

Models of Presence and Loss of Transcendence in History

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The article seeks to elucidate the status of transcendence in the historiography of secularization through the perspective of collective memory. It discusses two typological models dealing with the basic metaphysical problem concerned with the presence and meaning of transcendence in real human existence. According to the first, the historical reality of secularization causes a break from the collective memory whose roots are in religion. In contrast, the second model considers that despite the deep transformations in the status of religion in a reality of secularization, an experience of historical continuity may also occur there. These models denote the two poles in the argument about the meaning and value of history for modern people. The article suggests a phenomenological analysis of the two models and criticizes their deficiencies. Finally, the “tension model” is outlined as a third alternative that aims at overcoming the binary situation created by the first two in favor of a perspective that necessitates and contains both immanence and transcendence.

Keywords: immanence, transcendence, historical continuity, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Amos Funkenstein

1. Introduction

One of the most prevalent themes in sociology and anthropology of culture claims that secularization brings about a radical change, to the extent of forming a split between culture and its history, or even that it commences a new history.¹ This premise assumes a direct linkage between religion and historical reality, since in a reality where religion has significance for people, the historical process is characterized by continuity. However, this continuity is broken in a reality of secularization.

In this article, I will critically examine this theory and draw a more complex relationship between history and religion as a context organized around a relationship with a transcendent Being. To be sure, the predicate secular is not distinct from the sacred, but rather means first and foremost not assuming that providence takes place in historical reality, or at least admitting that providence is not manifest in it. Hence, transcendence is not necessarily dismissed in the historiography of secularization but rather its status, i.e., existing or not existing, remains undecided. In this context, I present through the perspective of collective memory two typological models dealing with the basic metaphysical problem concerned with the presence and meaning of transcendence in real human existence. According to the first, the historical reality of secularization causes a break from the collective memory whose roots are in religion. In contrast, the second model considers that despite the deep transformations in the status of religion in a reality of secularization, an experience of historical continuity may also take place there. Based on the critical analysis of the “break model” and “continuity model,” I will sketch

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the basic principles of the “tension model” as a third alternative that seeks to handle the deficiencies that arose from the first two.

The basic principles of the two models at the center of this discussion, and their problems, are expressed as paradigms in the famous polemic in Jewish historiography between Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (1982, 81-103) and Amos Funkenstein (1993). I consider that the special status of transcendence in the Jewish experience makes the Jewish context particularly suited to dealing with the general metaphysical problematic inherent in the two models. Transcendence here is not merely an issue for abstract theological study, but it permeates the practices of real life: God’s commandments (*Mitzvot*) are perceived in the Jewish world as a means of instantiating and affirming the transcendent entity in the real world. The Jewish law that covers all domains of life is the ultimate embodiment of the Jewish identity as an unbroken mixture of immanence and transcendence. As much as the law itself is God-given, its implementation is within the real historical world of human beings, in which it is also being ceaselessly interpreted and thus granted with new contemporary meanings. Moreover, the religious law is originally understood as given to living human beings and for their sake; its accordance with the human world is promised by its establishment. Since the religious law is the core of the Jewish Identity, there should be no gap between the concrete immanent experience in which Jews are present and act and the transcendent reality that forms their lives; thus in principle one does not expect that this gap will be bridged.

In their debate on the significance and influences of the phenomenon of Jewish historicism, the two historians referred to the different relationships existing between the present and the past in the historical realm—as an arena of events, as a field of knowledge and as an object of reference and memory for individuals and groups.² In principle, the historical datum they faced was similar: the dissipation of the transcendent presence from modern Jewish existence due to the loss of religious practice in the era of secularization. In light of the status of transcendence in the Jewish experience, it was to be expected that both would adopt the break in Jewish experience and the loss of continuity with the pre-modern Judaism as an inevitable conclusion. However, the two historians understood differently the nature of the historical datum, and accordingly formulated different approaches to the nature of Jewish collective memory, the rise of modern Jewish historiography, and the issue of historical continuity.

Yerushalmi believed that the experience of the break of modern man from his past was an inevitable element in the era of secularization in which Jews detached themselves from the traditional praxis and beliefs upon which classical Judaism was established. In his opinion, these processes were reflected in modern Jewish historiography that expresses a new and explicit awareness of the past, which had never been typical of Jews.

Funkenstein, however, developed a different approach when he argued that despite the changes in the Jewish experience in the era of secularization, Jews still had the option of experiencing continuity between their present and past. In his opinion, Jewish historicism expresses the Jews’ effort to connect themselves to their past, as protection against radical permutations within their surroundings. Thus, Jewish historicism proclaims continuity in Jewish history as an ever-continuing search for self-understanding while establishing references to the Jewish past.³

The exposition of the approaches of Yerushalmi and Funkenstein will serve as a basis for exploring the philosophical-phenomenological interpretation of the two models explaining the meaning of history in the era of secularization. These models denote the two poles in the argument about the meaning and value of history for modern people. In my opinion, the historiographical discourse on this issue shares two essential assumptions with the classical phenomenological approach: first, the treatment of facts as secondary; and second, the centrality

of the relations between immanence and transcendence denoting the complex of relationships existing between the formative consciousness and its object.⁴ As shall be seen later, the two historians do not argue about facts, but about their interpretation and about the very status of the facts themselves in the history of the collective and in the consciousness it forms regarding its history. Also, in the context of historiographical writing, immanence denotes the perception of both historians of the present, of subjective consciousness, and of the nature of historical reality, while transcendence refers to their attitude towards the past and the reality external and independent of the subject.

While the phenomenological analysis is often conducted at the level of consciousness, the ontological aspect also plays an important role in the issue under discussion. Against this phenomenological perspective, I argue that the interpretations of Yerushalmi and Funkenstein regarding the phenomenon of secularization and the rise of historicism in the modern Jewish world lay a significant foundation for the formulation of two comprehensive metaphysical models expressing two different basic approaches regarding the relationship between immanence and transcendence in the historical space. The elucidating of the possibilities and restrictions inherent in the two models might expand the horizon of the historiographical debate to wide aspects of human experience related to the status of the subject and object in history. Eventually, the suggested “tension model” will strive to lay the foundations for the liberation of the discussion of the modern approach to historical space from the one-sided attitude represented by each of the two paradigmatic models of modern Jewish historiography.

2. Break vs. Continuity

2.1. The Break Model: Yerushalmi

Yerushalmi attributes two central characteristics to Jewish collective memory. The first refers to the origin of this memory, which is “a function of the shared faith, cohesiveness and will of the group itself” (1982, 94). According to Yerushalmi, this faith was crystallized around two assumptions: “divine providence is not only an ultimate but an active causal factor in Jewish history,” and “the uniqueness of Jewish history itself” (1982, 89). Yerushalmi contends that the same memories functioned organically as “transmitting and recreating its past through an entire complex of interlocking social and religious institutions” (1982, 94). Yerushalmi describes pre-modern Jewish existence as a medium bearing the Jewish collective memory, without time and place leaving their mark upon it.

This view of Yerushalmi seems to be a consequence of his understanding of the contents of this memory as a substantial power which is unconditioned by the believing or remembering subject. One can deduce this, at least indirectly, from Yerushalmi’s account regarding what the historian cannot help doing: “I submit that no Jewish historian today, whatever his private feeling and beliefs, would bring himself to write an explicit ‘reasons-from-God’ epilogue to a work of scholarship [... yet] what would be inconceivable in a history of the English, the French, or the Dutch is still possible in a serious twentieth-century historical work concerning the Jews” (1982, 91).

