To Mend the World

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The main objective of Emil Fackenheim's 1982 work *To Mend the World* is to lay the foundations of a post-Holocaust Jewish thought. This work's urgency is to confront the possibility of collapse of Jewish, Christian and secular philosophies that results from the reality of Auschwitz and what was lost therein. Fackenheim takes seriously Adorno's claim of the metaphysical capacity being arrested in Auschwitz and takes this to its last consequences.

Freud describes mourning as a process whereby "each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the lost object is brought up and hyper-cathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it" (Freud, 1917). Therefore Fackenheim's enterprise may be understood as an instance of such a work as it revisits the history and historicity of the Holocaust. It outlines the impact of what was irremediably lost in the Holocaust – almost to the point of total collapse – and what can be repaired and clung to that may serve as the means to survive the abyss left by the titanic loss.

In order to reflect on the scope of Fackenheim's thought as a work of mourning, I will follow Fackenheim's steps by exploring his preliminary considerations regarding the pre-Holocaust state of things in Jewish thought. Then, I will explore Fackenheim's confrontation of the Holocaust proper comprising the logic of destruction of Auschwitz as well as the instances, which according to Fackenheim prevent thought from collapsing totally. I conclude this paper by interrogating the scope of Fackenheim's work in terms of a philosophical act of individual and shared mourning.

From the outset, it is clear that Fackenheim believes that the Holocaust has strong enough implications so as to think of a *post-Holocaust* state of things in Jewish thought and therefore in Christian and Western secular philosophies as well. In an earlier stage of his thought, Fackenheim's objective was to create a philosophical system based on Jewish philosophical principles, but he abandoned that endeavour due to his later agreement with Buber's ideas on the Jewish take on revelation. A philosophical system, such as Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is possible when it is thought that all things can be explained, and, in Jewish theological terms, this would amount to a complete revelation. However, Fackenheim follows Buber in that Jewish revelation is necessarily open-ended, incomplete and, therefore, bound to interpretation. Therefore, an all-encompassing Jewish philosophical system is impossible under these circumstances. What remains possible is, however, a systematic activity of thought.

In this sense, *To Mend the World* interrogates the conditions of possibility for Jewish religion and philosophy being *systematically thought* in the late twentieth-century particularly after the Holocaust. The main question is, can the Holocaust be thought systematically without thought collapsing in the attempt of doing so? Fackenheim asserts that there is a gulf between the pre and post-Holocaust states of things. Jewish, Christian and secular philosophies, according to Fackenheim, are threatened to collapse by the realities to which the Holocaust confronts them.

Fackenheim begins by describing the state of things in Jewish thought before the Holocaust. Therefore, he explores the philosophies of two modern Jewish thinkers, namely Baruch Spinoza and Franz Rosenzweig. Simultaneously, he introduces some of Hegel's philosophy as a necessary link between these two Jewish thinkers. Fackenheim criticises many aspects of Spinoza's philosophy, in particular those that result from Spinoza's assertion that Jews ought to become *"men-in-general,*

inhabitants of the liberal state" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 57*)* and the inevitable rejection of Jewish revelation that this implies.

Fackenheim's take on Rosenzweig has a very different tone, and his exploration of Rosenzweig's main philosophical work, *The Star of Redemption,* leads him to affirm that Rosenzweig's post-Hegelianism is visible in that *The Star of Redemption* is the dialectical opposite of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. I cannot go into detail in Fackenheim's careful description, explanation and contrast of the ideas of these authors, I will only point out three main aspects of it.

Firstly, Fackenheim finds the configurations of Rosenzweig's tripartite structure of elements (God, Man, World) central to contrast the Star of Redemption with Spinoza's and Hegel's thought. These elements "are not arbitrary postulates (…) they are the positive result of the demonstrated failure of more than two millennia of Western metaphysics to reduce all things, respectively, to 'God', 'World' and 'Man'" (Fackenheim, 1982, p 65). Each of these elements, explains Fackenheim, is posited by Rosenzweig as a "Not-Yet, i.e. ontologically occult powers which are not, but as it were, *strive* to be. And to this ontological status, corresponds, epistemologically, a "knowledge" that remains ignorance until the striving-to-be has *revealed itself as being"*. (Fackenheim, 1982, p 68).

