

## CRITERIA OF MODERNISM IN EARLY HEBREW *HASKALAH* LITERATURE

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Historians and critics of Hebrew letters—from Klausner to Lahover, from Shapira to Sha'anani, and onward—have attempted to identify the beginning of modern Hebrew literature with a certain writer or a group of writers. Underlying the respective selections of these literary historians is the notion that their choice represents the beginning of modernism in Hebrew literature. The beginning of modern Hebrew literature is said to have coincided with the beginning of modern times in Jewish history.<sup>1</sup>

A detailed analysis of all these theories will not be undertaken here as it extends beyond the scope of this study. Such analysis may be found, however, in several of the studies which I cite below, especially those by Avraham Holtz, Arnold Band and Uzi Shavit. Nevertheless, reference will be made to some of them in order to point out their orientation and some of their inherent weaknesses. Subsequently, several alternative avenues will be suggested for further attempts to define the concept of modernism in Hebrew literature.

At the outset, we should note that criteria for modernism in literature may be classified according to extra-literary as well as literary classifications. The extra-literary criteria are based on disciplines such as the history of ideas, or religion, rather than literature. Undoubtedly, they were adopted to reflect changes in literature as well, and thus it can be argued that they may be used also for literary purposes.

The literary classification refers to discussions of major trends toward modernism in strictly literary terms. This approach may be further subdivided into European or Judaic orientations. The former relies on European trends

which found their way into Hebrew literature, a phenomenon that is said to represent the modern inclination in Hebrew letters. The other orientation is inclined to define the new trends in Hebrew literature from within the confines of the Jewish literary corpus without reference to European literary criteria. While the concept of 'modernism' in Hebrew literature has not been defined satisfactorily, if at all, it was generally believed to be represented by a major shift from normative Jewish tradition to secularism.

Thus Joseph Klausner defines modern Hebrew literature as 'essentially secular' in that 'it started a new direction—to enlighten the people and resemble in its form and contents more or less the literature of all European peoples.'<sup>2</sup> Apart from the criteria of setting a new direction and enlightening the people, the concept of secularism is taken for granted as a term which needs no definition.

The notion that secularism epitomizes the modern trends, as advocated by Klausner and others, was generally accepted in *Haskalah* historiography. Both Lahover<sup>3</sup> and Sha'an<sup>4</sup> used the notion without defining it.

As with modernism, the concept of secularism was originally presented in an intuitive fashion. Historians and social historians such as Bernard (Dov) Weinryb, Jacob Katz and Azriel Shohet later identified certain social trends prevalent among West-European Jews which were said to represent an emerging secularism.<sup>5</sup> There was, however, hardly any attempt to define secularism in strictly literary terms.

It was Barukh Kurzweil who dwelt most upon the concept of secularism in modern Hebrew literature. He identified a radical gap between traditional Jewish literature and modern Hebrew literature, claiming that the latter represents a complete discontinuity from the former. Traditional Jewish literature, he said, has acted throughout its history from within a background of a sanctified world. Modern Hebrew literature, however, was said to have possessed 'secularism. . . [which] emerges from a spiritual world that became void of the primordial certainty with a backdrop of sanctity encompassing the totality of life's phenomena and providing a criterion for their evaluation'.<sup>6</sup>

Klausner's theory of modernism identifies Naphtali Herz Wessely as the person who initiated modern Hebrew literature. He considered Wessely 'a new man', someone who 'fought for a new life, a new education, and a new Hebrew style'.<sup>7</sup> Although Klausner's criteria for modernism now becomes clearer, his selection of Wessely to represent secular modernism in Hebrew letters is problematical. His choice is based on Wessely's *Divrei shalom ve-emet*. However, Wessely's other writings, before and after this controversial treatise on education, lean very heavily on the traditional aspects of Judaism. While there is something to be said for Klausner's choice of Wessely, it is not entirely satisfactory. For more than any other writer in the early Hebrew

*Haskalah*, Wessely epitomized in most of his writings—with the exception of *Divrei shalom ve-'emet*—the traditional values in Judaism.<sup>8</sup> He represented the very norms of traditional Judaism rather than a still-to-be defined modern secularism. Paradoxically, his writings contained a major innovation which Klausner failed to discern, and which will be discussed below.

