

WOMEN WRITE BUBER: 100th Anniversary of *I and Thou* (1923)

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS



Cedric Cohen-Skalli teaches early modern and modern Jewish philosophy at the Department of Jewish History at the University of Haifa. His research focuses on the relationship of Jewish thinkers to two main philosophical shifts: the shift from medieval philosophy to early modern thought (14th to 17th centuries), and the shift from early modern to modern thought (18th to 20th centuries). He has published three books and many articles on diverse aspects of Jewish thought and literature in the early modern and modern periods. He is also a translator of Freud, Benjamin, Scholem, Idel and Abravanel.



Yemima Hadad holds the Juniorprofessur für Judaistik at the University of Leipzig. Dr. Hadad teaches modern Jewish thought, German-Jewish philosophy and the Talmud. She is a research fellow at the Bucerius Institute for Research of German Contemporary History and Society at the University of Haifa. Her research interests focus on political theology, continental philosophy, feminism and 20th-century Jewish thought. She is currently working on a book on the weak God in Jewish sources and modern philosophy.



Ronen Pinkas is a research fellow at the School of Jewish Theology at Potsdam University. Dr. Pinkas specializes in modern Jewish philosophy, Judaism and psychoanalysis, and comparative theology, and has published works on Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Freud and Erich Fromm.

STUDENT ASSISTANTS



Deborah Epstein is a PhD student and a research assistant for Jewish Studies at the University of Leipzig. Her research focuses on modern Jewish thought with an emphasis on how secularistic and atheistic thought is introduced and construed within it, as well as the ethics of alterity and political theology.



Rachel Pafe is a writer and researcher interested in 20th-century post-war German-Jewish thought and interdisciplinary theories of mourning. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Leipzig.

Rakefet Anzi



Rakefet Anzi is a PhD candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her master's thesis (2021) focuses on the history of adult education in Mandatory Palestine, and examines the influence of the German and English pedagogical models. The analysis examines the educational projects of two German-Jewish intellectuals – Martin Buber and Abraham Halevi Fraenkel – who promoted adult education in Israel. Anzi's doctoral research explores the role of adult education in the process of nation-building in Palestine/Israel from the 1930s to the 1950s.

Women in Adult Education: Martin Buber and Nechama Leibowitz

Martin Buber is famous for promoting a unique educational method, based on dialogic teaching. He developed this concept from the beginning of the 20th century and worked throughout the 1920s and 1930s to implement it in various frameworks of adult education in Germany. Later, in the 1940s, Buber endeavored to influence the design of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the spirit of dialogical teaching, and even sought to establish an Israeli *Volkshochschule* as part of the university. In 1949 his long-held dream came true, and the Beit Midrash for Educators was established in Jerusalem, although it operated for only four years.

In the few studies that have been written about the Beit Midrash, Buber's unique pedagogy is emphasized as a key component of his activities. In my MA thesis, I examined the sources that influenced Buber and shaped this pedagogy. In my view, new methods of adult education that emerged in Germany after the First World War were the basis for the Beit Midrash, and an appreciation of these methods not only contributes to our understanding of the Beit Midrash's activities but also helps to explain its rapid closure. My research therefore suggests that distinctly German sources influenced a uniquely Israeli product, and that Martin Buber was the agent who bridged the two worlds and wove them together in a unique and distinctive way.

In my lecture, I will examine the connections and differences between Buber's dialogical method and that of Nechama Leibowitz, the professor of the Bible, teacher and educator who was awarded the Israel Prize in adult education in 1956. Leibowitz acquired her academic education in Germany, and in Israel she engaged in Bible teaching for many years in various educational settings for adults, one of which was the Beit Midrash for Educators. In the Beit Midrash she taught alongside its director, Buber, implementing the principles of his method in adult education, while giving them her unique interpretation. My lecture will introduce for the first time the connections between these two personalities in the field of adult education.

Noa Avron Barak



Noa Avron Barak is a post-doctoral fellow at the Franz Rosenzweig Minerva Research Center for German-Jewish Literature and Cultural History. Her academic focus lies on the intersection of art history and theory, gender and German-Jewish thought, particularly the relevance of Martin Buber's dialogical philosophy for art history. Avron Barak's doctoral dissertation at Ben Gurion University (2022), titled *Fictional Canons: History, Fiction and Authority in Israeli Art Literature*, offered a new literary-based theoretical framework for canonization mechanisms in Israeli art. Two articles based on her dissertation are forthcoming this year: "Jewish Art on Jewish Land? Martin Buber's Conception of Adama Yehudit in his Speech in the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901" in *Chidushim: New Findings in the Research of German and European Jewry* (Leo Baeck Institute) and "Fictional Canon – Reconsidering Karl Schwarz Modern Jewish Art, 1941" in *Imagined Israel(s): Projections of the Jewish State in the Arts*, editors Luna Goldberg and Rocco Giansante (Brill, Jewish Identities in a Changing World series).

Writing a Dialogical Art History: Martin Buber and Feminist Art History in Israel

This talk articulates the relevance of Martin Buber's dialogical philosophy for the discourse on art and feminism. To this end, I introduce Buber's unconventional redefinition of art creation. In *I and Thou*, Buber explains that the I–Thou relation is the origin of art insofar it involves a person who "confronts a form that wants to become a work through him." Through this prism, the key to evaluating art is not the artwork itself but the encounter between art on the one hand, and its producer or beholder on the other, both of which are perceived as subjects. Whereas this redefinition of art has been overlooked in conventional art history (including feminist art history), this talk not only foregrounds its conceptual significance, but uses it to outline a new approach to feminist art history in Israel. This history does not search out "Great Female Artists," as Linda Nochlin's well-known injunction of 1971 has it. Drawing on Buber, I stress that this new approach to art history is based instead on dialogical values for art interpretation and appreciation. Although Buber's work has been widely studied, scholars in art history and aesthetics have not drawn directly on his oeuvre. For Buber art encapsulates the essence of the I–Thou relation and is a key factor of human existence. Despite this, the place of art in his dialogical philosophy has hardly been addressed. In this talk, I first explain Buber's redefinition of art and then use it to evaluate a particular case study: the weaving department in the New Bezalel School for Art and Crafts. Operating from the 1940s into the 1960s, this department was populated by female students and teachers. Whereas Israeli art historiography has presented it as a Zionist replica of the Bauhaus's acclaimed weaving department, I focus on how its woven textiles actualize the relations among the women who worked together in the school's workshops. What is historically important for feminist art history in this case study is not the originality of their mutual practice, but the ways in which it empowered women and fostered female solidarity in the context of Israel/Palestine in the 20th century.