Secondly, the *"New Thinking",* of which Rosenzweig claims to be a founder, distinguishes itself from the *"Old Thinking"* that is embodied mainly in the old Rabbinic thought. The *Old Thinking*, to some extent, affects Spinoza's antagonism to Jewish religion. Rosenzweig's *New Thinking*, as opposed to the *Old Thinking,* on the one hand does not rely on old recognised authorities, which makes it un-fanatical. And on the other hand, each of the elements of the tripartite configuration (Man, God and World) keep their singular place instead of "Man and God being dissipated into World (ancient period), Man and World into God (medieval period), and God and World into Man (modern period)" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 64).

And thirdly, the particular dialectics between Judaism and Christianity that Rosenzweig describes in *the Star of Redemption* as a relation of mutual necessity and a sort of complementariness, contrasts with Spinoza's claims of Jews having to become men-in-general, that is, Jews undistinguishable from Christians. This comparison between Spinoza's and Rosenzweig's thought is what Fackenheim feels to be the necessary step to bring about a pre-Holocaust state of things of Jewish thought.

Almost at once, when discussing the preliminary details of the Holocaust, Fackenheim introduces some of Heidegger's thought. He calls Heidegger's affiliation to the Nazi party, however brief and disputed, an academic scandal. Furthermore, Fackenheim condemns ruthlessly Heidegger's by-standing of the victimisation of his hitherto friend and professor, Edmund Husserl, and his subsequent failure to account philosophically for the Holocaust. Notwithstanding, Fackenheim finds Heidegger's philosophy essential to understand the gulf that the Holocaust opened in Jewish, Christian and secular thought.

In *The Star of Redemption* Rosenzweig depicts the Jewish relation to history as "a vigil for redemption", hence the cyclical and un-affectable cannons of Jewish calendar and festivals. However, to Rosenzweig's mind, thought needs to undergo "school with life". This is an influence coming from a well-known Hegelian principle: the owl of Minerva will spread its wings at dusk, that is, knowledge is possible only a

posteriori. Therefore, thought can never be detached from events, precede them nor prescribe them. So, Jews seem to hold a vigil for redemption that places them "outside of history" on the one hand, but on the other, thought cannot detach itself from history and can only come about a posteriori. Thus Rosenzweig sets forth this complex relation between Jewish religion and history, both outside and inside history. Nevertheless, he does seem to think that in Jewish history, only redemption could be *a true event*. Rosenzweig wrote this before the Holocaust, and therefore Fackenheim sharply rejects this idea by asserting that it cannot be ignored that, in the Holocaust, Jews were dragged back into history (Fackenheim, 1982).

At this point, Fackenheim introduces some of Heidegger's ideas on history and historicity, which are not too dissimilar from Rosenzweig's; in fact it may be argued that the former influenced the latter greatly. According to Heidegger, in a stern and implacable fashion, history and historicity cannot be detached from one another without falling into inauthenticity. In other words, history, an idea of time "seen from the outside" as it were, cannot be detached from historicity, that is, the dimension of existence, that is, of Dasein's being-toward-death. To do so, would mean avoiding the confrontation of the anxiety proper of existence, and above all, the finitude that death is for Dasein.

Furthermore, Heidegger's notion of transcendence is central to Fackenheim's account. For Heidegger, being-towards-death, or, the finitude of Dasein, is one of the sources of anxiety, which can be either avoided by recourse to inauthenticity or confronted. Confronting anxiety implies confronting finitude, that is, being-towards-death. This is according to Heidegger, the way to transcendence, which can, however, be avoided by falling into inauthenticity. When it comes to history and historicity, the same can be said: thought can flight into history-in-general as an avoidance of historicity, that is, the finite dimension of temporality. The condition of possibility of transcendence, however, lays precisely in the authentic existence, in facing finitude and death. Therefore, an authentic transcendence of time means both to remain *immersed in* time as well as to rise above it. In Rosenzweig's words, this would amount to remain outside of history, but undergoing school with life as well. The contrast of Rosenzweig's and Heidegger's ideas of temporality, historicity and transendece, serve to lay the ground on which, according to Fackenheim, the Holocaust must be confronted.