The identification of Jewish history with sacred text and the understanding of it as God’s domain might diminish or even do away with the space bestowed to consciousness within the collective memory. Indeed, concerning Jewish collective memory, Yerushalmi acknowledged no power of the individual’s subjective consciousness; at most he regarded it as static and non-reflexive within the Jewish collective memory. Indeed, in this approach the voice of the historian and of the social critic is absent from the collective memory, and even Yerushalmi’s identity as a historian is not apparent. This approach towards the subject is necessitated by

the assumption of the permanence of the collective memory, which is enabled only from an unconstituted, and even passive, position regarding its contents. It appears that Yerushalmi assumes that there is an agreed significance to the nature of collective memory. Since he did not recognize the existence and necessity of the interpretative framework and subjective reference towards collective memory, he did not suggest any definition or interpretation of the term "historical consciousness" in the Jewish context. Yerushalmi's approach to the relation between the transcendent entity and the subject seems to express a sort of return to a Platonism in which the transcendent element is capable of operating in Jewish history without human subjects, i.e., it is unconditioned by the activity of individual Jews. The explanation of this approach, which, on the face of it, seems as striking against the basic forms of remembrance represented in rituals, is pinned in the classical self-understanding of Jews during the exile as existing outside time and place, i.e., living in an ahistorical plane which is not influenced by human activity but through divine providence.

The second characteristic of the Jewish collective memory noted by Yerushalmi refers to its selective nature which is responsible for the fact that "certain memories live on; the rest are winnowed out, repressed, or simply discarded by a process of natural selection" (1982, 95). Yerushalmi's approach, which places collective memory, with its faith in providence and the uniqueness of Jewish history, within the progression of real history, denies any meaningful involvement of the remembering subject.

The second characteristic Yerushalmi identifies in the Jewish collective memory indicates its selective nature (1982, 95), grants significance to processes of change and development in the collective memory whose place would not necessarily be recognized in an arena where the power of the transcendent element is supreme. However, it seems that these processes were not perceived as the direct result of human and real consciousness, and so he did not consider them as immanent factors. This does not mean that places that appear for example in the scripture, like Sinai or Egypt, do not denote real places where human beings really lived in the past. On the contrary, these events, as well as supernatural events and miracles, are grasped in the religious belief, upon which the idea of providence is based, as really having taken place. This means that the Jewish belief, at least to a certain extent, might function as a formal structure in reading the Jewish history. However, this does not imply that Jewish history is led by human beings. That is to say, the presence and influence of the transcendent in the real being does not generate its realization but elevates the realm of happening and the events themselves up to an ahistorical plane. In the same spirit, the occurrence of the collective memory perceived as designed by ontological forces beyond the subject's control makes it impossible for real historical selective processes to leave their immanent mark upon it.

All this is true up to the modern era, when, according to Yerushalmi, the status and power of the transcendent entity were greatly reduced. Now, providence no longer denoted the presence of independent transcendent power, but at most was an idea subject to the interpretation of subjects and exposed to the real contexts where they acted. That is to say, collective memory must be placeless so that it can endure. Similarly, the selectivity of the collective memory was perceived as part of the processes of change and development in the historical reality as a whole. What Yerushalmi argues is not that the collective memory must be placeless in order to endure, but that the weakening of the transcendent entity enabled the introduction of immanent elements into the collective memory and by that damaged it. In his opinion this is apparent in the mark left upon it by historical-real and human forces in general, and in particular by the secularization and the formation of Jewish historiography for the first time. These forces took place at the same point in time, the early 19th century. As he put it: "at time that witnesses a sharp break in continuity of Jewish living.... For the first time history, not a

sacred text, becomes the arbiter of Judaism” (1982, 86). Moreover, Yerushalmi attributes a similar meaning to two cultural phenomena: “If the secularization of Jewish history is a break with the past, the historicizing of Judaism itself has been an equally significant departure. It could hardly be otherwise” (1982, 91).

Just like secularization, in Yerushalmi’s approach, modern Jewish historiography is also apparent in the suppression of the various manifestations of transcendence. It seems that for Yerushalmi the break indicates not only the gap formed between personal and collective memory, but also the sovereignty individuals achieved regarding the collective memory, expressed in an interpretation of its contents harmful to the original metaphysical essence of this memory. Indeed, Yerushalmi distinguishes the phenomenon of historicism from the general human interest in the past: “Western man’s discovery of history is not a mere interest in the past ... but a new awareness, a perception of a fluid temporal dimension from which nothing is exempt. The major consequence for Jewish historiography is that it cannot view Judaism as something absolutely given and subject to *a priori* definition” (1982, 91).

So it is not surprising, then, that Yerushalmi identifies a contrast between a Jewish historian and his occupation: “only in the modern era we really find, for the first time a Jewish historiography divorced from Jewish collective memory and, in crucial respect, thoroughly at odds with it” (1982, 93). Considering the centrality of the entity element in the model of the break, in which Yerushalmi’s approach is classified, we can understand the linkage he finds between the inability to “view Judaism as something absolutely given and subject to *a priori* definition” and “a perception of a fluid temporal dimension from which nothing is exempt” (1982, 116).

In this context, the characteristics of absolute givenness and apriority denote the transcendent element. Although in Yerushalmi’s perception the transcendent is present in history and regulates it, in itself it is unconditioned by anything immanent. This means that between the transcendent and the immanent reality there cannot be any balance. Moreover, the transcendent, and not the often varying concrete circumstances, is considered as the force that stands behind the enduring features of Jews throughout the generations. Now it is clear why for Yerushalmi the historical perspective that characterizes the Jewish collective memory in terms of time, place, and self-understanding generates a break between the modern Jew and his collective memory. The violation of the metaphysical hierarchy inevitably led to the weakening of the transcendent and opened the door for the entry of immanent forces—historical, subjective, and real—into the collective memory.

The break model, to which Yerushalmi’s approach belongs, is thus based on the recognition of the enforcing reality of the transcendent being over the various manifestations of immanence. On the spectrum between “epistemological transcendence,” denoting the view point of the consciousness towards the world external to it, and the “metaphysical transcendence,” characteristic of classical approaches and denoting an entity outside space and time, the break model is clearly located at the second pole.⁵ The transcendent datum identified with an entity is *a priori* of real human experience, autonomous regarding the subject, and can be easily identified with God. Furthermore, stressing the transcendence as a decisive aspect of God’s character accords with characterizing God in terms of providence. Like transcendence, providence also denotes a basic gap in the relation towards the immanent experience, and like God, transcendence too acquires presence in the real world. In this respect, the break model is not based on a conception of complete transcendence. Indeed, the break model’s constituting insight deals with a riddle, or even a paradox, in which essential transcendence and historical reality are trapped together. In the Jewish context, this riddle is given some significance in the perception of God’s commandments as representing God in the world on the one hand, and as independent of the historical context on the other. In

this way, both the transcendence and its mark upon immanent human reality are preserved.

The permanence and independence attributed to the transcendent entity in this model are represented in the collective memory according to Yerushalmi through the ideas of providence and the particularity of Jewish history, expressing the divine accompaniment of the collective and the mark this leaves on the collective's history. The fact that these ideas are not perceived as a result of a situation or a distinct historical process enables the memory containing them to serve as an indicator for a transcendent ahistorical entity. Moreover, just like God's commandments, so also the contents of the collective memory in this model are entity-like and bear the mark of permanence and independence. In fact, what fills the collective memory in Yerushalmi's approach cannot be considered an idea or content. Instead, these are transcendent ideas to which consciousness has no way of referring.⁶ The analysis of Yerushalmi's approach revealed the dialectic contained in this model, where the concern for independence and for the ontological nature of the collective memory turns into dependence in a particular and specific meaning: the uniqueness of Jewish history and its divine providence. Since this meaning is perceived as an external fact independent of concrete consciousness in real time, the collective memory is liable to break whenever interpretation is directed at it by members of the collective. This reveals the fragility of the collective memory in this model, instead of the solidity one would have expected in light of its permanence and independence. However, since human beings are constantly trying to understand themselves, we can state that this model disproves itself.