Bettina Bannasch



Bettina Bannasch is Professor of Modern German Literature at the University of Augsburg. Her main areas of work and research include German-Jewish literature, cultural and literary memory research, intermediality in adult and children's literature, and German-language literature in Southeast Europe. She is co-editor of the *Exile Research Yearbook*. She has written publications on German-language literature from the early modern period to the present, and her recent publications include: *Zukunft der Sprache – Zukunft der Nation? Verhandlungen des Jiddischen und Jüdischen im Kontext der Czernowitzer Sprachkonferenz*, with Carmen Reichert and Alfred Wildfeuer (De Gruyter 2022; *Conditio Judaica* 97); *Darstellung, Vermittlung, Aneignung – Zu gegenwärtigen Reflexionen des Holocaust*, with Hans-Joachim Hahn (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2018); and *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Exilliteratur. Von Heinrich Heine bis Herta Müller*, with Gerhild Rochus (De Gruyter 2013; 2nd edition 2016).

Ladies' Philosopher and Salon Lady: Martin Buber and Auguste Hauschner

Auguste Hauschner was a successful German-Czech author around 1900 who lived in Prague and Berlin. She owes her place in literary history above all to Max Brod, who portrays her in his book about the "Prague Circle" as its amiable, if somewhat spinsterish, precursor.

Hauschner maintained a salon in Berlin and was in lively exchanges with authors and philosophers of her time, as well as with key representatives of the women's movement, especially Hedwig Dohm. Hauschner knew Buber personally, but how close this contact was remains to be investigated. However, it can be assumed that the connection mainly existed through reading his writings and through mutual acquaintances and friends. There was a close relationship with Gustav Landauer, whom Hauschner supported as a patron and from whom she took lessons in philosophy for a while. She also formed a close friendship with her cousin Fritz Mauthner; the extensive and informative correspondence has been handed down. Mauthner repeatedly warned Hauschner and Landauer not to succumb to the lure of the renewed Judaism, but to remain true to a liberal atheism – while Max Brod boasted in his letters to Hauschner that he had (re)won her to Judaism.

This lecture wants to explore the role that Martin Buber and his philosophy played for Hauschner, especially in respect to her own view of Judaism, in which women's emancipation and Jewish emancipation are closely intertwined.

Leora Batnitzky



Leora Batnitzky is Ronald O. Perelman Professor of Jewish Studies, and Professor of Religion and Director of the Program in Judaic Studies at Princeton University. Her teaching and research interests include philosophy of religion, modern Jewish thought, hermeneutics, and contemporary legal and political theory.

Mothering Beyond Essence? Martin Buber, Bertha Pappenheim and Donald Winnicott

As is well known, Buber's dialogical philosophy shares a number of affinities with feminist philosophies of care, including a conception of the self who is dependent on and responsive to the vulnerability of others, the notion that ethics and responsibility emerge from human dependence and vulnerability, and the characterization of dependence and vulnerability as "feminine" and in fact as a kind of "mothering." Yet also like some (though not all) feminist philosophies of care, Buber essentializes the "feminine," which brings his claims into sharp tension with more recent arguments that gender is not essential but is rather always and only constructed and performative. This lecture considers the benefits and costs of reconceiving Buber's notion of the "feminine" without its essentialist baggage. To do so, the lecture turns to Buber's correspondence with Bertha Pappenheim as well as to the relationship between Buber's arguments about the "between" and Donald Winnicott's conception of the "good enough" mother. In these contexts, the question will be raised what it might mean to reimagine mothering beyond essence.

Katharina Baur



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Dr. Katharina Baur is a German literary scholar and the director of the center of folk music, literature and popular music of the district of Upper Bavaria. She studies German literature as well as art and cultural history at the University of Augsburg. In 2022 she received her doctorate with her dissertation *Das Kunstwerk Leben zu gestalten. Leben und Werk Paula Buber (1877 – 1956)*, in which she worked with previously unknown material of Paula and Martin Buber, which is still in the Buber family's estate. Her work is a biography and personal biography about Paula Buber. Since 2021, Dr. Baur has been the director of the new cultural centre ZeMuLi near Munich, where she is responsible for the exhibition, event and educational program.

The Invisible Woman: Paula Buber – The Person of *I and Thou*

If you hear the name “Paula Buber” today, the first thing that comes to your mind is the wife of the famous philosopher of religion, Martin Buber. That Paula Buber (1877–1958) herself was fascinating and multifaceted, and in her marriage an independent person, is an almost forgotten fact, overshadowed by the fame of her husband. The biographical and literary existence of Paula Buber is unprecedented. Convert from Catholicism to Judaism, author under the protection of a male pseudonym, mental companion of her famous husband, resident in Germany and a refugee to Palestine during the Second World War, and a declared Philozionist, she personifies a bridge between foreign and own, between tradition and acculturation, between inclusion and exclusion. In 1923, the year of publication of *I and Thou*, the Bubers had been in a relationship for 24 years. Besides the romantic relationship there was also a working relationship: Paula was the co-writer and inspiring source, muse and editor of *I and Thou*. She was the center of Martin Buber's intellectual life, insofar as he felt that a successful dialogue and common growth with her was possible. Paula Buber was a “*Begegnung*” for Martin Buber; she was the person behind the concept of Buber's “Thou.” The lecture examines the relationship of Paula and Martin Buber from its beginning to the year 1923 under the perspective of the creative dialogue, the intellectual exchange and the process of a lifetime encounter – all aspects which enfold in Buber's famous work *I and Thou*.

