an impossible idea? – Goldstein seemingly takes a page from Eliade and explains it as a form of the dialectic between the sacred and the profane. The theoretical constructs of modern messianism “express a constant tension between the profane and the sacred realm (...) One is the secularization of the other: they are dependent on each other but opposed to each other”, or, to be more precise, the secularization of religious content comes together with the opposite process of sacralisation of profane elements. That is to say: one should read Zizek’s *The Puppet and the Dwarf*<sup>23</sup> with Benjamin’s original story from the “Theses” in order get a complete although contradictory idea.

Goldstein concludes that the mixture of religious content and political theory entails a critique of the unilateral model of the secularization process that is present in the thinking of (at least) Benjamin and Bloch: Marxism is not simply the secularization of Judeo-Christian messianism, as per the classical secularization theorem, but its “*dialectical* secularization”, where the functional repurposing goes both ways, always maintaining the tension between the poles, and forcing the thinkers to “alternate back and forth between logically contradictory meaning systems”:<sup>24</sup>

The dialectical theory of secularization hopes in a resolution of this dialectical conflict. However, the dialectic remains unresolved and therefore the contradictions need to be expressed (...) Benjamin and Bloch were not fusing Messianism and Marxism, but expressing this contradictory relationship.<sup>25</sup>

### **... and the excesses and limitations of the theory of cultural influences**

Less ambitious theoretically, maybe, but a more productive descriptive tool, the theory of historical and cultural influences sometimes gets the menial task to substantiate the claims made by the secularization theorem. In our particular case there is a plethora of attempts to trace the lineage of the modern messianic idea. Enough of them are good, solid scholarly work, with the only problem that they do not seem to concur. In some cases, however, the genetic defect of the method comes to the fore: once it starts to make connections, it cannot stop. Just one striking example here, out of the many. Michael Weingrad does a lot of good criticizing the excesses of J. Mehlman genealogy of poststructuralism. In the latter's description,

the transgressive spirit of Sabbatianism was transmitted by Scholem to his close friend, Walter Benjamin, [who] then imparted the Sabbatian mindset to the French thinker Georges Bataille, who knew Benjamin in Paris, in the 1930s. And since Bataille was a central influence on the whole pantheon of French postmodernism {...}, the subversive spirit of French theory can be seen as the late manifestation of this heretical, Jewish messianism.<sup>26</sup>

Weingrad takes the time to show why this genealogy is untenable. But there is a twist: he then embarks into a journey of his own to get to the roots of an elusive Parisian messianism<sup>27</sup> that he later admitted had little to do with the German-Jewish emigrées.<sup>28</sup>

A description of the complex network of influences in the German intellectual circles of the interwar period is an impossible task; but even a fair knowledge of the literature would enable one to confidently conclude that the modern messianism, as an idea, has too much to do with its religious antecessor and, as a concrete product, fewer direct links to it to justify the secularization hypothesis without a good measure of pure belief in the miraculous impact of a dozen scattered sources.<sup>29</sup>

Let us point to a common weakness of all this explanatory strategies for the survival of messianism in the modern age. They tend to consider these revenants as part of a *career of the messianic idea*, and concern themselves with inner logic of messianism and less with what we called the *life* of the idea. They are in this respect ideo-logical, and tend to ignore the people involved, reducing them to mere receptacles or carriers of

the ideas. This history of honey has little concern for the rationale and feelings of the bees.

### **... as reinvention or quasi-transcendental structure (Bensussan, Derrida)**

G rard Bensussan's insights<sup>30</sup> are, in this regard, extremely interesting. He drops any history of influences and all vertical dialectics of eschatology and posits instead a "reinvention" of messianism that he opposes to a different kind of appropriation of messianism, that of secularization. This looks astonishing at first, but the French philosopher projects a lot of confidence by remaining very consistent in all his assumptions. Taking his reflections on the history of messianism as a whole to its last consequences, he declares the messianism "entirely modern", moreover, decrees that "all modernity is, for good or bad, in a way or another messianic"<sup>31</sup> - thus acknowledging that there is no direct substantial connection between the ancient messianism and its modern forms, and setting the bar really high for his interpretation of the secularization process. He backs his proposition up with a distinction between three uses of the term messianism, one for each conception, or experience of time.<sup>32</sup> The religious Jewish messianism corresponds to the eschatological temporal register, the modern philosophies of history describe the secularization of the former in the teleological temporality, and the "*temps interruptif*" is the reinvention, at the level of lived temporality, of the teleological. With this move, he turns "from the rational, generic and universal community of the subjects in relation towards the inter-human ties".<sup>33</sup> The open assumption of his phenomenological project is that human temporality is essentially messianic, an insight that is not far from that of Derrida's messianicity without messianism.<sup>34</sup> There is not enough room here to go into the philosophical consequences of Derrida's hypothesis. Suffice to say that his essential contribution to our discussion is the definition of messianicity as a "quasi-transcendental" of the political. Sure enough, one can only deplore the fact that Derrida does not provide us with at least a 'quasi-deduction' of this category; but, at the end of the day, this two attempts to relocate the origin of messianism in the structures of human experience rather than in the *outopos* of ideas should prove to be worthwhile in spite of their shortcomings. Maybe the one that both share is the disparity between the general human availability of this structures

that are, so to say, always at our disposal, and the discontinuous manner of the historical occurrences of modern messianism.