Lahover identifies signs of a modern literature in the writings of Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto even though he, too, accepts the criterion of secularism as identifying modernism.<sup>9</sup> The selection of Luzzatto as a modernist is questioned by Klausner and other scholars. H. N. Shapira, for example, asserts that the beginning of modern Hebrew literature should be identified with the *me'assfim*, the writers and editors of *Ha-me'assef*.<sup>10</sup>

Kurzweil's definition of secularism as applied to the *Haskalah* is too broad and too general. His concept of *Haskalah*, while fitting the late phenomenon of Hebrew Enlightenment, is nevertheless incongruous with regard to the early Hebrew *Haskalah*.

Another theory was offered by Simon Halkin. His major criterion for identifying 'modernism' was 'humanism'. Accordingly, modern Hebrew literature is characterized by the shift from the theocentricity of traditional Judaism to an anthropocentricity modelled on European tendencies. Halkin borrowed this concept from the European Enlightenment, but stressed that European humanists were religious people. Thus, according to Halkin, modern Hebrew literature's inclination towards anthropocentricity does not represent a revolutionary trend, as suggested by Kurzweil, but rather an evolution.<sup>11</sup>

Classifying these theories according to the literary or extra-literary classifications, it seems that Klausner's definition is both extra-literary as well as literary, for he identified the new trends in modernism as attempts to emulate European literatures in form and content. Employing the second classification, European or Judaic, his orientation is definitely European.

Kurzweil, on the other hand, dealt mostly with the context of religion in an extra-literary fashion which nevertheless had a major bearing on literature. He seemed to concentrate on the Judaic—rather than the European—milieu, although by implication, the new trends were European-inspired.

While Halkin keeps referring to modern Hebrew *literature*, his criteria are basically extra-literary in origin, and are European-oriented. Although his terminology did not originate in the sphere of literature, he applied it to Hebrew literature.

A more recent attempt to define the modern trends of *Haskalah* was made by Uzi Shavit. Rejecting Kurzweil's notion of secularism, Shavit presented a concept which he had borrowed from Brenner. Accordingly, *Haskalah*

literature is characterized not by its 'secularism', but by its '*hofshiyut*'—its 'freedom' or 'freethinking'.<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, Shavit's argument with Kurzweil's definition may also be applied to his own concept of '*hofshiyut*' which, I believe, does not generally characterize the early Hebrew enlighteners. Although one may find a high degree of clandestine 'freethinking' in the writings of Isaac Euchel, Saul Berlin and Isaac Satanow—some of the extremists among the early *maskilim*—they were in no way 'free Jews', as may be deduced from Shavit's definition. They were functioning either within, or at the periphery of organized Jewish life and organized institutions, which, indeed, they tried to change. Euchel tried to form an Enlightenment substitute for the traditional structure of the *kehillah*, while Saul Berlin officiated as a rabbi, but was clandestinely involved in the *Haskalah*.<sup>13</sup>

Noting the inability to present modern trends of the *Haskalah* by a single concept, Shavit suggests three fundamental principles of the Hebrew *Haskalah*: Belief in the human mind (*sekhel*), in reason and in science, belief in God and in a revealed religion, and belief in the power of aesthetics.<sup>14</sup> He considers these principles as the common denominators of both early and late *Haskalah*. Even though his definitions are broad enough, one may question whether these criteria have the same weight and significance in both the early as well as the late *Haskalah*. One may also question whether all three principles carry the same weight, and whether the first two cancel or complement one another in the mind of the *maskilim*. Shavit's criteria combine both extra-literary and literary orientations, and capitalize on European Enlightenment concepts that also prevailed in medieval Jewish philosophy.

Recently Arnold Band has examined the question of modernism and the beginnings of Hebrew literature. He has scrutinized past theories, and has applied Hans Robert Jauss' theory of literary reception 'of a work of art by certain audiences' to both Wessely's *Shirei tif'eret* and Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto's *Layesharim tehillah*. Both works exerted a seminal influence on subsequent *Haskalah* writers. But Band argues that as no one has regarded these literary works as modern in the sense of being secular, or rationalist, he suggests caution in the use of the term 'modern', and proposes Berdiczewski as the herald of modernism in Hebrew literature.<sup>15</sup>

It indeed seems that Berdiczewski was considered to be *aher*—'other'—by his contemporaries. But his 'otherness' vis-à-vis Ahad Ha-'am, Bialik, Tchernichowsky, and Frischmann, I submit, does not make him a modernist in contradistinction to them. Both Berdiczewski and his contemporaries were products of the *Haskalah* and experienced its aftermath, the advent of a national movement, differently. To some, Frischmann represents some degree

of this 'otherness' which is found in Berdiczewski. Unquestionably, the 1890s represent modernism at its peak. However, the beginnings of modernism are to be found, as I shall presently show, in the early *Haskalah*.