Liora Bing-Heidecker



Liora Bing-Heidecker is a ballet educator and a dance scholar, as well as a poet and translator. She has translated texts by Jean Améry, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Alfred Döblin, Paul Valéry, Stéphane Mallarmé, Théophile Gautier and many others. She won the Israeli Ministry of Culture's award for poetry (2001) and the Deutsch-Hebräischen Übersetzerpreis (2020) for her translation of Else Lasker-Schüler's early prose. Bing-Heidecker publishes articles in various international dance research venues. Her latest publication, "The Godseeker: Akim Volynsky and Ballet as a Jewish Quest," was included in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewishness and Dance* (Oxford University Press 2022), and her recent lecture "Else Lasker-Schüler's Choreo-Phantasy: A Feminist Ontology of Becoming" will be published in the *Yearbook for the European Literature Studies Society*.

Martin Buber's Dance: "Making a Symbol Out of the Man of Our Generation"

The question of the body was brought to the foreground within the Jewish world as a result of secularization. While Pinsker's famous Auto-Emancipation indicated a disdain for the meek ghostly Jew of the past, Max Nordau's term "Muscular Judaism" indicated a positive turn toward the Jewish body in its full physicality and materiality. This new accord was crystalized in a change of attitude toward dance, which, in turn-of-the-century Germany, became a signifier of modernism and cultural emancipation. Buber's writings are not abundant with aesthetic references, but two of his early texts address dance specifically:

1. The poem dedicated to a Greek dancer (in the cycle "Elisha ben-Abuya called Acher," 1903), in which he compares two distinct group dance visions of antiquity: an aesthetic, erotic free dance of Greek youths and a fervent, ethically bound, liturgical dance of Jewish youngsters.
2. The essay "Bruder Leib" (Brother Body), written in the wake of Nijinsky's mental illness, in which Buber asserts that in the dancer "the Gesture of man liberates itself." I suggest reading Buber's acknowledgement of dance and body culture as a collective, socio-political activity (based upon the reciprocal union between members of society, addressed in the first text), and his acknowledgement of dance as a personal, theatrical and artistic experience (based upon the inner union of body and soul, addressed in the second text), as a dialogical bridge between his early and later thought. Furthermore I contend that his favorable attitude toward the mystery of the dance encouraged young Jewish dance enthusiasts. In view of his edited *Ecstatic Confessions* (1909), which both nurtured the secular religiosity of German modern dance and echoed the great importance it attached to ecstatic expression, I believe that Buber indirectly provided the emerging Zionist (women) dance pioneers with moral grounds, legitimatizing their chosen profession, as a meaningful artistic and educational vocation.

Einat Davidi



Dr. Einat Davidi is a lecturer at the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature in the University of Haifa. She is a baroque and neo-baroque researcher. She has published a book on José Lezama Lima's Theory of Culture, and articles on Federico García Lorca; Pedro Calderón de la Barca; Guillermo Rosales; the early modern literature of *conversos* in Spain, France and the Netherlands (Enríquez Gómez, Penso Vega); and psychomachic structures in modern Jewish literature, as reflected in works by Martin Buber and Isaac Bashevis Singer.

Isabel, Achab and Elijah as a Psychomachic Triangle: Martin Buber's *Elijah* as an Auto Sacramental Play

Acquaintance and knowledge of genre traditions are still crucial for understanding and interpreting literary works. The case of Buber's *Elijah* (1963) is a good example of the importance of genres as a key to the meaning of literary works. As surprising as it might sound, a crucial background for the understanding of this work, probably the last literary work Buber wrote, and certainly the less researched one, is the tradition of the Counter-Reformation baroque drama of *autos sacramentales*. In this lecture, I will show that this specific rich tradition of the baroque 17th-century religious drama is a key to understanding the only theater piece Buber has ever written.

This generic link raises many questions about the incongruence, at least apparently, between Buber's ideas and perceptions as a thinker who argued with Christianity and praised the idea of "Hebrew humanism," and the ideas and perceptions that lie at the basis and in the background of the *auto sacramental* genre that emerged in the Spanish Golden Age (Siglo de Oro), the Spanish baroque, the Counter-Reformation and the celebration of the Eucharist. This incongruence invites a more nuanced examination of these characteristics of the *autos sacramentales* and of Buber's association with these ideas, which is implied by their presence in the play.

Using Henry Sullivan's work on Calderón's reception in the German-speaking cultures and Buber's early essays on theater, such as *Das ewige Drama*, I will discuss Buber's engagement with the tradition of the mystery play, and specifically with the *auto sacramental* plays, and will draw connections between his notion of the sacrament as it emerges from his essay "Symbolic and Sacramental Existence in Judaism" and the genre identified with the sacrament, thus allowing us to characterize more precisely his own idiosyncratic version of this unique generic tradition.

Lena Eilittä



Leena Eilittä is a docent of comparative literature at the University of Helsinki. Her doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford was published under the title *Approaches to Personal Identity in Kafka's Short Fiction: Freud, Darwin, Kierkegaard* (1999). Subsequently she has published a monograph, *Ingeborg Bachmann's Utopia and Disillusionment* (2008), and articles about women travelers such as Annemarie Schwarzenbach. Eilittä has also published articles about romanticism, Viennese modernism and world literature, and (co-)edited three volumes on intermediality. She has been a guest lecturer at several European universities and served on the boards of academic societies and journals. At the moment she belongs to the research group on Jewish European environmental history at the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem.

Ich, Du und Es in Ingeborg Bachmann's Malina

Ingeborg Bachmann's novel *Malina* (1973) depicts a relation between the female narrator, I, and two male characters, Ivan and Malina. In the first part of the novel I tells about her attempts to form a stable relationship with Ivan. The end of their relationship plunges her into a depression that she hopes to overcome through her discussions with Malina. These intense discussions – which are interrupted by several other narratives (e.g., by a traumatic dream scene related to the Holocaust) – do not lead to her recovery and instead she feels only increasingly defeated.