Perhaps this disparity could be justified by the intervention of other factors, like the historical context and the group dynamics – a good occasion for us here to move from the rather general and nonspecific descriptions of modern messianism closer to the intellectual histories of the German-Jewish Weimar messianism.

### **The intellectual history of the German-Jewish modern messianism of the Weimar era (Löwy and Rabinbach)**

Two scholars have done more for the knowledge of this subject matter than all the others: Michael Löwy's decades of work dedicated to the intellectual history of cultural and political messianisms in the Central Europe before the Second World War (he started even earlier, actually, with his doctoral thesis<sup>35</sup>) established him as an authority in these field. One could argue that he (together with Rabinbach) created this field of research. Anson Rabinbach influential book<sup>36</sup> comes as a somewhat late fruition of his no less impressive research, the main insights that were previously published were however a mandatory reading for more than a decade already.<sup>37</sup>

Löwy's efforts from the 1980s until 2017<sup>38</sup> could be well summarized by the titles of the first and (hopefully not the) last article: „Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia“, and „Jewish Messianism and Revolutionary Utopias“ respectively. Throughout his work he demonstrates a great level of consistency in the main assumptions and insights, that were laid down in the 1980s. Taking Scholem work on the messianic idea and Mannheim's description of the new socio-cultural function of utopianism as his starting points, Löwy reduces all messianisms to a few necessary elements that articulate a tense and contradictory 'political' ideal. The „restorative tendency oriented toward the reestablishment of a former ideal state of a lost golden age, and a utopian tendency, aspiring to a radically new future“ form the first pair of opposites that skew the world as it is. The third characteristic is the already mentioned „public“ visibility of the messianic advent on the stage of history, and the fourth is the anarchic quality, directed against the fabric of reality, the order of things. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century anarchist and revolutionary groups and theories

seem to demonstrate the same characteristics, that leads Löwy to conclude that there is a

remarkable *structural homology*, an undeniable *spiritual isomorphism* between these two cultural universes situated in these apparently completely distinct spheres, the Jewish messianic tradition and the notably libertarian modern revolutionary utopias.<sup>39</sup>

He is dissatisfied with the traditional explanations of this “spiritual isomorphism” and proposes its own: between them there is an “elective affinity”.<sup>40</sup> The term, borrowed from Weber, would become a trademark of his scholarship. What he means with it is much in line with our early methodological reflection on the burden of proof. Instead of putting this homology over the centuries on a dozen of feeble influences or a conscious borrowing, he looks for a more adequate explanation in the historical situation itself:

It seems more useful to take as a point of departure a wider socio-cultural context, which serves as a general framework common to the two mentioned tendencies [the restaurative and the utopian], and which grows organically, so to speak, out of the central European societies in crisis. The new developments of romanticism from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 1930s does not designate here a literary or artistic style, but a much vaster and more profound phenomenon: the nostalgic countercurrent of pre-capitalist cultures and the current of cultural criticism of industrial/bourgeois society, a current that is manifested in the realm of art and literature as well as in economic, sociological and political thought.<sup>41</sup>

It is the “anti-capitalist romanticism”, then, that appealed to a good part of the younger German-Jewish intellectuals, who, in search of options in a tough world that kept them on its fringes, would be able to discern, from this *Weltanschauung*, the necessary opposition to the established order and the two main options: the return to the roots (spiritual – not political - Zionism) and the revolution, that was also imbued with more precise messianic elements, putting in motion the homology:

During the years 1900-1930, among a certain number of Jewish intellectuals of German culture, this homology became *dynamic* and took a form of



veritable elective affinity. In the *Weltanschauung* of these intellectuals, it evolved into a process of “cultural symbiosis” of stimulation and reciprocal nourishment, and even, in certain cases, of articulation, combination or *fusion* of these two currents of thought.<sup>42</sup>