In assessing previous theories, one notes that they contain insightful observations and intriguing generalities, but on the whole lack textual proof based on the literature itself. Thus, it is often easy to question some of these observations and even to refute them. This was done quite successfully by successive Hebrew critics as they reviewed their predecessors' comments on the subject while attempting to present a new notion of modernism in Hebrew letters.

In addition, some of these observations are inherently weak because they attempt to address a complex issue in a simplified manner. They attribute a complicated process of social and ideological changes to a single individual or to a single idea which was purported to have represented the new trends.

Furthermore, while some of the observations seem to be correct, that is to say, that they do represent phenomena which indicate aspects of a new trend, they do not necessarily in themselves represent the only answer, or the only criterion, as they were purported to. Thus, each single criterion, such as disrespect for the religious authority, or skepticism, rationalism, humanism, emphasis on man, utilitarianism, or freedom of thought, etc., is only a part of the picture. Other criteria, and some of the above, have been arrived at by answering the question 'What are the common characteristics of *Haskalah* writers?'<sup>16</sup> The answer, then, identifies social, cultural, religious and/or literary phenomena which are alleged to represent the change to modernism.

It is my contention that these common denominators only appear to represent the change towards modernism. They did indeed occur with the change; however, they were, in effect, the result of an occurring change, symptoms of a transitional process leading towards modernism. Many of these criteria are correct, but they do not represent the essence of 'modernism', which may be said to consist of mega-trends, or major shifts, encompassing the variety of phenomena, some of which are the result of modernism.

A definition of modern Hebrew literature is predicated on the following premise: first, on the occurrence of change and on our ability to distinguish the difference between the two periods of literature. However, it is not accepted universally that change had occurred in the first generation of Hebrew *Haskalah* writers in Germany. Ahad Ha-'am, for example, believed that early Hebrew *maskilim*, such as Wessely and Solomon Maimon, did not want to create a new literature on a new basis, but to continue the development of an old literature which had stopped developing.<sup>17</sup> A more modern critic, Dov Sadan, broadens the scope of 'modern literature' to include

hassidic and mitnagdic literatures, and not only *Haskalah* literature. He even expands the scope of the discussion beyond Hebrew to include Yiddish and other modern European languages.<sup>18</sup> Thus, according to Sadan, the question of modernism disregards the major criterion of secularism as epitomizing the modern age.

Second, we should take into consideration the gradual process of that change and its relative scope, whether in society, within the individual, or in literature. It was limited in size and in scope, and did not encompass the totality of Jewish experience, or the totality of the Jewish people at any given time or place. Nor did the change appear to be uniform and universal even within a given group of writers which considered itself to be 'enlightened'.

Third, we must discard attempts to arrive at a one-sentence definition of modernism in Hebrew literature. We are dealing here with a very complex issue, and with a process which covers a number of areas of human endeavour, and thus has had its impact on society, religion and culture as well as on literature.

In the same vein, we must acknowledge the multiplicity of *Haskalah* phenomena as an essential premise for its study. The term *Haskalah* is used to refer to diverse individuals and groups in different localities and at different times.<sup>19</sup> Even with a given group in the same locality and of the same period, *maskilim* may differ from one another in their interpretation of what *Haskalah* means and in their implementation of it.

In order to identify modernism in Hebrew literature we should bear in mind the need to examine the very early period of the *Haskalah* in order to distinguish aspects of the new period and its literature from those in the earlier period. This premise presupposes, for the sake of discussion, that the early period of the Hebrew *Haskalah* in Germany contains sufficient inherent signs of change which may—or may not—signal the beginning of different, or yet to be defined, modern Hebrew literature.

