**Part B-1**

***1. Excellence***

***1.1 Quality and credibility of the research project***

My research deals with the interconnections between modern Jewish thought and theories of ethics and politics in the continental philosophical tradition. I am especially interested in the ways religious categories interact with, transform, replace, and subvert modern political and ethical models and ideals. From a historical perspective, my work focuses on the responses to the challenges of secularism and assimilation in the Jewish world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The suggested project is the culmination of my previous academic work: it addresses the role of heresy—as both a theological and a political category—in Jewish modernity. *My main argument is that heresy has important political implications and is foundational to processes of community formation in the modern Jewish world. To make this claim, I contest the negative definition of heresy as mere deviance and aim instead to build on Foucault’s work on discourse analysis and power relations to demonstrate the positive, constructive role of heresy.*

In Greek antiquity, the term αἵρεσις (hairesis) initially carried two meanings: it could refer to the taking (or capture) of a city; or it could denote selection, in terms of a choice or inclination. From the second century BCE, the term was used to represent creedal deviancy or revolt. Heresy, according to this meaning, expressed a transgression of religious orthodoxy. In modernity, heresy has come to represent the wholesale rejection of religion. The concept is that modern men and women have rebelled against traditional religious dogmas and age-old religious institutions to create a new secular reality. Heresy, or iconoclasm, in this new formulation, is the *modern human condition*. However, I suggest that this narrow conceptualization of heresy disregards its *constructive* religious and political functions, especially in processes of community formation.

At the outset, the application of heresy to a Jewish context may seem incongruous. This is mostly because the narratives of Jewish history – offered by Christian as well as Jewish authors – have generally created an image of a coherent, self-identical culture of socially pressured cohesion. Heresy is supposedly a Christian term, applied to the Christian world. This portrayal has meant that Jewish internal differences are often overlooked, despite the long record of heresy as an integral part of the history of Jewish tradition, beginning with the biblical texts. However, over recent decades, a Foucauldian discourse of heresy that challenges these preconceptions has found new inspiration. Initially, this new articulation of heresy was applied to the study of Jewish and Christian antiquity in an attempt to decipher the emergence of rabbinic Judaism and Christian dogma after the destruction of the Second Temple.[[1]](#footnote-1) While heresy was previously seen as a mostly *Christian* category, this line of research demonstrated its applicability to *Jewish* antiquity. Importantly, in this new discourse, the function of heresy was no longer perceived as solely negative: heresy no longer meant an act of rebellion against orthodoxy (Judaism) in an attempt to form a new sect or group (Christianity). Rather, heresy came to refer to the discourse through which *Jewish* norms, values, and beliefs were shaped. In this view, the heretic was seen as crucial for the construction of Judaism by drawing the imaginary borders between Judaism and Christianity. By recognizing and defining the heretic and his or her religious and social values and ideals, the Jews were able to self-identify as Jews, to form their own values and ideals, and to delineate a border.

This more positive discourse of heresy, however, has never been applied to modernity. Instead, Foucault famously focused on other, secular, dimensions of human reality. In *Madness and Civilization* (1961), for example, Foucault identified and analyzed the way in which modern society defined itself as the Age of Reason, by first rejecting and then overcoming madness. *My suggestion is that this function of madness in modernity echoes with the role of heresy in antiquity*. In the same way that madness was excluded in order to create a cohesive, “rational” society in modernity, societies in antiquity defined themselves through the figure of the heretic. I argue that both heresy and madness represent forms of otherness that past societies struggled with in order to establish their “essence”; an otherness through which societies have created their core organizing principles. The essential difference between heresy and madness is that while heresy was supposedly the appropriate conceptual realm to negotiate the organizing principles of ancient *religious* societies, madness became the realm for the same negotiations in *secular* modernity. However, as secular and post-secular scholarship reaffirms the importance of religious categories for modernity, I claim that we should rethink the foundational discourses of modernity in general, and of Jewish modernity in particular. That is, *if Foucault focused on the discourse of reason vs madness to understand modernity, but disregarded other “religious” discourses, my suggestion is that the “ancient” and “religious” discourse of heresy may prove fertile for our understanding of the modern condition.*

I argue that *this framework is particularly appropriate to the early twentieth-century Jewish community*. In the vast literature on the modern Jewish world, the disintegration of Jewish tradition in modernity is often understood in connection with the Jewish struggle for acceptance within the European secular community, which required Jews to abrogate their cultural and religious markers.[[2]](#footnote-2) This change dismantled traditional Jewish ways of life and endangered the Jewish community. As in antiquity, the definition of Jewish identity was unclear. If in antiquity, the basic principles of Judaism were debated, as several different religious communities believed themselves to represent the epitomy of authentic Judaism, in Jewish modernity the same confusion erupted again: was a person a Jew because of his or her religious faith, or because of his or her cultural heritage? Was Judaism a religion or a nation? If in antiquity this debate was performed through a discourse of heresy, I suggest that in Jewish modernity the same discourse became prevalent again. As in Jewish antiquity, the modern heretic (re)played the crucial part of building a “new” Jewish community. That is, heresy provided the opportunity to restructure the core principles of the Jewish tradition. Put in more historical terms, *my argument is that heresy is one of the major discourses used by the Jewish community in modernity to tackle its impending challenges. As in antiquity, heresy became the medium for negotiating answers to such questions as: what is Judaism, what makes somebody a Jew, and how can Judaism survive modernity?*