In this lecture I will analyze the female protagonist's predicament in the context of Martin Buber's ideas as formulated in *Ich und Du* (1923). The protagonist of Bachmann's novel tries to form genuine relationships with the male characters of the novel, who both eventually reject her. Instead of allowing a genuine, immediate communication to come into being in terms of "*Ich und Du*," they consider her distantly as an object. Ivan begins to make ironical comments about her personality and literary interests. And Malina considers himself from the very beginning as superior to her. By analyzing dialogues from the novel, my lecture shows how their communication with her collapses into what Buber has entitled "*Ich und Es*." The female protagonist, who does not have a name, turns into a subordinated being who eventually disappears from the narrative scene. During her torture she makes attempts to keep her spirituality and mental health intact by fantasizing a romantic legend and expressing her wishes through prophetic messages about a better future. These narrations contribute to the level, which has utopian features, which the protagonist had wished to find in her relationships with Ivan and Malina.

Abigail Gillman



Abigail Gillman is Professor of Hebrew, German, and Comparative Literature in the Department of World Languages and Literatures at Boston University. She is affiliated with the Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies. This past year, she was a Visiting Scholar at Tel Aviv University, hosted by the Porter School for Cultural Studies. Gillman is the author of two books: *Viennese Jewish Modernism: Freud, Hofmannsthal, Beer-Hofmann, and Schnitzler* (Penn State University Press 2009) and *A History of German Jewish Bible Translation* (University of Chicago Press 2018). Her most recent articles deal with Jewish translation history, with the poetics of Aharon Appelfeld, and parabolic style in Keret, Kafka and Castel-Bloom. Her essay “Martin Buber’s Message to Postwar Germany” won the 2015 Egon Schwarz Prize for an Outstanding Essay in the Area of German-Jewish Studies.

Bertha Pappenheim’s Dialogue with Martin Buber

Between 1916 and 1936, Bertha Pappenheim penned 50 letters to Martin Buber, housed in the Buber archive at Israel’s National Library (Buber’s letters to Pappenheim did not survive the war). During those two decades, both figures played numerous, critical roles in German-Jewish communal life. Buber edited *Der Jude* and many other volumes, wrote *Ich und Du* and began teaching at university; Pappenheim worked as a social and political activist, led the Jüdischer Frauenbund and directed the home for unwed mothers and their children, where she implemented her theories of social work and Jewish education. Both Buber and Pappenheim taught at the Jüdische Lehrhaus, and both produced important translations, lectures and literary essays.

The correspondence, which ended with Pappenheim’s death in 1936, testifies to a multifaceted relationship and intellectual friendship. They visited and collaborated, attended each other’s lectures at the Lehrhaus (and those of others), and read and responded to each other’s work. Buber sent her many of his books and articles (i.e., *Drei Reden*, Hassidic tales, translations of psalms); she responded with gratitude and critique and occasionally some of her own writing. Buber has been called Pappenheim’s closest male friend. He not only admired her, he was fond of her. Pappenheim was fond of Buber in person, but from a distance she found him problematic (and told him so). She clearly valued and enjoyed their many-sided friendship and their lively epistolary dialogue; she referred to their correspondence as “*unser altmodischer Briefwechsel in der Luftlinie Isenburg – Heppenheim*” (June 15, 1935). Pappenheim’s letters to Buber have never been closely studied, and her relationship with Buber is usually ignored by Buber scholars and biographers.

Pappenheim regarded herself as Buber’s inferior, and she often wrote that his writings were too sophisticated for her (and for other women). Yet these sentiments led her to critique him, to express her anger and cynicism, and to formulate her perspectives, opinions and values. A refrain in the letters is her insistence that the most important Jewish principles were simple and accessible. As late as 1935, she lamented “*warum man die Dinge nicht einfach sagt*,” insisting she was for “a stabilization of the gold standard for all.” Many letters revolve around the biblical value of “*Nächstenliebe*”; Buber sent her Hermann Cohen’s writings on neighbor-love to which he wrote a preface, but she balked, insisting that she could not see things his way (*Der Nächste*, 1935).

This lecture will trace Pappenheim’s evolving ideas about Judaism, Torah, education (*Erziehung*) and gender, as she developed them in response to Buber’s thinking and writings. It will consider if/how Pappenheim can help us to read Buber differently – above all, his ideas about gender – and if/how she influenced his thinking. Finally, I will argue that in this dialogue, we obtain a clear picture of Pappenheim as a Jewish religious thinker in her own right.

Yemima Hadad



Yemima Hadad holds the Juniorprofessur für Judaistik at the University of Leipzig. Dr. Hadad teaches modern Jewish thought, German-Jewish philosophy and the Talmud. She is a research fellow at the Bucerius Institute for Research of German Contemporary History and Society at the University of Haifa. Her research interests focus on political theology, continental philosophy, feminism and 20th-century Jewish thought. She is currently working on a book on the weak God in Jewish sources and modern philosophy.

Femininity and *Frauendenken* in Buber's Thought

Responding to Buber's book *Daniel* Gustav Landauer noted that Buber "awakens and advocates a specific feminine form of thought without which our exhausted and collapsed culture cannot be renewed and replenished. Only ... when abstract thought is conjoined and submerged in the depths of feeling, will our thought engender deeds, will a true life emerge from our logical desert. Towards that objective women will help us".

What Landauer found in Buber was a form of woman-thinking (*Frauendenken*), which he saw as nothing less than a commandment that "has not yet taken its appropriate full share" in human thought. Landauer associated the virtue of *Frauendenken* with peace and humanism. "For the sake of human thinking", wonders Landauer, "should one expect the increasing of the specific woman-thinking within this human thinking? And I say: indeed yes, and I notice something like this with joy. I notice it in Goethe and his Iphigenia kingdom, which is embodied in our whole culture, [...] in me, though I am quite masculine, in you, I notice it in Rachel (Varnhagen), Bettina (Armin-Brentano), Margarete Susman etc. All these are the doers of humanity, the doers of oneness, whole, because in them dwells the woman-thinking (*Frauendenken*) vividly and because they are unique (Einmalige) [...]".