Last, and more importantly, any definition of modernism in literature should come from the literature itself. In other words, contemporary Hebrew *Haskalah* literature itself should convey to us its own sense of modernism. If possible, it should lead to its own definition. Thus, we must search the literary works for a definition, or else look for literary phenomena which represented these new trends in Hebrew letters. However, we should not confuse symptoms of modernism—which are of importance and indeed quite relevant—with major shifts in *Weltanschauung* leading to modernism. Those major shifts in outlook, unlike symptoms of the change, were mega-trends, representing the all-encompassing transformation which in effect radically

changed the Jewish outlook on life and the Jews' view of themselves vis-à-vis their tradition and their surrounding society and culture.

The need to find a definition from within the corpus is especially proper in literature which, due to its unique sensitivity, is prone to register overt as well as covert expressions of awareness concerning the changing spiritual and cultural trends. One may thus argue that literature may contribute a better insight into modernism than some social and historical records.

Based on the above, we may hypothesize that modernism began in Hebrew literature from the time that the awareness of modernism permeated the Hebrew writings. Consequently, it is the role of the literary historians or critics to identify, trace and locate this ostensible sense of modernism and the literary and linguistic expression of this change as manifested in the writings of the early Hebrew *maskilim*. They should then interpret and assess them critically as they would any other literary text or phenomenon for accuracy and insight. They should especially question the writers' ability to discern their own historical, cultural, or spiritual process of transformation.

Looking for this kind of awareness, we find several overt expressions enunciated by the early Hebrew German *maskilim* in *Ha-me'assef*. They indicate a deep awareness of the changes that had emerged on the European scene. These expressions were followed by statements of the need to emulate these trends. It was believed that the changing times necessitated a change from a traditional way of life and thought to a more current (modern?) orientation. Many of these expressions announced the advent of a new age of reason which indeed serve as a litmus paper for modernism. They may sound euphuistic, expressed as they were in *melitzah*, or even naive, yet they clearly represent the literary and linguistic awareness of the changing times.

Consider, for example, the modified quotation from Proverbs 1:20, 'and behold wisdom now sings outside', which was used by the editors of *Ha-me'assef* to indicate the nature of the new times. Behind the thrust of this observation one may detect the use of the sacred biblical idiom to convey an updated concept. It signals the linguistic trend of employing the sacral Hebrew language for secular use. Thus, the very language reflects in a subtle way the complex transition into modernism. These writers detect the emerging new epoch in Europe, referring to it as 'the days of the first fruits of knowledge and love in all the countries of Europe.'<sup>20</sup> Let us note that the two components of the new epoch are knowledge and love, namely tolerance, and that the two are related to one another.

These Hebrew writers further argued that this change among European nations also necessitated a similar change among the Jews: 'The era of knowledge has arrived in all nations; day and night they do not stop teaching

their children [both] language and book. And we, why should we sit idle? Let us get up and revive [those] stones from the heaps of dust.’<sup>21</sup>

Undoubtedly, the *me'assfim* discerned a major change taking place in Europe, and they advocated its adoption by European Jewry. Their continuous efforts to introduce changes in all spheres of Jewish endeavour helped bring about these changes among the Jews. Thus, if our assertion is correct, these expressions—and many others which should be explored—indicate that the writers and editors of *Ha-me'assef* were the exponents and the proponents of modernism in the eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

Simultaneously, some contemporary writers displayed their sensitivity through covert expressions of the ensuing transformation. Unlike the overt expressions, as cited above, these were subconscious expressions; they indicate a subterranean sensitivity to the budding changes and they foreshadow the new trends. They may be even more important than the overt expressions because of the covert message which they carry concerning Judaism and the Jewish religion in modern times. Those subtle signals in Hebrew literature conveyed the notion that traditional Judaism, as practiced and transmitted, was no longer self-sufficient and self-contained. They implied that Judaism in the modern age could no longer be a self-contained entity upon which its adherents could exclusively rely. There was a feeling that traditional Judaism was inadequate for the needs of modern man. This expression signaled a major turning point in Jewish history.

This change took place in the minds of some *maskilim* as they projected the sense that traditional Judaism was, moreover, subservient to Western civilization. Thus, they believed that in order to survive, modern Judaism had to adapt and adjust to its surrounding culture. For if it did not, Judaism would be doomed.

I believe that this awareness represented a new phenomenon in eighteenth-century Judaism. It shattered the age-old notion that Judaism was an all-encompassing way of life, which addressed all relevant issues and gave satisfactory answers to all the needs of the individual Jew and Jewish society.