**Originality and innovative aspects of the planned research** *This study constitutes the first attempt to rethink the place and meaning of heresy in Jewish modernity and to uncover its hitherto under researched deep political and social implications*. To this end, I will apply a Foucauldian discourse to this research. My aim is to think of heresy as foundational to processes of community formation, rather than merely as a form of dissent and refusal. I argue that heresy takes part in a political-theological discourse through which communities create, negotiate, and modify their collective identity. In marking out the border between the heretic and the in-group (nation/people), the latter are able to form a previously missing unity. *This project thus challenges previous conceptions of heresy, and significantly contributes to our understanding of the dynamic nature of tradition in Jewish modernity. The study also participates in a larger conversation in the history of ideas and philosophy of religion: it reestablishes the importance of heresy as a modern philosophical and political category, with the goal of offering a rereading of Jewish heretic thought within the basic trajectories of twentieth-century philosophy. Most importantly, in establishing the constitutive role of heresy in the construction of communal experiences, the suggested project lays the groundwork for modern debates on community***.**

**Interdisciplinary aspects of the action** The discourse of heresy provides a new framework for a dialogue between a diverse group of Jewish thinkers, writers, religious leaders, and community activists within the European Jewish world: Isaac Deutscher, Moses Mendelssohn, Martin Buber, Bertha Pappenheim, R. Abraham Isaac Kook, Hans Jonas and Hannah Arendt. I chose these figures because they allow me to portray the terrain of heresy in Jewish modernity. With Buber and Mendelssohn, I address some of the theological dimensions of heresy; the chapter on Pappenheim investigates the interrelations between feminism and gender relations and heresy; R. Kook is a good example of the national aspect of heresy; Jonas and Arendt offer an opportunity to think of heresy after the Holocaust; and in the chapter on Deutscher, I engage with his work on heresy to develop a different, Foucauldian theoretical structure of heresy in Jewish modernity. In all, my aim is to articulate the *constructive* role of the heretic in the modern Jewish tradition.

To clarify, my decision to focus on Deutscher, Mendelssohn, Buber, Pappenheim, R. Kook, Arendt and Jonas is not meant to represent an exhaustive list. We find concerns with heresy and with the heretic in the modern Jewish world in many more writers and thinkers, from Gershom Scholem’s work on heretical messianism to Sigmund Freud’s last heretical work on the murder of the Egyptian Moses in the Sinai desert, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). The purpose of the present work is rather to uncover the constitutive role of the heretic in European Jewish modernity and to connect the Jewish engagement with the heretic with modern political philosophy.

As this study encompasses a variety of literary, historical, and philosophical texts, a profoundly interdisciplinary approach is essential. The project requires thorough familiarity with modern Jewish philosophy and modern political theory, combining insights from historical, literary and other scholarly approaches, while using various methods and techniques. In section 1.4, I explain how my previous scholarly experience contributes to my ability to properly execute this research.

**Methodology and approach** The suggested research is based on a new and innovative approach to the study of heresy in modernity. While research on heresy customarily focuses on the *heretic*, that is on the transgressions of the heretic, analyzing their reasons, context, and implications, my aim is to engage with the *discourse of heresy*. To give a first approximation of what that means, in the chapters on Deutscher I move away from the self-proclaimed heretic and instead spotlight the discourse through which the heretic is identified, calculated, systemized, and eventually condemned. I do not focus solely on what Spinoza and Freud did, that is to say the transgressions that made them heretics, but rather on the discourse through which they were identified as heretics. In particular, I aim to shed light on the use and misuse of their theoretical positions on the part of their nineteenth- and twentieth-century readers. As for the methodology, the study calls for an analysis of literary, historical, and philosophical works on heresy in Jewish modernity. I will work with both primary and secondary sources, in either printed or manuscript form, as well as digital databases. More details on the methodology of the research are given in section 3.1 of the proposal.

**Detailed description of the project**

The primary outcomes of the project are a book-length manuscript on heresy in Jewish modernity and two journal articles. In what follows, I briefly outline the manuscript.