While Löwy puts a lot of energy in further refining and expanding the reach of his explanatory hypothesis and in taxonomies of even the most obscure intellectual groupings, Anson Rabinbach is more interested in a more nuanced description of the “new Jewish sensibility” and in clarifying the personal, intellectual and political options created within what he typically calls the “ethos”<sup>43</sup> of the modern German Jewish messianism. (By the way, Rabinbach must also be credited with the latter determinative, ostensibly superior to both “secular” and “profane” messianism.<sup>44</sup>) Starting from the same premises as Löwy (Scholem’s description of the messianic idea and the importance of the political and cultural reflections of the historical situation) he turns to the German-Jewish realities of the epoch with socio-cultural tools to describe a new type, the messianic type of sensibility, on the backdrop of the mainstream convictions and hopes of the educated German Jewry. The generation of 1914” (Robert Wohl’s term<sup>45</sup>)

emerges as the negative image of the assimilated German Jews”, “a product of the post-assimilatory Renaissance, [...] radical, uncompromising, and comprised of an esoteric intellectualism that is as uncomfortable with the Enlightenment as it is enamored of apocalyptic visions – whether revolutionary or purely redemptive in the spiritual sense.<sup>46</sup>

The definitive and indeducible characteristic of the generation, however, is the messianic *habitus*. Its intensional description (a pure form, as it were) would allow Rabinbach to minimize the importance of Löwy’s integration of romantic anti-capitalism and messianism and to broaden the extensional sphere of modern messianic political-cultural phenomena<sup>47</sup> while maintaining an unmistakable specificity of the phenomenon. He sees the messianic impulse appearing in different Jewish frameworks, so that “whether one chooses theology, philosophy, or aesthetics as a starting point, the Messianic tradition” – a specific configuration of its central elements - is always at work.

The modern messianism is, for Rabinbach, above all a *Haltung*, and comes, in this respect, before the political, theoretical or aesthetical concerns and decisions. It is “apocalyptic, catastrophic, utopian and

pessimistic”(in various degrees), a “pre-political vision of the world made whole”.<sup>48</sup> Its typical stances include the “anti-Jewish Jewishness” that rejects the Krausian abjuration, the rational Judaism of Cohen, and the personalistic, Buberian renewal of Jewish religiosity as so many forms of false Jewish consciousness, the refusal of the politics of the day in favour of a speculative intellectual attitude and a radicalism “which aims at nothing less than total transformation of the individual and society, whether coupled with activism or wholly without any concrete political touchstone”. And, one should add, a profound mistrust in the radical politics as well.

Indeed, in discussing the messianic ethos, one must consider not only the urge to jump into every revolutionary bandwagon, but also the opposed attitude of “having no spiritual investment in the world as it is”, as Taubes put it,<sup>49</sup> of “never willing to participate”.<sup>50</sup> In fact these two reactions are the poles of the modern messianic ethos as a whole, the two key “motor-fantastical dispositions” as Bloch calls them. Mendes-Flohr discovered a beautiful page from Rosenzweig that explains it:

The false Messiah is as old as the hope for the true Messiah. He is the changing form of the changeless hope. He separates every Jewish generation into those whose faith is strong enough to give themselves up to an illusion, and those whose hope is so strong they do not allow themselves to be deluded. The former are the better, the latter the stronger.<sup>51</sup>

The “stronger Jews”, it seems, are no less messianic than the “better” ones. Is it still possible then to conceive an “ethos” capable of generating, all this attitudes – the complete repudiation of the world, the hope put in a new order based on the destruction of the old, and the conviction that a “true” new world will never come to pass – expressed, to give just one example, in the Adornian “negative theology” where not only that “the progress has not taken place yet”, but after the fulfilment of the promise of progress in the form of the complete delusion produced by the administered world, it has become utterly unredeemable?<sup>52</sup> Moreover, there are enough examples in which the “better” Jews found strength in themselves to resist the illusion they participated in before wholeheartedly, not to mention the numerous shifts in position, group splits, adjurations and regroupings.

\*

Let's take a moment to admire this fine mess. The central question of our research is how was it possible for the messianic idea to re-appear when everything speaks against both its internal consistency and practical efficacy? How could one explain that it survived in a 'dormant' state between its brief moments of blooming (in the utopian French tradition of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the German-Jewish 1914 generation)?

We rejected the grand narrative of the dialectical evolution of Western eschatology proposed by Taubes for being too idealistic in the handling of its own "reality principle". We discarded the secularisation hypothesis for its inability to bear the burden of proof, although perhaps Blumenberg himself would have been hard pressed to accommodate this phenomenon in his own positive reconstruction of the modern age. Leaving aside the history of ideas and the theory of influences as inconclusive, we moved then to explanations that sought for an answer in the phenomenology of human experience and in the 'quasi-transcendental' structures of human political praxis, only to return into the calmer waters of intellectual history in search of more context and content, where the modern messianism is in both its appearance and specific form dependent upon a broader negative evaluation and rejection of the world, and ambivalent stances toward the possibility of a new one. But the best description of the messianic ethos makes it hard to count anybody as being 'out', and seems to be way too contradictory to respond to a more precise definition of the term ethos.