Halkin has already observed that the total sufficiency of a Jew in his inner Judaic life typified his confines ‘within the walls’ until the eighteenth century. Afterwards, the Jew is inclined more towards more worldly issues.<sup>23</sup> Additional study should be directed at this transitory period to ascertain whether these aspects of modernism had not occurred earlier.

What is so impressive about this new awareness is that it was first detected in the writings of a moderate *maskil*, Naphtali Herz Wessely. In other words, even traditionalist *maskilim* were aware of some inadequacy of Judaism vis-à-vis European culture in modern times, and manifested this attitude in their writings. As I have shown elsewhere,<sup>24</sup> this traditionalist *maskil* seemed to



have subordinated Judaism to Western civilization in his controversial book *Divrei shalom ve-'emet* (1782). In this educational treatise Wessely discusses two major concepts related to his view of Judaism. He makes a distinction between *Torat ha-shem*, which literally translates as the laws, or teaching, of God, and *Torat ha-'adam*—the law of man. He expands the first term, *Torat ha-shem*, to mean not only the laws of God, but also Judaism in general. Similarly, *Torat ha-'adam* is broadened to include not only the laws of man, but social customs and manners, and more importantly, secular knowledge and Western civilization. Wessely believes that *Torat ha-shem*, that is, Judaism, is subordinated to *Torat ha-'adam*, namely to Western culture in the modern age, and that it is completely dependent on it. Thus, even a traditional *maskil* such as Wessely sensed the changes affecting Judaism in his day and age. Accordingly, he felt that Judaism in modern times was subservient to Western culture, and it could not exist as an entity by itself. Judaism, he considered, was no longer as self-sufficient as it had been until the age of Enlightenment. Significantly, these observations were made by a Hebrew writer, a devout Jew, who was proud of his heritage. Unquestionably, this represents a major shift from traditional Judaism to the modern period in Jewish letters. Modernism in Judaism may then be construed as reflecting a shift from total reliance on Judaism and its values as self-sufficient and all-encompassing towards placing it in an inferior position to Western civilization.

The *Haskalah* has also manifested its orientation toward modernism through the concerted efforts of its writers to re-define Judaism. In a desire to reject the phenomenon of contemporary rabbinic Judaism, a major spokesman for the *Haskalah*, Isaac Satanow, searched for a historical model of his vision of authentic Judaism which could and should be emulated in the Enlightenment. Interestingly, he found the epitome of authentic Judaism in *early* rabbinic Judaism. The mishnaic and talmudic periods were conceptualized by Satanow as representing Judaism at its highest degree of wisdom, knowledge and scholarship. It was then—he felt—that the Jewish people made its lasting contribution to science and humanism. Satanow thus selected early rabbinic Judaism, as opposed to contemporary rabbinic Judaism, as the model for Judaism in modern times.<sup>25</sup>

Modernism, then, may reflect not only the secular tendency, as is asserted by literary historians, but also a desire to re-define modern Judaism in terms of a past model. Replacing the existing tradition with a re-defined, neo-traditional, modern version of Judaism was definitely the goal of many *maskilim*. However, one should not be misled by various pronouncements made to appease the contemporary rabbinic authorities. On the other hand, the accepted notion in *Haskalah* historiography that the early *maskilim*

rejected the Talmud must, as I have shown, be re-examined and revised.<sup>26</sup> Hebrew scholarship must examine aspects of modernism within the neo-traditional, cultural elements of *Haskalah* Judaism. Admittedly, the term 'neo-traditional' may *not* be construed in a religious, observant fashion, or as 'modern Orthodoxy', as it is conceptualized nowadays. In this respect, Kurzweil's view of modern Hebrew literature as a complete break from the past must be questioned.

There was yet another subtle awareness of a major shift in modern Judaism. Its covert manifestation emerged from questioning accepted fundamentals and values of normative Judaism. Isaac Satanow asserted that love of God (*'ahavat ha-shem*) and trust in God (*bitahon ba-shem*)—major tenets in traditional Judaism—were no longer binding in the age of Enlightenment. He even questioned the very faith in God (*'emunah*). Instead, these essential Jewish values were replaced by skepticism as the fundamental value and vital principle of modern Judaism in modern times.<sup>27</sup> Significantly, these extra-literary observations are found in Satanow's *belles lettres*, in *Mishlei Asaf* (1789-1802), and are therefore related to literary phenomena within *Haskalah* literature.