In this sense, Fackenheim asserts that to feel that the Holocaust has in any way been transcended means to do without its historicity, and therefore, to lapse into inauthentic thought. According to Fackenheim, to test if the putative gulf of the Holocaust can be traversed by thought, first and foremost, the historicity of Auschwitz needs to be confronted by thought. It is this enterprise that, Fackenheim fears, might arrest thought and make it collapse. How can the historicity of Auschwitz be confronted by thought if, following Adorno, the metaphysical capacity of thought is arrested in Auschwitz? Thought sees itself overwhelmed by Auschwitz and its natural tendency is to recoil from thinking about it. However, the alternative is for Jewish, Christian and secular thought to collapse into senselessness, for on what basis topics like evil, good, human dignity, victimhood, criminality, justice, ethics and morals could be thought thence? Fackenheim explains that

> "*After* Auschwitz, [human dignity] can no longer be believed, for […] humanity was destroyed in [the victim and the perpetrator]—the good will of both was destroyed as well, and with it the right to the dignity of the

human being as such. After this, the value of humanity has therefore become questionable, and this radically and forever: the destruction of humanity remains possible, for in Auschwitz it was actual. Elie Wiesel has therefore rightly said that the Holocaust destroyed not only human beings but also the idea of humanity" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 65).

This means that if thought cannot transcend Auschwitz authentically, that is, cross the gulf in its history and historicity, then Jewish, Christian and secular post-Holocaust philosophy will become, at best, pointless babbling. To test if Auschwitz can be authentically transcended is the tremendously urgent task that Fackenheim sets for himself to save philosophy from collapsing.

Fackenheim reflects briefly in the preliminary considerations section on the language that, he believes, is necessary to use when speaking of the Holocaust. I believe this is something important to highlight. He explains that "the *facts themselves* are outrageous; it is they that must speak through our language. And this is possible only if one's feelings are subject to a disciplined restraint. The language necessary, then, is one of sober, restrained but at the same time, unyielding outrage" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 28).

Fackenheim's reflection on Auschwitz is careful, detailed and considers the many possible arguments and counter-arguments of each step and each assertion about it. I will explore only the skeleton of it, and focus on the main pillars of his ideas.

Firstly, Fackenheim asserts that the extermination of non-Aryans, in particular Jews and Gypsies, was the corollary and true core of the Third Reich. The proof of this, according to Fackenheim, is that when Nazis were loosing the battle in the eastern front, more trains were nevertheless sent to Auschwitz so as to accelerate the extermination of the Jewish population. Thus Auschwitz, observes Fackenheim, was the Third Reich's priority.

Fackenheim believes Auschwitz to be a world in its own right and with its own logic; rightly called "planet Auschwitz" by some survivors. The logic of the Auschwitz world was "a logic of destruction", and this is what makes it a precedent-less *novum in history.* It is a well-known fact that the whole purpose of Auschwitz was to exterminate non-Aryans. The sin of the victims was *being,* and therefore nothing could prevent their death.

Fackenheim paraphrases Primo Levi and explains that as soon as the victims arrived to the camps: "they [were] overcome before they [could] adapt themselves; they [were] beaten by time, they [did] not begin to learn German, to disentangle the infernal knot of laws and prohibitions until their body [was] already in decay, and nothing [could] save them from selection or from death by exhaustion" (Fackenheim, 1982, p .99)

Thus, there were from the outset contradicting and absurd rules to which the prisoners who were not murdered instantly were forced to comply. For example, the arch in the entrance of Auschwitz read: "work sets free"; prisoners had to be perfectly shaved while having no razors; perfectly clean while having no soap or running water; it was forbidden to defecate during work, and so forth. Dysentery was a common illness in the camps, and not being able to defecate led prisoners to what became know as "excremental assault". Of course, the punishment for disobedience of these contradicting rules was death. These rules drove common sense to insanity and were not randomly set, but were purposely designed so as to lead prisoners to feel contempt

and disgust for themselves and their fellows (Fackenheim, 1982, 208 – 210). Fackenheim quotes Pelagia Lewinska, a noble Polish Christian woman who was sent to Auschwitz, and who, to Fackenheim's mind, grasped perfectly Auschwitz' logic of destruction:

> "At the outset the living places, the ditches, the mud, the piles of excrement behind the blocks, had appalled me with their horrible filth… And then I saw the light! I saw that it was not a question of disorder or lack of organisation but that, on the contrary, a very thoroughly considered conscious idea was in the back of the camp's existence. They had condemned us to die in our own filth, to drown in mud, in our own excrement. They wishes to abase us, to destroy our human dignity, to efface every vestige of humanity… to fill us with horror and contempt toward ourselves and our fellows" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 25).