What specific aspects in Buber's thought did Landauer associate with *Frauendenken*? What was the meaning of *Frauendenken* and to what extent did this mode of thought reinforce essentialist claims and gender-dichotomies? In this lecture, I will offer a re-construction of Landauer's notion of *Frauendenken* and examine its relationship to an often absent femininity in philosophy and thought.

Galit Hasan-Rokem



Galit Hasan-Rokem is the Max and Margarethe Grunwald Professor of Folklore at the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Myth and Experience: Women, Heroes and Dialogue

Myths had a special significance for Buber's conceptualization of the human experience in time and space. Impressed by its cosmology, he considered translating the Finnish epic poem *Kalevala* into German. *Kalevala* was shaped by Elias Lönnrot from oral epical singers' performances recorded by him and other early Finnish folklore scholars, first published in 1835 and reedited in the now canonized version published in 1849. Buber, although he studied some Finnish, ended up editing Anton Schiefner's German translation (1852) and authoring an influential *Nachwort* to its 1914 and 1921 editions. I shall discuss Buber's thoughts on myth as expressed in the afterword titled "*Kalewala, das finnische Epos*," in correlation to his ideas on dialogue and with special reference to the female figures and the heroes of the epic.

Vivian Liska



Vivian Liska is Professor of German Literature and Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium. She is, since 2013, a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Faculty of the Humanities at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Woman as World: Subjectivity and Singularity in Martin Buber's Dialogic Writings

Buber's depictions of woman and the feminine range from the most traditional to the most progressive. Both his exultations of woman as sublime and as caring but subordinate helper of man are age-old stereotypes. The most daring idea of femininity arises where Buber amalgamates these polarities. This occurs in particularly striking ways in his *Die Frage an den Einzelnen* (The Question to the Singular) where internally clashing images of woman culminate in his association of woman with world. In this context, Buber's formulations of woman as a corrective of the autonomous subject turn her into both the embodiment and the facilitator of the dialogic encounter itself. Two of his most prominent women readers, Else Lasker-Schüler and Margarete Susman, implicitly respond to this aspect of Buber's thought in ways that reveal their own poetic and philosophical voice.

Cornelia Muth



Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Cornelia Muth is an experienced phenomenologist with over 30 years of carrying out phenomenological research and educational formation in theory and practice within the fields of adult education, sports, politics, business and social work. Since 2001 she has held a tenure chair at the Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences. In her dissertation she dealt with Buber's philosophy, which she transferred into her concept of transcultural learning. Before she started her professorship, she was a research associate at the Department of Political Science at the Freie Universität of Berlin for five years, Head of the International Office at the University of Applied Sciences for Business in Berlin for three years and an education advisor at Berlin Sports Youth Education for four years. She is also a trained educational gestaltist (*Gestaltpädagogin*) and supervisor, and has conducted many workshops of intercultural learning; for example, one with Israeli, Palestinian and German women in Israel and Germany.

Martin Buber's Theory of Knowledge and Its Feminist Elements

For the last 40 years I have been reading and interpreting Martin Buber's *Ich und Du*. I got to know a part of this book during my study of adult education at the Freie Universität of (West-) Berlin in the 1980s, when my feminist thinking developed at the same time. Within my dissertation (1998/2011) in the 1990s I criticized Buber's ontology of women: Margarete Susman (1964) confirms in her autobiography that within his Chassidic narratives an analytical view of gender is missing. However, Buber is not discriminating against women and projecting on them in a negative way; rather he does it in a positive one, in the typical male manner of his time. Buber, for example, idealizes Ellen Key, projecting on her a deep belief which only women can have (1901). Nonetheless, I will show in my lecture what challenges and advantages *I and Thou* has as a feminist concept creating and revealing a gender dialogue. Also, I do use this "living concept" (Maurice Friedman) within my current research project as a research method finding out which images of gender students of my faculty have in mind in their real life.

Rachel Pafe



Rachel Pafe is a writer and researcher interested in 20th-century post-war German-Jewish thought and interdisciplinary theories of mourning. She is a PhD candidate at the University of Leipzig.

Hanging on the Sweetness of Religion: Susan Taubes and Martin Buber's Debate on Post-War Judaism

In 1950, post-war philosopher and novelist Susan Taubes wrote to Jacob Taubes that “B’s [Buber’s] critique of monotheism is philosophically penetrating ... But B. is not radical and hangs on the sweetness of religion.” Two years later, Jacob Taubes annotated “Buber” next to Susan Taubes’s assertion that “Man can dominate objects but his true creativity is in relation to man and the way in which the whole world is drawn in and made to speak to this relation.” My lecture explores Susan Taubes’s critique of Martin Buber’s insistence on the particular mission of post-war Judaism and exploration of the merits of interpersonal and communal spirituality in Buber’s thought. It examines these themes through a comparative analysis of Buber’s 1952 essay “The Silent Question” and Taubes’s 1959 essay “The Riddle of Simone Weil,” both of which use philosopher and mystic Simone Weil as a means to reflect on post-war Judaism.

Both articles deal with Simone Weil’s rejection of Judaism through a critique of what she deems the biblical people of Israel’s worship of an exclusive national community in the guise of God. Buber critiques Weil’s assertion as a chance to position the concern for community in Judaism as a love for one’s neighbor that builds a bridge to God. This is especially important in a post-war context, Buber argues, for it provides an example of what Judaism can contribute to the rebuilding of faith shattered by violence. In contrast, Taubes positions Weil’s critique as a harsh but necessary look at the ossified state of a modern and post-war Judaism that has lost its spiritual core. Taubes argues that “There results a piety which for all its inner justice and charity, posits Israel in the flesh as its sacrum and which regards the other, the non-Jew, his beliefs and habits, as its major taboo.” This lecture asks how Taubes’s reading of Weil both draws on and critiques Buber in its unresolved search for a universal spirituality.