The historical contingencies prove to be decisive for the reappearances of the messianic, to the extent that they could be viewed as an epiphenomenon of any serious crisis,<sup>53</sup> and something must be said about the importance of the philosophical and ideological metanarratives available or nascent in that particular period as well, since they do function as a catalyst. But they cannot explain the survival in between these irruptions. Could it be, then, that beyond the historical-intellectual occurrences of a messianic "ethos" lays a more profound, perhaps universal ground that bears this possibility?

### **The survival of the messianic and the existential feelings**

In order to respond to this question, we attempt here to link the messianic with the concept of existential feelings that has been developed by Matthew Ratcliffe.<sup>54</sup>

Ratcliffe's term is technical, pertaining to the research field of affective phenomena, but it draws on philosophical work, especially from the phenomenological tradition. It starts from the observation that whenever "I have an emotional experience of *p*, perceive *q*, or think about *r*, I already *find myself in a world*." So, in short, these feelings "constitute a sense of *how one finds oneself in the world as a whole*", "a felt sense of reality and belonging"<sup>55</sup> that bears a resemblance to Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*, but Ratcliffe's analysis moves towards a description of them as pertaining to the ways in which "things matter".<sup>56</sup> He sees them more in terms of an openness to "types of possibility" woven in the structure of experience itself, that can be described further in terms of

whether they involve encountering something as certain, possible, likely or doubtful; whether something appears significant to *me*, to *us*, or to *them*; and whether they concern something to be brought about through one's actions, the actions of others, or by other means. There is also a broad distinction to be drawn between a sense of being able to do something and a sense of its mattering. [...].<sup>57</sup>

Ratcliffe also refers to certain *kinds* of existential feelings, a thing that is of particular interest here. Depending on the intrinsic 'readiness', or rather proneness to incur changes, he isolates rigid existential feelings, like for instance in the cases of depression, and easily changeable up to the point of being disorganized feelings, that typify schizophrenic disorders. Other kinds are metonymies of the general openness to possibilities (excessive – diminished, excessive – constraint) and are subject to evolution in time.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of their background role in our experience, the existential feelings present a degree of sophistication that puts them closer to 'higher', cognitive processes, and links them directly with the philosophical inquiry. Ratcliffe admits that the existential feelings can in fact entail evaluations and even normative elements, and dedicates attention to their relation with philosophical positions and religious beliefs.<sup>59</sup> Leaving aside the situation, described elsewhere, in which an existential feeling "crystalizes into a thought", the otherwise non-problematic fact that philosophical and religious doctrines "can seldomly be reduced to a series of propositions and not even that would completely exclude the intervention of existential feelings in their general outline", his proposition is that "some existential feelings amount to broad philosophical dispositions, which motivate the explicit positions that philosophers defend".<sup>60</sup>

What is missing however from his work is a concrete example that could support this claim. We think that modern messianism can do even more than that. The modern messianic “ethos” pre-articulates not only the background of one philosophical doctrine, but, we would argue, it fuels different but related philosophical stances, part of a family of ontological, epistemic and political “policies”.<sup>61</sup>

Conversely, the existential feeling would not only solve the mystery of the survival of the messianic idea, but could also function as a more solid explanation of the “messianic pathologies” as Ernst Bloch named them. The intellectual history is teeming with anecdotes and textual examples that pertain to a messianic symptomatology, virtually every name can be associated with at least one of them. There is Landauer’s decree during the brief Munich Republic banning the study of history in public schools, Lukacs’ “great new philosophy” described in the journal of one of his friends in which the homogenous world is seen as the goal of salvation,<sup>62</sup> Löwenthal’s stern refusal to commit we mentioned earlier, Benjamin’s idyll with suicide, Ernst Bloch’s seemingly obnoxious demeanor in the eyes of respected men of scientific authority, Adorno’s abhorrence of “marching behind some flag” that exasperated his students and peers, Rosenzweig’s and Benjamin’s fulgurations (two of them being showcased in this paper), Kracauer’s go-for-broke game against the linear history of the world in his work of photography and film,<sup>63</sup> and the list goes on.

Our working hypothesis is that the (modern) messianism is essentially a kind of existential feeling before being a cultural, political, or intellectual-historical denomination.