**The first chapter**, “Deutscher’s Heretics: The Dynamics of Jewish Tradition,” revisits Isaac Deutscher’s canonical essay “The non-Jewish Jew.” In this essay, Deutscher focused on several famous Jewish “heretics,” from Baruch Spinoza and Heinrich Heine to Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, and Sigmund Freud, who, according to Deutscher, came to realize Judaism as too narrow, too archaic, and too constricting, yet struggled to find fulfillment elsewhere. At the crossroads of diverse cultural paradigms, they were able to champion ideals of universal human emancipation. Their deviance from the religious world view of Judaism, however, did not harm the Jewish community, but rather proved the fertility and continual validity of the Jewish tradition. For Deutscher, the heretic “non-Jewish Jew” is a hero of modern Judaism: he or she belongs to and even constitutes Jewish tradition.

Still, in Deutscher’s work, Judaism had a fixed essence, and heresy was a direct negation of this essence. There was something about “being a Jew” that the heretic rejected. My claim is that the history of the reception of “Deutscher’s heretics” proves that the place of heresy in Jewish history is much more complicated. By analogy with Deutscher’s work on heresy, I will develop my own approach to heresy from a Foucauldian perspective. Spinoza, I will claim, was admired by his nineteenth-century Jewish readers as a champion of universal rational values, while in the early twentieth century the focus shifted to his heretic stance on rabbinic Judaism. In different periods, Spinoza’s heresy took on different meanings that portrayed different visions of Judaism as well as different social and political ideals. This first chapter aims to revisit Deutscher’s heretics. I am interested in the reception of these thinkers, in the afterlife of their work. My argument is that this history proves the dynamism of Jewish tradition in modernity, but also, and more importantly, the role of the heretic in such a tradition.

**The second chapter**, “Reason vs Religiosity: The Heresy of Mendelssohn and Buber,” turns to one of the most consequential debates in Judaism since the Enlightenment about the essence of Judaism: should Judaism be based on rational laws and universal principles, on reason, and on the social and ethical ideals that Judaism shares with thinkers of the Enlightenment, as Mendelssohn claimed? Alternatively, is Judaism based on experiential and mystical dimensions, as in early Buber?[[3]](#footnote-3) This debate about the opposition of the systemization of religion vs privatization of faith, is, I argue, a debate about borders, or about heresy. On the one hand, Mendelssohn is a heretic who places religious revelation and rational principles side by side. On the other, Buber is a heretic who aims to transcend the limits of organized, institutionalized religion, and to replace it with a quasi-Nietzschean experience of religiosity. The chapter focuses on the discourse of heresy that Buber and Mendelssohn initiated. Whereas Mendelssohn became a representative of a Judaism gone wrong, Buber, the open heretic, has been co-opted over the years by Jewish tradition, regardless of what he wrote. What was the rationale behind this inclusion/exclusion? What changed that rationale, and why? Most importantly, *who* decides to accept a certain corpus as part of the modern Jewish canon, or to reject another?

**The third chapter**, “Feminism as Heresy?” addresses the place of the discourse of heresy in the responses to feminism in the early twentieth-century German Jewish context.[[4]](#footnote-4) The chapter focuses on the Jewish social pioneer Bertha Pappenheim and her work at the *Judischer Frauenbund* (JFB, League of Jewish Women). The JFB was founded in 1904 but dissolved by the Nazi regime in 1938. Compared to Sara Schenirer’s Bais Yaakov Movement, which was essentially seen as a sectarian phenomenon of Jewish orthodoxy, the JFB attracted 20% of all Jewish women in Germany, and therefore had considerable influence on the German Jewish bourgeoisie. The JFB serves as a case study for understanding the challenges faced by feminism in the German Jewish community. Indeed, initially, the JFB was seen as a secular, anti-religious movement, and was rejected by traditional communities. Yet Bertha Pappenheim came from a Jewish orthodox family, and her work at the JFB was meant to oppose Jewish assimilation or tendencies of secularization (unlike Rahel Varnhagen, an earlier pioneer of German Jewish feminism, who converted to Christianity). She believed that the loss of faith in many middle-class Jewish families was due to the fact that young girls were not given access to a proper Jewish education. In fact, she envisioned a greater role for Jewish women in the perseverance of traditional Jewish ways of life. Was Pappenheim a heretic, in espousing the emancipation of Jewish women, or was she orthodox, for struggling to safeguard Jewish tradition from its imminent destruction? How did her contentious relations with non-Jewish feminist movements impact on her place in the Jewish world? It is my contention that Pappenheim and the JFB provide an opportunity to rethink the discourse of heresy in Jewish modernity: how is heresy defined and for what purposes? It is equally important to consider how Pappenheim demonstrates the constructive role of heresy in the preservation of Jewish tradition, since it was with her help that the Jewish community re-consolidated its foundations.