Libera Pisano



Libera Pisano is currently a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. She received her PhD in Theoretical Philosophy from La Sapienza (Rome) in 2014 with a dissertation titled *Lo spirito manifesto. Percorsi linguistici nella filosofia hegeliana* (ETS 2016). She was a research associate at the Cluster of Excellence “Understanding Written Artefacts” at the University of Hamburg; a research fellow at the University of Calabria, at the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies; and a visiting research fellow at the University of Haifa and at Humboldt University of Berlin. She is the author of several essays on the role of language in Hegel’s writings, Leopold Zunz, Moses Mendelssohn, Gustav Landauer, contemporary German-Jewish philosophy and the concept of diaspora.

In the Beginning Is Narration: Reading Martin Buber through Adriana Cavarero

In my lecture I will bring Martin Buber’s dialogic thought into conversation with Adriana Cavarero’s philosophy of the narratable self. Drawing on the practices of consciousness groups in Italian feminism in the 1970s, Cavarero argues that a philosophy of narrative can be seen as the only antidote that saves philosophy from an anthropocentric symbolic order based on the sacrifice of the particular. By emphasizing the importance of (female) uniqueness over (male) exceptionality, the Italian feminist develops from her account of female autobiography “a relational ethics of contingency, that is, an ethics based on the altruistic ontology of human existence as a finite being.” Drawing on Cavarero’s philosophy, I would like to read the priority of relationship in Buber’s thought as a theoretical principle for a philosophy of narration and selfhood. If, according to Buber, “in the beginning is relation,” it can be said that the I is a void that can be filled through a narrative relationship with the Thou. It is no coincidence that Buber emphasizes the importance of language several times in *Ich und Du* and develops a kind of pronominal ethics. The use of pronouns therefore has a central role, as they are embedded in a narrative that rejects any kind of universality. *I*, *you* and *it* are ways of speaking of a subject/object that are not universal, but deeply connected to the realm of life experience. I argue that this can be interpreted as a strategy against the universalization of finitude that is a neuter and masculine universality. I will reconstruct the narrative stance in Buber’s thought not only as a theoretical cornerstone that can be seen as a contribution to the female account of autobiography, but also as a stylistic element of his versatile thought as the narrator of the legends of Hasidism, the author of his own memoirs and the one who brought the interrupted worlds of his deceased friends (such as Gustav Landauer and Franz Rosenzweig) to completion.

Randi Rashkover



Randi Rashkover is the Nathan and Sofia Gumenick Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of Religious Studies at the College of William & Mary. She is the author of many books, including *Revelation and Theopolitics: Barth, Rosenzweig and the Politics of Praise* (T&T Clark 2005), *Freedom and Law: A Jewish-Christian Apologetics* (Fordham University Press 2012) and, most recently, *Nature and Norm: Judaism, Christianity and the Theopolitical Problem* (Academic Studies Press 2020).

Buber's Theopolitics, the Beautiful Soul and the Needs of the Hour

Among the greatest virtues of Martin Buber's work is its tireless call for a theopolitics that honors God's authority and yet recognizes the urgency of human political action. As such, Buber's theopolitics constitutes a critical response to the burgeoning neo-Gnosticism of the early 20th century launched by the publication of Adolph von Harnack's *Marcion: Das Evangelium von dem fremden Gott*, his recovery of the work of the early Marcion of Sinope that challenged efforts to harmonize faith and the world. Of course, the centerpiece of Buber's theopolitics is his account of the prophet or "*nabi*" who performs the critical role of materializing God's intervention into the world of human history and human need. His is the endless labor of bringing God's word into the world as a response to the unique historical situation, relying on no prior knowledge or bodies of law, no set of preordained moral principles.

No doubt, Buber's concern for the "needs of the hour" and his deep appreciation of the prophet as the one called to address these needs provides a rich Jewish response to Harnackian neo-Gnosticism while avoiding the idolatrous tendencies of Carl Schmitt's parallel response. However, in her "Reply from the Single One: Søren Kierkegaard to Martin Buber," the late-20th-century philosopher Gillian Rose casts doubt on Buber's account of theopolitics and its apparent call for political action. At the heart of Rose's critique is her concern for Buber's insistence upon the prophet's rejection of all prior knowledge or bodies of law in his political response to the human needs of the hour. Stated otherwise, Rose sees in Buber's prophet a Jewish version of what in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel refers to as the "beautiful soul," or the romantic believer inspired by his devotion to God, but unwilling to wrestle with the realities of power, law and collective reasoning that constitute the backdrop and mechanisms of historical and political action. In a day and age when women's lives are routinely victimized by abusive expressions of political power and in need of concrete, legal responses that draw from the power of collective reasoning, can Buber's theopolitics offer an adequate approach to feminist Jewish political action?

Silvia Richter



Silvia Richter studied medieval and modern history, philosophy and Jewish studies at the University of Heidelberg and the Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg, where she submitted her PhD thesis in 2011 on the topic “Language, Philosophy and Judaism in the Work of Emmanuel Levinas and Franz Rosenzweig” under the supervision of Prof. Ephraim Meir. In 2012 she worked as a scientific coordinator at the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris. From 2013 to 2021 she worked as a research assistant at the Guardini Chair (Guardini Professur für Religionsphilosophie und Theologische Ideengeschichte) at Humboldt University of Berlin. Since January 2022 she has worked as a project coordinator of the “Dynamics of the Religious (Dynamiken des Religiösen)” research association at Goethe University Frankfurt.

The Life of Dialogue: Martin Buber and Etty Hillesum

In my lecture, I would like to relate Etty Hillesum’s life and thought to the work of Martin Buber, especially to *Ich und Du*.