There could be little doubt that the philosophical – and also the religious – expressions of messianism refer to the world as a whole, thus confirming that they are linked with an existential feeling. What is characteristic for the messianic existential feeling is that the acknowledgement that this world here lacks in existential possibilities does not lead to existential despair, but takes the form of a condemnation of the world: the only enticing possibility it still has it’s that of its disappearance. I believe this is acceptable in the phenomenological account of the existential feeling, since having it as an elaboration of a passive having-to-be-here would not make much sense. Even Heidegger’s *Befindlichkeit* as a “having to take it from here” does it fact include the possibility of taking it against the world.<sup>64</sup> There is something to be said about this reactive element in the messianic feeling. In a way, it looks more like a meta-emotion,<sup>65</sup> and if a more precise analysis would lead to this conclusion, it would

be possible to explain the role of existential feelings on the development and pre-arrangement of philosophical and political ontologies by way of this mechanism.

With the sense of belonging in the world shaped in this manner, “the world does not belong here”, “the world matters only in as much it contains the possibility of its own destruction”, rather than “I feel distanced from it”, or the modern feeling of depeisation, the structures of anticipation come in place, with this catastrophe being felt as either imminent, certain, uncertain, doubtful or even impossible, depending on the historical contingencies, and the participative dimension adds more content. Besides the image of the “collective Messiah” representing the revolutionary forces, one could encounter for example, the stance of the “theologian of the revolution”, prophet of the new messianic age (an image cultivated by Bloch), which is not at all uncommon in the Weimar era of barefooted prophets,<sup>66</sup> but also the stance of the sad, last observer, that was so dear to Benjamin, who even when thinking about escaping to America, could only see himself, with “messianic irony”, as an odd exhibit piece in a sideshow – “the last European”. The utopian dimension of the messianic, with its deeper broad openness to new forms of belonging to a community and the world, would then be coupled with a much constrained, critical attitude, and it is not rare to see shifts from the one to the other.

The four dimensions of the messianic idea imported from Scholem’s description could aptly be translated into types of possibility in a shared existential feeling, where the proneness to changes and shifts are accentuated by the concrete historical circumstances. But its consistence as a feeling seems to be maintained across the whole family of particular stances it informed. We think this consistency is clearly present for instance in the paradoxical turns of the phrase so typical for Adorno’s and Bloch’s philosophical styles, for example.

Thus we replace Rabinbach’s messianic ethos with a more accurate term, capable of sustaining not only the description of the concrete phenomena, but also the history of messianism. The same definition allows us to recuperate potential precious insights offered by Derrida and Bensussan. In the case of the former, the quasi-transcendental character is sufficiently uphold by an existential feeling, since it consists of, well, types of possibility; in the latter case there is work to be done to see how much can his phenomenological analysis of the messianic temporality contribute to the understanding of existential feelings as a whole.

## Conclusion and ways ahead

In main aim of this article was to pile up the arguments that ask for a more apt description of the modern messianism and better explanations for its re-birth in the German-Jewish generation of 1914. Comparatively, the proposal to conceive messianism as an existential feeling might have arguably received little more than a half-backed justification, with enough elements of this equation still in contention.

Ratcliffe insights, while accepting a certain degree of mutual influence between conceptual thought and existential feeling, and the former's intervention in the shaping of the philosophical perspectives do not refer to this matters sufficiently, so more work is necessary here as to how these existential feeling intervene not only in conceptual thought, but also in the structuring of the onto-political horizon of possibilities. Our hypothesis that this could be investigated as a form of meta-emotion still needs proofing, beyond the scope of our research here.

Secondly, in order for the messianism to maintain historical stability, Ratcliffe's existential feeling must be seen as a historical category, and – another aspect that was, alas, left out in this brief paper – as sensitive to human relations, to the point that this existential feeling could be seen as “shared”, or “contested”.