In **the fourth chapter**, “R. Kook: Heresy, Apostasy, and Zionism,” I aim to apply the proposed theoretical framework to the early stages of Zionism to examine the role of apostasy in the thinking of R. Abraham Isaac Kook, one of the important leaders of religious Zionism.[[5]](#footnote-5) R. Kook famously argued that apostasy (*Kefira*)—the rejection of religious doctrine—is not necessarily subversive and harmful but actually contains positive and constructive dimensions. In a Lurianic key, he claimed that apostasy is a negation of faith that cleanses and *purifies faith*: the fractured soul of the apostate reflected the rupture which R. Kook identified in the world, and its purification elevated the self and produced spiritual harmony. This vision led some to argue that for R. Kook, “faith and heresy are interdependent, each in need of the other, and they join together in building the world of spirit and of human creativity in the broadest sense.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Indeed, R. Kook was fascinated with several “apostates” like Herzl, who, he believed, had sparks of Messiah ben Joseph. However, this nuanced vision of the apostate was in stark contrast to R. Kook’s harsh disparagement of Christianity. The purpose of this chapter is to delineate the heroic place of apostasy in R. Kook’s thought, to compare it to his work on Christianity, and to rethink its place in early Zionism.[[7]](#footnote-7) I am especially interested in the constructive place of apostasy (compared to the destructive role of Christianity) in the spiritual resurrection of Judaism.

**The fifth and concluding chapter**, “Heresy after 1945: Jonas, Arendt and the Opposition from Within,” addresses the heretical dimensions of inner-Jewish dialogues after the Holocaust. The chapter focuses on Jonas’ call for new religious ideals and Arendt’s criticism of Zionism during the Eichmann trial as two examples of the politics of criticism and heresy in the second half of the twentieth century.[[8]](#footnote-8) First, attention is given to Jonas’ search for a new Jewish religiosity. In the turmoil of the post-WWII era and in the face of the horrors of Auschwitz, some declared God dead; for some God represented evilness; and for others God was powerless.[[9]](#footnote-9) Hans Jonas represents a different response from the post-WWII Jewish intellectual world: he was not interested in rejecting Judaism nor rebelling against God. Instead, the primary concern of his work—and the work of others like Eliezer Berkovits, Irving Greenberg and Arthur Cohen—was to seriously engage with the core principles of Judaism. The chapter focuses on Jonas’ talk upon receiving the Dr. Leopold Lucas Award from the Faculty of Protestant Theology at Tübingen University in 1984 (published in 1987 as “The Concept of God after Auschwitz: A Jewish Voice”), in which he called for a change in our understanding of the divine, and applied a new kind of theodicy that takes evil seriously. Although this urgent call for change would have previously been considered heretical, Jonas was not regarded as a heretic, despite his provocative suggestions. He is especially interesting in this context, since his previous and more famous work on Gnosticism is often regarded as verging on heresy.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Hannah Arendt, a leading political theorist and one of Jonas’ closest friends, presents a different kind of criticism and consequently a different type of heresy. The chapter moves to Arendt’s work on the Adolf Eichmann trial, and her famous correspondence with Scholem on her reporting of the trial. In her Eichmann book, Arendt famously criticized mainstream Zionism and several *Judenrat* organizations and was consequently condemned for her lack of “Love of Israel.” In these epistolary exchanges, Scholem appears to represent the voice of orthodoxy, vehemently disagreeing with Arendt, the heretic, whose accusations are seen as sinful. Why was Arendt condemned, while Jonas’ radical suggestions were met with approval? Who decides who is a heretic, and who is not? The chapter explores these peculiar episodes in Jewish thought to uncover the mechanisms of inner-religious dialogue about borders.

***1.2 Quality and appropriateness of the training and of the two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host***

Principles of training: The Bucerius Institute is a dynamic and collegial research institution of the University of Haifa, Israel, bringing together the best of local and foreign scholarship on modern Germany, with a special emphasis on modern German-Jewish history and thought. As the suggested project focuses mostly, but not exclusively, on the German Jewish world, the Bucerius Institute promises to offer an inspiring and stimulating intellectual environment for my work The Bucerius Institute currently has twelve research fellows, and it intends to organize twenty-five academic events per year between 2021 and 2023. These events include research seminars, workshops, conferences, guest lectures, and academic courses, involving distinguished German and international scholars, faculty members from Israeli universities, and young Israeli researchers and students. I will participate in one research seminar each semester. I am already scheduled to contribute to the 2021-2022 seminar “Contemporary German Philosophy and History” (conducted by Dr. Cedric Cohen-Skalli), and “Wissenschaft and Power (conducted by Dr. Orr Scharf). In the first year of the project, I will also attend a graduate course on Digital Humanities, and in the second year I will participate in a seminar of the faculty of humanities on principles of university education, which will include workshops on inclusion and institutional equity and online teaching methods. In this context, it is important to note that the Bucerius Institute also offers an academic framework for researchers from abroad who come to Haifa for their research projects. Professor Cornelia Wilhelm (LMU) will be hosted at the Institute in 2021 as part of her digital humanities project “MIRA Plus: German Refugee Rabbis in the United States and Palestine/Israel after 1933.” I was invited to collaborate on this project which aims to rethink the place of heresy in the experience of refugees, in the framework of digital humanities.