Modernism may be further identified by significant changes in the conceptualization of major historical processes in Judaism by the early *maskilim*. There emerged an important change in the view of, and attitude towards, Jewish history. For the first time, as far as I know, a Jewish writer questions the inevitability of Jewish history and the course it had taken. It was an attempt to fathom the meaning of Jewish historical existence. The effort of the *Haskalah* to change the course of Jewish history reflects this modern aspect of eighteenth-century Judaism.

The *Haskalah* exponent of this new attitude was a rabbi and a *maskil*, Saul Berlin. His views on Jewish historiosophy were presented in a satirical piece entitled *Ktav Yosher* (1795). Berlin's objective was to shatter accepted notions and major concepts in Jewish historiosophy and to destroy some normative values in Judaic tradition. He questioned the sacred attitude towards *kiddush ha-shem*, martyrdom, and the ostensibly predestined fate of Jews in history. Among other fundamental phenomena in Judaism, Saul Berlin scrutinized the phenomenon of *galut* (state of exile), the nature of *ge'ulah* (divine redemption), the chosenness of Israel, and gentiles' hatred of the Jews.<sup>28</sup>

Behind the satire, Saul Berlin gave voice to ideas which, I believe, represent a watershed in Jewish history and Hebrew literature. They mark a shift in view of Jewish history. No longer was there passive acquiescence to, and acceptance of, the tragic consequences of Jewish history. A bitter protest now emerged against Jewish fate. Moreover, the Hebrew *maskil* protested

against the Jewish mentality which accepted Jewish history as a God-given gift to be welcomed in the past as in the future. Saul Berlin expressed a changing attitude towards the concept of *galut*: it was no longer viewed as inevitable, or as reflecting the nature of Jewish existence in modern time. *Ge'ulah*, on the other hand, was no longer conceptualized as being confined to the Divine, and the alleged chosenness of Israel was questioned.<sup>29</sup> From a Judaic point of view, these changes reflected substantial shifts in Jewish outlook that may be said to reflect modernism.

Another mega-trend of the shift in conceptualizing Judaism was asserted in the writings of two major writers of the early *Haskalah*: the editor of *Ha-me'assef*, Isaac Euchel, and Saul Berlin, cited above. For the first time in the modern age, the question arose as to whether traditional Judaism could bring happiness to the individual Jew and to Jewish society as a whole.

Aware of the centrality of *mitzvot* (precepts) and *kiyyum mitzvot* (observing the *mitzvot*) to traditional Judaism, Euchel and Berlin doubted whether the modern Jew could achieve happiness through observance of *mitzvot*.<sup>30</sup>

The major shift seemed to be a natural development of Wessely's view of the revised relationship between Judaism and Western civilization. With the abandonment of traditional Judaism as the exclusive, unique provider of happiness for the Jew, the door to modernism seemed to be wide open even for those who continued to observe the precepts of Judaism.

Both Euchel and Berlin touched upon the most significant aspect of the change towards modernism in that period: the desire of the modern Jew to achieve worldly happiness. They manifested a mega-trend towards secularism—prevalent in modern Judaism to this day—in its inception.

Our discussion so far has concentrated on criteria of modernism borrowed from non-literary disciplines and applied to literature. To address the issue fully, we should also attempt to define modernism in strictly literary terms. One prospective avenue is the study of emerging new literary genres and new literary phenomena in the *Haskalah*. It will, I hope, lead to a different concept of modernism in Hebrew literature. Accordingly, a new definition of modernism may be based on the shift from traditional Hebrew literature to modern Hebrew literature by noting the changes in literary genres.

Regrettably, as of now, Hebrew criticism has not produced a detailed, thorough and comprehensive study of the *Haskalah's* literary genres. Until such time that the whole of *Haskalah* literature is dissected and classified it will be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to arrive at any satisfactory definition along these lines. For the time being, however, we may use some working hypotheses to guide us in our endeavours.

We may nonetheless hypothesize that the literary genres of the Hebrew Enlightenment indicate a dual trend.<sup>31</sup> There is certainly a noticeable element of continuity in *Haskalah* literary genres. Many of the Hebrew *maskilim* continued to use accepted genres in the traditional Jewish literary corpus. Parables, fables and aphorisms, for example, represent a continuity. Of course, their contents reflected contemporary preoccupations.