Similarly, the past to which the collective memory refers is perceived in this model as a fixed reality, independent of human attempts to understand it. Yerushalmi argues this explicitly regarding Jewish history, and links this to the presence of the transcendent entity, which is the axiom in this model:

The notion that Jewish history is on the same level of reality as any other history, subject to the same kind of causality and accessible to the same types of analysis, did not find its way into actual historical writing until the nineteenth century. Long after an essentially secular view of world history had permeated ever-widening European circles, a providential view of Jewish history was still held tenaciously.... (1982, 89-90)

Accordingly, the reference suited to it is through static consciousness that does not partake of the formation of its meaning. A past that is unalterable, meaning one that cannot be perceived differently, bears a particular mark that removes from it any element of generality. The particular and fixed nature of the contents of the collective memory in the break model protects them from change and thus ensures the transcendent texture of their presence in real life. While this may seem paradoxical, collective memory as perceived in the break model denotes an ahistorical understanding of the past. Yerushalmi expresses this insight clearly in his approach that identified a contrast between the collective memory and modern Jewish historiography (1982, 93). It appears that Yerushalmi believed the transcendent mark this memory bore raised it above the level of the subjects and of possible facts in the real life of the collective, while historiography deals precisely with the relationship between the facts or at least events known as such and the significance people grant them.

The special status of the transcendent datum in the break model has far-reaching consequences for the status of the various manifestations of immanence within it. This is apparent first and foremost in the status granted to the subject, whose involvement and participation in the presence of the transcendent reality in existence is perceived as very minor. The subject is required to show restraint and passivity, aimed at affirming the autonomous existence of the transcendent entity and the culture of law, with its derived normative, heterogeneous system. In a different way, it is possible to state that the activity the subject enjoys as a knowing and understanding being is diverted in the break model from the object existing there to the subject itself, and

acts with self-restraint and self-qualification.⁷ So, instead of functioning as sovereign over the meaning of its objects, those it faces, the subject appears in the arena as affirming their presence as external to it and independent of it. The passivity of the subject constitutes a reflection of the balance of power between it and the transcendent entity, and to a certain extent can be considered as a declaration of the subject regarding the increasing power of the transcendent entity. It is worth clarifying that, for its own part, the transcendent entity is autonomous and independent upon a particular formation of diffusion on the subject's part. However, the passivity of the subject enables the presence of the transcendent entity in the subject's world.⁸

It is not surprising that in the context of an approach that granted such a decisive role to the transcendent entity, Yerushalmi did not progress beyond indicating the very existence of the collective memory, and did not ask about the people bearing it. Nor did he refer to the mechanism through which the collective memory is formed, the role of the human subject regarding it, or the issue of the relation between the collective memory and the personal memory. These aspects, directed at the subject, are marginal in the break model that was almost completely overrun by the power of the transcendent presence. Against this background, we can understand Yerushalmi's decision to locate the break in the appearance of secularization in the Jewish world rather than in the ideological approach that stood behind it, i.e., the Enlightenment (1982, 82-83). Secularization denotes a reality in which Jews demonstrated an activism that led to abandoning the normative commitment to God's commandments, and in this context it has a more dramatic significance than abstract mental processes such as those involved in the appearance of the Enlightenment in the Jewish world.

The formation of the subject as a passive experience whose role is limited to affirming the reality of the transcendent entity already entails a fundamental position regarding another immanent dimension typical of the break model, concerning the status of consciousness. The decisive dominance of the transcendent entity undoubtedly forces the conscious element, too, into a marginal position. The demand that the subject affirm the existence of this entity and obey the norms derived from it does not require the full, specific power of consciousness, represented in its ability to interpret its objects and thus to form their meaning for it. Quite the opposite, consciousness is itself subordinated to the entity as the reality whose meaning has already been heteronomously determined. The extreme ontological and even substantive position towards reality typical of this model frustrates the conscious-interpretative reference to external reality on the subject's part. The restrictions imposed upon consciousness in this model may also reduce the transparency of these beings within it, and also the ability to incorporate them into the subject's mental world. But it seems that this is how the transcendent nature of these beings is portrayed in the reference towards it. Unlike the immanent objects, the transcendent ones always remain completely no-transparent to consciousness. In this spirit, the past is perceived as a context of ideals or information that the subject identifies as transcendent—not only in terms of its origin or its being inexhaustible by human consciousness. As a result, human existence is perceived in this model as occurring in the face of complete otherness or in the face of transcendence.

In principle, the hierarchical balance of power between the transcendent entity and the immanent consciousness is supposed to prevent the process of selection and change in the collective memory. Thus, in situations where processes of change and selection occur, they are considered in this model as a reliable indication of the weakening of the collective memory, or more precisely, of the distortion of the passive disposition of the subject towards the transcendent entity, intended to enable the subject to affirm it as a reality independent of it. Conversely, as consciousness gains a more active role in the collective memory, even if the activity is directed at the interpretation of the transcendent entity, it is considered in this model as evidence of a break and a distortion

of the original hierarchical system in which transcendence has a superior status over the subject. Eventually, the formation of the subject in the break model as a passive experience accords with the minor status it grants the element of consciousness, and both are the result of the transcendent nature of the collective memory.

This formation of the subject and consciousness in the break model is well demonstrated in Yerushalmi's approach, which did not refer at all to the concept of "historical consciousness" denoting the mental links directed towards collective memory—a concept that, as we shall see, is at the focus of the continuity model. Also, the components Yerushalmi identified in the Jewish collective memory—divine providence and the uniqueness of history—were not understood by him as expressing the self-understanding of the Jews throughout the generations, but as transcendent elements independent of the members of the collective themselves. The static nature, indicating the permanent and independent divine presence accompanying Jewish history, grasps simultaneously both the permanents and the independence attributed to the transcendent entity and the passivity characterizing the subject in the break model. In fact, not only the transcendence Yerushalmi attributed to the Jewish collective memory but also the marginality of the conscious component can explain the uniformity he identified in it. Yerushalmi's understanding of the transcendence of the Jewish collective memory as expressing its being given above and beyond the immanent framework of reference does not open to him any different interpretations, and as a result, the possibility that it could absorb diversity originating in various mental references directed at it is also blocked.

It is amazing that Yerushalmi did not see the natural selection that occurred in collective memory (1982, 95) as any threat to its wholeness and uniformity. He probably assumed that its static nature was guaranteed by the transcendent entity that constituted it. In contrast, he identified the activity of the historian—a subject directing active consciousness at the collective memory and treating it from the point of view of its contents—as problematic and even a "disturbance" (1982, 95). Yerushalmi held this opinion even though one of the prominent outcomes of this activity is actually the preservation and protection of the contents of the collective memory from the natural process of human selection and forgetting. This is how Yerushalmi described the historian: "against the grain of collective memory which is ... drastically selective"; "seeks ultimately to recover a total past.... No subject is potentially unworthy of his interest, no document, no artifact, beneath his attention" (1982, 94-95).