Principles of mentorship: I will have bi-weekly meetings with Dr. Cohen-Skalli to monitor the development of the project. The mentorship includes—besides theoretical guidance and support in practical issues (libraries, research materials, etc.)—counsel on the financial management of the project and help in building and maintaining the outreach plan, as noted in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Transference of previously acquired knowledge and skills: My research and training have been characterized by ongoing movement between academic institutes and disciplines. Over the past few years, I have completed training in the USA and Israel and have forged a wide network of connections that will allow me to become a valuable contributor not only to the Bucerius Institute, but also to the department of Jewish History and Thought and the faculty of Humanities. I am positive that my academic knowledge and experience (see section 1.4) and the personal and working relationships I have established with other scholars around the world will serve as a good basis for future collaborations, which I look forward to pursuing in Haifa. In particular, I would like to contribute to the intellectual conversation in the department of Jewish History and Thought and the Bucerius Institute with my expertise in modern Jewish philosophy, theories of heresy and messianism, and the interrelations between Jewish and continental traditions of philosophy. I also plan to work with the Bucerius Institute toward fostering its ties with the department of philosophy and the general history department. More concretely, I will give a research seminar “Heresy in Jewish Modernity” in spring 2022 and a second seminar on my previous research on Jewish messianism “The Negation of Time: Repetition and Messianism in German Jewish Modernity” in fall 2022. I will also organize an international conference on the place of heresy in Jewish modernity in fall 2022 and a few workshops tailored for non-experts (see section 2.3). I will supervise one MA student with Dr. Cohen-Skalli as my mentor and will offer an interdisciplinary BA course on Jewish heresy at the department of Jewish History and Thought.

***1.3 Quality of the supervision and of the integration in the team/institution***

Dr. Cohen-Skalli, the head of the Bucerius Institute, has agreed to supervise the proposed study. He teaches early modern and modern Jewish Philosophy in the department of Jewish History and Thought at the University of Haifa. He is an expert in Jewish political philosophy and in modern Jewish thought, both at the core of the suggested project. Dr. Cohen-Skalli has published and edited several books—most recently, *Don Isaac Abravanel: An Intellectual Biography* (Waltham MA: Brandeis University Press, 2020), and with Libera Pisano: *Skepsis and Antipolitics. The Alternative of Gustav Landauer* (Leiden: Brill, 2021). He is currently leading several research projects on Jewish political philosophy (see part B-2 of the proposal), and his expertise in Jewish political philosophy in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe is essential to the success of my study. In the last few years, Dr. Cohen-Skalli has supervised five postdoc projects and has been awarded several visiting professorships (University of Salzburg, University of Potsdam, and Sciences Po Bordeaux). He is also a translator of many works by Freud, Benjamin, Scholem, and Abravanel. I will have bi-weekly supervision meetings with Dr. Cohen-Skalli for the duration of the project.

Several fellows of the Institute, such as Dr. Orr Scharf, Dr. Yotam Hotam, Dr. Natasha Gordinsky, and Dr. Anat Zur Mehalal, have extensive research experience in my field of study: modern Jewish intellectual history. For example, Dr. Yotam Hotam’s work on heresy and Gnosticism in Zionism dovetails with my work on heresy and Zionism in R. Kook. Dr. Scharf’s work on Buber will be helpful as well. Prof. Marcos Silber from the department of Jewish History and Thought, who works on Eastern Jewish history, will also contribute to the success of the project.

Lastly, I am very much used to working in new academic surroundings: I have had postdoc fellowships in UC Berkeley, Tel Aviv University, and the Hebrew University, and a faculty position at Towson University, and in all of these establishments I rather quickly spearheaded collaborations with my new colleagues. I have already made first contact with Dr. Orr Scharf and Dr. Yotam Hotam and with several possible venues for the planned workshops (section 2.3), and I am positive that many more productive collaborations will be formed before long.

***1.4 Potential of the researcher to reach or re-enforce professional maturity/independence during the fellowship***

In the years that have passed since I received my PhD, I have succeeded in creating an international academic profile for myself and have worked rigorously to prepare for my reintegration into the Israeli academic world. My PhD dissertation, “Therapeutics and Salvation: The Pre-Figuration of Freud’s Concept of Freedom in Schelling’s Philosophy,” proposed a new framework for understanding Freud’s psychoanalysis and its relations with German Idealism in general and the philosophy of F.W.J Schelling in particular. Principally, *the work broke new ground in exploring the crucial role of Freud, a self-proclaimed “God-less Jew,” in processes of* *modern secularism*. A revised and expanded version of the dissertation is forthcoming (fall 2020) with Magnes Hebrew University Press. My second book project, *The Negation of History: Repetition and Messianism in Modern Jewish Thought* focused on theories of history, repetition, and messianism in the works of Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin, Franz Kafka, and Sigmund Freud and their interconnections with several modern philosophical models of repetition—in Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. The manuscript has gone through the peer review process and is under final consideration for publication with Brandeis University Press. The suggested study, “Heresy and Tradition in Jewish Modernity” aims to further examine the same historical period, but from a different conceptual framework. In my previous work, secularism and messianism featured as important examples of responses to the deterioration of the German Jewish world in the early twentieth century. In this new work, I suggest that the discourse of heresy is a crucial yet underresearched category for understanding the same complicated reality.