There was also a tendency to revise accepted Judaic genres, or rather to search for established genres in the Judaic corpus. These genres were then represented either in the appearance of the old cast, such as in Satanow's *Mishlei Asaf*, or as a re-introduction of a genre, such as the religious disputation in Satanow's *Divrei rivot*. A student of modernism must then take into account the neo-literary genres which were re-introduced into *Haskalah* literature.

On the other hand, modernism is manifested by the introduction into Hebrew literature of European literary genres such as satire, epistolary writing, the travelogue, the biography and autobiography. These often show a strong European influence, with different degrees of Hebraic colouring, indicative of some background in past Hebrew literature.<sup>32</sup>

It may be suggested that modern Hebrew literature began with the introduction of a sufficient number of new literary genres. They represent a substantial literary shift which we can refer to as a shift towards modernism.

The search for literary definitions of modernism would be incomplete without the necessary probe into the subtle changes that affected the Hebrew language. The process of secularization of Hebrew should be part of a study of modernism for it reflects—and it affects—the inner *Weltanschauung* not only of literature but also of the Jewish people at that time.

Many sacred concepts, terms and words, which had been venerated for centuries, underwent acute, albeit subtle, changes, and were pressed into a secular, that is, modern use. The topic of language as well as others which I have touched upon in this paper indicate the need to re-examine the complex issue of modernism in Hebrew literature closely from within the *Haskalah* literature itself.

## Notes

1. See F. Lahover, *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah*, I (Tel Aviv, 1963), p. 1: '...it [modern Hebrew literature] echoes the modern times.' Joseph Klausner, *Historiah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah*, I (Jerusalem, 1952), p. 9: 'The term "Modern Hebrew Literature" should be changed to the Hebrew literature of modern times...' Shimon Halkin, *Derakhim ve-tzidei derakhim ba-sifrut*, I (Jerusalem, 1970), p. 155: 'Modern times in the history of the

- world and the nation gave birth to modern Hebrew literature' (the above quotations originally in Hebrew).
2. Klausner, *Historiah*, p. 9.
  3. Lahover, *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah*, I, p. 4: 'The inclination was now towards secularism.' It was presented earlier by Yaakov Rabinowitz, *Maslulei sifrut*, I (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 5 (originally published in 1919). See also: Isaac Barzilay, 'Li-vdikat mahut ha-haskalah u-vikortah', *Hadoar*, 43 (No. 19, March 13, 1964), p. 320.
  4. Avraham Sha'anán, *Ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah li-zrameha*, I (Tel Aviv, 1962), p. 18: '...penetration of secularism to the Jewish world of opinions and faiths'. Avraham Holtz comments on the ambiguity of the term as used by the Hebrew literary historians in his 'Prolegomenon to a Literary History of Modern Hebrew Literature', *Literature East and West*, XI (No. 3, 1967), p. 261, as does Arnold Band, twenty years later, in his elaborate article 'The Beginnings of Modern Hebrew Literature: Perspectives on "Modernity"', *AJS Review*, XIII (Spring-Fall 1988), pp. 1-26. The question of secularism as indicative of the beginning of modern Hebrew literature was discussed in 1947 by Hayim Bar-Dayán, 'Li-she'elat reshitah shel sifrutenu ha-hadashah', *Ha-kinnus ha-'olami le-mada'ei ha-yahadut*, 1947 (Jerusalem, 1952), pp. 302-306.
  5. Dov Weinryb, 'Gormim kalkaliyim ve-sotzialiyim ba-haskalah ha-yehudit be-germaniah', *Knesset*, III (Tel Aviv, 1938), pp. 416-436; Jacob Katz, *Masoret u-mashber* (Jerusalem, 1958), ch. 20, 21, 23, 24; Katz, *Tradition and Crisis* (New York, 1977). Azriel Shohet, *Im hilufe tekufot* (Jerusalem, 1960); Shohet, 'Reshit ha-haskalah be-yahadut germaniah', *Molad*, XXIII (203-204, September 1965), pp. 328-334.
  6. Baruch Kurzweil, *Sifrutenu ha-hadashah: masoret 'o mahapekha* (Tel Aviv, 1960) p. 16; also: p. 44: '... modern Hebrew literature is secular because it comes out of a world void of divine holiness that had been hovering over the unit of Jewish culture' (translated from the Hebrew).
  7. Klausner, *Historiah*, p. 10.
  8. See Moshe Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah* (Leiden, 1979), ch. VI; Pelli, *Be-ma'avkei temurah* (Tel Aviv, 1988), pp. 47-55.
  9. Lahover, *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah*, p. 4.
  10. For example: H. N. Shapira, *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah* (Ramat Gan, 1967), pp. 57-58. This notion was presented earlier by Yaakov Rabinowitz, *Maslulei sifrut*, I, p. 16 (see note 3 above for the date of publication).
  11. Simon Halkin, *Zeramim ve-tzurot ba-sifrut ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah*, I (Jerusalem, 1984), p. 31. Halkin had formulated his views earlier in his *Modern Hebrew Literature* (New York, 1970 [first published in 1950]), p. 36.
  12. Uzi Shavit, 'Masat mavo', *Shirah ve-'ideologia* (Tel Aviv, 1987), p. 16; published previously in *Be-fetah ha-shirah ha-'ivrit ha-hadashah* (Tel Aviv, 1986), p. 9.
  13. See the respective chapters on Euchel, Berlin and Satanow in my book *The Age of Haskalah*. Also: Shmuel Feiner, 'Yitzhak Eichel—Ha-'yazam' shel tenu'at ha-haskalah be-germaniah', *Zion*, 52 (4, 1987), pp. 427-469.
  14. Shavit, *Shirah*, p. 25.
  15. Band, 'The Beginnings of Modern Hebrew Literature', pp. 25-26.