Let me briefly introduce you to Etty Hillesum (1914–1943): “The thinking heart of the barracks” is how she described herself when she was an inmate of the Westerbork transit camp. Hillesum’s diary, which she began writing on the advice of her therapist Julius Spier in March 1941 and kept until her deportation to Auschwitz in September 1943, shows us the story of a remarkable inner transformation: her search for a better, more balanced life, which had initially led her to Spier, becomes more and more a search for God as time passes. While outside the persecution increases, her soul expands into a transcendent search for meaning that does not stop with her own self or God, but finds its ultimate purpose in helping others. On the last page of her diary she writes: “One wants to be a plaster on many wounds.”

Regarding Buber, she alludes explicitly to *Ich und Du* in a diary entry on December 5, 1941 where she states: “It appears that I passed the ‘Ich-und-Du’ stage.” I will take this entry as a starting point to elaborate on the following questions: What is Hillesum’s understanding of *Ich und Du*? Is it the same as Buber’s or does it differ from his understanding – and if so, in which aspects? Writing that she has passed the *Ich und Du* stage implies that she must have either known this stage rationally or had experienced it emotionally. Furthermore, her remark indicates that she must have understood, to some extent, what an *Ich und Du* stage is; namely, something that had been part of her life, but is not anymore (since she writes that she has “passed” it).

By reading Hillesum’s interpretation together with Buber’s own account of the *Ich und Du* stage, I want to highlight a female perspective on one of the most important aspects of Buber’s major work and at the same time offer a fresh, new approach to it.

Sarah Scott



Sarah Scott is Professor and holds the Chair of Philosophy at Manhattan College in New York City. She is the editor of *Martin Buber: Creaturely Life and Social Form* (Indiana University Press 2022), and has published on the significance of Buber's moral philosophy for sexual ethics, Buber's aestheticism and account of moral imagination, and Buber's early work on Nicholas of Cusa. Beyond her work on Buber, she conducts research in ethics and the history of philosophy, especially women philosophers.

The Body that Questions: Embodiment in Martin Buber's Moral Philosophy

In a little-studied reference to Martin Buber, Franz Fanon ends *Black Skin, White Masks* by writing, "Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the *You*? ... My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who asks questions!" Taking this passage as inspiration, I explore the role of embodiment in Buber's moral philosophy. Several passages in Buber's writing describe deeply embodied encounters, such as dancing, sexual relations, and violence and torture. In analyzing these passages, I ask: What does it mean to know another in and through the body? How does embodiment serve as the location of freedom and the provocation to question? What does it mean to enact morality through the body, such that it is as questioning bodies that we build the world of the *You*?

Yael Sela (Teichler)



Yael Sela (Teichler) is a Visiting Associated Researcher at the Moses Mendelssohn Center, Potsdam University. Previously, she was Assistant Professor at the Department of Literature and Arts, Open University of Israel (2014–2022). Following her PhD in Historical Musicology at the University of Oxford (2010), she held visiting fellowships at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Michigan (2020–2021); Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies (2020); Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, University of Pennsylvania (2013–2014 and 2015); Max Planck Institute for Human Development; Humboldt University of Berlin; and the Hebrew University. Dr. Sela's research is located at intersections of aesthetics, biblical poetry and political theology in German-Jewish thought, especially Moses Mendelssohn, and has appeared in, among others, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, *Renaissance Studies*, *The Musical Quarterly* and the *European Journal of Jewish Studies*. Her monograph *The People of the Song: Biblical Poetry and the Reception of Moses Mendelssohn in the Berlin Haskalah* is forthcoming with Brill (2023), as is her English translation with commentary, *Book of the Songs of Israel: Three Hebrew Introductions to Psalms on Aesthetics, Translation, and Music by Joel Bril (Berlin, 1791)*.

Dialogues of Hearts: Martin Buber and bell hooks on Love

All About Love, published in 2000 by the feminist theorist, literary scholar and anti-racist cultural critic bell hooks (pseudonym of Gloria Jean Watkins, 1952–2021), was the first attempt by a woman writer wholly dedicated to the question of the central animating experience of our lives. Responding to a longstanding dominance of male voices in the philosophical and theoretical literature on love, hooks sought to explore and systematically chart a new love ethics written from a feminist point of view. While hooks did not explicitly draw on Martin Buber's writings on this most taunting emotion of humanity, both the ethical fabric and the core concepts that provide the pillars of her work are closely bound up with those that constitute Buber's phenomenology of love and, more broadly, his dialogical philosophy.

My lecture weaves an imaginary conversation with as well as between hooks's work and Buber, drawing particularly on his *I and Thou* written three-quarters of a century earlier, while revisiting chapters in Buber's foundational text through hooks's eyes and experiential writing style. Focusing on notions such as trust, presence, responsibility/responsiveness and grace, the lecture will demonstrate how, to hooks as to Buber, what we often think of as the most commonly shared and least explicable human emotion is a core practice whose redemptive power is transformative to the individual as well as to the community and is invariably bound up with the realm of the spiritual, however understood by each of these writers.

The lecture ultimately explores how, despite and within shared sensibilities, longing for community and commitment to human intimacy, hooks's deliberately feminine and feminist love ethics can shed light on and raise questions about Buber's engagement with love and intersubjectivity. More broadly, the question is raised: What does the very fact that, to this day, our prime philosophical paradigm of human intimacy was formulated by a male philosopher reveal about patriarchy in modern philosophy, and what do we gain in our understanding and in our aspiration to social transformation by having female voices chime in?

Claire Sufrin



Dr. Claire E. Sufrin is Senior Editor at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, where she edits the journal *Sources*. Previously, she was an Associate Professor of Instruction and Assistant Director of the Crown Family Center for Jewish and Israel Studies at Northwestern University. She is the author of multiple articles on Martin Buber's biblical hermeneutics, and co-editor of *The New Jewish Canon: Ideas and Debates 1980–2015*, a finalist for a 2021 National Book Award.