So it is not surprising that Yerushalmi identifies particular problems with the historian as compared to other formative figures in the existence of the collective, such as the modern author or ideologist, who, in his opinion, supported the Jewish collective memory as he understood it.⁹ This can be indirectly deduced from Yerushalmi's statement about what the historian is unable to do: "I submit that no Jewish historian today, whatever his private feeling and beliefs, would bring himself to write an explicit 'reasons-from-God' epilogue to a work of scholarship ... what would be inconceivable in a serious twentieth-century historical work concerning the Jews" (1982, 91).

This point leads us to the final aspect in the analysis of the break model, dealing with the perception of history it contains. From the perspective of the break model, the arena of history is the victim of an insoluble problem: it exists in an immanent field, being the context of the actions and mental references of individuals and groups in reality. History occurs fundamentally in the intentional diachronic space where in principle there is not supposed to be a hierarchy between the subject and the object. On the other hand, it denotes an arena of events and a reality beyond the individual, who exists in this model in synchronous relations intended to enable the superiority and independence of the transcendent entity in human reality. Since an intentional framework

cannot accord with a hierarchical system, the arena of history can be seen as a reliable reflection of the relations existing between transcendence and the immanence typical of the break model. Against this background, it is not surprising that the appearance of historiography was perceived by Yerushalmi as decisive evidence of the distortion and damage to the collective memory (1982, 93) and even as an active factor in its secularization: “History becomes what it had never been before—the faith of fallen Jews” (1982, 86).

So it transpires that when a historical reality is formed in which the subject cannot affirm the presence of the transcendent datum, as happened in the reality of secularization, there is a break in the collective memory. The break indicates the gap created between personal memory and the collective memory, through which the basic elements of immanence, first and foremost the consciousness referring to events in reality, penetrate. This can be expressed in several ways, one of which is historical writing. The unique status Yerushalmi granted historiography in the formation of the break in the Jewish collective memory is based upon the unique congruence he identified between the appearance of secularization and the formation of historiography in Jewish culture. But the break model does not take a stand regarding the means by which the presence of the transcendent entity is portrayed and affirmed in a given culture. Thus in the absence of such congruence, historiography does not receive a unique status in this model. In any case, the hermeneutic application of the break model is not relevant only to cultures where the existence of the transcendent presence is in crisis, but it might be applicable also for those where the permanence and uniformity of the collective memory are preserved, and where the subject continues to hold a passive attitude towards its contents. In this respect, the break model perceives the transcendent entity as having a significant role both in its presence and in its absence.

2.2. *The Continuity Model: Funkenstein*

Funkenstein’s concept of collective memory is based upon two fundamental characteristics: according to the first, collective memory “is a mental act and therefore absolutely and completely personal” (1993, 4). The second speaks of the endeavor of tying one’s personal memory with the collective one: “even the most personal memory cannot be removed from its social context” (1993, 4). These two conscious dimensions, the personal and the general, form the basic immanent foundation of Funkenstein’s perception of Jewish collective memory.

The Cartesian viewpoint that regarded human consciousness as referring to an autarchic individual is thus rejected in favor of the Hegelian one that pointed out the social nature of one’s self-consciousness and the inseparability of the individual from his society. Additionally, like Hegel, Funkenstein too recognizes the binding and preserving grounds of human experience, which survive the selective course of history. While the particular and the individual, which are provisional and contextual by their very nature, are excluded, the universal or the generalis is preserved and crystallized as an archetype and thus elevated from place and time.¹⁰

However, unlike Yerushalmi, Funkenstein did not consider selection as a distinct feature of the collective memory, nor did he see it as expressing a problem or distortion within it, but identified it with the processes of inclusion typical of human consciousness. This approach towards historical selectivity is undoubtedly an outcome of the immanent framework that includes Funkenstein’s approach towards collective memory. In fact, an approach such as that of Funkenstein is incapable of characterizing the inclusivity of collective memory, since what determines its content and dimensions are the mental processes subjects’ experience as individuals and as part of the group in a given real context, rather than an external transcendent factor and independent of them.

The connection between individual and collective memory is the most basic infrastructure in Funkenstein’s continuity model. First, it stresses that consciousness is a mechanism of reference and inclusion that enables the

movement of individuals into the collective with which they identify. At the same time, these individuals assimilate into their personal world the meaning and significance offered them by the collective memory. Since the conscious memory is always anchored in the present, while memory is identified with contents and realities from the past, the continuity between the individual and the group entails the basic connection between the present and the past. In any case, the continuity does not denote permanence of specific contents or meanings granted to the events or to any particular aspect of the collective memory, but rather the preservations of its status as a fixed object of reference despite the modifications in the understanding of its contents by individuals within the group.

However, Funkenstein clarifies that the continuity characteristic of collective memory is not secured or accomplished by itself, but is mediated by the “historical consciousness” that signifies “the attempt to understand the past, to question its meaning” (1993, 11) and “the degree of creative freedom in the use of interpretation of the contents of collective memory [... which] differ at different times in the same culture or in different social environments at any given time within the same culture” (1993, 19). In other words, the term “historical consciousness” denotes both the human attempt to mediate and the freedom this entails. More specifically, Funkenstein intends “historical consciousness” to serve as “an additional interpretive dynamic construct to explain how the second [recorded history] arises *out* of the first [collective memory]” (1993, 9).

This statement focuses Funkenstein’s continuity theory on a more specific issue concerning the relationship between the collective memory and historiography. However, this focus does not detach Funkenstein’s continuity theory from the general universal foundation in which it is anchored. Quite the opposite, I believe that this issue focuses on the spectrum of meaning of the relations between the general and universal and the individual and particular.

Against the background of the focus on the relations between collective memory and historiography, it is worth noting the double contribution of the term “historical consciousness” to Funkenstein’s continuity theory: first, this term implies the power of the collective memory to contain otherness and change without its status being diminished in the eyes of the collective identified with it. Second, historical consciousness mediates between personal and collective memory, and one of the synthetic expressions of this mediation is the historiographic work. In this respect, historical consciousness indicates the accessibility of historical contents to the group which identifies them as referring to itself. As such, historical consciousness may serve as a framework for ideologies which determine the meaning or even the status of the comprising contents of the collective memory (i.e., ontological, symbolical, religious, etc.). The mediating nature of this consciousness empowers it to prevent the contradictions between personal and collective memory, and between collective memory and historiography.¹¹ Indeed, Funkenstein himself clarified that his approach seeks “to refrain from postulating an unbridgeable gap between collective memory and the recording of history” (1993, 9). In his opinion, “the transition from pre-critical historiography to historicism, however revolutionary, was not altogether sudden” (1993, 9), although, like the continuity between personal and collective memory, in Funkenstein’s opinion the continuity between collective memory and historiography is also not guaranteed.

The relationship existing between historical consciousness and collective memory is clearly connected to the concept of history in Funkenstein’s thought. In his opinion, history does not represent an autonomous transcendent entity in relation to the consciousness referring to it. Just like historical consciousness, history itself constitutes the product of immanent subjective action inseparably involving the consciousness of individuals and the processes of their formation. In other words, although historical consciousness and history

as a discipline are not identical, from Funkenstein's point of view they are based on the same mental activity that allows the linkage between them.

Obviously, just as Funkenstein's thesis of continuity does not testify to the uniformity of the collective memory, it cannot imply the same for historical consciousness. This consciousness is merely the illumination of the immanent aspect of a memory, which being collective exists also outside the consciousness of individuals as such.