As for the interdisciplinary nature of the study: (1) In my previous works, I put Jewish philosophy in conversation with major developments in continental philosophy (German idealism in my dissertation, and Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger in my recent book project). This framework informs the methodology of the suggested project, which reinterprets Jewish heresy from a Foucauldian perspective. (2) Theories of heresy: I recently co-edited the volume *Canonization and Alterity: Heresy in Jewish History, Thought, and Literature* (De Gruyter, 2020), with Willi Goetschel (University of Toronto). I also organized the international conference “Judaism and Heresy” in May 2019 at Tel Aviv University. Through both experiences, I gained the required expertise to tackle the question of heresy in Jewish modernity. (3) My extensive work on Kafka—I organized a symposium on Benjamin and Kafka at UC Berkeley, published a journal article on Kafka, Benjamin, and Scholem, and wrote a chapter on Kafka in my book on Jewish messianism—has prepared me to properly engage with literary texts that I expect to feature among the sources I will consult during the study. In sum, I strongly believe that my interdisciplinary research experience (modern Jewish philosophy, continental philosophy, German Jewish literature and culture) indicates that I am well prepared to take on the planned research agenda, and that I have much to offer the vibrant and dynamic community of faculty and students sharing an interest in Jewish Studies.

New competences and skills: My work at the Bucerius Institute will help me to acquire a leading role in the field of modern Jewish thought. Collaborations with renowned scholars of Jewish political philosophy are especially important, as these will allow me to develop expertise in the interrelations between political thought and Jewish philosophy. Working with the excellent team of researchers at the University of Haifa will also deepen my knowledge and understanding of modern German Jewish culture, critical theory, and Jewish literature. The Institute’s emphasis on international collaborations and the organization of workshops and conferences will allow me to develop academic relations with scholars from Israel and Europe. In this way, I will be able to gain knowledge about different aspects of the dissemination processes of academic scholarship.

***2. Impact***

***2.1 Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship***

The suggested study is the third in a series of philosophical works on the challenges of the early twentieth-century European Jewish world (see section 1.4). In the next stage of my academic career, I aim to build on the collaborations and expertise I will develop in this study to think about heresy in *contemporary American Jewish culture*. I aim to shift the focus of my work from Europe to the USA, and to engage with current events in the Jewish American community, all from the theoretical perspective of heresy, as developed in this study.

In terms of my academic journey, I have enjoyed an enriching career spanning several years in the USA, first as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Berkeley and then as a tenure-track faculty member in the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Towson University, Maryland (I am a second year assistant professor). Having acquired new theoretical knowledge and methodological tools, and having collaborated with these vibrant intellectual communities, my aim is to return to Israel. I believe that an extensive research period in a thriving and prestigious academic institution in Israel—which offers superb networking opportunities and excellent research facilities—is essential if I am to consolidate my academic standing and secure a position in Israeli academia. The resulting products of the research project (a book and two journal articles, as well as the international conference and several workshop presentations) will increase the visibility of my research and open up new avenues of collaboration. Indeed, the department of Jewish History and Thought at the University of Haifa has shown particular interest in my academic achievements and advancement, and Dr. Cohen-Skalli and other members of the department and the faculty of humanities are deeply committed to working with me toward securing a long-term position at the university.

***2.2 Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results***

The suggested project is primarily intended for scholars of Jewish thought, philosophy of religion, modern philosophy in the continental tradition, political theology, theories of post-secularism, and German literature and culture. As evidenced by my list of publications, throughout my academic career I have been deeply committed to disseminating my research in both academic and popular publications, along with presentations, conferences and other academic initiatives. My previous studies have been published in leading peer-reviewed journals and top-tier academic presses. While the main forms of dissemination will be the journal articles and book manuscript, I intend to publicize the study through my membership with several professional organizations (Association for Jewish Studies, Israeli Philosophical Association, The American Academy of Religion, World Jewish Congress, and German Studies Association). These associations’ annual conventions, exhibits, awards, internal mailing lists and online platforms will provide a prominent forum for the project. I am also included in a set of international subject-specific and institutional mailing lists which reach a considerable number of scholars in the relevant disciplines in the US, Europe and Israel (H-Net, Hum-il, etc.). The research workshop and the international conference I intend to organize at the University of Haifa during my time at the Bucerius Institute, together with my social media platforms (Academia.com and Facebook accounts) will provide additional important dissemination opportunities. I plan to apply for funding for the conference from the Leo Baeck Institute, which has generously funded my research on Jewish messianism in the past. As noted in section 3.3, the Bucerius Institute will help with travel costs for the purposes of attending conferences in Israel.