16. See *ibid.*, p. 15.
17. 'Ha-lashon ve-sifrutah', Li-she'elat ha-lashon, *Kol kitvei Ahad Ha-'Am* (Tel Aviv, 1956), p. 95.
18. Dov Sadan, 'Al sifrutenu—masat mavo' (Jerusalem, 1950), pp. 1-9; first chapter published earlier in 'Al tehumei sifrutenu ha-hadashah', *Molad*, II (1948-9), pp. 38-41. Sadan reiterated his views in other articles and recently in 'Al sifrutenu—masat hitum', *Yerushalayim*, XI-XII (1977), pp. 162-171.
19. On the concept and term 'haskalah' see Uzi Shavit, 'Ha-"haskalah" mahi', *Mehkerei yerushalayim be-sifrut ivrit*, XII (1990), pp. 51-83.
20. 'Nahal ha-bsor', Prospect of *Ha-me'assef*, bound with vol. I (1783-4), p. 3.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
22. An observation made, on other grounds, by H. N. Shapira, in his *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-ivrit ha-hadashah*, p. 58.
23. Halkin, *Derakhim ve-tzidei derakhim*, pp. 156-157; Halkin, *Zeramim ve-tzurot*, p. 11.
24. Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah*, p. 121-124; Pelli, *Be-ma'avkei temurah*, pp. 54-61.
25. See *The Age of Haskalah*, ch. VIII; *Be-ma'avkei temurah*, ch. III.
26. *The Age of Haskalah*, ch. III.
27. *The Age of Haskalah*, pp. 166-169; *Be-ma'avkei temurah*, pp. 120-122.
28. *Be-ma'avkei temurah*, pp. 14-17. See also *The Age of Haskalah*, ch. IX, and my two additional articles on Saul Berlin published in *Leo Baeck Year Book*, XX (1975), pp. 109-127; XXII (1977), pp. 93-107.
29. *Be-ma'avkei temurah*, pp. 17, 144.
30. *Be-ma'avkei temurah*, pp. 13-14.
31. Avraham Holtz has lamented this phenomenon in the article cited in note 4, p. 268. Note also Shmuel Werses' comprehensive review of the study and research of the *haskalah*, 'Al mehkar sifrut ha-haskalah be-yameinu', *Megamot ve-tzurot be-sifrut ha-haskalah* (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 356-408, published previously in the *Newsletter of World Union of Jewish Studies*, 25 (Summer, 1985) and 26 (Winter, 1986).
32. In the published studies on the genres of the *Haskalah* I have discussed the following genres: satire, biography, autobiography, epistolary writing, dialogues of the dead, religious disputations, travelogues, utopian and wisdom literature, and pseudo-Halakhah.