Fackenheim tries to grasp the innermost essence of Auschwitz, and explores "medical" experiments performed on victims, or the idea of babies drowned in buckets or thrown to the flames of the crematoriums without being gassed first. But this seems insufficient to account for the absolute novelty and uniqueness of Auschwitz' logic of destruction. According to Fackenheim, "the most original, most characteristic product of the entire Nazi Reich were the *Muselmänner*, "the downed… and anonymous mass… of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them…" (Fackenheim, 1982, p.25) The so-called *Muselmann* is the most characteristic prisoner of Auschwitz: the senseless wandering man whose skin-and-bones image haunts thought and understanding. Primo Levi wrote about the Müselmanner: "one hesitates to call them living; one hesitates to call their death death" (Levi, , p. 82). It is the Muselmann the core and epitome of Nazism: the man who has been robbed of transcendence, for his death and the consciousness of it has been taken away from him; and whose divine spark and dignity, have also been extinguished; in short, a man who is a no-man. The Muselmann cannot repent, rebel or become a martyr for he has been purposely deprived of choice and consciousness. It is in this sense that humanity was, in fact, destroyed in Auschwitz. It is here where the metaphysical capacity of thought collapses.

In Fackenheim words, when trying to confront the historicity of Auschwitz "we reach an impasse with the question of whether perhaps *no* thought can be where the Holocaust is; whether perhaps *all* thought is "paralysed" vis-à-vis that event; and whether perhaps paralysis at this catastrophic point calls into question significant post-Holocaust thought everywhere" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 249).

But Fackenheim interrogates this even further, because he believes that the limit of philosophical intelligibility is not the limit of all thought. He explains: "the circular thought movement that fails produces a result in its very failure, for it grasps, to the extent possible, *a whole*". (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 238). Hegel's philosophy is the best example of this, and in Hegel's view, once this whole is grasped it is comprehended, transcended and the meaning of it is perceived from a higher standpoint by putting it in perspective. But the whole of the Holocaust is a whole of horror which we cannot comprehend but only comprehend its incomprehensibility; "we cannot transcend it but only be struck by the brutal truth that it cannot be transcended" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 238).

In this sense, it becomes clear that the gulf that the Holocaust opened by means of destroying *humanity* cannot be fully breached and overcome. But Fackenheim furthers:

> "One asks: why did so many become Muselmänner? One ought to ask: How did even one *not* become a Muselmann? The logic of destruction was irresistible: then how was it, nevertheless, resisted? (…) The demands of the bowels overcame them; yet some washed in water that made them no cleaner, or attempted to shave, to comb their hair. Why did they do it? How could they do it?" (Fackenheim, 1982, p. 217).

Fackenheim finds acts of resistance to the logic of destruction the only possible way for thought to traverse the gulf, and therefore, they are *ultimate*. Fackenheim posits resistance during the Holocaust as a *novum* in history. It was a way of holding fast to human dignity, and therefore it was a way of *being authentically*. For Fackenheim's thought, in the *here and now,* resistance is an *ontological category* that was *ontic, there and then*.

Fackenheim explores different acts of resistance: the uprisings of the Warsaw ghetto and Sobibor extermination camp; the explosion of Treblinka's crematoriums by the prisoners, the Jewish and Christian partisans, and so forth. He explores each case and explores whether each of these can be thought as resistance in this sense. But, there is a kind of acts of resistance in particular that Fackenheim finds worthy of attention: old Hassidic rabbis who traded bread in exchange for phylacteries in Buchenwald concentration camp, a group of women who fasted on Yom Kippur (the day of atonement) while being prisoners in Auschwitz or a group of Hassidic Jews who, before being killed outside Lublin by the SS officer Glowoznik, danced ecstatically while praying for redemption. These acts are of significant importance and now we turn to them.

In 1943 in Germany, there was a group of German students called "The White Rose", led by philosophy professor Kurt Huber, which distributed anti-Nazi propaganda. They knew that their actions were futile, that they were going to be caught, judged and put to death. Indeed, in the final statement of his trial, Huber claimed that they were acting in responsibility for all Germany; that their act was not illegal but rather an attempt to restore legality, and he quoted Fichte:

> And act thou shalt as though
>
> The destiny of all things German
>
> Depended on you and your lonely acting,
>
> And the responsibility were yours.

According to Fackenheim, Huber and the White Rose, in fact, did restore legality in Germany, *ontically* then and then, and *ontologically* here and now. From Huber's quote of Fichte, we infer that Huber acted with full consciousness of his and the White Rose's actions. Indeed, he knew that all things depended on his actions and the responsibility was his. Fackenheim observes that "the Idea of Man can be—has been—destroyed, for humanity can be—has been—destroyed. But because of humanity itself has been mended—*in* some men and women *by* some men and women—the Idea of Man can be mended" (Fackenheim, 1982, p 276).