***2.3 Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences***

As a humanities scholar, specifically in the field of modern Jewish philosophy, I am strongly committed to fostering a dynamic intellectual community that maintains productive and ongoing collaborations: between Jewish Studies and various departments and research centers around campus. I also believe that academic campuses should serve as intellectual centers for the communities around them. These insights have informed my work in recent years. Since 2015, I have organized or co-organized six high-profile interdisciplinary academic conferences and symposiums at UC Berkeley, Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University. I have led two reading groups and given seven public presentations. The 2015 international conference “Revisiting Freud and Moses: Heroism, History, and Religion,” for example, received much attention from the campus community and was co-sponsored by nine UC Berkeley departments and centers.

While I have made a point to disseminate my research to different audiences in the past, the present research project strikes me as being of particular significance in its treatment of the place of heresy and dissent in Jewish tradition, with important implications for the current political climate in Israel. During my tenure at the Bucerius Institute, I intend to create and maintain a network of collaborations with different departments and academic centers within the University of Haifa and across Israel. This will allow me to present my research to different target audiences, including non-experts, through full-day workshops. I have already made first contact with the DAAD Haifa Center for German and European Studies, the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Leo Baeck Institute Jerusalem, the Shalom Hartman Institute and the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. I also intend to build on the many collaborations of the Bucerius Institute with international academic centers, such as the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies at the University of Hamburg, with a view to developing the range of outreach programs. Additionally, I believe that as a scholar in the humanities, I should be present in the social sphere as a public intellectual in order to contribute to the larger conversation about the role of religion in modern society in Israel and Europe. In this capacity, I recently appeared on the Israeli internet news broadcast DemocraTV. I intend to continue to engage with the wider audience through other platforms like popular articles and podcasts. Lastly, the University of Haifa organizes a yearly event, the “Night of Scientists,” when its researchers meet with the wider audience in informal settings (bars, cafes, etc.). I plan to participate in this event during my tenure at the university.

***3. Implementation***

***3.1 Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources***

Table 1: Project Gantt Chart

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

The research project is planned as a two-year project, primarily because of the estimated time required for the research and writing of a book-length manuscript. The work plan is composed of two parallel parts, research and dissemination. As for the research, the project consists of two work packages: journal articles (WP1) and book manuscript (WP2). In the first stage of work package 1, I will map out the contours of the discourse of heresy in Jewish modernity, using the responses to heresy in the case studies of Deutscher in his essay “the non-Jewish Jew.” I will present these initial findings at the colloquium of the department of Jewish History and Thought. Upon the completion of this stage, I will submit an academic article to the journal *Jewish Quarterly Review* that will focus on methodological aspects of the project, especially the differences and similarities between my approach to heresy and that of Deutscher. The second stage of the first work package focuses on Buber and Mendelssohn as a case study for the theological dimensions of the project. This part of the study will be presented to the colloquium of the Bucerius Institute. On the basis of my findings at this stage, I plan to submit an academic article to the journal of *Jewish Thought and Philosophy*. The second work package is dedicated to the composition of a book manuscript exploring the issue of Jewish heresy in the early twentieth century. This will be submitted to a top-tier international academic press. The framework of the study will be presented at the international conference I will organize in November 2022. As shown in the Gantt chart, I have dedicated 210 days to the completion of the journal articles (work package 1), as they form the theoretical foundation for the book manuscript. As for the dissemination of the project (work package 3), I plan to dedicate 60 days to the preparation of each one-day workshop, and 100 days to the preparation of the international conference. The events will be spread out over the two-year period. It is important to note that the funding for the workshops will come from the budgets of the other parties involved.

***3.2 Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures, including risk management***

General: Each stage of the action is tailored in a way that ensures extensive feedback from multiple sources, and intense academic scrutiny, both domestic and international. Dr. Cohen-Skalli and I will have bi-weekly meetings to monitor the development of the project. As detailed in section 3.1, I am expected to present the project at the colloquia of the department of Jewish History and Thought and the Bucerius Institute. These oral presentations and the feedback received will serve as the basis for the two articles. I will also present the framework of the project at the international conference in November 2022. After the first year of the fellowship, I am expected to submit a full report on the progress of my project to the Bucerius Institute. In addition, throughout the duration of the project, I will prepare drafts of the chapters of the manuscript, which will be sent to my prospective host and colleagues at the Bucerius Institute.

Importantly, this research will be given the direct and ongoing support and guidance of the head of the European Desk at the RA. The RA serves as the administrative and financial framework for research activities, scientific experiments and technical analysis carried out by the university faculty and visiting fellows, and it ensures the independence and academic freedom of researchers.

Risk Management: The greatest risk to the study pertains to the early stage of data collection. It is possible that my current hypothesis about the place of heresy in Jewish modernity will be proven wrong. However, this is extremely unlikely as I worked on this topic relentlessly when I co-edited the volume of Jewish heresy. Based on my familiarity with the focus of this study and the major philosophical traditions of the period, I am convinced that this research will demonstrate my claims about the role of heresy in Jewish modernity.