Through the concept of historical consciousness, Funkenstein's approach actually causes the historization of the collective memory. This means that the contents that fill the collective memory do not denote fixed elements within it, but express the real reference of the members of the collective to it in a given place and time. The element of contents, which does not essentially require a linkage to real time, is joined in his approach with the element of historicity, which also has a real aspect. Thus, the perception of Jewish history as subject to divine providence and as unique is perceived as reflecting the Jews' self-perception. This means that there is no essential difference between what is perceived as collective memory and historical consciousness itself, since the collective memory itself denotes a conscious and mental framework. In other words, the collective memory, the historical consciousness, and the mechanisms of mediation and access all act on the immanent consciousness level. Of course, historiography is just one of the possible expressions of historical consciousness, and just as it has no special status among the different expressions, so it cannot be considered to have the power to create a break between individual and collective memory.

It is important to note that the thesis of continuity does not exclude the possibility of a break in the collective memory. In Funkenstein's opinion, such a break could occur when the mental frame of reference treating the collective memory as an object is damaged. In his words: "... the distance between secular Jews ... and traditional Judaism was created not by the lack of historical knowledge and symbols, but their alienation from texts and textual messages ..." (1993, 21).

The historian is unique in this context compared with the other members of the collective in having relatively easy access to the contents of the collective memory, rather than having an attitude affirming or rejecting a particular meaning that has been attributed to them in the past. However, clearly the experience of continuity is essentially collective and cannot be borne by a few scholars. This is one of the few meeting points between the break model and the continuity model: in both, the historian is not granted the status of a "memory doctor" in a reality where a break has occurred in the collective memory.

Funkenstein's consistent turning to the immanent infrastructure of consciousness determines, therefore, the meaning of the concepts of past, historiography, historical continuity, and collective memory. These signify a *net of relations* among different subjective consciousnesses aiming at history, memory, past, and present. Inside this net, particular contents are located and constantly subjected to exegesis and modifications. Seemingly, the relativistic appearance, which comes out of the suggested analysis of Funkenstein's conception, is likely to threaten his thesis of sequence. Yet, definitely being aware of that, Funkenstein insisted that his setting deprives no possible contact with the specific and even incommensurable contents of the Jewish tradition. So, Funkenstein's approach considers immanent consciousness both as the general framework of reference and also as the receptacle for particular contents.

The continuity model, demonstrated by Funkenstein's approach, is anchored in immanence by its two constituent elements, consciousness, and reality. The continuity denotes an ongoing process of conscious reference, and at the same time the function of reality as an object and as a fixed context for the act of reference itself.

However, this immanent infrastructure does not become a forced datum in the continuity model. This is because the continuity itself, including all its constituent immanent expressions, is merely an empty structure that is filled with new contents each time an act of reference is directed at the collective memory. This means that the continuity is not equivalent to statements in specific conscious content or to a certain characterization of reality. Rather, it denotes the independence of specificity as such. The anchor in immanence is portrayed as the understanding of the memory as contents borne in the consciousness of real people anchored in a reality that serves as a context and object for the memory. To the extent that the memory expresses the reference to reality, it constitutes one of its means of representation by the individuals and groups that bear it.

In principle, the immanent infrastructure in which the continuity model is grounded does not negate the possibility that memory—individual or collective—could contain a transcendent element. Unlike the break model, the continuity model does not perceive immanence and transcendence as mutually exclusive. However, recognizing this option is not necessitated by a realistic approach such as the one on which the break model is based, not by the very existence of transcendent objects in relation to consciousness, since these are perceived in the continuity model as part of the immanent framework in which consciousness itself is planted. In the context of this discussion, this means that individual memory can absorb components of the collective memory, and of the past in general. These can function within the immanent consciousness as permanent elements that grant it its features and stability. The ability of immanent consciousness to absorb transcendent elements through the act of reference allows individual memory not to be perceived as purely individual, and it is not subject to the boundaries of the real experience of the individual bearing it. This is precisely Funkenstein's position, linking individual and collective memory.¹²

The continuity model rejects the possibility, articulated by the break model, that there could be a contrast between the "given" and the person referring to it. As we have seen, in Funkenstein's approach, the immanent model contains the option of recognizing the existence of a transcendent entity and accessing it through the subject's conscious reference. As he says: "historical consciousness ... does not contradict collective memory, but is rather developed and organized from it" (1993, 18-19). The lack of contrast between the collective memory identified with the past and the reference of present-day people to it entails an opinion regarding the active status of the subject in the collective memory.

As we have seen, this complex understanding of immanence in the continuity model, containing the possibility of incorporating transcendent elements, enabled Funkenstein to identify the binding and preserving element in the process of historical selection. Moreover, Funkenstein also believed that even if what survives the historical process is not consciously recognized by the collective as a permanent element of the collective memory, its presence in this memory shapes it as such.¹³ So, it is not surprising that Funkenstein did not consider the selection taking place in the collective memory as a distinct feature of it, nor as a problem threatening its nature. While in the break model, it was expected that the transcendent entity would overcome the processes of historical selection, an expectation disappointed in the modern era due to secularization, in the continuity model the immanent framework itself guarantees, by the very act of conscious reference, the preservation of the collective memory, although not of any specific manifestation of it.

The relationship between the two models, which at first appeared as a stark contrast, now transpires as more complex, since the ontological interest behind the break model is not necessarily absent from the continuity model, but is perceived differently in it. In any case, it is important to clarify that even in cases where the transcendent dimension enters the immanent framework in whose boundaries the continuity model is

anchored, this dimension does not form a datum that forces itself upon consciousness or reality, as it does in the break model. This is because like all the other constituent components of the difference, the transcendent dimension too is projected into the same mechanism of reference in whose boundaries the significance of the datum facing it is determined each time anew. The meaning produced through the act of reference is granted the status of truth in the continuity model. But the truth in this context does not denote any accord between what happens in the present and the transcendent and atemporal datum, but expresses the uncovering of a possibility existing already in the real link between the present and the past.¹⁴ In the end, immanence—as consciousness and as reality—serves in the continuity model as an exclusive source for the creation of significant contents. Thus, from the perspective of the continuity model, what fills the collective memory in Yerushalmi's approach cannot be considered as content at all, since these are sort of transcendent ideas to which consciousness is unable to refer.

It appears that while in the break model collective memory is substantiated and as a result of this it is perceived as portraying a transcendent entity, in the continuity model the past datum is immanentized. As a result, the past is transferred from “there” in the past to “here” in the present. Specifically, the immanentization of the collective memory brings its contents closer to the consciousness and world of the people of the present—as individuals and as a collective—and naturally places the transcendent elements into the real historical process. At the same time, there is a transformation in the perception of the past itself: while in the break model it is perceived as an ahistorical reality, in the continuity model, as Funkenstein describes, “[t]he past is remembered present” (1993, 7).¹⁵

The process of immanentizing the collective memory and historicizing the past in the continuity model leads inevitably to relocating the focus to the present space where the individual conscious links towards the past object are formed, which constitute the contemporary historical consciousness. From the perspective of the present, continuity denotes the existence of the actual context for referring to the past and the essentiality of the subject to produce meaning from this reference.

However, the actual link to the past is not solely responsible for the continuity. The acts of reference of the present-day people to the collective memory already encompass the past presence that prevents the possibility of separating the individual and collective memories, or the past and the present. At this point, Funkenstein's words are illuminating: “No memory, not even the most intimate and personal, can be isolated from the social context, from the language and the symbolic system modeled by the society over centuries” (1993, 5).