These acts—in different measures, senses and fashions—restored partially what was broken, namely humanity, human dignity, the divine spark of Man or the Idea of Man. It is paramount to keep in mind that this restoration is partial, the gulf can never be fully breached and that something unthinkable became actual then and forever. Can philosophy ever go back to being what it was? Fackenheim believes that this question will be answered by the action of recovery and reinterpretation of the old in the light of the new.

Fackenheim explains that Huber's actions were given strength by the Idea of Man, and in turn, they gave strength to that Idea itself—this is a dialectic worthy of exploration. This same dialectic exists between the owl of Minerva that flies at dusk and the cock that announces sunrise, that is, thought that precedes and determines events, and thought that comes after events and is determined by them. An idea that determines an action, and in turn, an action that determines an idea, is the dialectic of the Kabbalistic notion of "Mending the World" or *Tikkun Olam.*

Kabbalah is the mystic discipline of Judaism. In it, symbols have a metaphysical reference and they are not figures of speech as they are in mainstream Judaic texts. The metaphysical references to rupture in Kabbalah are manifold, and so the notion of *Tikkun* comes about. There is a Kabbalistic account that narrates that before the world was created, God was contained in a vessel. After the Creation, the vessel could not contain the divine light and was fractured into fragments and scattered across the cosmos, and so were their divine contents. An act of Tikkun Olam restores a fragment of the vessel and liberates a fragment of divine light that returns to its container. The belief is that enough acts of *Tikkun Olam* might fully repair the broken vessel, thus containing God again and precipitating redemption. This may sound like magical thinking to the secular mind; nevertheless, it would be perhaps worthy to think of this as a metaphysical account of what in psychoanalysis is meant with the notions of container, contained and reparation. Supported by the figure of thought of the divine vessel, the acts of restoration of fragments of the vessel amount to containment for they entail *a movement towards growth*. In this case, containment amounts to the meeting of container and contained as well as the reparation of the very container whose state of brokenness is intrinsic to it. If we take the description of a world where broken, essentially evil fragments are to be reintegrated to a main vessel, container or object, we can clearly recognise the uncanny similarity to the paranoid-schizoid world of split and uncontained elements described by the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein and further outlined by her disciple Wilhelm Bion. Bion (1970) himself argued, "*Tikkun* is an age-old myth which was transformed by the genius of the revolutionary mystic Isaac Luria" (Lutzky, 1989, 500).

In the Kabbalistic account, the divine, the cosmic and the historical are broken. Man shares this brokenness with the cosmic, and Fackenheim explains that "it is precisely if the rupture, or the threat of it, is total, that all powers must be summoned for a mending. If the threat is to man, there is need to invoke divine as well as human power" (Fackenheim, 1982, 253), and vice-versa, that is, human power may aid the divine if a rupture is visited upon it. Fackenheim exemplifies this notion by quoting Gershom Scholem who believes that "the impulse below calls forth an impulse from above" (Scholem, 1965, p 270). Thus the dialectic of Tikkun Olam becomes visible, and thus retrospectively we understand that the Idea of Man aided Huber in his actions and his actions aided the Idea of Man, nay, his actions *mended or repaired* the idea of Man. Otherwise put, the divine spark of man motivated Huber's actions, and in turn, this very action restored the divine spark of man. Huber's trial, explains

Fackenheim, was the most important trial in philosophy since Socrates' trial, and Huber's act of *Tikkun Olam*, like the other acts of resistance to Auschwitz, are therefore a novum in history.

Kabbalistic thinkers would assert that this *Tikkun* perhaps redeemed fully those who died. But Fackenheim does not go that far. He explains that "we must accept from the start that at most only a fragmentary *Tikkun* is possible. This is because we are situated in the post-Holocaust world. We must accept our situatedness. We must live with it" (Fackenheim, 1982, p 256). Fackenheim, therefore, does not share the idea of *Tikkun Olam* of the Kabbalah *stricto sensu*. However, he chooses the ethical dimension of it to be that which *must* cross the abyss of Auschwitz: "a philosophical *Tikkun* (mending) is possible nowadays because a philosophical *Tikkun* already took place in the Holocaust itself" (Fackenheim, 1982, p 266). Thus he asserts that the *Tikkun* is not only "possible", but also "necessary"*,* and it is ethical in this sense. It is, in my view, Fackenheim's urgent answer to the question "how can we not resist it today, if it was indeed resisted there and then?"