Also, it is important to note that due to the Covid-19 pandemic all project activities and events will be *virtual* until further notice. Our hope is that by the time this project begins (fall 2021) we will be able to return to the campus for face-to-face interaction.

Ethics: This project focuses on philosophical and historical works in Jewish modernity and is in compliance

with European and Israeli law, as well as with the ethics and regulations of the Research Authority (RA) of the University of Haifa. Furthermore, the Bucerius Institute has an ethics committee that convenes once every semester to review and address ethical challenges that researchers may face.

***3.3 Appropriateness of the institutional environment (infrastructure)***

The Bucerius Institute will serve as my academic home for the duration of the fellowship. In addition to supplying training, physical and research facilities, and opportunities to interact with scholars, faculty and students on an international scale, the establishment will be in charge of monitoring the study’s adequate progress. The Bucerius Institute will provide me with an office, computer, printing facilities, and full library access. I will be able to request the support of a research assistant for evaluating and transliterating archival materials. The institute can also help to cover travel expenses for the purposes of accessing various archives and attending conferences throughout the country.

1. See, for example, Daniel Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Shaye J. D. Cohen, “A Virgin Defiled: Some Rabbinic and Christian Views on the Origins of Heresy,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 36.1 (1980): 1–11; Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The literature on the modern German Jewish world is immense. George Mosse’s *German Jews beyond Judaism* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997) is the canonical entry point. For another enriching discussion on the subject, see Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) and David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Paul Mendes-Flohr’s *German Jews: A Dual Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) is also helpful. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For Buber’s early works on Judaism in English, see Martin Buber, “Revelation and Law,” *On Jewish Learning*, ed. Nahum Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1965); and the section “The Early Addresses” in Martin Buber, *On Judaism*, ed. Nahum Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1967). For Buber in German see Martin Buber, *Werkausgabe*, vol. 1 *Frühe kulturkritische und philosophische Schriften, 1891-1924*, ed. Martin Treml (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2001). For introductory readings see Leora Batnitzky, “Revelation and *Neues Denken*—Rethinking Buber and Rosenzweig on the Law,” *New Perspectives on Martin Buber*, ed. Michael Zank (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Hillel Goldberg, “The Early Buber and Jewish Law,” *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*, 21(1): 66-74 (1983): and Ron Margolin, “The Implicit Secularism of Martin Buber’s Thought,” *Israel Studies*, 13(3): 64-88 (2008). Paul Mendes-Flohr emphasizes the heretic dimension of Buber’s work in his recent biography *Martin Buber: A Life of Faith and Dissent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). For Mendelssohn’s work see *Jerusalem, Or on Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allan Arkush (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 1983). For prominent works on Mendelssohn, see Michael Albrecht, *Moses Mendelssohn, 1729-1786: das Lebenswerk eines jüdischen Denkers der deutschen Aufklärung* (Weinheim : Acta Humaniora, 1986); Allan Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994); Shmuel Feiner, *Moses Mendelssohn: Sage of Modernity*, trans. Anthony Berris (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Willi Goetschel, *Spinoza's Modernity: Mendelssohn, Lessing, and Heine* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 85-182. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The topic of feminism in the German Jewish context has attracted some attention in recent decades. For a historical perspective see Marion A. Kaplan, *The Jewish Feminist Movement in Germany: The Campaigns of the Judischer Frauenbund, 1904-1938* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979); Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1991); Naomi Seidman, *Sarah Schenirer and the Bais Yaakov Movement: A Revolution in the Name of Tradition* (London: Littman, 2019); and Naomi Shepherd, *A Price Below Rubies: Jewish Women as Rebels and Radicals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). For a theoretical perspective see Tova Hartman, *Feminism Encounters Traditional Judaism* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For the life and work of Rav Kook, see Yehudah Mirsky, *Rav Kook: Mystic in a Time of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Zevi Yaron, *The Philosophy of Rav Kook* (Jerusalem: Eliner Library, 1991) [Hebrew]; and the edited volume by Lawrence J. Kaplan and David Shatz (eds.), *Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Jewish Spirituality* (New York: NYU Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Binyamin Ish Shalom, *Rav Avraham Itzhak Hacohen Kook: Between Rationalism and Mysticism* (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Pinchas Polonsky, *Religious Zionism of Rav Kook*, trans. Lise Brody, ed. Galina Zolotusky (Jerusalem: Orot, 2016);

   Dov Schwartz, *The Religious Genius in Rabbi Kook's Thought: National “Saint”?* trans. Edward Levin (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For a discussion of responses to the holocaust in post-WWII Jewish thought, see Zachary Braiterman, *(God) After Auschwitz: Tradition and Change in Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Most notably, in Richard L. Rubenstein’s *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Benjamin Lazier, *God Interrupted: Heresy and the European Imagination between the World Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Willem Styfhals, *No Spiritual Investment in the World: Gnosticism and Postwar German Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)