This means that recognizing the immanent fixing of the datum by the subjective linkage directed at it does not involve distancing from the fixed and unchanging foundation of the datum or surrendering the substantive dimension as a real element in the historical event. The differences between the various references to the past actually denote different interpretations of the substantive—whether it is perceived as particular or as universal. Indeed, the immanent links to the past datum change for different subjects at different times, but since the subjective experience is not restricted to its own boundaries, it also preserves the substantive dimension that exceeds the boundaries of the individual's reference.¹⁶ From the perspective of the past, continuity denotes the fixed presence of an unchanging element in the various manifestations of the references to the collective memory and to the past in general. This element serves as a counter-weight to balance the wide anchor of the continuity model in immanence, and it guarantees against the arbitrary subjectivization of the collective memory by the actual consciousness.¹⁷

Two elements combine in the continuity model: the real element, which eventually forms as a substantive

and permanent dimension of the collective memory, and the conscious element arising from the real linkages of members of various present times. The first element denotes the ontological dependence of present-day people on the past reality, while the second element describes the epistemological dependence in the references of the present-day people. As a result, the continuity transpires as a structural framework without any commitment to any permanent or particular content. In fact, the secret of the continuity lies in protection from *a priori* identification with any particular content. Thus, the changes in the contents formed within the boundaries of the links directed to the past datum cannot harm its very givenness as a significant element for contemporary people. No less than the continuity constitutes an indication of the continued interest in the past datum itself, it also indicates that the datum is not constituted by the reference towards it. Indeed, the reference itself recognizes and declares the fact of its givenness. This means that the immanent foundation in which the continuity model is anchored affirms the existence of the collective memory and at the same time forms its continuity.

Also, the immanent anchor of the collective memory does not restrict its meaning to the boundaries of real experience of its actual contents, but contains an element of future potential. Thanks to this potential, even those who have not face the “original” entities of the collective memory—entities that are sometimes created as mythological—can acquire them as the origin of meaning and belonging. If the past to which the collective memory refers in the continuity model is subject to constant interpretation and changed by contemporary people, this is even more true regarding the “future” of this memory, that is, its meaning and status for members of future generations. In this way, the openness of the present to both directions, past and future, ensures the continuity of the collective memory.¹⁸ In this context, mobility from the particular to the universal level is possible through the consciousness of contents and meanings. However, even what is perceived as a transcendent element in real life depends on its affirmation and formation as such by consciousness. In this respect, the consciousness and the subject that bears it create the axis around which the continuity forms.

The immanentization of the collective memory that occurs in the continuity model has a formative influence on the status of the subject and of consciousness. While in the break model there was a distinction between the status of consciousness and the character of the subject, in the continuity model it is impossible to make such a separation, since what is emphasized regarding the subject is the subject’s consciousness. The conscious activity is founded upon the activism shown by the individual’s judging the objects of his or her consciousness, attributing qualities to them, determining their identity, and deciding the relationship between them and other objects. The conscious object is always silent towards the subject referring to it. The implication of this for the perception of collective memory in the continuity model is clear: what decides about its contents or status in the eyes of the collective is the conscious formation of the subject, including in the case where transcendence is attributed to the collective memory.

Furthermore, at the center of the continuity model is the issue of the accessibility of the collective memory, rather than the clarification of the ontological status of protecting the original or particular meaning of its contents. While concern for the accessibility aspect in the center of the continuity model leads to dealing with the means of linkage suitable for the collective memory, the ontological orientation feeding the break model focuses on preserving the particular meaning of this memory, which has already been determined and is perceived as independent of the contemporary subject. In fact, just as the past datum does not appear as pure in the continuity model, neither is the subject. Both constitute part of an inter-generational dialog that removes any reference to the past from the boundaries of its particularity and locates it on one continuum with other references to the collective memory, both contemporary and in the past. This means that in the continuity model

the past can never be considered a static datum, since it is constantly being informed by active human consciousness. Therefore, the meaning of the object of reference taken from the collective memory can never be determined in advance, but only with hindsight. As a result, both the datum and subject referring to it are subject to change, just like the processes of change that take place in human reality. Paradoxical as this may seem, the category of change transpires as an integral part of the mechanism of explanation and reference to the collective memory in the continuity model. This insight is directly expressed by Funkenstein, who maintained his continuity thesis despite his awareness of the existence of vast differences between the perception of history arising from the Bible and that developed by Jewish historiographers in the 19th century.

It is important to stress that while in the continuity model the subject receives a central status and the subject's activism towards the objects of consciousness is emphasized, but the subject does not become omnipotent. This is not only due to the subject's dependence upon objects to realize his or her experience as a subject, it is also due to the conscious distancing from the Cartesian perception of the subject at the foundation of the formulation of the continuity model and the ontological aspect apparent in this approach, regarding the power of the collective memory to contain transcendent elements. This means that the intentional relation the subject directs at the past does not necessarily entail an argument regarding the constituting of the past by the subject, who is not considered as its sovereign in the continuity model. Thus, even if a difference arises between the past contained in the collective memory and the past arising from the work of historians, these two types of past are located on one continuum of constant references towards the past, references that do not detract from the holistic nature of the past, which in itself does not exist outside the acts of reference themselves.

3. Critical Summary and an Outline of a Third Alternative

The two models discussed in this article deal with the metaphysical problem concerning the relations between transcendence and immanence in the realm of history. The starting point to the exposition of the two models was a shared historical datum: the dissipation of the transcendent presence due to the loss of religious practice in the era of secularization. The phenomenological reading proposed in this article of the approaches of Yerushalmi and Funkenstein, demonstrating the models, sought to reveal their internal coherence. The break model is based on the recognition of the enforcing presence of a transcendent datum that overcomes immanence with its various manifestations, especially consciousness, the subject, history, and time. The super-abundance of the transcendent datum over its immanent manifestations is apparent in its characteristic independent permanence, thanks to which it does not absorb the temporal and concrete nature of history, and thus is not supposed to encounter the problem of historical continuity between different periods. To the extent that the break model can be attributed a temporal dimension, it would be metaphysical, like Eliade's "primordial time," which is not the product or manifestation of a conscious constituent act. Real time, the context in which historical research takes place, the break model is considered as a "platform" on which the events appear, without it constituting an active aspect of the events. However, when real time becomes an active element, a break occurs within it, denoting the transition from atemporality to temporality and historicity, or the transition from metaphysical to real temporality.

In contrast, in the continuity model, the dominant power constituting the meaning and significance of human existence is in immanence in all its forms. The unity that is formed in the break model due to the permanence and independence of the transcendent datum is replaced in the continuity model by constant plurality, diversity, and change. The organizing element of continuity is the conscious act of the subject showing

activism towards the real events composing the human world—both in the past and in the present. In this context, there can be a place for a transcendent datum, but the conscious act of the subject has primacy and priority over it. So, continuity denotes the structure organizing the events in the historical, real, and temporal realm. The existence of a shared, unifying meaning cannot be derived from the organization of events or occurrences over one continuum. Indeed, the organizing structure of continuity overcomes the changing contents appearing on the axis of real time, and it is independent of the particular contents. In any case, continuity itself is an expression of conscious content with a fixed structure.

The profound differences revealed in the analysis of the two models show how marginal the shared point of origin is in forming these two models compared with their perception of human experience. In order to characterize the difference between the two models, I distinguish between the “experience of presence,” guided or constituted by the transcendent power, and the “experience of making present,” centered on the intentional experience addressing the objects of consciousness and seeking to determine their meaning and sometimes even their very being. Each of these perceptions of experience forms a different concept of the absolute. The experience of presence reflects a strict, disjunctive concept of the absolute moving between two extreme options of affirmation or negation, while the experience of making present is flexible and adaptive to the changing historical circumstances. Also, each type of experience responds to a different image of subject. The subject in the break model is passive and is required to affirm the presence of the transcendent entity as an external and independent entity, and to adopt the meanings attributed to it in the collective memory. Perhaps the best way to characterize the experience of the transcendent entity, in itself a paradoxical concept, at the base of the break model should be taken from the world of myth, portraying an independent and transcendent entity that is not stained by the real historical process.¹⁹ In contrast, the subject in the continuity model demonstrates activism and initiative aimed at obtaining meaning and significance for his or her existence, and as part of the collective.