Besides these tweakings that seem more interested in the history of messianic movements, there are some modest proposals for the study of existential feelings themselves. Ratcliffe considers the phenomenological approach to be the best tool for this task. The existential feeling have little complexity, however, if the examples are taken predominantly from the medical and psychiatric cases, as compared with the messianic ‘pathologies’ we mentioned. If the soul does not contain more than what one could express, the research of existential feelings would benefit from interpreting more complex bodies of work.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Anson Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch and Modern German Jewish Messianism', *New German Critique*, no. 34 (Winter 1985): chap. 3.
- <sup>2</sup> „Es ist der umgekehrte Turmbau zu Babel: Die Völker der Bibel häufen Quader auf Quader und das Geistig Gewollte: der himmelragende Turm entsteht nicht. Die Juden handhaben die Idee wie Quader, und nie wird der Ursprung, die Materie erreicht. Sie bauen von oben, ohne die Boden zu erreichen.“ Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, ed. Christoph Göttsche and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), I, 84 (Hereafter GB I).
- <sup>3</sup> Joseph Dan, 'Scholem's View of Jewish Messianism', *Modern Judaism*, 1992, 117–128.
- <sup>4</sup> Moshe Idel, 'Messianic Scholars: On Early Israeli Scholarship, Politics and Messianism', *Modern Judaism - A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 32, no. 1 (1 February 2012): 22–53; Lars Fischer, 'Zur Beziehung zwischen Gershom Scholem und Theodor W. Adorno', *sans phrase. Zeitschrift für Ideologiekritik* 10 (Spring 2017): 85–92.
- <sup>5</sup> Cited by John Roberts, 'The "Returns to Religion": Messianism, Christianity and the Revolutionary Tradition. Part I: "Wakefulness to the Future"', *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 61.
- <sup>6</sup> Jacob Leib Talmon, *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (Praeger, 1961).
- <sup>7</sup> Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 113–15.
- <sup>8</sup> For a good try to at least explain the philosophical mechanisms behind the connections between the messianic and the revolutionary tradition, see the twin articles Roberts, 'The Returns to Religion I'; 'The "Returns to Religion": Messianism, Christianity and the Revolutionary Tradition. Part II: The Pauline Tradition', *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 77–103.
- <sup>9</sup> Matthew Ratcliffe, 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)', in *Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions*, ed. Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer (Routledge, 2019).
- <sup>10</sup> B. Babich, 'Ad Jacob Taubes', *New Nietzsche Studies: Nietzsche and the Jews* 7, no. 3–4 (2007): v–x.
- <sup>11</sup> Gershom Scholem, 'Zum Verständnis der messianischen Idee im Judentum', vol. *Judaica I, Judaica* (Eranos-Tagung, Suhrkamp, 1963), 7–74.
- <sup>12</sup> J. Taubes, 'Scholem's Theses on Messianism Reconsidered', *Social Science Information* 21 (1 July 1982): 669–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901882021004010>.
- <sup>13</sup> Taubes, 669.
- <sup>14</sup> Taubes, 670.
- <sup>15</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (MIT Press, 1985), 5.



- <sup>16</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- <sup>17</sup> Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (University of Chicago Press, 1957), 42 sqq; Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 14–15.
- <sup>18</sup> Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 9.
- <sup>19</sup> See further Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (University of California Press, 1997).
- <sup>20</sup> Richard Wolin's 'Reflections on Jewish Secular Messianism', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. VII (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 188 start from the key question.
- <sup>21</sup> Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 18.
- <sup>22</sup> Warren S. Goldstein, 'Messianism and Marxism: Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch's Dialectical Theories of Secularization', *Critical Sociology* 27, no. 2 (2001): 246–47.
- <sup>23</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge - London: MIT Press, 2003).
- <sup>24</sup> Peter Berger, cited by Goldstein, 'Messianism and Marxism', 271.
- <sup>25</sup> Goldstein, 249.
- <sup>26</sup> Michael Weingrad, 'Parisian Messianism: Catholicism, Decadence, and the Transgressions of Georges Bataille', *History & Memory* 13, no. Number 2 (Fall/Winter 2001): 113.
- <sup>27</sup> Michael Weingrad, 'The College of Sociology and the Institute for Social Research', *New German Critique*, no. 40 (2001): 120–61.
- <sup>28</sup> In his response to my e-mail inquiry from 7 October 2007.
- <sup>29</sup> Cf. Michael Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900-1933)', trans. Renee B. Larrier, *New German Critique*, no. 20 (1980): 109.
- <sup>30</sup> *Le temps messianique: temps historique et temps vécu* (Paris: Vrin, 2001).
- <sup>31</sup> Bensussan, 15.
- <sup>32</sup> Bensussan, 12.
- <sup>33</sup> Bensussan, 94.
- <sup>34</sup> See, apart from the Specters of Marx, *Marx & Sons* (Presses universitaires de France, 2002).
- <sup>35</sup> Löwy, Michael, 'L'évolution politique de Lukacs, 1909-1929: Contribution à une sociologie de l'intelligentsia révolutionnaire' (Université Lille III, 1975).
- <sup>36</sup> Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*.
- <sup>37</sup> Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse'.
- <sup>38</sup> See, for instance Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia'; 'Messianism in the Early Work of Gershom Scholem', *New German Critique*, no. 83 (2001): 177–191; 'Capitalism as Religion: Walter Benjamin and Max