Martin Buber's Bible as a Feminist Resource

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Hebrew Bible played a pivotal role in the development of the Jewish feminist movement. One of the central tasks in theologian Judith Plaskow's call for Jewish women to "stand again at Sinai" was the writing of feminist Midrash, stories of biblical women that did not appear in the original text. Such commentaries, she recognized, were a combination of history and memory: they relied upon historiographical research in order to reshape Jewish collective memory. Half a century earlier, Martin Buber also approached the biblical text with an eye toward two types of writing, which he called "saga" and "history," as he too addressed the significance of the text for Jews of his time. In this lecture, I will ask two questions. First, what can reading Buber together with Plaskow and her feminist colleagues suggest about the significance of the Hebrew Bible in the 20th (and now 21st) century? Second, what might feminists today draw from Buber's biblical writings as a means of continuing Plaskow's project of reshaping the Jewish collective?

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson



Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson is Regents Professor of History, Irving and Miriam Lowe Professor of Modern Judaism, and Director of Jewish Studies at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. She holds a Ph.D. in Jewish Philosophy and Mysticism from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1978), and a BA in Religious Studies from SUNY-Stony Brook, New York (1974).

Tirosh-Samuelson explores the interplay of religion, science, and technology with a focus on transhumanism and religious environmentalism as expression of our post-secular age. She is the PI or Co-PI of several large externally-funded projects: “Facing the Challenges of Transhumanism: Religion, Science, and Technology” (2006-2010); “The Transhumanist Imagination: Innovation, Secularization and Eschatology” (2012-14); “Beyond Secularization: Piloting New Approaches for the Study of Religion, Science, and Technology in Public Life” (2016-2018) and “Beyond Secularization: Religion, Science, and Technology in Public Life” (2019-2023); and “Fasting and Flourishing: Comparative Analysis” (2022-2025). These grants have funded symposia, public lectures, faculty seminars, and international conferences. Tirosh-Samuelson is a member of International Society of Science and Religion (ISSR) and serves on the academic board of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*. As Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at ASU, Tirosh-Samuelson manages the international society, Judaism, Science and Medicine Group (JSMG) and organizes its annual conferences.

Martin Buber and the Challenges of the 21st Century: Ecology and Technology

Two main challenges overwhelm the future of humanity in the 21st century: climate change and ecological degradation, on the one hand, and the technologization of human life, on the other hand. Buber's dialogical philosophy is most relevant to the challenges of the 21st century, even though he did not engage ecology and technology directly. This presentation argues that the ecological and technological challenges arise from instrumental I-IT relations, which Buber analyzed so insightfully, and that Buber's I-THOU relations offer the most profound response to both challenges of the 21st century. Compatible with the feminist ethics of care, Buber's dialogical philosophy has already inspired eco-theologians (e.g., Sallie MacFague, Larry Rasmusen, and Judith Plaskow), but the relevance of Buber to contemporary debates about technology, especially the debates on artificial intelligence, is yet to be recognized. This paper argues that Buber's religious humanism supports the critique of transhumanist techno-futurism, according to which humanity will become obsolete, replaced by super-intelligent machines, and that Buber's dialogical philosophy exposes the social harm caused by increasingly autonomous AI systems in domains such as economics, politics, and warfare. Buber remains our guide to the perplexing challenges of the 21st century.

Claudia Welz



Claudia Welz is Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at the School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University. She is the Principal Investigator of the interdisciplinary project “Epistemological Aspects of ‘Dialogue’: Exploring the Potential of the Second-Person Perspective” and the co-director of the Research Unit for Kierkegaard Studies.

Her research focuses on questions of orientation and draws mainly on Continental philosophy (particularly existential hermeneutics, phenomenology, philosophy of dialogue and of emotion), systematic theology in an interreligious context, modern Jewish thought and religious motifs in contemporary literature.

She has authored the monographs *Love’s Transcendence and the Problem of Theodicy* (Mohr Siebeck 2008), *Vertrauen und Versuchung* (Mohr Siebeck 2010), *Humanity in God’s Image: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Oxford University Press 2016) and the essay collection *SinnSang: Theologie und Poesie* (Nordpark-Verlag 2019) about the work of the poet Elazar Benyoëtz. She is currently working on an ethical, theological and psychological phenomenology of listening.

Essi Ikonen



Essi Ikonen is a postdoctoral research fellow at the School of Culture and Society at Aarhus University in the interdisciplinary project “Epistemological Aspects of ‘Dialogue’: Exploring the Potential of the Second-Person Perspective.” She is also a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Helsinki and an advisor at the Center for the Study of Gender, Religion and Culture. She has authored and edited several articles, textbooks and digital learning resources for philosophy, religious education and general education with an emphasis on sensorial, digital and arts-based learning. Since defending her doctoral thesis *Life, Death and Love: Phenomenological Investigations into the Messy Nature of Authenticity* in November 2020, she has been working on creative methodological approaches focusing especially on listening and imagination as methodological orientations for inductive sciences.

Her work is informed by phenomenology, autoethnography, sensory ethnography and art-based research in particular.

Listening to Nature:

Martin Buber's Philosophy of Dialogue and Environmental Ethics

This paper explores possibilities and limits of Buber's dialogical approach to nature; that is, to fauna and flora as well as inanimate geological formations and the four elements. The latter also carry symbolic meanings. For instance, in the Hebrew Bible, wind is linked to *ruah*, the divine spirit, which, according to Buber, is or can become present "between" all creatures and is believed to suffuse the whole creation. Buber's philosophy of dialogue contains key notions such as *Hinwendung*, a turning to the Other, and *Verantwortung*, responsibility based on a caring response to the Other's existence, which imply not only verbal language, but also and primarily one's openness to and acceptance of the Other's being-there. In relation to non-human nature, human beings' ability to "listen" to its silent posture is required, but what exactly does it mean to listen to nature? In what ways does listening promote dialogues *with* and *about* nature? And how can such a listening stance and dialogical approach to nature contribute to environmental ethics in these times of climate change? These questions will be explored in a truly dialogical fashion: in an interdisciplinary conversation between Claudia Welz (ethics and philosophy of religion) and Essi Ikonen (educational research).