Against the background of the clarification of the various concepts of human experience, we can point out the main faults at the basis of each model, as a conclusion of the critical analysis of the models. As we have seen, in the break model, the past is perceived as whole, independent, and *a priori*.²⁰ Accordingly, in this model there is a contrast between the past or tradition as a system of lifestyles and the attempt of people in a given present to understand and interpret the past. This attempt is perceived as doomed to subjectivizing and relativizing the past and the collective memory.²¹ I believe the main flaw in this model is the reduction of the collective existence to the interpretation of the contents of the collective memory and of the past in general. This reduction distorts first and foremost the transcendent meaning of the past itself. I argue that while the interpretation of reality or of contents related to it is not identical to experiencing it, there is no reason to assume there is a contrast between them. Moreover, even recognition of the fluidity of time does not have to create such a contrast. In fact, experiencing reality or a particular entity is meaningless—in fact, it cannot be considered as an experience—without the human effort aimed at this entity which naturally makes it present. This statement is also true regarding the experience of an entity or a reality perceived consciously as transcendent. Indeed, recognition of a particular element as transcendent is itself an expression of the fact that it has significance in a particular immanent context. The existence of this meaning does not necessarily imply that it is the result of constituting by a real subject. In contrast, what is completely transcendent cannot be discussed, and as Wittgenstein said, “about this one must be silent” (1974, §7, 89). So, the understanding of the past as a transcendent datum does not necessarily imply its perception as an element inaccessible to human experience in the present. The understanding of the past as a transcendent datum can at most serve as a starting point towards it.

However, any attempt to progress beyond this starting point introduces into the understanding of the past immanent elements originating in the subjective experience of the referrer and in the reality from which the interest in the past arises. The penetration of the conscious element into the discussion of the transcendent datum is not only inevitable, it is desirable, since without it the very givenness of the past as a datum of human experience is negated. Suddenly, the transcendent datum and the transcendental human experience directed at it do not necessarily exclude each other.²²

Furthermore, the basic fact that the preservation of the Jewish collective memory is entrusted to social organizations and institution, meaning immanent contemporary factors, does not accord with the permanence and unity attributed *a priori* to the collective memory in the break model. It is clear that the very fact that the interest in the past is conducted by subjects is not in itself sufficient to cause the subjectivization of its object, or to make it immanent. The influence of the reference on its object depends on the nature of the reference rather than on its very occurrence. Thus, for instance, if a historian demonstrates commitment to the phenomenon he or she is studying and allows the various voices it contains to be heard, he or she may find a way to express it according to its spirit. Thus, the sharp contrast between historiography and its object, around which Yerushalmi's approach formed, originates first and foremost in an incorrect understanding of the very act of objectification.²³

But the continuity model too does not lack problems. Like any approach anchored in immanent consciousness, this model is also at risk of not preserving the qualified status of consciousness as a containing framework for contents and references to them. It could become an authority determining the contents themselves and their status.²⁴ In other words, the profound awareness of the transcendental nature of human experience, constituting a fundamental foundation of the continuity model, may eventually lead to denying the experience of transcendent entities, whatever the meaning of this experience. The danger of denying the existence of the transcendent entities is critical in the context of this discussion, and may be decisive regarding the applicability of the continuity model in the interpretation of cultures formed around references to a transcendent entity.

Regarding the Jewish context that served as a test case in this article, the perception of the contents of the collective memory by the real consciousness of people in a given historical place and time does not suit the experience of the Jews. This experience was directed at a transcendent entity that required them as subjects a disposition of affirmation and obedience to the norms derived from it. The dominance granted to consciousness and the sovereignty it enjoys in the continuity model also raises the fear that the interpretation that relies on it will be unable to preserve the incommensurable nature of contents in the collective memory, contents that are an inseparable part of each culture and personal identity.²⁵

The explication of problems that arose from the two models discussed raises the question regarding an alternative to them. The modern man, who internalizes the historical nature of all the realms of his life and activity, might revolt and ask: must my life space necessarily be binary, i.e., divided between an experience of irreversible break and eroding the possibility of standing in the face of a transcendent Being in favor of an almost unreserved sovereignty of the individual? It seems that although these two models rely different assumptions, the one is shaped in the face of the other. Since they exclude each other, in fact, the binary space suggests only one alternative. Against what transpires as considerable harm to human freedom, I outline the principle of an alternative model that I name the "tension model." In my opinion, this third model might be applicable to the hermeneutics of cultures that, like the Jewish one, is consolidated around a relation to a transcendent Being.

At the outset of the disposition of tension stands the evident recognition of a transcendent element as a constant datum of human history, therefore, individuals live out of a deep awareness that not everything in their lives and surrounding is apparent and wholly understandable. This model adopts the constancy that is attributed to this element in the model of break, but rejects the main consequence that accompanies it, according to which not only the transcendent but also the legitimate modes for its expression are already determined, since these are also ahistorical. In opposition to that, in the tension model the meaning of the evident knowing in itself, as well as the behavior that is demanded by it, is determined again and again in a concrete historical context. This renewed determination is nothing but a result of the unceasing endeavor to grant a historical expression to transcendence. This approach defends the transcendent from being shaped as a firm element with only one meaning, so that every deviation from it causes a break from the collective memory. Indeed, what saves the tension model from break is the preservation of a constant element that does not dissolve into reality. At the same time—unlike the model of break—the contemporaneous historical expressions that are bestowed upon it are not considered as undermining it but as nourishing the evidence with regard to it and thus grant it historical validity.

In addition, the acknowledgment of the existence of a transcendent element in history grants something that is so lacking in the model of continuity, i.e., the limit of one's interpretations, namely a hedge to consciousness' freedom. Especially the positing of something external to individuals might be helpful in consolidating an attitude towards the incommensurable contents that fill the collective memory. The possibility to harness these contents to the grounding of a transcendent element is pinned on an aspect common to both transcendence and incommensurability: the impossibility of their achieving a complete clarity. Moreover, the evidence regarding the existence of a transcendent element in history becomes itself a source for new contents, thanks to contemporary individuals' referring to it and not the other way around. In other words, the transcendent element itself is not a conclusion driven by consciousness or a specific content that describes a particular idea of an individual.

Thus, in the tension model, the evidence regarding the constant presence of the transcendent element in history might have a double influence: it restrains the individual, and consequently avoids identifying history with the limits of meaning he bestows upon it. This evidence helps him to contain the vagueness and blurring regarding the existence of a transcendent element in a historical reality in which providence is not apparent, such as in an age of secularization. In addition, the awareness of the dimension of incommensurability that typifies a history of a specific group limits the universalization that occurs to the contents of the collective memory while being interpreted, without preventing its exposure to a contemporary spirit—a limit that is so lacking in the model of continuity that opens in all directions. The tension model thus contains the transcendent element, but at the same time avoids its becoming the be all and end all, like in the model of break. Indeed, the tension model demands that individuals refer to the transcendent element in history, and thus admit that history is not exhausted in its realistic appearing. Yet, this demand does not contain an assertion about the legitimate expression or practice with regard to it.