Having explored a fragment of Fackenheim's ideas, we come to a halt in our exploration and conclude by interrogating the scope of these ideas in terms of mourning. As we have understood, the loss in the Holocaust was such that it was almost *absolute*. Therefore, I believe that *no mourning will ever do*. In psychoanalytic terms, this might strike as a melancholic statement, for it singles the Holocaust as an object in history that cannot be totally mourned. In other words, the Holocaust exceeds not only what can be understood but also what can be mourned. This is so because to mourn the Holocaust would imply to posit the *loss of humanity* as a "mournable object loss", that is, to place this loss within the series of objects that *can be lost*. This is perhaps one of the few *objects* that*,* in Fackenheim's and my own viewpoint*,* we cannot afford to lose. This viewpoint, however, can be disputed by many other philosophers who consider that we can do without, and in fact we actually do without, the Idea of Man or of human dignity. In this sense, the retreat of metaphysics in the twentieth century may hold an intimate dialectic with the Holocaust, and perhaps the Holocaust was possible insofar as the Idea of Man had been already abandoned, lost or damaged prior to it.

In a normal process of mourning the object is finally decathected and the libidinal energy hitherto invested in it, is released to cathect other objects. But in the case of the Holocaust the nature of the almost total loss would have entailed the loss of hope in humanity and life in general. Paradoxically, if this work of mourning succeeded, we would fall in metaphysical despair for we would have to come to terms with the death of humanity. In psychoanalytic terms, this would mean coming to terms with having no Eros to cling to, no good object left, no container and no containment possible. This devastating reality and the impossibility to mourn it, indeed, lock us almost completely in a melancholic state. It leads us to affirm that the Holocaust can mostly be remembered, or reintrojected, as one of the darkest periods of history, wherein understanding and mourning will collapse ever anew. Perhaps, Fackenheim's suggestion of using a language of outrage keeps the Holocaust at a distance that allows for the self not to collapse in it.

However, the attempt to authentically confront the Holocaust can be thought as a work of mourning that, albeit fragmentarily, provides a means for surviving the total collapse. Firstly, to single out the object that cannot be mourned confines the collapse, in this case, to the Idea of Man. The Idea of World and God are kept untouched

enough so as to be able to assert that "an impulse below may call forth an impulse from above". This assertion can be disputed, as the questions of the presence of God and the caring of the World during the Holocaust is grave particularly in the survivors' memory, or in the countless who committed suicide or despaired. Furthermore, perhaps a damage visited upon one element of this triad entails damaging the others. However, one could hold on to the partial un-touchedness of God and World, as destroying these two, according to Fackenheim, was not necessarily the primary goal of the Third Reich. These two, to some extent, give to the acts of mending the Idea of Man a source of power and thrust. In Huber's example, World was understood as Germany, and mending Germany was perhaps as important as to mend legality and human dignity.

The acts of resistance are the true kernel of Fackenheim's contribution as they are the only and ultimate way of preventing the total collapse. We have learned that resistance as an ontological category and the acts of resistance there and then understood as *Tikkun Olam*, call for acts of resistance in the here and now and allow to cross the gulf of the Holocaust. In this sense, the loss is not total, but partial, as there is a continuum in what otherwise would be an un-breachable abyss. The recognition of the possible mending and its limits makes of Fackenheim's work an effective act of mourning, for, in this sense, the self survives the loss.

The notion of *Tikkun Olam* is a bridge between an individual symbolic act and its meddling in shared reality, hence its effectiveness. Fackenheim's work of mourning effectiveness, in this sense, comes from the act of reparation, albeit partial, of what was lost and damaged. The acts of resistance of Huber, the Hassidim in Buchenwald or the women in Auschwitz, individual as they were, impact *us* here and now. Fackenheim believes that this is so because *they mended the Idea of Man then and there for us here and now*. Therefore, these acts of resistance are good examples of the private –or individual– becoming shared; that is, individual acts of *Tikkun Olam* that mend The Idea of Man for all mankind. In this sense, these acts of resistance thought as ontological categories, guarantee the survival of philosophy and provide the means to perform the act of mourning, fragmentary as it may be. Moreover, Fackenheim's work itself can be thought as resistance; as an act of a philosopher resisting the total collapse of philosophy in the hope that an impulse below may call forth an impulse from above.

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