- Weber', *Historical Materialism* 17, no. 1 (1 March 2009): 60–73, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920609X399218>; 'Utopia and Revolution: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber', *Value Inquiry Book Series* 274 (June 2014): 49–64; 'Jewish Messianism and Revolutionary Utopias in Central Europe: Erich Fromm's Early Writings (1922-1930)', *European Judaism* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 21–31.
- 39 Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia', 108.  
40 Löwy, 109.  
41 Löwy, 109–10.  
42 Löwy, 108–9.  
43 Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 78.  
44 Rabinbach, 82.  
45 See Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914*, First edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979).  
46 Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 79–80.  
47 Rabinbach, 82–84 To be fair, as already said, Löwy too expands well beyond the initial 'focus on the anarchist-expressionist libertarians of the Munich circle'.  
48 Rabinbach, 81.  
49 Jacob Taubes, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus: Vorträge, gehalten an der Forschungsstätte der evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft in Heidelberg, 23.-27. Februar 1987*, ed. Horst Folkers, Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, and Christoph Schulte (München: Fink, 1993).  
50 Helmut Dubiel and Leo Lowenthal, *Mitmachen wollte ich nie: ein autobiographisches Gespräch mit Helmut Dubiel*, Erstaussg, Edition Suhrkamp, n. F., Bd. 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980).  
51 Rosenzweig, cited in Paul Mendes-Flohr, "'The Stronger and the Better Jews": Jewish Theological Responses to Political Messianism in the Weimar Republic', *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 7 (1991): 159–85.  
52 Wolin, 'Reflections on Jewish Secular Messianism', 194.  
53 One scholar goes as far as to call Benjamin's thought a work on hyperinflation: N. Lambrianou, "'A Philosophy and Theology of Hyperinflation:" Walter Benjamin, Weimar and the New Thinking', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 5, no. 2 (2004): 78–97.  
54 *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality*, International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); 'The Phenomenology of Existential Feeling', in *Feelings of Being Alive / Gefühle Des Lebendigseins*, ed. Joerg Fingerhut and Sabine Marienberg (De Gruyter, 2012), 23–54; 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)'.  
55 Ratcliffe, 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)', 2–3.  
56 Ratcliffe, 'The Phenomenology of Existential Feeling', 33.

- 57 Ratcliffe, 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)', 4.  
58 Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being*, 211–16.  
59 Ratcliffe, chap. 9 and 10.  
60 Ratcliffe, 241.  
61 Cf. the discussion of stances and 'epistemic policies' Ratcliffe, 249.  
62 Discovered by Rabinbach 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 81.  
63 Miriam Hansen, 'Decentric Perspectives: Kracauer's Early Writings on Film and Mass Culture', *New German Critique*, no. 54, Special Issue on Siegfried Kracauer (n.d.): 47–76; See also Lorin Ghiman, 'The Kracauer Connection: The Conflation of Art and the Messianic-Political in the Works of Kracauer, Benjamin, and Adorno (in Print)', *Annals of the University of Bucharest - Philosophy Series* 67, no. 1 (n.d.).  
64 Jan Slaby, 'More Than a Feeling: Affect as Radical Situatedness', *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 41, no. 1 (2017): 7–26.  
65 Christoph Jäger and Anne Bartsch, 'Prolegomena Zu Einer Philosophischen Theorie Der Meta-Emotionen', in *Leben Mit Gefühlen*, ed. Barbara Merker (mentis, 2009), 113–137.  
66 Ulrich Linse, *Barfüßige Propheten: Erlöser der zwanziger Jahre* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1983).