The first impression that the model of tension might create is of a compromise or of a negative disposition, that as such is consolidated in relation to the two original models. Yet, this is not the situation. The model of tension is not only an independent approach but also a positive and obligated one. The tension is first and foremost an outcome of the common presence in these models of two elements, each of which arguing for exclusivity—the subject whose modern establishment was shaped as an unreserved sovereign force, and the

transcendent that monotheistic religions grant a decisive status. Indeed, these are two wholes that in the modern era have been thrown into one arena. Seemingly, in a secular reality, meaning in a reality in which providence is not apparent, there is room to expect that the subject will be able to outweigh the transcendent and thus overcome the tension. Yet the modern reality is not altogether secular, and the profane does not contradict the sacred. More importantly, the transcendent and the modern subject share the quality of independence that elevates them above the real historical level. It is this resemblance that is responsible for the mighty crash between the two competing elements. On the other hand, in the tension model there is an attempt to establish a relationship between the two elements by means of throwing them back into the historical process, so that the subject is unceasingly required to validate the transcendent by the very act of interpretatively referring to it. The directedness of subjects to the transcendent dissolves their self-understanding as independent of everything external to them—either the real historical reality or the transcendence. Also, the transcendent is directed to immanence; by means of relations that subjects direct towards it, the transcendent acquires a presence in their world and thus becomes historically validated. The unbridgeable gap between immanence and transcendent—that in the model of break was decided in favor of the transcendent, while in the model of continuity in favor of the immanent—is substituted then in the tension model for a net of relations that is created again and again in a concrete historical context in which they are both necessary. Thus their pretension for exclusiveness is naturally dismissed, and their shape as ahistorical elements is dismantled. That is to say, in the tension model not only a relationship between the immanent and the transcendent is established, but they also pass through a transformation. Like every genuine relationship, also in the one that is established in the tension model between immanence and transcendence, none of the participants remains as it was before.

The possibility of implementing the model of tension on a given historical reality is a challenge for historians whose work will actually translate the theoretical abstractedness into the understanding of a concrete event. It is likely that their meeting of this challenge will uncover difficulties and deficiencies in the model of tension. This will bring about the turn of the philosopher to suggest accommodations and improvements, either within the framework of the model of tension or by consolidating a new model.

Notes

1. This thesis is deeply discussed by Peter Berger and challenges many cultural perspectives upon tradition. For example, see Berger, 1969; 1979; Morris, Heelas, and Lash, 1996; Taylor, 2007.

2. Modern Jewish historiography (*Wissenschaft des Judentums* or *Hochmat Ysrael*) was founded at the beginning of the 19th century. For a general introduction regarding this phenomenon, see Meyer, 1967, 85-114. According to the phenomenological method employed in this article, I will not discuss here the historical-real question regarding what really happened in modern Jewish experience, whether it was a continuation of the traditional Jewish experience or expressed a break from it.

3. See also Funkenstein, 1992.

4. Each of the terms holds a double meaning: at the level of consciousness, immanence signifies the mental activity of the human being, whereas transcendence indicates the objectifying act, namely referring to a conscious object which is “there,” i.e., in itself is transcendent to the referring act (the phenomenological tradition regarded such an object as “immanent transcendence.” See Husserl, 1977, 48-50; Kockelmans, 1994, 288-90. On the ontological level the term “immanent” denotes one’s mental and spiritual world, while “transcendent” often points to God, but also to the world of objects as independent of the human referring consciousness.

5. On the distinction between the two types of transcendence, see Schrag, 2007; Wood, 2007. On Heidegger’s criticism of the metaphysical perception of transcendence, see Heidegger, 1984, 186.

6. Already Berkley and Hume pointed to the idea that consciousness cannot refer to what is transcendent to itself. Yet, Hegel was the first to uncover what might be regarded as the apparatus through which the transcendent turns immanent, namely enters consciousness. This demonstrates that the very referring of one’s consciousness to an object transcendent to it makes that object immanent.

7. Hedwig Conrad-Martuis, an important though unknown phenomenologist, dealt in length with the need to restrain the consciousness' endeavor to present the external world in order to let the reality transcendent to the subject appear. See especially Conrad-Martuis, 1916, 407.

8. For a more general view of the phenomenology of presence, see Fuchs, 1976, 6-36.

9. Regarding ideology, see Yerushalmi, 1982, 86; regarding literature, see Yerushalmi, 1982, 97-98.

10. See Funkenstein, 1993, 18-19.

11. It appears that Funkenstein's idea of "historical consciousness" as mediating between the personal memory and the collective one follows the philosophical tradition from Kant onwards that regarded the term "consciousness" as denoting the synthesizing element between different grounds that seem strange to each other. Following this tradition, Funkenstein's concept of "historical consciousness" functions as mediating between the personal memory and the collective one.

12. The idea that one's self contains within itself the other is central to Hegel's thinking. This is well reflected in the opening sentence the famous chapter "Lordship and Bondage" in his *Phenomenology*: "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (1988, 111).

13. See Funkenstein, 1993, 18-19.

14. Compare with the concept of "primary truth" as analyzed by Heidegger, 1993, §44.

15. See Funkenstein, 1993, 4.

16. See Funkenstein, 1993, 18-19.

17. The problem of subjectivism is common in approaches anchored in immanence and assuming a Cartesian subject. Funkenstein was aware of this problem, and stressed the central status of the subject as an essential part without which no human experience could exist. As he put it: "Any attempt to completely destroy the status of the subject is a sort of philosophical illusion. A careful examination would show that another subject is always implicitly assumed: there is no avoiding a subject, not in epistemology, not in history and not in life" (1995, 346). On the essentiality of individuality, see also Frank, 1986. For a wide perspective on the problem of subjectivism, and the resulting relativism, see Bilén, 2000.

18. The concept of openness in this context relies on Gadamer's approach. See Gadamer, 1989, 268, 350-60.

19. See Yerushalmi's depiction of modern Jews: "seem to await a new, metahistorical myth ..." (1982, 98).

20. For the total nature of past, see Thompson, 1996, 91f.

21. For the gap between tradition as a way of living and the conscious attempt to understand it, see Bauman, 1992, 149.

22. The term "transcendental" is not identical with "transcendent." While the first is an epistemological term that signifies the conditions for consciousness or awareness, including the subjective referring to the "given," the second has an ontological meaning, and as such it alludes to the ontic status of the discussed object. However, I contend that ontological determinations are not disconnected from epistemological ones and obviously do not stand in contradiction to them. This understanding is well accepted within the modern neo-scholastic approaches that were committed to the elucidation of the transcendent given without granting the immanent aspects accompanying it any establishing preceding status. For example, see Maritain, 1946.

23. In the phenomenological literature there appears a clear distinction between intentional intending towards an object, characteristic of every mental act (see Husserl 1952, §36, 72-74), and the institutional conception that regards the intentional activity not only as referring to the object but also as establishing it. Consequently, the object is regarded as immanent by its very being (Husserl 1977, §30-§41, 65-88). This shift can be regarded as a modification that turns an epistemological attitude, which treats the object as existing "for me" (*für mich*), into a metaphysical determination, i.e., the object as driven "from me" (*aus mich*). In Husserl's words: "The Objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me, the only world that ever can exist for me ... derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me myself" (1977, §11, 26); "I can enter no world other than the one that gets its sense and acceptance or status ... in and from me, myself" (1977, §8, 21). See also Ricoeur's (1967, 85-90) observation of this phenomenon in Husserl's thinking.

24. This claim summarizes the main criticism of the Munich school about Husserl. See Schmücker, 1956; Avé-Lallemant, 1971. See also Ricoeur, 1967, 115-42.

25. For an analysis of the incommensurability argument, see Statman, 1995, 56-88.

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