## Bibliography

- Babich, B. 'Ad Jacob Taubes'. *New Nietzsche Studies: Nietzsche and the Jews* 7, no. 3–4 (2007): v–x.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Gesammelte Briefe*. Edited by Christoph Gödde and Henri Lonitz. 6 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995.
- Bensussan, G. *Le temps messianique: temps historique et temps vécu*. Paris: Vrin, 2001.
- Blumenberg, Hans. *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*. MIT Press, 1985.
- Dan, Joseph. 'Scholem's View of Jewish Messianism'. *Modern Judaism*, 1992, 117–128.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Marx & Sons*. Presses universitaires de France, 2002.
- Dubiel, Helmut, and Leo Lowenthal. *Mitmachen wollte ich nie: ein autobiographisches Gespräch mit Helmut Dubiel*. Erstausg. Edition Suhrkamp, n. F., Bd. 14. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980.
- Fischer, Lars. 'Zur Beziehung zwischen Gershom Scholem und Theodor W. Adorno'. *sans phrase. Zeitschrift für Ideologiekritik* 10 (Spring 2017): 85–92.
- Ghiman, Lorin. 'The Kracauer Connection: The Conflation of Art and the Messianic-Political in the Works of Kracauer, Benjamin, and Adorno (in Print)'. *Annals of the University of Bucharest - Philosophy Series* 67, no. 1 (2018).
- Goldstein, Warren S. 'Messianism and Marxism: Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch's Dialectical Theories of Secularization'. *Critical Sociology* 27, no. 2 (2001): 246–281.
- Hansen, Miriam. 'Decentric Perspectives: Kracaues Early Writings on Film and Mass Culture'. *New German Critique*, no. 54, Special Issue on Siegfried Kracauer (n.d.): 47–76.
- Idel, Moshe. 'Messianic Scholars: On Early Israeli Scholarship, Politics and Messianism'. *Modern Judaism - A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 32, no. 1 (1 February 2012): 22–53.
- Jäger, Christoph, and Anne Bartsch. 'Prolegomena Zu Einer Philosophischen Theorie Der Meta-Emotionen'. In *Leben Mit Gefühlen*, edited by Barbara Merker, 113–137. mentis, 2009.
- Lambrianou, N. "'A Philosophy and Theology of Hyperinflation:" Walter Benjamin, Weimar and the New Thinking'. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 5, no. 2 (2004): 78–97.
- Linse, Ulrich. *Barfüßige Propheten: Erlöser der zwanziger Jahre*. Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1983.
- Löwith, Karl. *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*. University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Löwy, Michael. 'Capitalism as Religion: Walter Benjamin and Max Weber'. *Historical Materialism* 17, no. 1 (1 March 2009): 60–73. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920609X399218>.

- . 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900-1933)'. Translated by Renee B. Larrier. *New German Critique*, no. 20 (1980): 105.
- . 'Jewish Messianism and Revolutionary Utopias in Central Europe: Erich Fromm's Early Writings (1922-1930)'. *European Judaism* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 21–31.
- Löwy, Michael. 'L'évolution politique de Lukacs, 1909-1929: Contribution à une sociologie de l'intelligentsia révolutionnaire'. Université Lille III, 1975.
- Löwy, Michael. 'Utopia and Revolution: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber'. *Value Inquiry Book Series* 274 (June 2014): 49–64.
- Löwy, Michel. 'Messianism in the Early Work of Gershom Scholem'. *New German Critique*, no. 83 (2001): 177–191.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul. "'The Stronger and the Better Jews": Jewish Theological Responses to Political Messianism in the Weimar Republic'. *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 7 (1991): 159–85.
- Rabinbach, Anson. 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch and Modern German Jewish Messianism'. *New German Critique*, no. 34 (Winter 1985): 78–124.
- . *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment*. University of California Press, 1997.
- Ratcliffe, Matthew. 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)'. In *Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions*, edited by Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer. Routledge, 2019.
- . *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality*. International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . 'The Phenomenology of Existential Feeling'. In *Feelings of Being Alive / Gefühle Des Lebendigseins*, edited by Joerg Fingerhut and Sabine Marienberg, 23–54. De Gruyter, 2012.
- Roberts, John. 'The "Returns to Religion"; Messianism, Christianity and the Revolutionary Tradition. Part I: "Wakefulness to the Future"'. *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 59–84.
- . 'The "Returns to Religion"; Messianism, Christianity and the Revolutionary Tradition. Part II: THE Pauline Tradition'. *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 77–103.
- Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Scholem, Gershom. 'Zum Verständnis der messianischen Idee im Judentum', *Judaica* 1:7–74. Judaica. Suhrkamp, 1963.
- Slaby, Jan. 'More Than a Feeling: Affect as Radical Situatedness'. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 41, no. 1 (2017): 7–26.
- Talmon, Jacob Leib. *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase*. Praeger, 1961.

- Taubes, J. 'Scholem's Theses on Messianism Reconsidered'. *Social Science Information* 21 (1 July 1982): 665–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901882021004010>.
- Taubes, Jacob. *Die politische Theologie des Paulus: Vorträge, gehalten an der Forschungsstätte der evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft in Heidelberg, 23.-27. Februar 1987*. Edited by Horst Folkers, Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, and Christoph Schulte. München: Fink, 1993.
- Weingrad, Michael. 'Benjamin or Bataille : Transgression, Redemption, and the Origins of Postmodern Thought', 7 October 2007.
- . 'Parisian Messianism: Catholicism, Decadence, and the Transgressions of Georges Bataille'. *History & Memory* 13, no. Number 2 (Fall/Winter 2001): 113–33.
- . 'The College of Sociology and the Institute for Social Research'. *New German Critique*, no. 40 (2001): 120–61.
- Wohl, Robert. *The Generation of 1914*. First edition. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Wolin, Richard. 'Reflections on Jewish Secular Messianism'. In *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, VII:186–97. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Zizek, Slavoj. *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*. Cambridge - London: MIT Press, 2003.